

Filled With the Knowledge of God's Will

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Preacher: John Hopkins

[0 : 0 0] Whoa. Harvey is here and ready to go. He's got his Bible already open. I love his heart. That's awesome. So everybody else can catch up to Harvey. Turn to Colossians chapter one. Because I feel very strongly the importance of faithfully delivering God's word. And I want to do it in a way that's clear, that teaches you something new, and that most important of all is actionable. That you can take what you've learned and put it into practice in your daily life. Because that's really God's plan in giving us his word, is that we can put it to use. And so I review my previous week's sermon. I go back over it, sometimes more than once. I pray through the passage. I read it over and over and over again through the week. And then I go through various commentaries. I do word studies.

[1 : 1 3] There's all this process to be able to make sure that I'm bringing God's word in a way that's useful to you, that you can access it. But I've been doing some reading about what's called meta-learning.

Meta-learning is studying learning itself. How do we learn? And I realized that learning is not a one-way street. It doesn't matter how well I prepare if the ground, if the soil is not ready to, is not prepared for what's being delivered.

So I want to honor the fact that you have responsibility here too. I have a responsibility. You have a responsibility. Now in your bulletin, there's a flyer that Libby put together, very nice looking.

I just said, here, I wrote this. Could you make this look attractive? She did a great job. So I got this from a book on learning called Limitless. And we're going to go through an acronym over the next several weeks to help you prepare to learn.

And to set the table, I want to point something out. When we're going through the process of learning, there's three people involved, not just one. I'm one.

[2 : 2 5] I've already talked about my role. You're the other person. You have a role to play in learning. And then the third person is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is building a bridge from me to you, sometimes emphasizing things that I say, sometimes putting things I say aside.

Don't listen to that. He doesn't know what he's talking about. Or the Holy Spirit will say, here's something else I want you to see from the passage. But the Spirit has a role to play as well. This acronym focuses this morning on your role.

And the first letter of faster, we're going to learn faster, is forget. I want you to forget what you think you know about Colossians chapter 1.

I want you to come as a child with a clean slate. Kids are curious. When I try to have a conversation with my granddaughter, Sunny, who is six, oh my word, she'll ask a question.

I'll start the answer. She asks another question. I'll start that answer. She'll ask another question.

And on we go. It's like, Sunny, stop talking. I'm four questions behind.

[3 : 3 8] That's really how we should come to this study of the Word of God, is I want you to forget what you think you know. And there's another F. Come with a fresh perspective.

Come with a heart to learn and to absorb something that God has to say to you today. Because ultimately, this isn't me speaking to you.

It is God speaking to you through me. I'm just a vessel. I'm a vehicle. I'm a vehicle that God is using to speak to you. So I'm inviting you to take an active role in going through Colossians with me.

Can you do that? Can I hear an amen? Amen. All right. That's great. So let's talk about last week.

Last week, we looked at the first eight verses of Colossians 1, and I made it through verse 1 1/2, because there's so much there.

And I gave you an assignment to go through and think about it yourself. I also put at the bottom of the notes page of the bulletin a thought-provoking question.

[4 : 42] There's one this week, too. There will be one every week. Because I want to encourage you to get into God's Word in between Sundays, and so that you're prepped for what's coming in the next Sunday.

So last week, we looked primarily at who Paul was addressing, the saints and faithful brethren in Colossae. We talked about the fact that the saints was a look at God's role in our salvation.

A saint is somebody who's been made holy. We've been set apart for a holy purpose. Paul said in Ephesians 2, 8 through 10, if you can give me that slide, that'd be great.

In Ephesians 2, 8 through 10, it's really kind of the picture I think Paul had in mind when he said... Sorry, I got distracted there for a second.

Go ahead and give me the next slide. Thanks. Thanks, Catherine. I'm supposed to bring the clicker up, and I forgot. No, I'm all right. So Paul said to the saints, that is verses 8 and 9 of Ephesians 2.

[5 : 49] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it's a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. So we receive sainthood when we receive Christ as our Savior.

But he also addresses the faithful brethren. Verse 10 of Ephesians 2, give me that slide, Catherine. For we are God's workmanship, created for good works, which he prepared beforehand so that we might walk in them.

We have a responsibility as well. And we talked about those characteristics of being faithful. And the one I want to highlight, because we're going to come back to it again and again and again in the book of Colossians, is that faithfulness is rooted in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our identity is centered in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We cannot forget that. And what I want to emphasize again and again and again is we live our Christian life in relationship with a person who loves us passionately, who wants the best for us, who's engaged with our lives.

I want you to constantly think about that. We so often move in the direction of creating formulas and checklists and strategies for walking with God that we would never use in a human relationship.

[7 : 24] We need to shift our focus. We are in a relationship with God himself. And from that arises the things that God expects of us.

And that's going to become important because this morning, we're going to be talking about God's will, which is not easy to understand. So, you're in Colossians chapter 1.

Let's read verses 9 through 14 together. Colossians 1, 9 through 14. Colossians 1, 9 through 14. Colossians 1, 9 through 14. 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, that's God's will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk...

Gee, that sounds like Ephesians. 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, strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

[8 : 46] For he rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Let's pray together. God, thank you that you initiated a rescue mission to take us from the domain of darkness, where we were held captive as slaves and delivered us to your kingdom of light.

God, that we've been redeemed. We've been given value. Our sins are forgiven, and now we're being remade in the image of Christ, to be like you.

God, I pray that as we spend time this morning looking at what it means to be filled with the will of God, that we would just be captivated by the fact that we can even know what your will is, and that it's something that you've empowered us to do as well as calling us into it.

God, I pray that you would speak through your word this morning. In Jesus' name, amen. So this, I got to tell you a little bit of a backstory.

[10 : 06] Go ahead and give me this next slide. Probably 10 or 15 years ago, I was going through Colossians, and this happens occasionally, where the Holy Spirit put a hard stop on verse 9 of chapter 1.

And I just got totally obsessed. I continued my devotional Bible reading through the year, but I kept coming back again and again and again and again to this idea of what does it mean to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God?

And I thought of all these different analogies. I thought of a balloon. If a balloon is completely full, nothing else can get that. But nah, that didn't quite work. And finally, I came up with this image. It's a sailboat driven in front of the wind. I wanted a picture, but I couldn't find one. We had an exchange student who stayed with us for a summer a few years ago that was an avid sailor. And he's competitive. And he's got a picture that he sent me that I couldn't find of him on this sailboat. And it's completely healed over in going into the wind.

[11 : 12] And Adrian, this young man, is literally parallel to the water. His feet are on the side of the boat. He's pulling that boat over to bring it into the wind. And he is completely, he's completely at the mercy of the wind.

And by the way, having the time of his life. We need to keep that in mind too. But that's what it means to be filled with the will of God.

I was thinking about John chapter three, verse eight, because it's a similar idea. Go ahead and give me the next slide, Catherine. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it.

This is Jesus talking to Nicodemus. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit. Let's go back to that picture of the sailboat. I'm really making me work hard today, Catherine. You're doing a great job. There's a couple things you need to remember. A sailboat is worthless without the wind.

[12 : 22] It just sits there. It does nothing. The wind is what gives it the power to move. But that boat is at the mercy of the wind. And that's something we have to keep in mind with this metaphor.

I love metaphors because they help us to get a better, a fuller picture of what we're trying to understand. The boat is worthless without the wind. Just as we are motionless if we're not moved by the will of God.

The boat is at the mercy of the wind. Wind blows wherever it wants, in whatever direction it wants. And there's something else that's really important. The wind never yields to the boat or to the sailor. The sailor always submits to the wind. It's never a question. The wind dictates to the sailor, do I tack to make progress?

Do I just put the sails, I don't know the terms, put the sails on and lean into it and let it carry me across the water? Or do I sit here in the doldrums and wait patiently for something to happen?

[13 : 32] Regardless of the circumstances, the wind determines the movement of the boat. That's what it means to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God.

It's not intellectual. It's like the wind. Let's talk about the will of God for a second. I brought up some books. This is a book that I got when I was in high school, Decision Making in the Will of God. Interestingly enough, this is from the Emmaus Library. Whoever donated it also got it when they were in high school. This book is 497 pages long.

Ask me if I ever read it. No. It is this complex, difficult to understand analysis of our understanding of God's sovereignty, which means his rule, and how he expresses it, which is his will, and how we make decisions.

What 18-year-old in the world is going to wrestle with those topics? And let's be honest, what 60-year-old is either? These are things that are very difficult to understand.

[14 : 51] I've got this one, Hero on a Mission. Great book for young adults. How to figure out what's your purpose in life. That's on my shelf. This book, Designing Your Life, is an interesting book.

It's based on a course on how to understand your purpose in life and your direction. One of the designers and authors of this book is a believer. The other one is not. This, by the way, is one of the best books I've ever read on how to interact with God to understand your purpose in life.

I'm just really curious how that dynamic was between a believer and a non-believer. And then this book is written by a couple of business guys about how to make good decisions.

I've got about 1,000 pages sitting here. Seems a little overwhelming, doesn't it? How do we get a hold of what it means to know the will of God and to be filled with it?

How do we grasp this? You know, that's why, that's one of the big reasons why this heresy of Gnosticism was starting to grow in Asia in the first century.

[16 : 00] As people wanted to have the inside scoop, what's going on? How can we know? And so the Gnostics, Gnosis is the Greek word, knowledge.

The Gnostics claims, well, we can give you that knowledge because we've got the inside track. But it's not for everybody because you have to be an ascetic, meaning you have to deny yourself things.

You have to partner with angels and it's this complex system whereby we storm the gates of heaven and we follow this formula to get to heaven and we climb up this very dangerous ascent until we're into the highest heavens and then we get to special knowledge and aren't you lucky? We'll bring it to you. That's what the Gnostics claimed and that's what Paul was addressing. We're going to come back to this idea again and again and again and develop it more fully as we go through the book of Colossians.

Now, there's a term that Paul uses in this first verse that we read today that's really interesting that I just want to point out because Paul is firing his first shot across the bow of the Gnostics.

He's giving them notice that we're going to war on this topic of knowing God. So in verse nine, Paul wrote, 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.

[17:33] Now, what's interesting is Paul does not use the word gnosis, G-N-O-S-I-S. He uses the word epignosis. Well, gee, John, that's nifty.

Why do I care? Because epignosis means super knowledge. It's greater knowledge. It's greater than what the Gnostics are offering on the one hand but what we're going to discover in Colossians, it's accessible to all of us in Christ.

You don't have to go through this painful, ascetic self-denial to battle your way to heaven and to demand of God that he give you what is your due because you've gone through all those rigors. So this fantastic super knowledge of the will of God is available to us, every one of us. So when you come to the Bible, come expectantly.

God wants to talk to you. God wants to deliver his word to you to tell you what those works are that we read about in Ephesians 2, what those good works are that he prepared beforehand for you to do and to empower you to go and do them for his glory, for your glory, for the benefit of the people of the world and to bring people to Christ.

[18:59] Isn't that awesome? This is something we can have and hold ourselves. I'm going to emphasize that a lot too. So let's talk about the will of God.

Turn in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 1 or if you're kind of lazy, you can look at it right here.

Catherine, go ahead and jump ahead to the Hebrews 1 slide if you can find it. I love this passage.

God, after he spoke long ago to the fathers in... Lost my place. God, after he spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days, has spoken to us in his Son.

who he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the world. And he, Jesus, is the radiance of his glory, the exact representation of his nature, and upholds all things by the word of his power.

When he had made purification of sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. We're going to expand on that as we go through the rest of Colossians 1 in the weeks to come.

[20:20] It's kind of cool. God spoke, has been speaking to humanity since he created Adam and Eve in the garden. And his most consistent means of speaking has been through the prophets and through the Old Testament writings.

But God knows that we're flawed and we couldn't understand what he was saying. If you doubt that, read the Old Testament. It's a story of man's folly and failure to understand what God has clearly told us to do.

And so, God came up with a better way to deliver his message. He sent Jesus. Jesus is a living parable, a living metaphor for us.

You want to know what God is, who God is, how he thinks, what he feels, what's important to him? You look to Jesus. That's what Jesus said to the disciples in John 14.

Remember, we talked about that briefly a few weeks ago or a few months ago that Jesus said, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father because Philip said, well, we haven't seen the Father. Show us the Father.

[21:32] And Jesus, in one of his hair-pulling moments, like, I've been with you for three years. Don't you get the message? Which is Hebrews 1. God reveals himself through the person of his Son, Jesus Christ.

That is the means by which we come to understand the will of God because otherwise we couldn't possibly understand it. It is completely beyond our understanding. I would go so far as to say, if someone tells you, I've got it figured out.

This is how the sovereignty of God works. I've got your answer. That guy needs a straitjacket. Or he's a liar. But these are things that are beyond our understanding.

We can't grasp them. I have, over the 40 plus years I've been walking with Jesus, tried to understand how God's sovereignty works, his rule works, with different analogies.

And I'll come to one and I'll think, oh, I think this works. I better get fitted for my straitjacket. And nope, there's flaws in that. And then I'll come up with another one.

[22 : 38] Think, okay, I've got that one. Nope, nope, that doesn't work. We just can't understand how it works. How could God be in control of all things? I don't know.

I'm not even going to try to present to you all the different theories of how God rules the universe. Because it's just not, it's not a good use of our time.

Instead, what I want to talk to you about is how do we take what God has put in a way that's accessible to us and put it into practice and obey it and follow.

So Paul said in Colossians 1 as he's praying, side note, Paul's a man of prayer. You can't not see that.

He's always praying for the people that he's writing to. I don't know how he had time. And yet prayer was a priority. We saw that in the life of Jesus as well. We need to be people who pray. And if you're not sure how to pray for somebody, Colossians 1.9, just pray that.

[23 : 43] God, you can pray that for me. Fill John with the knowledge of your will. Give him wisdom and spiritual understanding so he can live properly. We can pray that for each other. And off you go.

And watch and see how God answers. So Paul was a man of prayer. We want to follow that example. So Paul, back to verse 9, says, for this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

So this is now we're unpacking, okay, you just said that the will of God is incomprehensible, it's bigger than we are, we can't possibly understand how God rules, and yet, it's knowable. John, pick one.

It's both. Because God has taken what's incomprehensible and made it accessible to us to the degree that we can understand. With all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

What does that mean? We're just going to look at the three words. We're not counting and. It's spiritual knowledge. Now, not like the Gnostics would say. The Gnostics say that spiritual knowledge requires this heroic effort to get to it and only the select few, the elites, can obtain it.

[25 : 00] That's not what we mean by spiritual. What we mean by spiritual is that it is, it's where we're interacting with God on His terms.

And His terms are the Holy Spirit speaking to us in words of one syllable so we can understand what He's saying. We have to come to any discussion or any exploration of God's will with the humility of recognizing that we cannot possibly understand what we're trying to understand apart from the Holy Spirit coming to us.

Now, what's the promise though? What did Jesus say to the disciples in the upper room discourse? I'm leaving you. And they got sad. And Jesus said, no, no, this is for your benefit because I'm going to send another comforter who's going to have an even more intimate relationship with you than I do here on earth as a man.

And His job is to reveal all truth to you, to tell you what you don't know, to expand on what I've been teaching you to help you understand. So this is a spiritual exercise.

Every part of your life falls under this umbrella. I had a friend when we were in the Dominican Republic who came down to work with us. And Nathan, great guy, loves kids, doesn't speak a word of Spanish.

[26 : 27] He might know baño, which is bathroom. But that was it. So we had this exercise one day where we had the boys at the orphanage partnered up with volunteers and Nathan was sitting with this boy Carlos and we wanted them to interact and figure out ways to interact apart from language because most of our volunteers didn't speak Spanish and the boys didn't speak English.

So Nathan stopped because he got really frustrated because Carlos was a 13-year-old pain in the backside who was always constantly, without exception, in trouble.

I put him with Nathan on purpose and Nathan was getting frustrated because Carlos was not cooperating. God, please help me to connect to this kid.

I don't know what to do. And the Lord said to Nathan, just call her because that was part of the deal. So Nathan said, that doesn't sound like a great way to connect to a 13-year-old but you're the boss. So he starts to color. And Carlos had nothing to work with to get in trouble so he started coloring too. And they started pointing at things and sharing words.

[27 : 44] Out of that beginning it started with Nathan asking God to help him build a bridge to Carlos came a rich friendship that lasted all summer. They figured out ways to communicate.

I would listen to Carlos speak to Nathan in what supposedly was English and I would listen to Nathan talk to Carlos in what was certainly not normal Spanish and yet they understood each other. They connected like a father to a son. a very rich relationship developed there. That's what happens as we invite the Holy Spirit to speak to us and to help us to solve the problems we're trying to solve.

As we do it as, this word might sound familiar to you, as an apprentice allowing God to speak to us. So the knowledge of the will of God starts as a spiritual exercise in every circumstance of our life with all spiritual wisdom.

The definition of wisdom very simply is experience plus knowledge. It's actually evaluated experience. So we know something, we act on it, do an okay job, we evaluate the experience, we put them together, we learn something and that learning is called wisdom.

[29 : 05] I, at 60, am much wiser than I was at 40 and way wiser than I was at 20 because I've learned, I've gained wisdom.

As we walk with God, as we're interacting with Him through the Holy Spirit, we are learning things, we're reading God's Word, we're reading other books, there's value in these things. We're looking at our lives and saying, oh, that didn't work, oh, that really left a mark, I don't want to do that again. That worked and we put it together and the next time we do something, we're better at it. we gain wisdom. That's how we come to have a better understanding of the will of God. I am much less obsessed and worried about getting it right, understanding the will of God now, than I was at 20 or 40, because that's wisdom.

And we gain understanding. I can tell you, even though I spent literally months thinking through Colossians 1-9, and what does it mean to be filled with the knowledge of God?

What is the will of God? What does that mean? As I studied this week, my understanding got deeper and broader.

[30 : 26] That's the beauty of God's Word. You read most books like this, it's one and done. Okay, got what I need, don't need it anymore. This book, don't ever make that mistake.

You think you got it? You're wrong. Go back again, and again, and again, and again. It's like mining an endless gold mine of wealth, and our understanding grows.

So we grow in understanding, we grow in wisdom, and we come to understand the will of God. In the context of our relationship with God.

It's not a formula. It's not a complicated problem. Remember, we've talked about that. It's a complex problem that we grow and understand as we go through life in relationship with God.

And His will becomes apparent. We learn how to live. So let's talk about some of the things that comprise God's will. Start at verse 10 of Colossians 1.

[31 : 28] So Paul was praying that they would be filled with the super knowledge of the will of God with all spiritual wisdom and understanding so that important words there so there's a purpose in knowing the will of God so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

If you recall when we did the mission value series that phrase is also at the beginning of Ephesians 4. That Paul the prisoner of the Lord entreated them to walk worthy of their calling.

This is the same idea to walk worthy of the Lord. As we come to know God's will our life increasingly more and more over time will reflect well on him.

How many of us have heard oh I know you Christians especially if you're in business I don't want anything to do with you you're not honest you're hypocrites whatever the case may be if we're walking with God that may be true of us at some point in our life but if we're walking with God every part of our life has changed and we reflect well on him what did Jesus say in the Sermon on the mountain Matthew 5?

!! That's the outgrowth of knowing God of knowing his will is our life in every arena becomes more and more the type of life that Jesus would live if he was in our shoes that's the growth is our life is worthy of all that we've been given in Christ the new life the salvation the forgiveness of sins the

Holy Spirit our life reflects that so that's one of the outcomes and that's part of the will of God for you that you would live a life that's worthy of him the next thing is that you would please God in all respects wouldn't it be great to have a life that's pleasing to God in the parable of the talents in Matthew you know the guys are each given some money they're told to invest while the king is gone king comes back and two of the three have brought a good return on the king's investment in them the guy who was given five talents has five more the guy who had two talents has two more and what does

[34 : 04] God say to them well done good and faithful servant and of course the guy with one talent says well so I just put it in a hole and he is condemned what's interesting is that the two guys who brought well actually all three guys knew their master they knew the assignment that's what happens as we come to know the will of God we come to a conference that what I'm doing is honoring to God he's pleased we feel his smile and make no mistake we are made we were made to receive that smile give you an example I believe that one of the most important tasks if I can put it that way that a child has to gift is a better word one of the most important gifts a child receives at a very young age is the absolute rock solid conviction that I am loved by everybody who crosses my path a child should feel that level of love that that yields a healthy child so that when they grow up they're trusting they expect good things they are good people but it's rooted in

I'm love I'm the cutest kid in the room did you know that we never lose that we want to feel the unconditional unwavering love of our father and we get that in relationship with him as we're filled with the knowledge of his will so we walk in a manner worthy we please him in every respect respect we bear fruit in every good work we bear fruit in every good work in the course of my life I've done a lot of good works I'm sure you have as well some of those God has said ta-da here's the fruit and it's really fun to see the fruit it's rewarding it's encouraging because seeing the fruit motivates me to keep doing the right thing right to follow the Lord but other times you sow a seed and you don't see the fruit your paths diverge and you don't know what the outcome is I think in heaven in heaven God is going to say ta-da look at what I've done do you remember that seed oh yeah I do remember that guy I do remember that woman this is the outcome this is what happened that I God speaking I brought to fullness because you were faithful back there and now I just want to show you that's part of your reward but we as we sow good works as we're filled with the knowledge of the will of God we can expect fruit good fruit God's expectation is that we bear fruit that's in John 15 and the trees that bear fruit are pruned to draw to yield more fruit that's God's design for us and you know!

bearing fruit is fun it's fulfilling I think Joe would agree he loves it when he gets all these full bushes of tomatoes and other stuff because it's fun to eat it and to enjoy it taste good and to know that your hands played a role in bringing that fruit to life God has given us that delight to enjoy the process of sowing seeds and then seeing the fruit come out so we walk worthy of the Lord we receive his approval we bear fruit and we're increasing in the knowledge of God so as we're taking this walk as we're following Jesus one of our core values as we're walking closely with him part of our mission statement kind of explains why it's there we get to know

God better not to fill up theological commentaries but as a friend we are invited into ever increasing intimacy with God pause and think for a minute what I just said if we got a phone call from somebody that we admire we drop everything to take that call I got a call in response to an email from a best selling author this was back in 2006 or 7 or 8 I still get excited about talking about that phone call I'm talking about an intimate relationship with a God who made you you need to let that sweep you off your feet and grab a hold of you part of this being filled with the knowledge of the will of

[39 : 42] God is an increasing intimate knowledge of God and then out of that comes we are strengthened with all power verse 10 according to his glorious might so not what we muster up but his glorious might says in Ephesians 1 that his glorious might the measure of that of his power is raising Jesus from the dead that's power we are strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the attaining of all steadfastness that's endurance and patience with joy the way that joyously is kind of stuck in limbo there in English Paul was vague of where that applies does it apply to that we are attained all steadfast and patience with joy or are we joyously giving thanks to the father so we're going to take it as both if you're not sure about something in the Bible both and is usually a safe bet but we as we come to know

God we're strengthened with his power for attaining of all steadfastness and patience with joy because Paul is a realist I want to remind you again the two themes that come into my sermons almost every time life is hard the gospel is greater than we can ever imagine we need endurance life is hard we've got to be close with God to handle often feels like walking through the valley of the shadow of death but he gives us strength according to his glorious might to get through this it may not feel like it in the time it may feel like you're just barely holding on but cling to this promise as you're filled with the knowledge of the will of God he is with you through that that's a promise in Psalm 23 even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death you are with me in the presence of my enemies you prepare a table that's our hope this is a fruit of the knowledge of the will of God it's actually part of the will of God for you and we're giving thanks to the father who has qualified us now she's talking about how marvelous it is to stop and pause and think I have a relationship with God now let's turn it around and take an honest look in your heart and go I have a relationship with God how is that even possible I don't belong here but it is possible it's true you you with your faults your sins your shortcomings you are a child of God if you are in Christ you need to own that give thanks for it look at it like a diamond and understand what it means every facet of that intimacy that you yes you have with God we share in the inheritance of the saints the set apart ones the holy ones in light you have been moved from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light you have forgiveness of sins in Christ that's our hope Catherine give me that sailboat picture again you may find yourself as you're in your sailboat in a race like this

Paul uses the analogy of a race a lot in his writings this this would be fun being in a regatta racing other yachts but you may be in a boat like this picture which I thought of this before right now like Rembrandt's painting of the storm on the sea of Galilee which was so fearsome that professional fishermen were afraid they were going to die Jesus is asleep at the back of the boat and you're thinking what are you doing Lord I'm dying here and you turn to him or you're in the doldrums and it's just calm no movement there's not even a ripple on the water that happens sometimes in all of those turn to the Lord let the knowledge of his will fill those sails again and move you forward trusting that he is the one who's at work in you trusting that he is the one who is directing the wind and you need to trim your sails to follow him and when you do when you do you'll be worthy of him you'll have his pleasure you'll produce good works you'll know him better you'll have strength that's what comes from trimming our sails to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God let's pray together

[45 : 09] God thank you that this knowledge is though it's more than we can bear you've made it so we can understand it to the degree that our feeble minds can you have revealed your will and God help us to be enthusiastic followers of you who trim our sails to go in the direction you're leading and trust you for the stuff that we don't understand because honestly that's most of it God let us experience these blessings that you promise through Paul's writing we pray in Jesus name amen