

Title: *About walking*

No. 201422

Venue: Tyrrell Baptist Church

Date: October 26, 2014

Scripture: Colossians 1v9-14

Call to Worship: Proverbs 2v1-11

Main Idea: We need prayer for a worthy walk

All Scripture is from the English Standard Version unless otherwise indicated

Call to Worship

(Proverbs 2)

¹ *My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you,*
² *making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding;*
³ *yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding,*
⁴ *if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,*
⁵ *then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.*
⁶ *For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;*
⁷ *he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,*
⁸ *guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.*
⁹ *Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path;*
¹⁰ *for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;*
¹¹ *discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you,*

(Colossians 1)

³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,
⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and
 of the love that you have for all the saints,
⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.
 Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,
⁶ which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—
 as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and
 understood the grace of God in truth,
⁷ just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.
 He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf
⁸ and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

This is Paul's prayer for followers of Christ.

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you,
 asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will
 in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him,
 bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.
¹¹ May you be strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might,
 for all endurance and patience with joy,
¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share
 in the inheritance of the saints in light.
¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and
 transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

What good is God?

If someone were to ask you, “*What good is God?*” what would you say? You know that some people have no use for God and they may well be asking that question.

I was reading an Internet article about a developing movement in the United States. They are committed atheists who have no belief in God but are now meeting together in church-like gatherings with celebration music and speakers and social conversation. These are like “churches” without God. “Atheist churches”—that’s how the media is describing them.

So, if you are a Christian follower of Jesus Christ, and someone asks you, “*What good is God?*” you have one answer in this passage of Colossians 1v13-14.

He [God] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Personally, I know about the kingdom of darkness. I spent some time there in my life.

I know that for hours, darkness blanketed the area around Calvary when Jesus hung on the cross.

I know that Jesus bore my sins in His body on the cross.

I know that through a transaction called “redemption”—that means being bought out of the slave market of sin—my pardon and freedom have been granted by God.

I have forgiveness of sins now and, whenever I confess my sin, I know that it will be forgiven.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1v9)

I know that I am not left with uncertainty to wander about aimlessly. He has transferred me to the Kingdom of Jesus. That is where I am to reside and abide and focus my attention.

ILLUSTRATION — I use the Internet to pay many of our bills. We have an account with the Meridian Credit Union and can transfer money from the account to many of our utilities and charge cards. So, say for instance, when my power bill comes in, I go online and transfer the required amount from the MCU to Norfolk Power. Once the money is transferred, I can't transfer it back. It is a completed transaction! For the Christian, our transfer is also a completed transaction with God.

We have been transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son, Jesus.

So, what good is God? These two verses nicely answer that question and there is so much more that can be said about what God is doing for me and for you.

Can you repeat this passage from Colossians putting in your own name?

He [God] has delivered YOUR NAME from the domain of darkness and transferred YOUR NAME to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom YOUR NAME has redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Wow! that is refreshing news and most worthwhile to hold on to.

Well, for people who are committed to a church like this one, it may seem like a rhetorical question to ask "What good is God?" We should have already come to a conclusion about that.

But the question brings out what Paul describes in verses 13 and 14 about the work of God.

So, now, we turn our attention from the work of God to the walk of the child of God.

About walking

In verse 10, Paul expresses his desire for the Colossians that they would "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding"—this seems like a lot of stuff going on in the head—knowledge, wisdom, understanding.

It's all good stuff, but it is not, as they say, "where the rubber hits the road." That knowledge, wisdom and understanding is designed to have the effect that we "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord."

That is what we are called to do—walk in a way that shows we belong to Him.

Paul used the same images of darkness and light and walking when he wrote to the church in Ephesus:

- 6 *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.*
 7 *Therefore do not become partners with them;*
 8 *for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.*
Walk as children of light
 9 *(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),*
 10 *and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. (Ephesians 5v6-10)*

What does it mean to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” and “Walk as children of light”?

Well, both of the passages in Colossians and Ephesians have short but important descriptors.

so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him (Colossians 1)

Walk as children of light . . . and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. (Ephesians 5)

No surprise there—we are to try to understand what is pleasing to Him and actually be pleasing to Him.

You know, for the Christian, how we live is not about what pleases us but, rather about what pleases God. God will bless and delight us if we are open to that. But our lives should be directed to bless God and delight him. That comes first.

Walking

Some of us have required knee surgery. Some have stiff joints. Talk of walking might carry our thinking back to younger years when it was a delight to go for a vigorous walk.

Of course, you should know that when Paul writes “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,” he’s not talking about a physical walk.

Talk of “walking” and “paths” describe a whole approach to life.

My life verse is from Psalm 16v11: *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

The “path” is not a trail in the woods. It is a direction in life and a way of living.

So it is when we read about our “walk.” It’s a way of describing how we are living.

What does the walk look like?

As Paul prays for these believers in Colossae, he gives a description of that their lives would look like when they are walking in a way that pleases God.

1. First, they would be *“bearing fruit in every good work”*

Do you think that it pleases God when we are producing good fruit?

In verse 6, Paul had already talked about the gospel *“bearing fruit.”* The gospel is good news. Here, he is talking about good works.

We need always to keep in view that we are not saved by our good works but, rather are saved in order to serve through good works. Our Lord Jesus did good through healing and other miracles. The early Christians were recognized because they did good unto others.

The sharing good news combined with doing good works is a very good combination and would be part of walking in a manner that pleases our Lord.

2. Second, they would be increasing in the knowledge of God.

How do we increase in our knowledge of God?

Well, let me ask another question: How do you come to better know a person?

I can think of two ways. You can gather information about the person and then you can meet with the person.

Isn't that the way to increase in our knowledge about God? Gather information. Read the Scriptures. Read His words to you. Immerse yourself in the Word of God. Then spend time talking with Him. Pray and then listen. Listen and then pray. Both prayer and Bible reading are ways of hearing from God and increasing in knowledge about Him.

ILLUSTRATION — I have been following a series of talks about church revitalization. The speaker, Thom Rainer, says that in a wide study of American churches—and he has gathered information of different sorts from about one quarter of the churches in the USA—Rainer says that one of the conditions for revitalization to occur is when the leaders and people are committed to prayer and Bible study.

Do we want to see Tyrrell Baptist Church revitalized? Let's increase in our knowledge of God by spending quality time with Him!

3. Third, Paul sees them as being “strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might”

You know from experience that when you go for a walk it uses up physical energy. When we walk, we simply need power to keep moving along a path—don't we?

Sometimes in our Christian lives, we do things by our own power. Well, when we are talking about doing physical tasks, we need to be strengthened by nourishment from food and water. Then we can carry out physical tasks.

Let's remember, this walk is about your whole person—heart, soul, mind and strength. It has a spiritual component. We simply need God's power—empowerment by the Holy Spirit—to carry on the type of walk and to do the works that God would have us do in His service.

It is my prayer, when I'm engaged in activities—whatever type they are—to ask God for wisdom and strength to carry out what needs to be done. It is a simple prayer but it reminds me to look to God for what He alone can provide.

4. Fourth, the strengthening with all power will contribute to our endurance and foster patience with joy.

Walking in a manner worthy of the Lord is not just a “Sunday only” thing. It is 24/7 and seven days a week. It's that and it is long term as well. I walk our dog briskly for about 2 kilometres on the abandoned railway trail north of the Queensway. This is good but think of the Christian walk being more like a trek from the Atlantic coast right across the country to the Pacific coast.

The Christian life requires endurance. It is all-day, every day and all life long.

But it also requires patience. There will be stops and starts and obstacles and delays. There will probably be times when we might say, “*It shouldn't be like that*” thinking that, because it is a walk that God has called us to, it should go smoother.

God grant us, by His power, that we have persevering endurance and ample patience.

Note that it is not patience with grumbling, but with joy—Holy Spirit granted joy.

When I encounter a Christian whose life is not marked by joy, my guess is that he or she is not enjoying their walk the Lord. I feel fairly confident saying that because of observation—observing the lives of others and observing my own life.

Take another look at Psalm 16v11: *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

When we are enjoying our walk with the Lord, a natural response will be to thank Him for what He has done for us and what He is doing day by day.

This has been Paul's prayer for the believers at Colossae.

I want to remind you of the way we have to look at many Bible passages, especially those in the new Testament. Some words speak about our POSITION in Christ. Some words speak about our PRACTICE as Christians.

This passage of Colossians 1v9-14 presents both things that affect us directly.

Paul's Prayer Presents
our POSITION
in *"the kingdom of his beloved Son"*
and
our PRACTICE
"to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord"

In closing, I want to give you a suggestion to help in making choices while you are engaged in this walk called "the Christian life." I'll point your attention to a book entitled *"In His Steps"* by Charles Monroe Sheldon. It's a classic and perhaps you have already read it.

It was first published in 1896 and has sold more than 30,000,000 copies. With that, it ranks as one of the best selling books of all time.

The full title of the book is *"In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?"*

And that is the key question: *What Would Jesus Do?*

If we want to walk in a manner pleasing to Him, we should be continuously asking the question, *"What Would Jesus Do?"*

Sometimes, we might get it wrong but we're more likely to get it right if we make decisions, have attitudes and take actions that reflect the life of our Lord.