**Worthy of The Lord**

***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 increasing—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.*

***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****being 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. (Colossians 1:3-14, ESV)*

 The church of Christ is called to live a life worthy of Him.

 Greetings in the Lord, as we start a new sermon series today on the lifestyle of the church (meaning its members). God has called His church to be different than all other gatherings of people. How? Different by its values, its dealings with people, its awareness and its faith expression. We are going to see more of those differences in the coming four weeks, with the hopes that each message will further clarify our minds. The purpose of today’s specific message is to understand just why the Apostle Paul prays for the Colossian church. My hope is that through the explanations given, that we will better understand as to what that worthy life is that the Apostle expects from (us) believers. Again, Christ’s church is called to live a life worthy of Him.

 In order to live a God-pleasing life, we must understand what Jesus has done for us and then apply that practically. It is easy to say that we need to live a life worthy of the Lord. Without understanding the root of that statement, however, our conviction (our driving force behind our actions) will be weak. Thus, let us review by looking at the Apostle’s doctrine of what has happened to each believer in Christ, who is also a member of the Lord’s church.

 The Apostle says that he is praying and giving thanks to God for the Colossians. Why? There are multiple reasons: first and foremost is their faith in Jesus Christ. Then, their love for the brothers and sisters (fellow Christians/church members), and then their anticipation of Christ’s Final Return. The faith elements just listed were received through the preaching of Epaphras, and that faith is already bearing fruit, according to Paul. What does the Colossian church still need, if they already believe all the above? They need the understanding of God’s will; wisdom and spiritual comprehension; a lifestyle built upon the foundation of God. They need to have an attitude that is always after pleasing God; they need to be strengthened by God’s Power (thru the Spirit); they need patience and longsuffering. They need to be thankful for the faith granted to them and to realize that God has given them the inheritance of the saints in light. They’ve got to realize that they have been transferred to the kingdom of the Son of God from the previous domain of darkness. They need to understand that they already have freedom/redemption in Christ through His blood, which is the forgiveness of sins. It is not that they didn’t know all the above, but rather that they needed constant reminding, since this world has always been working against the kingdom of Christ. In a word, the above are the major categories of the expected beliefs and convictions of the church by (the Apostle and) God.

 This is just like any company that has a motto and core values that it expects people to know and to follow. Perhaps the motto of the company is, “To make people happy.” Perhaps its core values will be something like this: “A happy man brings happiness – do not enter work with a glum face!” Perhaps one of the values is, “It is forbidden to get upset within the walls of our building; if you are upset, please stay or go home.” Or “Happiness is the best medicine – if you feel sick, either stay home, or enter work with a smile.”

 The church’s motto is clear: “First and foremost is salvation in Christ.” Or “Jesus said, ‘Come to me you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.’” Then you would have value statements that would flow out of the main motto or mission statement. Once the goal of every believer is clear, the individual core values flow out of that. A church becomes a church when its teachings are accepted by the individual members, as well as when the latter serve, become examples and witnesses for Christ.

 Here, it is important to say that in this world, we are all on the way; we must not expect that anyone has reached perfection in the church. Having said the latter, however, it is the expectation of the Church to have all the members share the same faith (in Christ.) It may be that we are not individually living perfect lives, but perfect faith, which is that focused on Christ and trusting in his salvation is a requirement to be a member of the church of Jesus. This is why we require an expression of faith (a testimony) from each membership candidate.

 Therefore, the first proof of a Christian’s identity is their expressed faith, both in words and deeds. So, as we meditate further on this message, let us remember that the difference between us believers and unbelievers become more evident when we put into practice our understood faith. Again, the church of Jesus Christ is called to live a life worthy of the Lord. May God help us to remain faithful to Him alone. The Lord bless you all. Amen.