

God's Word IS Working

‡ all over the world (vv.1-6)

‡ growing spiritual fruit (vv.7-9)

‡ flooding God's kingdom with light (vv.10-14)

In the Name of Jesus, always working for you 24/7, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, dear friends:

“Is it working?” “Is it running?” Walking through a parking lot these days, you may not even hear a car backing out. Does it have to hit you before you know it's working? This is one thing that messes people up about the Bible. They can't hear a car running, but they think they should be able to tell whether **God's Word is Working**. The Lord's Apostle Paul was sent to us today on the wings of the Spirit in this word of grace to assure us, yes! **God's Word IS Working...**

‡ all over the world (vv.1-6)

One of the things I really enjoy about the intensive weeks of study known as Seminary Summer Quarter (SSQ) is getting to know some of the younger pastors. That's most of them these days. Listening to a couple young pastors talking about the new hymnal project, I tried not to embarrass myself. I asked the one sitting across from me, “Which committee are you serving on?” He was so respectful, quietly saying, “I'm the Chairman of the Hymnal Committee.” Gave me a chance to say how grateful I am to see **God's Word IS Working** to bring us a new tool for worship in the very near future.

They laughed when I told them what I say to some of you asking, “Why do we need a new hymnal?” “Ever sing *Amazing Grace*?” “Oh, yes! I love that one!” “It wasn't in our old hymnal.” “How about *On Eagles' Wings*?” “That's a great one too!” “Also not in our old hymnal.” “How do you like *In Christ Alone*?” “That's one of my favorites!” “That wasn't even in our new hymnal. We sing it from the *Supplement*. Same with *Day by Day*, *Draw Near*, *The Lamb*, *Peace Came to Earth*.” In many ways even our relatively small church body, this part of the body of Christ we call the Wisconsin Synod, is running so quietly, you can't always hear it. But rest assure, **God's Word IS Working all over the world**.

The Lord's Apostle Paul needed this. He was in prison under house arrest in Rome when he wrote Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians – the *Captivity Letters*. As usual Paul greets them with God's undeserved love. And from His *grace* what results in your heart is you enjoy God's *peace...from God our Father*. Or as David said: “*God sends his love and his faithfulness.*” (Psalm 57:3)

Some people are like stagnant ponds, keeping all their time and money for themselves and no care for others. They end up like the Dead Sea. It has no outlet either. Bodies can float, but nothing can live.

Paul is constantly praying, constantly thanking God for the Christians in Colossae because they heard God's Word, believed and began pouring out *faith and love*. That's why we get so excited when guests keep coming, go through BIC (Bible Information Class) publicly confess Christ with us. Twenty members and friends personally visited 600 homes around us in June. **God's Word IS Working. All over the world** by hearing God's Word of grace and forgiveness in Jesus, *faith and love are springing up from the hope that is stored up on layaway for you in heaven*. We keep praying for God to bless our mission offerings. At Summer Quarter I heard there are about 150 pastors in training and another 450 in Asia, Africa, South America and Europe asking to be trained by WELS pastors. This sweet, sweet message of forgiveness that still takes God's law seriously and calls sin as God calls it, is in high demand **all over the world** because **God's Word IS Working**. Maybe you can't hear it, but you have **God's Word** on buds and blossoms. **God's Word IS...**

✠ growing spiritual fruit (vv.7-9)

Here's one of the cool things about the Christian church in Colossae. Paul didn't plant it. This is one of two of Paul's thirteen letters to churches planted by someone else. (The other is Romans.) ***"You [Colossians] learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit."***

There's a place not far from here, many of you know it, but don't like to mention it, where the joy of ministering, serving someone else is shown in a very special way by young boys and girls. There fans wear hats that advertise a certain dairy product. According to their website their colors are forest green and cheese gold. In that unnamed place near a Green Bay, young boys and girls are said to loan their bikes to huge men to ride down to the practice field. The kids walk along side. And sometimes, if some kids don't have bikes, the players will buy them one so they can have fun serving together.

That's Paul's spirit of service: ***"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding."*** Serving God is so awesome. You wear God's colors as soon as you're baptized. He gives you greater gifts than a bike for His service. Are you using God's gifts to show love to God and your neighbor? Do you know what God does if you need more gifts to give, more energy, more time, more wisdom? He'll provide gifts that no money can buy from a bike store. When you put God's gifts to work joyfully serving God with your time, talent and treasure, you get to see how **God's Word IS Working – growing spiritual fruit**. You can't hear at first, but it's a joy to see at last!

✠ flooding God's kingdom with light (vv.10-14)

One of the scariest things I ever heard on an airplane was not said by the pilot or a flight attendant. It was a young woman, a PhD candidate, telling us that science has not figured out the cause, much less the cure to a single neurological disease. "Not one?" I asked because I couldn't believe it. "Not one," she said. We're still in the dark about all that. We just keep experimenting, hoping something will show.

That's where many dump their eternal soul. They want scientists to solve all their problems. One scientist wrote in *National Geographic* a few years how they try to tone down their predictions because they get accused of alarmism. But he said his real fear is not global warming, but "global burning." How can someone be so close to the truth, yet so far away? By being in the dark about God.

Paul was thrilled for the Colossians who were holding firm in trials. He wanted them to stand strong against false ideas about human knowledge being the answer to everything even without God. Paul kept praying for them and us too, ***"that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."***

We're seeing sad videos of violence and floods these days. Only God has the answers for their cause and cure. Why run back to the swamp when the rivers recede? Why build again and again in the same flood plain where loved ones die and people hate each other? Your soul was bought with the blood of God's own Son. Don't go back to the darkness. Come into the light of God's love shining in the face of Jesus Christ. You can't always hear His engine running, but there is no greater power to give you life eternal in heaven and life with God on earth. ***"Great endurance and patience"*** – those keep growing and going wherever **God's Word IS Working, flooding God's kingdom with light**. Let's keep growing and going strong with Jesus. You'll always hear Him if you just listen to **God's Word**. Amen.