

Sermon Title: A Life Worthy of the Lord

Sermon by Fred Oaks

Week of November 21, 2010

Sermon Based Small Group Discussion Guide

Icebreaker

Big Idea: God desires all people to live a godly life. Christians often find that God uses situations to mature us as believers to speak his purpose into lives of others.

Sermon Text:

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,[a] 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you[b] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

– Colossians 1:9-20

In this first chapter of Colossians, what conclusion can we draw from the words of the Apostle Paul? On the surface, it seems like he is asking us to do something impossible. After all, who can honestly live “A Life Worthy of the Lord?” What the apostle wants us to realize is a the need for consistency between our behavior as Christians and the truth we claim to believe. It’s clear that Paul wishes desperately to see the gospel expand and bear much fruit. And Paul understood that this would not happen if Christians professed one thing and lived another. So the apostle’s words are a kind of moral incentive exhorting Christians to live lives which are in accordance with the gospel and the Lord himself.

According to Paul, truth is revealed by the way we live, not just our thoughts. But the information age causes a problem: we think that because we’ve learned about something that we are living it. We want to gather data about prayer, but we fail to pray! But Paul reminds us that it’s the actual actions of our lives that proclaim the truth that we know. **As Christians, the stakes are high, because we are representing no less than Jesus himself!**

There are lots of reasons why people are rejecting the faith. Here’s the number one reason. People are rejecting the Bible and its truths because our lives are so ineffective. The Apostle Paul in the text challenges us to live “A Life Worthy of the Lord.”

1. When was the last time you received a letter/card that really cheered you up?
2. Why do you think Paul takes time to write a letter to the Colossians (strangers), a group of people he never met?
3. Have you felt others (i.e. parents, employers, family, friends) had expectations for you that seem impossible? Please share how that made you feel and what steps you took.

4. Do you have more endurance and patience as evidence of an increasing measure of God's strength at work in you as described in verses 11-12?

5. Consider what Paul writes in verse 13 , “ . . .for he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness.” Does this give you a surge of hope? Can you relate to the need to be delivered from spiritual darkness? Specifically, how can we pray for you?

6. In what ways does your life reflect joy and thanksgiving to God who has qualified you to share the inheritance with the saints in light and redeemed you by forgiving your sins?

Pray together as a group for the courage to face areas in which you need to grow and for God's grace to be shared in/through your life and the life of our church. Thank God for the blessings associated with seeking “A Life Worthy of the Lord.”

Taking it Home

1. What is one specific way you can improve your prayer life this week?

2. To whom can you write an encouraging letter sometime during the next week?

3. What specific steps might you take to strengthen your faith in Christ this week?

4. What specific step might you take to accept the spiritual adventure and legacy God has planned for you?

Prayer Requests and Praises: