***Joshua and Caleb

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-080***

Please open the Word of Truth today to Colossians 1:3-8, as we continue in our subject of "Prayer for the Colossians," increment number 14.

"For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two edge-sword, and piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequately equipped for every good work. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth. For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope. For you have been born-again, not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable; that is, through the living and abiding Word of God. Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but, wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. But grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

We have indicated, as we have considered Colossians 1:9-14, that all that a human being should be in a world dominated by Satan and his evil influence is summed up in Isaiah 11:2, where we have a preview of what God the Father would provide for the humanity of His Son, to enable Him to live victoriously in the devil's world: "And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and strength; the spirit of knowledge; and, the fear of the Lord. We have gone extensively into each one of these. What makes a functional human being, first of all, is that he is spiritually regenerated by God the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. And he lives his life in temporal fellowship with God the Father. He should also have God's mind of wisdom, which means the capacity to apply doctrine in life. He should furthermore possess understanding to be able to discern the truth about people and his experiences. He should have the divine viewpoint counsel of God the Holy Spirit guiding him in his choices. He should have the strength from God enabling him to serve effectively with divine good works. He should have a knowledge of Bible doctrine stored in his human spirit for divine viewpoint in his attitudes. And finally, he should have the fear of the Lord because of God's Holy character. That is a reverential awe, a deep respect in his presence. The Hebrew word means a dread of the Lord.

These seven qualities, that enabled the humanity of Christ to function, are the seven qualities that enable us to fulfill what Paul is talking about here in Colossians 1:9, about our being filled with something that is lacking. When we have this, we are functional human beings. I remind you again that the world about us (most of the people you know) are dysfunctional human beings. They're that by the fact that they're not born-again spiritually. We are governed a great deal in our lives by people who are going to spend eternity in the lake of fire. However, believers who are functional should be aware that sometimes they must bear the effects of the actions and the hatreds of dysfunctional believers.

I have an enormous grapevine intelligence system. I didn't put it together. It's a divine provision. And I'm constantly getting information back from people. Many of you sometimes say things in the privacy of your home, and I get the word back as to what you said. I won't tell you how. There are technical matters now that . . . I know about, and I am able to deal with these matters. You say something at a social gathering, and the intelligent network comes back with it with to me. You walk into our office, and you say something, and those sweet-looking secretaries have mental computers that are recording what you say, and that comes back to me, and they gives me the information. So, I'd suggest that you be aware of the fact that dysfunctionality is a profitless game. And I'm well aware of how that can be happening, even to Christians. And the younger you are, the more dysfunctional you are.

People tell me how our young people sit in church. They lean back, sleeping. They are not paying attention. And they are very dysfunctional. It's very wise to realize that you are the most hazardous people in the world, because you're the highest target that Satan has. You have good lives now, but he wants to botch you up before you get going.

Now, we who are believers are surrounded by people who are very dysfunctional in one way or another. And we receive the hatreds of them. And if I were to tell you some of the things that are said about the circle of Berean ministries by people in other groups, you would be appalled, because they are totally not true. And you'd say, "Why would that be?" It's because the devil is active through dysfunctional human beings, and we are the ones who receive the consequences and the suffering that comes from that.

A classic example to illustrate this is Caleb of the Exodus generation who, at 40 years of age, having been freed from slavery in Egypt, was one of the 12 men sent out to reconnoiter the Promised Land of Canaan by Moses, in preparation, at Kadeshbarnea, for their campaign of conquest of that land. When the 12 spies returned, 10 of them advised against attacking the pagans there in Canaan, in spite of God's order to do so, and His promise of victory. This came undoubtedly as a shock to Moses. Numbers 13:27-29: "Thus they told him (the 10), 'We went out. We went into the land where you sent us. And it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.'" They had brought a bunch of grapes back that they had cut off. The thing was so huge (so big), they put it on a pole, and they carried it on the shoulders of two men – it was so heavy. And they brought it back as an example of the fruitfulness of that land.

In verse 28, nevertheless, God was telling us the truth there about the milk and honey, but here's this dysfunctionality coming in: "Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. Amalek is living in the land of the Negev, and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea, and by the side of Jordan." This frightened them terribly.

Verse 31: "But the men who had gone up with him said, 'We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us.' So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, 'The land through which we have gone in spying it out is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size."

Now this indeed was a frightening report. And how they viewed themselves is expressed in the end of verse 33: "We became like grasshoppers in our own sight. So we were in their sight – grasshoppers." These were very big men. These were powerful people." These were pagans of pagans in that land. And the dysfunctionality kicked in with that word "nevertheless," where they said, "God has told us the truth about what kind of a land He was sending us to, but he hasn't told us the truth about the fact that we're going to be able to conquer it, as He has directed us to do."

**Joshua and Caleb**

Now, here are Caleb and Joshua – the minority. These two men gave a positive report, advising that the attacks should continue in accordance with God's command. Numbers 13:30: "Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, 'We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we surely shall surely overcome it." Here is a classic example of a functional group and a dysfunctional group. The majority was totally dysfunctional, as, incidentally, it generally is. You can always count on the majority being wrong, because people are dysfunctional. And when they get together, they reinforce their dysfunctionality. On the other hand, the people who are functional are in a minority, so they're the people who look like the oddballs. How do we look as a church to other people? What kind of a church is this where you walk in, and you see an overhead projector, and the guy gets up, and he talks about Hebrew and Greek words, and puts stuff on an overhead projector, and expects you to go out and learn the Word of God?

One lady once said, "When I go to church, I don't like to go to school. I want to go there to be inspired." And she was the shallowest person I ever met. She had no substance; no depth; and, nothing to her. Why? Because there was no doctrine in her. She was a shallow little empty nothing. And when she said that, she wanted to be entertained. Well you do. You go to church for two things: for entertainment; or, for instruction. There is nothing else. And don't get mad at me when I warn you that what goes out there is mostly entertainment. I'm nice enough not to name churches by name. I let you do that. But I'm telling you what is out there in the general Christian community, where there's lots of sweetness-and-light, and smiling, and shallowness, because people, unless they know the two key words of Colossians 1:9, are almost certain as believers to be dysfunctional.

So, here are Caleb and Joshua out in left field by themselves. God had a great deal of respect for Caleb, as he did for Joshua. In Numbers 14:24, we read, "And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O Lord, are in the midst of this people, for You, O Lord, are seen eye-to-eye why the cloud stands before them, and You go before them in a pillar cloud by night," and so on. These people would not go into the land, and Moses is telling them: "God's going to be there, and He's going to stand by us." And the Word of God said that Caleb had a different spirit about him. God says, "My man Caleb has a different spirit about him." What did He mean by that? What He meant by that was that this man was functional.

Numbers 14:24: "But my servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit, and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered. And his descendants shall take possession of it." God says, "My functional man Caleb is not only going to be blessed himself (he's going to get to enter this Promised Land), but his descendants are going to be there and prosper as well. The two positive-report spies were functional believers. The 10 negative report spies were dysfunctional believers.

Now, because the people of Israel themselves, as you know (that slave, Exodus generation), were, by and large, spiritually a dysfunctional lot, they listened, naturally, to the majority spies' advice, and they refused to obey the minority report advice to attack the inhabitants on the basis of the promise of God – that they could take the Promised Land as per the command of God. And it's very hard for us to imagine anybody doing that. But don't sell your old sin nature short. It's as bad as theirs were. And you and I can be just as dysfunctional.

Deuteronomy 1:26-28: "Yet you are not willing, God says, to go up, but you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God," as Moses speaks here to the people: "And you grumbled in your tents and said, 'Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the land of the Amorites to destroy us. Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying the people are bigger and taller than we are. The cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of Anakim there.'" These were giant people.

Well, they had never learned the axiom that: "the bigger they are, the header of the fall." But that was true here if it ever was true. Why? Because God says, "I'm going to cut these guys off at the knees. All you have to do is form an orderly military campaign, and go for it. And here these 10 spies, spiritually dysfunctional, found a ready hearing with a spiritually dysfunctional society in Israel, and they then refused to obey God, and go up and take the land.

This was a classic example of how often the majority is wrong, and, because most people in society are wrong, you should be very careful about going with what most people think. Stop rearing your children according to what kids are permitted to do. Stop living your life according to the standards of what is out there as the fashion of the moment. This is the very thing the Word of God says we should not do.

Now, Moses himself was horrified by this reaction. Here he has led these people out of the depths of slavery; across the Red Sea, by a marvelous miracle; and, into the wilderness area. Now they've come to the port of entry at Kadeshbarnea, and there it is – that straight road right into the Promised Land, with everything there that God had prepared for them, and these people turned their backs upon God and His promise. He tried to rally the people to follow Caleb and Joshua, but it was in vain.

Deuteronomy 1:29-33: "Then I said to you, 'Do not be shocked, nor fear them. The Lord your God, Who goes before you, will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked, until you came to this place. But for all this, you did not trust the Lord your God, Who goes before you on your, way to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night, and a cloud by day, to show you the way in which you should go." Moses is writing his farewell address to the people of Israel in this book. And he is reviewing the terrible history of the past when they approached Kadeshbarnea for the first time, and how they had seen God's cloud (fire by night, and cloud by day) leading them, and directing them, and how they had seen His miraculous provisions for them.

Now, you try to put yourself in his place, and you shake your head and say, "This has to be madness above madness – that people who had this kind of actual evidence before their eyes would, at this point, turn their back upon God. Don't compliment yourself. You and I have plenty of the same kind of evidence in a different way. And yet when it comes to the crisis point of doing something great and big for God, and casting out, you still want to hang on to some security, other than the promise of the God who says, "I'll always take care of you, and I'll always provide for you. And the more you take care of My business, the more I'll take care of your business."

But Moses' efforts were in vain. Joshua and Caleb were, of course, horrified by the dysfunctional condition of the Israelites in that they would listen to these disoriented men rather than listening to God. Numbers 14:6, "And Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes." This was the oriental expression of great grief. These men were absolutely in sorrow over what was happening. This is a picture of a national action on the part of the nation – on the part of its lower echelon leaderships. And here these people who knew the truth, as you often know the truth, and have eyes to see where our nation is going, and what should be, and what should not be, and you stand helpless, because you see the evil people taking every step that's an evil step, and being frustrated that there's nothing you can do about it. So, you bow in sorrow before God. You have one comfort only – knowing that you are seeing the fulfillment of Scripture in its prophetic area.

I don't have any question anymore, that I used to have, of how can the United States, a nation with a Reformation Christian heritage as its foundation, be part of the antichrist's world. It is falling together every day and every night at breathtaking speed. And it's going to be climaxed very soon. You may count on this national election to give you a major signal of the timetable of God. It'll be a signal that it is now God's purpose to bring a nation rapidly to its total degeneration, or a signal that there might be a time of grace still left to sound off the Word of God, and to prepare our children educationally for their role of rulers in the Millennial Kingdom. So, don't think that we're doing a short-term situation here when we promote Christian education. Our eyes are already on the millennium, and that's where you parents should have your eyes.

Well, Joshua and Caleb pled with these people in vain, that they should ignore the majority report, and go into the land. Numbers 14:7-9" "Joshua and Caleb spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, 'The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us – a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord, and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.'" That's why anybody who's in the military service, and is in harm's way, in a combat situation, or in a hazardous situation, the man who is filled with doctrine in his soul (doctrine stored in the reservoir of his human spirit), which is cycled up to the mentality of the soul, is a man who thinks right in battle. And by that very action, he is under the preserving hand of God.

One of the greatest things you can do to preserve your life, I found, in military situations, is to have yourself oriented intensively to the principles of the Word of God. It has a saving effect, and that's exactly what these people were being told. This was the very reason they would be successful, because they had God's point of view guiding them in what they were doing.

The people of Israel responded to the plea of Joshua and Caleb just the way they do today. What did they do? They listened to this intense, sincere heart-felt speech. Numbers 14:10: "But all the congregation said to stone then with stones." They responded by saying, "Let's kill these guys. We don't want to hear this anymore. We're tired of you telling us that God told us to do this." Now, do you really want to get mad at anyone who tells you that false information is out there, throughout the Christian community, and that false information is being directed to you? Do you think they should have gotten mad at Joshua and Caleb here for saying, "That is false information coming from within our community of believers." And these guys are all believers: They're not in touch with God, and they're leading you astray." Only those who want to be led astray will ever rise up and say, "I'm sick and tired of hearing about what goes on in other groups of Christians."

They rose up to stone them, but notice the rest of this verse: "Then the glory of the Lord appeared in the tent of meaning to all the sons of Israel." Uh oh. Nevertheless, God hasn't told us how bad those people are. We can't make it. Then in comes God. They pushed it until the loving kindness (the grace) of God said, "That's it." God was now so angered by this inexcusable demonstration of dysfunctionality that he declared that no one 20 years of age or older would enter the Promised Land except the two functional spies with the minority report, Joshua and Caleb. The minority was right. That is those of us who know doctrine. And the majority was wrong – those who don't know it, or simply toy around with it.

Deuteronomy 1:34-36, "Then the Lord heard the sound of your words, and He was angry, and took an oath, saying, 'No one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers, except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. He shall see it, and to him and to his sons, I will give the land on which he has set foot, because he has followed the Lord fully." So, the Lord particularly marks out Caleb (and also Joshua) of all this generation. Do you understand what we're saying? Of a million-and-a-half people, at least, two men are going to make it. Of that group that crossed the Red Sea, two men are going to make it into the Promised Land. Now, why are you afraid to be in the minority when you are right, relative to the Word of God? That majority went spiritually crazy, and they quickly responded to the minority report.

Numbers 14:27-30 also deals with this judgment of God: "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? (God says.) I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. Say to them, as I live, says the Lord, 'Just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you. Your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number, from 20 years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun.'"

What a judgment! They said, "Your God is taking us in there to have our children killed. That's why He is doing this." God says, "Oh yeah? Fine. You're worried about your children? Well I'll tell you: "All of your children, 19 years and under, are still under the authority of the priesthood of their father, and they are free of this decision. They're not responsible for this decision. Therefore, they will go into the Promised Land. All those of you 20 years old and up who complained (and every one of you were so dysfunctional that you did) you're going to die in the wilderness. We're going to have the biggest cemetery that the world has ever seen. It's going to stretch out all across the desert. But your children – you're worried about them? They're going to be in the land of milk and honey.

So, be careful if you want to have some flimsy excuse why you should not do what you should do, as per the will of God for you. And one of the flimsiest excuses is their children. More people get mad at our ministry because we deal with their children's sin nature in our lovingkindness, because of our concern for them almost than anything else, and they depart indignant because we have done right, and they do wrong. But God can straighten it all out. I'll guarantee you. In the end, we're going to see who's right and who's wrong.

Consequently, functional Caleb and functional Joshua were promised a blessing. But here's the point. What about them for the next 40 years? These two guys are in the prime of life. They're 40 years old. They're ready to go. And now they've just discovered that for the next 40 years, instead of being able to get into this land; start the agricultural plans they had; start the building of the houses; start the enjoying of the land; and start the spiritual life that God had put together for them in the tabernacle and the whole structure of their worship system, they can't do it. It's bad enough if you happened to live in the generation where a war comes along. Then you have to go into the military service, and if you're qualified, you'll find that a chunk of four years or so (and maybe more) disappears out of your life. And the next time you sit in a college classroom, you look around here, and here are all these yo-yo kids, younger than you are, because you've been sitting on the treadmill for four years. That's bad enough, but for 40 years? And how should he have responded to that?

Number 14:32ff are verses terrible verses. You are going to be in that land, wandering around aimlessly: "But as for you, your corpses shall fall in this wilderness. Your sons shall be shepherds for 40 years in the wilderness. They shall suffer for your unfaithfulness, and your corpses lie in the wilderness, according to the number of days which you sped out the land (they spied it for 40 days), for every day, you shall bury your guilt a year: even 40 years. And you shall know my opposition. I, the Lord, have spoken. Surely this I will do to all this evil generation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness, they shall be destroyed, and there they shall die."

Now, wouldn't it have been better to have believed that God was going to give them the land, and that He would conquer these people, as powerful as they were, and as impressive as their armaments and their fortifications were? Wouldn't it have been better to learn that God is omnipotent, than to have learned it like this – to have gone through a series of dying?

In elderly care facilities, where they have a lot of elderly folks they're caring for, I have found, in my contacts with them, that you will come in someday, and they will say, "Oh, Mary died (some gal living down the hall). Sam died last week. He's gone now." And they're watching each other go. They get up every morning (all of these old folks), and they're looking around: "Who's on the list today, to move to the big old folks' home in the sky. And they never know. But that's what they're doing.

Now here, you have a whole million-and-a-half-people, and two guys know they're safe (and the younger ones from the younger generation). Everybody else – they're looking at one another: "Who's next today? Who are we going to leave behind in the desert this day, buried, as we move around?" And this is what Joshua and Caleb now had to face. God said, "You're going to be the corpses in the wilderness? You will be left behind. And because I said this, it's going to happen." But He said, "As for the men who Moses sent to spy out the land, and who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him, bringing out a bad report concerning the land (these ten dysfunctional spies with the majority report), even those men who brought out the very bad report of the land died by a plague before the Lord." This was so serious with God that these people didn't even get to wander in the wilderness at all. He said, "You gentlemen are first on the list. Adios amigos. This is your day." However, Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, remained alive out of all those men who went out to spy out the land.

**Caleb**

Now, because Caleb was a functional believer operating on the Word of God, he was a man of courage. He was able to stand against a dysfunctional will of the majority. He did not justify them. He did not compromise with them. But Caleb and Joshua had to suffer the consequences of the dysfunctional majority – the same as we in the local church ministry have to suffer the dysfunctional factors of believers today who are not on track. And when they get off-track, which is what Satan wants to do all the time, what happens? We are weakened. We can't do what we are capable of doing; what it is the will of God for us to do; and, what we should be able to do. We have to struggle under stress to do it because we've got dysfunctional people who are not capable of rising to the calling. And it is a thing that none of us is free of. But it only points up how dependent we are upon each other, as these people were dependent. If there was anything they needed to do, it was to say, "Yes, here we are in the wilderness. There are a lot of us. We need to get into this land; get into our subdivisions; and, get things rolling. Let's go it with God. That's the way to do it. But if you're dysfunctional, there's no way that you can do it.

Caleb, you'll notice, did not tone down his message when the threats came his way. Instead he made it clear and more pointed. What he did was let them know that he was absolutely right, and they should listen to him. When pressures come upon a church ministry or upon preachers, they tone down their message. When people don't like what they hear, they make it easy for them. And you would be surprised how much advice I get on things that I should not be talking about; things I should not say; and, things I should not point out to the congregation, because it riles up the people. But I say, "Are they the things they should know? And they say, "Well, yeah, maybe." And I say, "Are they the things that are true?" And they say, "Yeah, maybe." And I say, "Are they things they could get hurt if they don't know? And they say, "Well, yeah, maybe." But nevertheless again.

It is the functional believers who are the giants of God, but they are harassed by the grasshoppers of dysfunctional men. Dysfunctional politicians in Washington make the anti-God, anti-doctrine decisions that functional believers have to live under, and that injure the nation. We suffer the consequence, but our job is to suffer the alarm with courage.

Well, 40 years passed for Caleb. We want to focus on him. 40 years passed for Caleb in this dysfunctional society, and his functionality never diminished. He remained true to God (to the Word of God), while dysfunctional people were dying all around him. And then he noticed something very strange. As the years went by, he noticed that people around him were getting old. They're getting decrepit. They were slowing down. They were breaking down – his contemporaries. But he wasn't. That was very odd. He kept eating that manna which was loaded with vitamins, but so did they. But there was something funny about this. This 40-year-old guy is clicking off the years like everybody else. And the older they get, the younger he gets. He's out there playing tennis every day, and these guys can hardly swim. And this is becoming very strange to him. And he begins to wonder about this. What is happening in the grace of God?

So, for 40 years, this man was true to the Word of God. Do you see what I mean – what doctrine does for you on the physical level, let alone the spiritual. People were dying all around him. Every day he has to help send out the burial detail. And after the conquest, finally, of the land of Canaan (it took about five years), it is time now to divide up the land. And Caleb now is 85 years old, and he goes up to the leader Joshua, and he asks him for the portion that Moses, 45 years before, had agreed to give to Caleb as his family portion when the land was conquered. He now asked for his territory.

Joshua 14:6-11: "Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite said to him, 'You know the word, which the Lord spoke to Moses, the man of God, concerning you and me and Kadeshbarnea. I was 40 years old when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadeshbarnea to spy out the land. And I brought word back to him as it was in my heart. Nevertheless, my brethren, who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear. But I followed the Lord my God fully. So, Moses swore on that day saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance to you, and to your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God fully.' And now, behold, the Lord has let me live, just as he spoke, these 45 years from the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness. And now, behold, I am 85 years old today. I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me. As my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war, for going out and coming in.'"

Now, what on earth is going on? Doctrine in the soul. That's what's going on. Doctrine in the human spirit. That's what's going on. This is what happens to a functional human being. It not only reflects itself spiritually, but it reflects itself in you physically. And here, where people are dying like flies (dropping like flies all around him), this man is holding the line and he says, "I'm 85. That's my chronological age, but my physical age is 40." What a great way to be! It's hard when doctors deal with you, because they keep treating you as 85, and not as what you are. But there was no doubt that they looked at Caleb, and they saw his vitality, and it was the greatest testimony of what happens to a person who's functional in the Word of God. It was magnificent. And everybody undoubtedly must have been awed by this demonstration of the grace of God.

Joshua 14:12: "Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day. For you heard on that day that the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. Perhaps the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out as the Lord has spoken." Now, in heaven's name, do you see what this guy is planning to do? What God told them to do was: "Get rid of the pagans in the land, and get rid of the heathens. It's cancer. It's a spiritual cancer upon the land. If you don't remove it, it's going to come back to haunt you, because it will come back upon your children. They will be led astray if you leave any of these people back in the land. You flush them all out."

Now they had conquered the land. But there were pockets of pagan resistance here and there. What is Caleb doing? Caleb says, "The territory that was assigned to me by Moses still has the Anakim in it" – these people that they were so afraid of. He says, "I am planning an operation, and I want to confirm that this is my territory. I'm planning an operation, and by the help of God, we're going to go in there, and we're going to finish the job, and we're going to remove these people out completely. We're going to obey the doctrine that God gave us in direction on this matter." What an unbelievable thing – an 85 year old general!

"So, Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, for an inheritance. Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, until his day, because he followed the Lord God of Israel fully." Now, how can you follow the Lord God fully? Well, you do meditation? You do yogi? You look within yourself for the great information and the great truth? You listen to the president of the United States? You look for wisdom here or there or everywhere, and it all comes into you? No! He followed the Word of God because he knew doctrine. This is what Jesus, as a 12-year-old boy could demonstrate – the combination that God had given for Him to function in His humanity. He didn't live by his deity. He lived in his humanity like you and I have to in the devil's world, except He was free of a sin nature. That Boy had been taught doctrine. And He was indwelt by the power of the Holy Spirit. That was the winning combination. You've got it yourself, and therefore, when you follow the Word of God, nobody can beat you. You are a winner. And that's why this man's physical condition was so capable that he was out there making new plans. And this was in the view of the fact that Caleb's younger contemporaries around him were planning to retire. Caleb here is planning to begin a new era of greater service to God, with his good health, and his good fortune, and his good financial status.

The functional man of God here is focused on new dreams rather than old memories of achievement. A functional Christian is always focused on new dreams. And he's calling for people for new dreams. But the dysfunctional guy is always looking back to the great times we had here, and the great victories we had here, and they're always looking back to the achievements in the past. Don't let yourself get dysfunctional such that your memories overwhelm your dreams for the future.

Caleb was determined to obey God's mission, and to wipe out those pagans entirely from his territory as God has commanded. And his strength was God's testimony to the favor of God upon him.

In Isaiah 40:31, Isaiah says, "Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run, and not get tired. They will walk, and not become weary." Now, he's not talking about some Olympic athlete here. He's talking about the oldest one of you here today. Those who function on doctrine, and consequently, who live according to those principles, will mount up with wings like eagles. And eagles have long wingspans, and they are powerful. And they will run, and they won't get tired. They will walk, and they will not become weary.

Psalms 92:12-15 adds this: "The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, and will grow like a cedar in Lebanon, planted in the house of the Lord. They will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still yield fruit in old age, and they shall be full of sap, and very green, to declare that the Lord is upright. He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." In his old age, he's going to bear more fruit than he has ever before. That's right. Unless you have this mentality to retire from God's work.

Proper nutrition and exercise today enables more and more people to live functioning lives to 100 years of age, and more. More and more articles are coming out and saying that the human body, because of the way it's constructed, will easily live to 100, even at our age, and, even without our canopy of water over us. People should live to 100. More and more people *are* living to a hundred. But it takes proper nutrition to make up for what is not in the soil anymore (depleted) – the nutrition you don't get from the food. And it takes some very significant kinds of nutrition that the body will metabolize. And it takes that exercise. And the physical condition is going to improve, especially in the person who lives by the Word of God. So, what is God saying? He says, "Never say, "Die," and never stop planning.

Now since the day the apostle Paul heard of the super grace level of spiritual maturity, which was common among the Colossian Christians, and was demonstrated by their mental attitude "agape" love, he earnestly prayed that they would not fall into reversionism and become dysfunctional in God's service. That's what all this is about in Colossians 1:9.

**Fill a Deficiency**

Dysfunctional believers are spiritual casualties in the angelic warfare. They cannot function, therefore, as good soldiers of Christ. What Paul wants to see is the word of doctrine from salvation to rewards in heaven, for divine good service, to spread throughout the vicinity of the Roman Empire in which Colossae is located. They want the full counsel of God to be preached. The means to maintaining functionality as a child of God is expressed in two keywords in Colossians 1:9: "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it (their 'agape' love), we have not ceased to pray for you, and to ask that you be filled." Key word number one is "pleroo" (play-ro'-o). And we've looked at that in detail, and the four basic meanings of that word. There's a great deficiency in the human soul, and this has to be filled in order for a person to be able to attain functionality. He petitions now to God that this void would be filled in the souls of the believers of Colossae. The Colossian Christians need to have a deficiency corrected, so that they would be deeply devoted to something. That's one meaning of the word. To have a certain quality – that's another meaning of the word. To be under the governing influence of something – that's another meaning of the word. They have to have this deficiency corrected. This is an experiential deficiency. Therefore, it can be corrected by proper action a believer. And that's the grace system of perception, which begins here in the local church service when you're receiving instruction by the pastor-teacher gift. And you know how that system works.

**Knowledge**

Today, before we close, we introduce you the second word: "And with the knowledge." This is a significant word that's very tricky, because it's they don't always identify it in the English translation. . . The Greek word is "gnosis" (gno'-sis), G N O S I S. That's the ordinary word for "knowledge" in the Greek language. This is what you learn in school: reading; writing; and, arithmetic. This is where you learn in the perceptive ability of your mind. Doctrine is taught to you. 2 Timothy 4:2 and Titus 1:9 speak about that. You have "gnosis" (knowledge). That's all you have. But if you believe that, and, by an act of faith (Hebrews 4:2), you believe that you say, "Amen, that's true," suddenly that "gnosis" gets transformed into something totally different. "Gnosis" up in your mind is useless. That's the guy who goes to church all his life. He learns this and that, but he's a horrible person, and a terrible Christian. Now we add a little preposition before it, and we have a different word: "epignosis (ep-ig'-no-sis), E P I G N O S I S. That has now intensified that word ("gnosis"). And what has happened is what was just information you had when you said, "Amen, Lord," that get kicked down to the point of contact that you have with God, and that's your human spirit.

Colossians 1:9-10 speaks about this human spirit. Job 32:8 and Romans 8:16 talk about our knowledge of the will of God – the purpose of God in our spirit. The human spirit is informed and filled with God's knowledge.

Now, this is a storage bin of truth. And you will not store false doctrine there. The more you learn of the Word of God (and the more that's stored there), the better you will be able to use it, at some point in time when you need the guidance for the directive capacity of your mind where you're making decisions. That's when, under the filling of the Holy Spirit (temporal fellowship – Ephesians 5:18), the Holy Spirit brings in the appropriate doctrine for your memory. Ah, that's what I should do in this particular case. And it'll pop up there automatically. You'll be amazed. What should I do? Oh yes, this is what doctrine says. This is what I should do. That gives you a frame of reference, and that frame of reference guides you in spiritual things, and guides you in temporal things. If you do not have this from the human spirit, cause you're not a Christian, or cause you're a carnal Christian, this whole system is short circuited right there. Nothing goes from there. If you don't have that, then your information comes up from the sin nature. That's the frame of reference of the mind. And then that teaches your volition to be negative. That teaches you the wrong things in temporal decisions and spiritual decisions. Whereas if it's the frame of reference of doctrine, you will go positive, and the result will be divine good works and godliness. If it goes negative, it'll be human good works and sins.

So suddenly we have something of enormous importance here. This is what makes a functional human being. If you don't know the operation of "epignosis," you're in for a big problem. This is a word for "perfected or full knowledge." It is more than mere information. "Epi," in addition to "gnosis" (information – knowledge). Sometimes they try to indicate this in the translation by "full knowledge" or "real knowledge," and that's good. I don't know why they don't do it every time. I'm going to walk you step-by-step, next time, through 20 places where this word is used, and you'll be amazed how significantly different the passage is when you understand that this is information out of the human spirit, and what a winning situation that creates every time in that passage of Scripture, because what this connotes is a greater involvement of the knower with what he knows – with what he has been taught. This is inherent in the meaning of "epignosis." It connotes a greater involvement of the hearer with what he knows.

Did you ever hear the statement from James 1:22: "Be not merely hearers of the word, but be doers." If you don't have "epignosis," you will never be a doer of the word. The hearers of the word only have "gnosis" in the head, but it has never been stored as: "Amen, I believe it" in the truth of the human spirit. So, this connotes a greater involvement of the knower. It indicates doctrinal knowledge, which more powerfully influences the knower in grasping the mind and the will of God. It's more than mere information. What this refers to, then, is usable knowledge, which is applicable to life situations for growth to spiritual maturity at the super-grace level. "Epignosis" is where it's all at.

Now, we're going to tell you what the consequences of having that, and the influence upon your life, and the magnificent person that you can become in the royal family of God, when that deficiency of divine viewpoint is corrected by being filled with "epignosis" – the knowledge of the Word of God.

Our Father, we thank You for the power of doctrine.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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