Series: That You May Know God's Love

The Transforming Love of God - How it works -(part 2)

Colossians 1:9-14

Introduction:

In the month of February we began to focus our attention of the concept of God's love for us.

The Apostle Paul prayed that we may know the love of God in its fullness.

Introduction:

We saw together that God's love is a pursuing love, a compelling love and a transforming love.

We have learned that God's love transforms us in 4 primary ways.

First, God transforms who we are when we are born again.

Second, God transforms what we believe about everything.

Third, God then transforms how we live.

Fourth, God transforms what we pursue.

This is not a one-time process through this 4 step cycle.
God continues to transform us in these ways as we journey through this part of our life with God.

Ephesians 2:10 describes this process with the words "we are His workmanship".

The ultimate purpose of this work of transformation is to make us more and more like Jesus in every way and to lead us to the pursuit of God's Kingdom and Righteousness above everything else.

This transformation is a work from the inside out.
The Holy Spirit who comes to dwell within us when we are born again leads this transformation process.

The goal is to bring the soul and body of the believer into alignment with the will of God.

This transformation is a result of our relationship with God which we are given when we become His children. This transformation is a work of God alone but it does require our cooperation, and/or our willingness.

In Ephesians 2 we saw last week

two important words.

The words are grace and faith.

Our experience of transformation
by God's love is a result of God's grace
combined with our faith.

Philippians 2:13 gives us the perfect definition of grace.

Philippians 2:13

13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Grace is the desire to do God's will ("to will").
Grace is also the power to do God's will ("to work").
Grace is given in these two stages.

Once we experience the first stage of grace which is to receive from the Holy Spirit a desire to want to do God's will we must then chose faith.

Biblical faith is a trust which leads one to obedient action.

So once we are given the desire we then begin to move in the direction of the desire in trusting obedience. Our faith is in Jesus and in the truth that God's will is best for us.

Our faith is a trust that God will supply the power to carry out the obedience.

We cannot desire God's will nor do God's will on our own.
We depend upon God's grace alone.
Transformation occurs as God gives grace and it is made complete by our choice of obedient faith.

In our desire to look at this concept more closely we are considering how this process of transformation works in four keys areas of God's will for us.

- God's will concerning our salvation
- God's will concerning our character development
- God's will concerning our overcoming sin
- God's will concerning our serving in His Kingdom

In each of the four areas we are considering the process of how grace and faith leads to our being transformed. We must continue to remember that all of this work of transformation is accomplished through the relationship of love between God and us.

The primary tool used by the Holy Spirit to reveal to us God's will is God's Word. We should therefore expect to see in God's Word these four areas revealed clearly as God's will. The Holy Spirit takes the Word and uses it to create in us an understanding of God's will and a desire to obey His will.

Last week we considered the transformation which occurs as we receive God's gift of salvation.
Today we consider the second example:
God's will in transforming our character to be like Jesus.

In Colossians 1:9-14 we see in Paul's prayer how the principles of grace and faith are to work together to transform a believers walk or character.

Colossians 1:9-14

o 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,

Colossians 1:9-14

10 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;

Colossians 1:9-14

11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

Colossians 1:9-14

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Colossians 1:9-14

13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

Colossians 1:9-14

14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

In Verse 9 Paul prays
for the first part of God's grace.
He prays for the believers to be filled
with the knowledge of God's will.
He further defines this knowledge as
all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Grace starts by giving us the desire to do God's will.

As we are filled with knowledge, with spiritual wisdom and understanding we are receiving "the want to", "the desire to" to do God's will.

This desire of grace must be met with the response of trusting obedience.

We must begin to act upon the desire in faith.

Paul therefore prays in verse 10 the word "So". He is saying we are filled with knowledge of God's will "So" or for a purpose.

It is not just to gain knowledge.

It is to lead to a "So", an action of faith.

He prays "so you may".
 "May" indicates choice.
 The knowledge provides the desire which urges us to the action in faith.
We, however, must chose to act in faith.
 The desire given urges us to begin to walk in God's will.

Paul describes this walk first by telling us what it is like. It is a walk in a "manner worthy of the Lord". Worthy is defined by God's will.

He also tells us how this walk is motivated.

It is a walk that desires to be "pleasing to the Lord in all respects".

Pleasing in all respects is defined by God's will.

This worthy walk, which is pleasing to God, is blessed by God to bear fruit in every good work.

Obedient faith is more than desire and talk.

It leads to actions of good works blessed by God.

As we begin to walk in the direction of God's will, with a motivation in line with God's will, the result is that we experience an increase in the knowledge of God's will.

In other words when we receive from the Holy Spirit, through God's Word, an understanding of God's will it urges us to act upon it, knowing it is how God desires us to live. It also enables us to be pleasing to God.

As we act upon this grace given knowledge, we grow, by experience, to understand God's will in this area at a deeper level.

In verse 11 Paul's prayer reveals the second aspect of Grace.

When we begin to move towards God's will, we experience the power to accomplish God's will.

Paul describes it by the word "strengthened".

As we chose to obey God in faith we are strengthened with all the power we need to obey.

The power is God's power, described as "glorious might".

This power enables us to fully obey God's will.

Whatever the action or inaction that is required to obey God's will, we are strengthened to accomplish it.

Paul then reveals the work that is done in us concerning our character. In the obedience to God's will, we grow in steadfastness, patience, joy, and thanksgiving.

We grow in the understanding that God has qualified us to share in the inheritance of Jesus with all of the saints.

Developing character to be like Jesus, according to God's will, is not merely an individual experience.

Those who are growing in character grow to appreciate more and more the joy and thanksgiving of being a part of God's family.

We know that we are all qualified to belong to God's family the same way. Verse 13-14 describes again our salvation experience with the concepts of being delivered from the domain of darkness, being transferred (new birth) into the kingdom of Jesus, being redeemed, and forgiven in Christ.

We all come to God the same way; by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone.

We all grow in character to be like Jesus the same way.

It is the process of grace and faith in the relationship of God's love that transforms us.

Application

Have you experienced salvation by God's grace as described in Paul's prayer?

(Delivered, transferred, redeemed, forgiven)

God's grace gives you the desire.
You simply trust in Jesus and
God transforms you making you
His child

Application

Are you growing in the understanding of His will?

Trust and obedience is what causes this growth.

Application

Are you becoming more like Jesus in character?

(More steadfast, patient, joyful, thankful)

It comes as a result of walking in grace by faith.

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