

MESSAGES AT TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH

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THE DIVINE PATTERN FOR BLESSING

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:1-18.

Text: Col. 1:9-12.

Intro: In any work of God, in the establishing of churches, there are many things that are absolutely essential. Two of them are mentioned early in the Church's history, and they keep recurring throughout the Word of God. Cf. Acts 6:4. This meant it was important for the Apostles to give priority to 1) the Word of God and to 2) prayer, but it also meant that in this they were to be leaders and examples to the people of the Church. If these two things are to have priority in the Church, they must be first in the lives of the leaders and the people day by day!

Paul has emphasized this in the prayer recorded in Col. 1:9-12 ff. This is God's pattern for the Church's blessing - the model, the plan, the guide, the direction the Church must take, the basic characteristics of a Church that is to see God's blessing. All must be centered in prayer and the Word of God.

And so as we look at our text we see first of all:

I. THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER (Col. 1:9)

Obviously it is God who moves

us to pray, The the Spirit of God who enables us to pray, who shows us how to pray, and who keeps us praying, but note: Paul's praying for the Colossian Church began the very day he first heard about them! and his praying had continued. He had addressed the Father on their behalf, and his praying had been motivated by God-given desires for their spiritual growth and blessing as well as for the glory of God.

All of this points to one thing which we must get in our hearts this morning. It is this: BLESSING IN THE CHURCH COMES FROM GOD ALONE - AND IT IS GOD'S PLAN TO GIVE BLESSING IN ANSWER TO PRAYER!

Oh, let us pray, and continue to pray!

II. THE BASIC REQUEST (Col. 1:9)

Paul has not been asking the Lord to do many things for the Colossian Church. He has been asking the Lord to do just one thing. and you have it in v. 9.

It has to do with the Word of God because that is the only place you will find the will of God.

But he is not talking here just about the will of God as it relates to our lives each day. HE IS PRAYING ABOUT THE GREAT PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE WORLD AND IN THE CHURCH. He has

in mind what the Lord was thinking about when He said,
 "For I came down from heaven,
 not to do mine own will, but
 the will of him that sent me"
 (John 6:38).

This is what was behind the request that the Lord included in the Model Prayer:

"Thy will be done in earth,
 as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10b).

Paul teaches us in Eph. 1:11¹² that we are "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory."

That is what we need to know - and to know it thoroughly, increasingly, and with the "spiritual understanding" which only God can give.

The Church does not chart its own course. The Church is to be concerned with the purpose of a Sovereign God who has called us to Himself for the accomplishing of His will. Nothing else will have God's blessing. Nothing else glorifies God. Nothing else will delight and satisfy the people of God.

That will is revealed in the Word. We are responsible to know it and to know it well. There will be aspects of it that run contrary to

^{our way}
 contrary of thinking. There will be things about God's glorious will that we will not be able to fully understand or explain, but we must know it! No child of God will be excused for his ignorance. It is in the Word - what God is doing, most certainly, unfailingly. We must fit in with what He is doing. How glorious this is! And this is the foundation of all blessing.

And so this is basically how we need to be praying for each other. There really is no more important prayer requests in all of the Bible.

But what follows? Why is this so important? Let us look secondly at

II. THE FIRST PURPOSE FOR THIS REQUEST (Col. 1:10a).

BC - 2/1/81 pm

Three Important Doctrines

Matt. 15: 1-20

Intro: The opposition to the Lord's ministry. The way in which men rebel against the truth of God. They will work around it, or deny it, or ignore it.

Three doctrines are emphasized here:

- Two have to do with the scribes and Pharisees - as well as the disciples.
- The third was spoken to the disciples alone.

The problem in this experience with the disciples was the question of offense. See v. 12. Obviously the scribes and Pharisees were offended. Should the Lord back down, or not?

What are the truths?

- 1) The depravity of man, or the sinfulness of the human heart.
- 2) The authority of Scripture.
- 3) The sovereignty of God in salvation.

Let us look briefly at each one.

I. The depravity of man.

The scribes and the Pharisees had

every opportunity to know what the scriptures taught. Cf. Psa 14 for example. Also Isa 53:6.

They also should have known the remedy: Isa 53, the types of the Law, the Passover. The faith of Abraham.

Yet in spite of this they:

- 1) Set aside Scripture.
- 2) Established their own rules.
- 3) Set up human authority.

Their cleansing for divine worship had nothing to do with God, but rested solely on their own works. Admittedly recognizing their sins, they rejected the grace of God, and taught that man is not totally depraved.

This is our problem today. We believe that there is still some good in man, and that man still has the power within him to decide on his own salvation. Man will try all kinds of remedies, all attempting to touch the inside from the outside, unwilling to recognize and admit that the heart is the problem.

II. The authority of Scripture.

Isn't it interesting that the Lord did

not discuss this point with them? Instead, he shows them what had led them to this false position. It was their treatment of THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE which in turn had been brought about by the desire for money. Cf. 1 Tim. 6:10. How amazing this is! Their authority was greater. Our Lord does not say that the people requested this, but that the scribes and Pharisees taught it.

It is surely one of the clearest indications of where a person stands with the Lord when you see how they treat the Word of God.

III. The alarm of the disciples (Matt. 15:12).

This was after the Lord had openly opposed the scribes and Pharisees. See vv. 10, 11. The Lord was speaking the truth. Perhaps the disciples even then realized that it would only lead to trouble to oppose the established religion.

But we cannot hold back on the truth regardless of what the error might be, or regardless of the consequences! The glory of God is involved and so is the salvation

of men. The Word of God is our only authority - and the Lord will stand behind His Word.

It is difficult to know all that was in the hearts of His disciples when they asked the question in v. 12.

IV. The Lord's response - the third doctrine: the sovereignty of God in salvation. Cf. vv. 13, 14.

And see the great assurance that the Lord displays, and the great peace He has!

Salvation is not a human work, but God's work. Look back into Scripture: It did not even originate at man's request. It has been planned by God from all eternity!

But there are counterfeiters, hypocrites - and it seems that the Lord is saying here that they can be known by their rejection of the Word of God.

See the Lord's amazing instructions to His disciples in v. 14 - both for the scribes and Pharisees, as well as their followers. They all were spiritually blind, and that was the reason they could not see. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:14.

How does the passage end?

V. The Request of the Disciples, and the Lord's answer (vv. 15-20).

It ~~is~~ was a truth which they did not understand, but they did not reject it. Instead, they sought the Lord's help in understanding it.

Concl: See page in Col. 1:9.

Let me ask you to do two things:

- 1) ~~Always accept~~ everything that you find in the Bible.
- 2) Whatever you do not understand, take it to the Lord. That may involve talking to others who do understand it, reading books, studying Church History.

What about particular redemption, or limited atonement?

Let me tell you how I came to understand it. Respect for Dr Johnson after hearing that he was teaching it. Began to read the Scriptures, and books and to face questions I had never faced before.

and what did I find? I found that this was the teaching of Scripture. It meant more to me than my position at CD or my reputation. I have greater peace than ever before.

and rejoice more in the glory of God!

I stand wholeheartedly on these three great truths.

- the depravity of man
& man's inability to change it.
- the absolute authority of Scripture
- the complete sovereignty of God in salvation.

I know some of you have questions lots of questions. That's why I want to teach you - and keep on learning myself.

Spiritual Ministry

Ex. 18:7-27

Intro: Is this plan suggested by Jethro to be followed? Many have said, no! How can we tell?

- 1) By the fact that Jethro had turned to the Lord.
- 2) Because it itself it is spiritually sound.
- 3) Because this is what the Lord ordered in Num. 11:14-17.
- 4) Because of its similarity to other passages:
 - a) Col. 1:9-10.
 - b) 1 Sam. 12:23, 24.
 - c) 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.
- 5) Because these are the very things which the Lord emphasized with His disciples.

What is the plan?

I. A spiritual leader must be a man of prayer (Ex. 18:19).

He will not only pray himself, but he will pray for his people with his people and teach his people to pray.

Think of the place this had in our Lord's life

note the references Paul makes to prayer.

This was what impressed our Lord

about John the Baptist. Cf. Luke 11:1.

Cf. devotional reading, like Power Through Prayer, the writings of the Reformers, and the Puritans, and godly men of all ages.

II. A spiritual leader must be a teacher of the Word.

He is really a man of one Book!
He goes to the Word for:

- 1) His doctrine
- 2) His way of living.
- 3) His service.

The Word of God contains it all. The Church has moved away in all three of these areas! We avoid doctrine like the plague -- and yet doctrine (God, Christ, man, salvation, sanctification, service, the coming of the Lord) -- all are the foundation of everything else in our lives.

Go through our bookstores and see what is being emphasized about Christian living -- how man is exalted, how Christ is simply brought along for support, how holiness is rarely mentioned!

What is the Lord's work -- building large churches, occupying all of our people's times, or is it building saints and seeking sinners?

We need to get back to the Word.

which is just as up-to-date as it ever was, and needs to be followed.

III. A spiritual leader must, under God, produce his own help. Cf. Ex. 18:21.

Jethro listed 4 qualifications. It is interesting to compare this with other lists in Scripture.

A. "Able men" - or stable men, like those described in Eph. 4:14.

These are men like God commanded Joshua to be in Joshua 1:1-9.

B. "Fear God" - men who obey God, love Him, trust Him, and yet fear Him. Pleasing God is their one aim; displeasing Him their fear.

C. "men of truth," men characterized by the Word, and faithful to it. They are not at all impressed by the opinions of men when they are contrary to the Word.

D. "Hating covetousness." They do not serve to get, but to give.

A verse we seem to have lost sight of: "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Mt. 10:8b).

See also 1 Tim. 6:10.

Concl: This is God's plan. This must be our emphasis. Getting back to God's way will restore God's blessing to the Church.

THREE GREAT PRIORITIES
or
THE REASON PAUL WROTE 1 TIMOTHY
1 Timothy 3:14-16

Intro:

Note the urgency that is apparent in what Paul says. It was important enough to necessitate a visit. But, just in case he was delayed for any reason, time was so important in this matter that Paul felt compelled to write. And, obviously, his compulsion was from the Holy Spirit.

A careful reading of these three verses will reveal that there was one reason why Paul was writing, and that reason had to do with Timothy himself. But, in dealing fully with that reason, Paul found it necessary to deal with three great priorities -- all involving Timothy:

- 1) The priority for Timothy.
- 2) The priority for the Church.
- 3) The priority of the Word of God.

Let them be expressed as follows:

- I. THAT WHICH MUST BE TIMOTHY'S GREATEST CONCERN -- HIS PRIORITY (1 Tim. 3:15a).

"Oughtest" = must, a necessity imposed upon him by divine appointment.

His behaviour here speaks of his life, his walk, his conduct. And note that it is not his behaviour before the world, but his behaviour before the Church. Timothy as a servant of the Lord could not live one way and expect other believers, especially those under his ministry, to live another way. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:12. See also our Lord's denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees in Matt. 23:3. Look at Rom. 2:21 ff.

Paul speaks of the Church as "the house of God," i.e., the place where God is now pleased to dwell and to make Himself known to the world.

- II. THE CHURCH'S PRIMARY MINISTRY (1 Tim. 3:15b).

Paul uses two terms to describe what the Church is. It is "the pillar and ground of the truth."

By "pillar" he means:

- 1) That which makes and keeps the Word of God prominent.
- 2) That which supports the Word as being true.
- 3) That which declares for the Word of God supreme, absolute, final authority.

By "ground" Paul means that the Church sees to it that

those within are firmly established in the Word.

So the Church has nothing more important to be concerned with than the Word of God -- its authority and its teaching.

But all of this has a purpose related to what Paul began to say to Timothy about his life. Now it becomes apparent what that purpose is:

III. THE TRUTHS GREATEST THEME, or THEMES (1 Tim. 3:16).

The word of God is concerned pre-eminently with "godliness." This is really a letter dealing with "godliness." See 2:2, 10 (same root, slightly different word); 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11. This is a word which speaks of behaving properly or reverently toward God. It is piety. The purpose of "godliness" is not to make ourselves appear holy to men, or acceptable to men, but to see to it that our lives are acceptable to God!

What an order! "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." What is the answer? Note two things:

- 1) The answer is in the Word.
- 2) The answer is Christ.

Note the meaning of the six statements that are made about Christ, and all who are involved in these statements.

- 1) "He who was manifest in the flesh."
- 2) "Justified in the Spirit."
- 3) "Seen of angels."
- 4) "Preached unto the Gentiles."
- 5) "Believed on in the world."
- 6) "Received up into glory."

Concl: Could anything be clearer for us as a church? We must be godly -- godly so as to please God. There is no other way except through the ministry of the Word which in turn points us to the One Who came as a man, suffered and died, was received back into heaven -- all for the purpose of making us a godly people.

It has to be seen in the leaders first of all.