

WALKING THE WALK

Colossians 9:1-11

Walking has become a popular activity in recent years with many American adults. One estimate is that between 21 and 34% of all American adults walk at least 30 minutes 5 times a week, and regular walking has been proven to decrease the possibility of heart disease and cancer. And some of you are faithful to walk every day. But let me tell you, many walkers are more serious about their walking than you probably are. I was leaving a store in Mid-town Mall this week and saw two of this committed company. They were a couple probably about 70 years old. She was in the middle of the sidewalk and he was six to eight feet to the side of her just at the sidewalk's edge. And let me tell you they were getting with it. And they were fast-gated and determined, not saying a word to each other nor anyone else. You've seen walkers like them. They were on a mission to keep that heart rate up and that total time down, and you best not mess with them unless you are bleeding to death.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm a firm believer in keep our bodies fit for the glory of God, and walking is one of the best ways to do it. But there is another type of walking that God is supremely more interested in than walking around Mid-town Mall or walking around our local walking track or a walk that I might take up Grant's Creek road and back. It's not a walk for your heart; it is a walk for your soul. And Paul speaks of this walk in the first part of a prayer that he continually prayed for the Colossians Christians. So just what is walking for your soul all about? And what will happen in your life if you faithfully walk for your soul? Today we're going to find out. So turn in your Bibles, please, to Colossians

1:9-14. Notice again the focus of Paul's prayer, which is vs. 10, "that you might walk worthy of the Lord..."

The Bible speaks much about walking for your soul. We are told in Gen. 4:24 that Enoch walked with God, and that Noah walked with God (Gen. 6:9). Malachi writes that Levi, one of Jacob's sons, walked with God in peace and equity (Mal. 2:6). Micah asks Israel the question in Micah 6:8, "...What does the Lord require of you?", and then he promptly answers it, "To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God". Think about that. Three great old patriarchs are said to have walked with God, and God says through Micah that He desires that you and I walk with Him in the same way. What a calling! What an honor! And in three other letters besides Colossians Paul talks about walking the worthy walk of a Christian. He admonished the Ephesians in Eph. 4:1 to walk worthy of their calling. He told the Philippians 1:27 to conduct themselves worthy of the gospel, which is the same idea. Live every day in a manner that honors the gospel of Christ. And in 1 Thess. 2:12 he urged the Thessalonians to walk worthy of God.

Beloved, there should be no higher goal in your life than that you walk worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because look what it does. It fully pleases Him. For when you are walking a walk worthy of the Lord, the power and the peace and the joy that He gives you just exudes out of you and all those around will have a hunger in their hearts to know God like you know Him. It was said of St. Basil, "His words were thunder because his life was lightening". And that's what God desires for you and me. That our lives are like lightening, dispelling the darkness all around us with the light of Jesus Christ.

Now, if you sincerely desire that your life be like this, that your walk of life is worthy of the name of Jesus, Paul shows you in his prayer how it will happen. It has to do with two things that you

must receive from God. Look at vs. 9 and vs. 11 and read along with me. Beloved, if you and I would walk the walk that is worthy of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only way we will ever do it is by His wisdom and His power alone, and I want us to look at both of these for a few minutes.

God has shown us His wisdom in two marvelous ways. Psalm 104:24 says, “How countless are Your works, LORD! In wisdom You have made them all...” Beloved, every day the birds, the bees, the bugs, the beasts, the flowers, the mountains and hills, the moon, the stars – all of Creation – it all cries out to us the awesome wisdom of God.

But there is another way in which God has shown us His wisdom. Look at 1 Cor. 1:30. “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God....” Have you ever asked yourself how Jesus Christ displays God’s wisdom? Well, the answer lies in the great human dilemma. We are all a part of the great human dilemma, every one of us. And the great human dilemma is, how can I, a wretched, sinful creature of the dust who have rebelled against a holy God by breaking His holy laws, and who is worthy of nothing but the flames – how can I escape the punishment that I so rightly deserve and live eternally with God in Heaven? And I tell you, it was an unsolvable problem to angelic or human wisdom. It would be easier to find a way for an ant to move a five thousand pound boulder.

But in His infinite wisdom God found an answer to the human dilemma, an answer that left all Heaven speechless with wonder. God would send His only beloved, sinless Son into the world to pay the penalty for the sins of the entire world by His death on the cross, and all those who would trust in Jesus’ death as the payment for their sins could be forgiven and receive eternal life. What wisdom!! No wonder that Paul cried out in Romans 11:33: “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of

God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”

Beloved, our God is a God of perfect wisdom, and you and I need that wisdom if we are going to honor Him with our lives in this world. And listen! There is not a single area of our lives in which we do not need the wisdom of God. We certainly need His wisdom in our family life. The week after Vacation Bible School I was painfully reminded of this when I was down at Rebekah’s house one day. Grandson Andrew and I were singing one of the VBS songs together, and the name of it was “Ride of your Life”. Well, all of those songs have motions to them, and so Andrew and I were singing and doing the motions, too, having a good ol’ time, or so I thought. And all of a sudden my three year old grandson looks up and says, “Granddad, you can’t do the motions as good as I can”. Friends, we need God’s wisdom in our family lives!

In all seriousness, look around and see how many families are shattered every year by divorce. And look and see at how many more are dysfunctional. Husbands and wives don’t love each other, they tolerate each other. Parents are too wrapped up in their own world to meet their children’s needs, and so the children’s values are instilled by their friends, the TV, and the internet. And then those precious children reach their late teens and begin to commit adultery and have children out of wedlock and live together out of wedlock or moms raise their children alone. And many times the reason is so very simple. The wisdom of God is nowhere to be found in the family.

But many times God’s wisdom is also not found in our finances. Think about how much money so many people just throw away every day. I saw a news segment recently that reported the average American family throws out over \$2000 dollars of food every year. And how many Christians live in stress mode every day because of car payments and credit card

payments that they struggle to meet? Payments that were never God's will for them to be making in the first place. And others who are financially secure squander all of their money on themselves while people the world over are starving and more than that starving for the gospel. And in most cases, whether people are financially struggling or striding, their tithe check is the one that never gets written. But the reason their finances are in such disorder is the same that their family life is in disorder. God's wisdom is not to be found.

Beloved, may I remind you that you have an adversary that seeks to destroy your home, your health, your happiness, and your holiness every single day, His name is Beelzebub, the Devil, and he is much wiser than you! Paul tells us that he disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor.11:14). And without God's wisdom you can be sure that he will deceive you and then devour you, and destroy your witness for Christ.

Well, I trust that you do understand the necessity of God's wisdom being operative in your life. But how do you attain God's wisdom? That's the ultimate question. And I'm sure that most of you know the answer already. We gain God's wisdom from God's Word.

Do you know what this Book is? It is a manual for life. It tells you where you've come from, it tells you of two destinations, one to which you are certain to arrive when you die. It tells you how to arrive at the right one, and it tells you how to enjoy the journey. Listen to what the Bible says about itself: "The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple" (Ps. 119:130). "Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble" (Ps. 119:165). And concerning the man who meditates daily on God's Word, here is God's promise to him, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of

water, that brings forth his fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he does will prosper” (Ps. 1:3).

Beloved, I could never overemphasize to you the value of God’s Word. It is your very spiritual lifeblood. Ps. 19 says, “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold”. Suppose that you went to the doctor tomorrow and he comes in and says, “I have good news and bad news. The bad news is that you have terminal cancer and without treatment you will die in one week. The good news is that there is a cure”. And then he hands you a one page sheet of instructions and says, “If you’ll follow these instructions you have a 100% chance of recovery and you’ll be in better health than you’ve ever been”. Now, what if you left your doctor’s office and said, “I know more about my condition than he does”. And you throw his instructions in the trash and set about to cure yourself with a potion that you read about in the farmer’s almanac. Well, beloved, you are even more foolish if you ignore the perfect teachings that God has given you as how to live and die in His Word.

So let me ask you something. How much time are you spending in God’s Word every day, which is the only place you will get God’s wisdom? And how much time do you read it and meditate on it or hear it preached? How much time do you spend watching TV or are you on the internet, where you get the wisdom that James tells us is earthly, sensual, and demonic (James 3:15)? Beloved, there’s only one way to walk the walk that fully pleases God, and that is to get His wisdom from His Word.

Now, notice what will happen when you take in God’s wisdom from His Word. You will be fruitful in every good work (v. 10b). Isn’t that what each of us who know Christ desire to be? Fruitful for the glory of our Lord? Well, this is how God tells us to bear fruit. Get godly wisdom from God’s Word. Jesus says the very

same thing to His disciples in John 15: 7-8: “If you abide in Me, **and My words abide in you**, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, **that you bear much fruit**; so you will be My disciples”.

But look again at v. 10 and notice what happens after we begin to bear fruit. “..being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”. As we bear fruit for God, God allows us to increase in our knowledge of Him even more. We grow closer to God, we learn more of His precious grace and of His mysterious ways. It is what someone years ago called the Colossian cycle. We learn of His wisdom and we start walking the worthy walk with Him. And then as a result we bear fruit, and then after that God rewards us with more of His wisdom. And we continue to grow more and more and bear more and more fruit for a lifetime. That’s why the psalmist could say in Psalm 92:14, “They shall still bear fruit in old age, they shall be fresh and flourishing”. You senior adults ought to be bearing more fruit for Jesus now than you ever have. You should be more excited about Jesus than you’ve ever been. Are you? But that goes for you younger people as well. We are all to be growing in wisdom and bearing more fruit all the way up until the day that Jesus calls us home.

But as indispensable as wisdom is to our spiritual health, it is not the only thing that we need from God to walk the worthy walk of a Christian. Look again at what Paul says beginning in v. 11. Beloved, wisdom will do you little good unless you have the power to use it. For this reason wisdom and might are much like the two wings of an airplane. In the Christian life you just have to have them both to fly. That’s the reason that Daniel prayed the prayer he prayed after God gave him the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Daniel prayed: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His....I thank

You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might.." (Daniel 2: 20,23). Daniel needed wisdom to interpret the dream but he also needed the might to tell it with boldness to the king.

Now, I want us to examine this might that Paul prayed the Colossians might have. He says that they needed it for all patience and longsuffering. These are related words with different shades of meaning. The word "patience" has primarily to do with circumstances. The normal trials and troubles of life that we all face. Health issues, family issues, financial issues, job issues. We all have them, and some of them we've been dealing with for years. They never go away. And as we seek to bear witness for Jesus day by day, these circumstances cause us to get weary, and we desperately need patience.

But there is also a great need for patience in our service to Christ. In 1 Peter 2:20 Peter says that if we are beaten for the sake of the gospel and we take it patiently, this is commendable before God. We have been blessed in America to have been spared of much persecution up to this point. But I assure you that many of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world have not. My friend Tim McGhee told me just this week that the mission teams from his church are no longer able to go into northern Nigeria because of the persecution of Christians there. And this is but one of many places on the globe where believers are suffering and even dying for their faith. And beloved, America is headed in that direction! But Paul prays that the Colossians would be strengthened with all might for persecution that was coming in the days ahead.

But Paul also says that we must have God's might for all longsuffering. Longsuffering has more to do with people, first of all people who will not respond to the gospel. So many times we love people in the name of Jesus. We study, we pray, we try to teach

and minister to these people, and their response is minimal and they misunderstand us and reject us, and we get discouraged. And furthermore, we are often unappreciated by God's people and even criticized by God's people. And that hurts even more, and we get discouraged even more. And many times we get discouraged by professing Christians that just don't care. They will tell you they love Jesus, but they won't run the race that God has set before them. They won't fight the good fight. They care nothing about walking worthy of the Lord. But Paul says in 1 Thess. 5:14, "...be longsuffering toward all men". But we just can't do it in our own strength, for all these discouraging people have sucked out all the strength that we have in us. And we must have the strength of God to keep on keeping on.

But notice something else about Paul's prayer for the Colossians' might. He prays that they will not only have patience and longsuffering, but he prays that they will have it with joy. Oh, beloved, God doesn't want you to just hang on by your fingernails during your trials. He doesn't want you to just drag through life, dutifully doing what you have to do for Jesus. Paul says that by God's might to run your race with **joy**! That's what changes the world, friends. That's what causes Philippian jailers to get saved. Singing songs of joy when you're battered and bruised in the darkest night. Is this the posture of your life today? This is what Paul prayed for the Colossians, and what God's will for you and for me.

But we cannot leave this discussion of wisdom and might just yet. For I want you to see something that will bring that joy to your soul that I'm talking about. Most of you have heard three words that theologians use to describe the attributes of God. They say that God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, meaning that God is everywhere, God is all knowing, and God is all powerful. And when I think of these big theological words they just

seem to make these attributes of God bigger in my mind. Yes, God is EVERYWHERE, and God's knowledge is UNLIMITED, and God's power is UNLIMITED. Just like the praise chorus says, our God is indeed an AWESOME God!

So here's a question. When Paul prays for wisdom for the Colossians, how much of God's wisdom could they expect to receive? Look back in v. 9. What does it say? All wisdom. All of God's unlimited wisdom. So how much wisdom does God want **you** to have? All of God's unlimited wisdom. Say it with me, please. "All of God's unlimited wisdom". So how much wisdom does God want you to have? "All of God's unlimited wisdom". Well, what about might. How much of God's might did Paul ask for the Colossians? Look at v. 11. All might. All of God's unlimited might. So how much of God's might does God want you to have? All of God's unlimited might. Say it with me, please. "All of God's unlimited might". So how much of God's might does He want you to have? "All of God's unlimited might". I tell you, beloved, that ought to be enough to make a Methodist shout.

But we cannot leave this morning without one final word. We said earlier that in order to acquire God's wisdom we receive it from God's Word. Well, what about God's might, His strength? Where do we find God's strength? Here's how. Just add one word to the Word. And that word is wait. Get in the Word and wait. What does Isaiah 40: 31 say? "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength....."

If you are a true believer in Jesus Christ, I want you to ask yourself, "Am I walking worthy of the Lord today? REALLY? Will you be honest enough with yourself to do it? And if you do, and God says that you are not walking the worthy walk, won't you heed His voice and begin walking that walk today?"