

# THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST

## The Fullness of Deity Dwelling in Christ

### *Strengthened by God*

Colossians 1: 11-12

**Introduction:** Paul's prayer for the Colossians contains a primary request followed by four clauses introduced by participles: *bearing fruit, increasing in the knowledge, strengthened, giving thanks*. It is also interesting that two of the participial clauses are active and two are passive, all in the present tense.

1. Bearing fruit is active...something which we do by God's life and grace within
2. Increasing in the knowledge of God...is something that happens to us as we walk with Him in fruitful living
3. Strengthened with all power...is something which God does to us and for us as we rest in His power and trust Him
4. Giving thanks...is something we do arising out of gratitude for the marvelous life God has given us.

Today we will consider these last two in some detail as we study verses eleven and twelve.

#### I. Strengthened with all power according to His glorious might

- A. A phrase filled with superlatives: ALL POWER, HIS GLORIOUS MIGHT—it would be difficult to emphasize the strength and power available to us in any stronger terms.
- B. The grammar has profound meaning here, a present passive participle
  1. It is not a power we have, but God's power given to us by God
  2. It is given in the moment as every need arises and is always sufficient to accomplish its goal
- C. It is given for a specific purpose: to attain *with joy*...
  1. All patience—holding our ground and enduring any circumstance
  2. All longsuffering—bearing with every kind of human opposition
- D. Paul knows that the Colossians cannot stand against the enemies of the Gospel, human and supernatural, in their own strength; they need the power of God. This is not a life we live *for* God on our own, but one lived *in* God by His power. That power does not come from strict religious practice or legalistic rituals, but by trusting God by faith through every moment of every day.

#### II. Giving thanks to the Father

- A. We are active participants in fruit bearing—even though the fruit arises from the life of Christ within, it is developed and borne on our branch. The fruit is, in part, contingent on what we allow Him to accomplish through us.
- B. Likewise, giving thanks arises from our own grateful heart. The walk with God daily, to experience His mighty power, to grow in the knowledge of Him, to realize our place in the inheritance of the saints in light—these wonderful realities should cause thankfulness to well up from within as we express our gratitude to God.
- C. We are people of The LIGHT. We have our illumination from the Source of all light in the present and in the future. We walk with Him in Whom is no darkness at all, and we will live eternally with Him in a place that will need no sun or moon.

*For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. <sup>13</sup> For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. <sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>1</sup>*

Colossians 1: 9-15  
(NASB)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1.) What are the four main participial phrases in Paul’s prayer? What is the main body of the prayer that precedes these four phrases.
- 2.) On a separate sheet of paper, write out an outline of Paul’s prayer for the Colossians and share it with your group. (vv. 9-12) Explain how your outline helps you to remember and understand what Paul is praying for.
- 3.) In the Greek language, the present tense expresses linear or continuous action in the present moment; it stresses something that is actually happening or unfolding right now. How does knowing that *being strengthened* is a present tense participle encourage you and increase your faith?
- 4.) The active voice expresses action done BY the subject, while the passive voice expresses action done TO the subject. How does knowing that *being strengthened* is in the passive voice encourage you to trust God? Is this something for which you can pray? On whose power does the fruitful Christian life rest?
- 5.) Share how this study of Paul’s prayer has encouraged you in your walk with God. Explain how it has impacted your own prayer life.
- 6.) Why do you think Paul is praying this way for the Colossians? What dangers are they facing that make this prayer most appropriate and effective?
- 7.) How important is an attitude of gratitude in our Christian walk? Upon what does such consistent gratitude depend?

### NOTES

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