

WESTSIDE CHURCH

COLOSSIANS 1

Like all the prison epistles, Colossians 1 has a number of sermons packed into a single chapter. I have highlighted some points and trust you will use your judgment to know which points will edify people.

INTRODUCTION

DATE: Approximately 60 AD

THE CHURCH: Colossae

- A church that Paul did not plant and never visited.
 - 100 miles from Ephesus
- Not a big church
 - They probably met in a house-church setting like we are doing today.
 - The most unimportant church Paul wrote to (Lightfoot)

PURPOSE:

- Paul had heard about the heresies and persecution faced by the disciples in Colossae during a visit from Epaphras. He wanted to address the false teaching and encourage the church.

Colossians 1:1-2 (Introduction)

Paul introduces himself and acknowledges who are the recipients of the letter.

Colossians 1:3-5 (Thanksgiving and Prayer)

Paul's Prayer

- He kept a church he never met in his prayers.
- Always praying/praying continually.

Faith and Love

Paul had heard of the faith and the love of the church from Colossae. Faith and love have a dependent relationship. Faith without love is nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2). Love without faith is sentimentality.

Faith is something tangible; not just a belief.

- Mark 8:1-3 - The leper believed Jesus could heal him if he was willing. He still had to find out if Jesus was willing.
- Mark 9:2 - He also saw the faith of the paralytic's friend and the love they had for the paralytic.
- Mark 8:5-11 - Jesus saw the centurion's faith and his love for his servant.
- Galatians 5:6 - Faith expressing itself through love
- If Jesus followed you around for a day, would he see your faith?
 - *Would he see how you love people?*
 - John 13:34-35
 - *When have you seen someone express their faith with love?*

Colossians 1:6-8 (The Gospel)

The good news of God is bearing fruit and growing throughout the world. (1:6)

- John 15:16
- Galatians 5:22-24
- When you are focused on the good news of God, fruit will be born in your life.
 - The gospel is the source of fruit.

They learned the gospel from Epaphras.

- In the search for truth, the medium is as important as the message.
 - Oral traditions had to use stories and proverbs to share truth.
 - The written word could use vast amounts of language to share the truth.
 - Later the radio and the television became the medium by which we share the truth.
 - Now we look to the internet to share the truth. (Tweets, Tik-Toks and videos)
- Which of these is the best medium to learn the truth about God?
 - The best medium for learning the truth about God is one person sharing the gospel with another person.

Colossians 1:9-12

Paul prayed for the Colossians to be filled with the knowledge of God's will through wisdom and understanding.(v.9)

- Common hope of Paul
 - Ephesians 1:17 - I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^a of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.
 - The Christian life is one that involves growth. God intends us to mature; to move from milk to solid food (Hebrews 5:12-14)
 - KNOWLEDGE - *Sunesis* - The ability to apply first principles to any situation in life.

A Life Worthy of the Lord (v.10)

- Philippians 1:27 - Worthy of the gospel
- Ephesians 4:1 - Worthy of the calling
- 1 Thessalonians 2:12 - Worthy of God

- 2 Thessalonians 1:5 - Worthy of the kingdom of God
- **Never worthy of man**
 - *We live in a world where people seek the approval of man. People invest their all into “likes” and a following. Pursuing the approval of man always leads to compromise.*
 - *What do you want to be worthy of?*
- **Qualities of Life Worthy of the Lord**
 - Bearing fruit in every good work
 - **Galatians 5:22-24**
 - Growing in knowledge of God
 - Maturity
 - Great endurance and patience
 - Great endurance - *hupomone* - the ability to turn tough times into glory (Barclay)
 - Patience - Long suffering of men
 - This requires joyful thanksgiving. Thanksgiving that we have been qualified you to share in the inheritance of God’s holy people in the kingdom of light.
 - Redemption and forgiveness of sin (**v. 13-14**)

Colossians 1:15-23 (The Supremacy of the Son of God)

There was a false teaching in the church at Colossae that questioned and diminished the supremacy of Jesus. This teaching believed angels were superior to Jesus.¹

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation” - Colossians 1:15

- **Image** - *eikon* - portrait, statue or representation
 - *In contract law, an eikon was a brief summary of the personal characteristics and distinguishing marks of the contracting parties. - Barclay*
 - *Jesus is the eikon of our covenant with God. He has the personal characteristics and distinguishing marks of God.*
- **Firstborn**
 - *The firstborn of a family held a preeminent place in that family Just as that first-born son would have authority over all of the father's realm, the LORD, Jesus has authority over all of God's realm. - Clarke*
 - *Psalm 89:27 - And I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.*

All things were created through him and for him and hold all things together - Colossians 1:16-17

- Even angels were made by him.
- Jesus holds things together...not angels.
- Angels are ministering spirits. (Hebrews 1:14)

“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.” Colossians 1:18 NIV

- Head of the body, the church
- Psalm 127:1

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 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 1:19-20

- **Fullness** - Totality of God

¹ Most scholars think that Colossians 1:15-20 came from a poem or a hymn in the early Church that described what Christians believed about Jesus. This is entirely possible, but can't be proven one way or another. - Guzik

- *Completion*
- *Nothing left out.*
- **Reconciliation** - The word 'reconcile' used here refers to a specific form of peace made between two factions who had been embroiled in a bitter battle when the victor accepted the total surrender of the defeated. - Clarke

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. “But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation - Colossians 1:21-23

- **Alienated** - The ancient Greek word translated alienated (apellotriomenous) is literally “transferred to another owner.
 - If you are alienated from God, you are being owned by the devil.
- **Enemies in your mind** - See reconciliation above.
 - *Jesus reconciled us from being part of the and made us part of God’s kingdom.*
 - *Romans 8:32 - He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

Paul’s Labor for the Church - Colossians 1:24-29

Paul’s word for the persecuted.

Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.” Colossians 1:24 NIV

- Jesus suffered to start the church
 - Paul suffered and was imprisoned for the church
 - There is no way to be a Christian or build the church without suffering
 - *Living contrary to the world makes waves*
 - **2 Timothy 3:12** - *In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,*
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- Matthew 5:10
 - Matthew 13:21
 - John 15:20
 - Romans 8:35
 - Hebrews 10:33

I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. - Colossians 1:25-27

- Paul was commissioned to present the word of God in its fullness
- The full word of God included the mystery that had been disclosed to the Lord's people.
 - *The gospel and the promises of God belong to the Gentiles as much as they belong to the Jews.*
 - *Isaiah 49:6 - It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. (It was always the plan)*
- Christ in you, the hope of glory
 - *Redemption*
 - *Reconciliation*
 - *Heaven*

He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. - Colossians 1:28-29

- Proclaiming, admonishing and teaching Jesus is how we present one another fully mature in Christ.
 - **Mature** - *téleios* (an adjective, derived from [5056](#) / *télos*, "consummated goal") - mature (consummated) from going through the necessary stages to reach the end-goal, i.e. developed into a consummating completion by fulfilling the necessary process (HELPS Word Studies)
- Paul said he strenuously contended to present everyone mature in Christ.
 - *What are your relationships like?*
 - *Are you strenuously contending for others?*