**Colossians**

Author: Paul

Audience: The church in Colosse (city in Asia Minor) letting them know they have everything they need in Jesus Christ.

Date Written: Approximately 60 A.D. during Paul’ first imprisonment in Rome (Ephesians and Philemon written nearly the same time.

Colosse

* 100 miles East of Ephesus on the Lycus river.
* A trading crossroad for ideas and religions.
* Has a population of a lot of Jews who had fled persecution in Jerusalem nearly 200 years before Jesus came.
* Colosse belonged to the Roman province of Asia.
* Epaphras is probably from Colosse and with other believers that have been blessed on Paul’s missionary journeys founded the church of Colosse.

Chapters 1 – 2: What Christ has done.

Chapters 3 – 4: What Christians should do.

Paul never comes out and specifies the problems in the church of Colosse, but we surmise it was some form of Gnosticism. This is when we mix and match beliefs to form a new or desired belief. (paganism, Judaism, Greek beliefs, etc.). However, Paul does address the solution – Knowing Jesus Christ better will solve so many problems.

**Chapter 1**

Grace, Faith and Power to Endure with Joy (vs. 1 – 12)

* Paul starts off with his greeting and acknowledges the saints.
* Understanding the grace of God in truth.
  + Hebrews 12:15 - “See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God.”
* Paul prays for the following for the church at Colosse:
  1. Paul prays that they will be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.
  2. Paul prays that they will be able to walk in a manner worthy of their identification with Christ.
  3. Paul prays that they will be able to walk in a manner pleasing to God. (Eph. 5:8-10)
  4. Paul prays that they will be able to bear fruit in every good work.
  5. Paul prays that they will be able to increase in the knowledge of God.
* We experience what others in the world experience, but we have the power of the hope of God. Paul is praying that the church in Colosse would live in that power!
  + How do you tap into the power, daily? [LA]
* Human strength runs out, but God’s power is limitless. He gives us power to endure with patience and joy.

Deliverance and Translation (vs. 13 – 14) & St. John 9

* Delivered from Darkness.
  + We have been delivered from the dominion [authority/control/jurisdiction/bondage/power] of darkness.
    - YOU ARE FREE! [LA]
* Translate (Transferred) into another kingdom (The Kingdom of Light)
  + We have a new ruler in our lives. (I Peter 2:9)
* St. John 9 captures deliverance and transference into another Kingdom.
* God works in the lives of people and uses blindness in this parable and his healing to demonstrate deliverance and transference.
* Precepts of redemption gathered from the parable of the blind beggar:
  1. [1,39] We are all born spiritually blind and unable to see. (Used as a justification for not changing.) (Psalm 51:5 & Matthew 6:23 & Ephesians 6:12)
  2. [4-5] Jesus opens the eyes of the blind (Psalm 146:8 - The Lord opens the eyes of the blind.) (Jesus is the Light!)
  3. [6] Faith response (Our response by faith is necessary) (Eph. 2:8 - For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:)
  4. [8] We are made a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17 - Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.)
     1. We sin, because we choose too. If not careful, we will reassume our old (sinful) self.
  5. [25] We attain spiritual insight. (2 Cor. 4:6)
  6. [34] We will suffer persecution from those who don’t believe. (John 15:18-20 & II Tim. 3:12 & I Peter 4:12-14)
  7. [35] We eventually see that Jesus is worthy of our worship.

The Supreme Jesus (vs. 15 – 23)

* Jesus is the exact image of the invisible God.
* Jesus is the first born, he is higher than everything. (Psalms 89: 20, 27 – God calls David the firstborn king)
* Jesus is God! This is core to our Christian belief.
* Jesus was before all things ane He is holding things together/sustainer [17]
* Jesus is the beginning of God’s redemptive plan.
* There is a merging of Jesus’ divine and human personifications.
* We needed to be reconciled to God because we were the offender (we sinned)… God was the offended. [20] (II Cor. 5:18-19)
* [21-22] **We were alienated and may not have even known. But now, we are made holy, blameless and unreprovable in God’s sight. - THIS IS HUGE!**
  + None of us are good enough to save ourselves.
* [23] The aforementioned is conditional. We must continue in faith for these blessings to be available. Our faith must be stable, steadfast, and not shifting.

The Hope of Glory (vs. 24 – 29)

* Paul starts off rejoicing in suffering for Jesus. (Acts 5:41) & (Matthew 5:10-12) & (I Peter 4:13) & (Romans 8:18)
* Paul was made a minister. He was called to declare that Gentiles have access to the Kingdom of God. (Eph. 2:12 – 19)
* Christ’s abiding presence in us is **our hope** of glory! Not suffering!
* Paul proclaimed Christ to whoever would listen.
  + This needs to come in the form of warning (admonish; lay it on their heart; caution; council) and teaching. (Prov. 13:1)
  + We should strive for spiritual maturity.

**Chapter 2**

Continuation of The Hope of Glory (vs. 1 – 5)

* Paul was working with all of his effort (struggling) that the power is working within him.
* Paul writes to let the church at Colosse know that he is once again struggling (concerned) about them and the church in Laodicea.
* Paul wants the believers and new converts to be encouraged and he desires that there be a unity amongst the churches in the Love of Christ.
* The results of being unified are full of riches and understanding of the mystery of God.
* This is what Paul had in mind for the church at Colosse (and all of the churches
  + That their hearts may be encouraged (give support, confidence, or hope)
    - Keep your eyes on Jesus in order to remain encouraged. We sink like Peter when we take our eyes off Jesus. [LA]
  + Being knit together in love (Body of Christ should be knit together in Love.)
    - I Peter 4:8 - And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.
  + To reach all of the riches of
    - Full assurance of understanding
    - The knowledge of the mystery of God
* Paul is writing this, because he wants the church at Colosse to know what’s true (John 16:13 - Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.)
  + The problem with the church at Colosse was that they were having challenges similar to Gnostocism. The heresy contradicted the principles of Christianity.
    - One point of their belief was that there was information that was hidden from believers. This is why Paul said the mystery in God was fulfilled/answered in Jesus.
    - Another point of the belief system was that the body was evil. Problem with this belief is that, Jesus had a body.
    - Last point they believed that Jesus was only human. Christianity embodies Jesus has human and divine.
* Paul was pleased to see the Colossian Church’s good order.
  + Paul hadn’t met these people so he must have gotten a report.
  + We should strive to be consistent with the character of the Holy Spirit in our gatherings. [LA]
* Paul was pleased to see they were firm in their faith.
  + When we are under duress, we find out about our faith. (I Cor. 16:13 - Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.)

Grounded and Growing in Jesus (vs. 6 – 8)

* If you have received Jesus, and considering what Paul has previously stated, we have to be ever mindful to walk in Jesus.
  + We received Jesus by faith, guess what, continue to walk in faith. [LA]
  + Just as Jesus saved us, we must learn to depend on him. He is willing to handle our daily problems. (Galatians 3:3) Don’t think you are growing from depending on your flesh.
* How do I walk with Jesus
  + Rooted - We have to be rooted so we aren’t easily uprooted. (Eph. 4:14)
  + Built Up – Look for what develops (builds) you and what builds your neighbor. We have to be mindful that we have to insure we are not preventing the body from being built up from our behavior and conversation. (Rom. 14:19, I Cor. 14:26, Eph. 4:11-12)
  + Established in the faith – to be established in what you know to be true. If you are not fully understanding of how salvation takes place, you can be swayed easily.
  + Abounding in thanksgiving – habitually thankful; continually thankful (I Thes. 5:18, Psalm 100:4)
    - Thanksgiving reminds me to be thankful of the good things Jesus does
    - Thanksgiving shows me what I have.
    - Thanksgiving keeps us from harmful feelings that are counter to the peace of God.
    - Being thankful, makes you happier and it’s healthier. (Harvard article: [Giving thanks can make you happier - Harvard Health](https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier)) [LA]
* Be careful, so you do not get distracted with common thought and rationale which are not based on Jesus.

Jesus is the Answer (vs. 9-15)

* In Him & with Him references in this passage:
  + We walk in Him
  + We are rooted in Him
  + Fullness of deity dwells in Him
  + We are filled in Him
  + We are circumcised in Him
  + We are buried with Him
  + We are raised with Him
  + We are alive with Him
  + In Him He has triumphed
* Acts 17: 28 - For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.
* Jesus covers it all – The Godhead is fulfilled in Jesus! It all comes down to Jesus!
* We are complete in Jesus! We have fullness in Christ. We must realize that it is a trick of the enemy to make us feel deficient. [LA]
  + Do we really feel complete in God? Or do we feel we are lacking something?
  + Do we let our inadequacies prevent us from feeling complete in Jesus!
  + We are more than conquerors!
* We must put off the old man.... the flesh must be cut away – this was accomplished by faith when we came to Jesus!
* When Paul discusses baptism, I believe he means more than just the water baptism.
  + Baptism – emersed; enveloped in something.
  + We were immersed in his death – we see this dying in water baptism and the resurrection as we were raised up.
  + Let’s not miss the point that the old man was buried and is dead.
    - Do you believe it?
* Before Jesus, we were dead! We had a certificate of death.
* Jesus made us alive by cancelling the record of debt, by nailing our debt to the cross.
* Jesus put them to open shame, to show the authorities no longer have rule over God’s elect!
  + Don’t forget your debt has been paid. Even when you mess up! Jesus paid the price! It’s a done deal. [LA]
  + People doubt in the presence of their sin, regarding their relationship with Jesus! There is generally no doubt that Jesus’ payment was sufficient.
  + Wherever the principalities and powers came from Jesus disarmed them.
  + Romans 8:1 - There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
  + John 19:30 - When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.
    - Finished = paid in full

Threats to our Christian Walk (vs. 16-23)

* Legalism and Spiritualism are still issues today.
* Food and drink; religious festivals; and Sabath regulations were an issue in Colosse.
  + Don’t let yourself be judged by the opinions of others, Jesus set you free! [LA]
* Paul points to the shadow as not being the real issue that we need to focus on. We need to be focused on Jesus. But at times.... we get lost looking at the shadows. Particularly the shadows that other people cast.
  + Math. 5:17 - Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.
  + Jesus fulfills the law. We honor the law by having faith in Jesus.
  + Romans 6:14 - For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.
  + Don’t let anyone judge you! We are accountable to Christ! [LA]
* Don’t let anyone disqualify you of what you are entitled too. Don’t get wrapped up in the things that he listed in verse 18.
  + They were teaching, God was a long way away and you had to worship angels in order to get to God.... wrong, wrong, wrong.
  + We are forbidden to worship angels (Ex. 20: 3 – 4; Rev. 22: 8 – 9)
* Paul is warning the church of Colosse of being wrapped up in a spirituality with no Jesus! Self-made religion that sounded good to men’s ears.
* The major issue Paul is calling out is that these teachings were not connected to Jesus (the head) in any way.
* Don’t be caught following the false doctrines. In verse 20, he is saying it makes no sense to follow man’s rules based on the price Jesus has paid for our freedom.
* We should represent different than the world.
  + Look back over the last year of your life. What spiritual changes have you seen in yourself? [LA]
* We can’t depend on our pious self-denial to improve; we must depend on God. Legalistic rules will not get it done for us.

**Chapter 3**

How to Live Holy (1 – 17)

* We start with the assumption that the reader understands the platform of Baptism and being raised with Christ.
* In Paul’s instruction he suggests that we act in order to adopt this behavior into our lives. (Verses: 1, 2, 5, 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, etc.)
  + WARNING LABEL: These actions can’t be done in your flesh! Only possible through the power of the Holy Ghost!
  + Romans 8:5-8 - For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. **6** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. **7** Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. **8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
  + We start with this because you have to have the foundation in order to experience the instructions provided in the remainder of this chapter.
* One of the primary things we need to stay focused on is *seeking things above*.
  + Seek - Strive for something earnestly; want it with desire.
  + You must keep doing it.
  + We focus on blessing above, not below. Don’t lose site of the promises of God, which are to come. Don’t get so lost in the happenings of this world, that we lose focus.
  + Jesus is seated on the right hand (power) and is tentatively aware of what’s going on in our lives.
* Paul says to *set* your mind on things above.
  + This action implores us to concentrate on the things above.
  + II Cor. 4:18 - While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.
* Paul says to *put* the following behavior to death.
  + This is more than resisting. We resist the Devil. (James 4:7)
  + We are to put the following behavior to death. NOTE: WARNING LABEL
    - Fornication
    - Uncleanness
    - Inordinate affection
    - evil concupiscence,
    - covetousness, which is idolatry.
* Paul tells us to put off the above list because the wrath of God is coming.
* Paul tells us to put the following behavior off:
  + anger,
  + wrath,
  + malice,
  + blasphemy,
  + filthy communication out of your mouth.
  + Lie not one to another.
* After putting off the old man and the behavior that accompanied this life Paul suggests that we put on the *new* man (Christ like nature resulting from the Holy Spirit)
  + Colossians 2:11
  + It was a process to put off the old man. We were circumcision of the spirit, by putting off the body of the flesh (sinful nature).
  + Past tense, “In him you were...”
  + We walk this out by faith, not by our works or effort. [LA]
* The work that was done in us is available to everyone.
* Paul then takes time to tell us what to *put* on:
  + bowels of mercies,
  + kindness,
  + humbleness of mind,
  + meekness,
  + longsuffering;
  + Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another
    - Do this as the Lord forgave you.
  + ABOVE EVERYTHING LISTED PUT ON **LOVE**.
    - It’s binds everything together in harmony.
* Paul says to *let* the peace of Jesus rule in our hearts.
  + Don’t let your emotions make the call, they will get you in trouble and they fluctuate.
* Paul says to let the word of Jesus dwell in us richly in all wisdom.
  + Dwell – inhabit.
  + Richly – abundantly.
* Paul finishes this section by saying, if I left anything out....do whatever you do in the authority of the Lord Jesus.
  + Based off of your behavior, when you speak/act in society, what would people think of Jesus?
* Paul finishes with reminding us to *give thanks*.

Rules for the Christian Family (18 – 25)

* Paul continues and is not saying what it takes to be saved, but what it takes to live saved.
* We need God’s help in family relationships.
* Paul is encouraging wives to submit to their husbands based on the role that Jesus has given the husband.
  + Submit – willingly subordinate yourself to someone else [leadership.]
  + When a wife submits to her husband, she is expecting Godly leadership.
  + Society opposes the use of the word submit.
  + Philippians 2:5-8 - Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: **7** But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: **8** And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
* Men: this is an example that Jesus emptied and humbled himself. This is what men should do for their wives. (Eph. 5:25) Men should not tell women to submit that’s not the man’s place.
* Women: Submission should be a willing act that a woman should do as an act of her love for Jesus.
* Husbands are to love their wives and to not be harsh with them.. This is a protection that keeps her from harm.
* Each relationship requires mutual submission and love; to obey and encourage; to work hard and be fair by both parties.
  + Examine your relationships at home, work … do you relate to others as God intends. [LA]
* We need God’s relationship to help with these relationships.
  + Ephesians 5:21 – 6:9 provide similar instructions.
* As our world moves away from the structure of the Godly family (dismantling of family is devastating) the events become that much more stressed and harder for families to make it. Changing laws don’t help.
* Paul is telling wives to submit/respond to husbands in alignment with the role that God gave him. Man didn’t ask for this position, this is God’s order.
  + submit – willingly submit yourself under someone else.
* Submission does not degrade or impact equality.
* Most men probably don’t even want the position of authority.
* Jesus came to the Earth to submit to the will of His Father and did not yield any equality with God.
  + Phil. 2:5-8 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself... (ESV)
    - A reminder of what Jesus did and a reminder of what the word instructs wives to do. Her heart is to respond to her husband as though she willingly surrenders to Jesus Christ.
      * This is the work of the Lord.
    - Jesus humbled himself. Men, must realize it was an act of volition. It is not to be demanded by a man/husband.
* Husbands are to love their wives and not be harsh with their approach. There must be balance and the protection that God requires of men over their wives and family. This keeps the wife and family from harm.
  + Any woman/wife that is expected to submit to a man that doesn’t love as Christ loves the church and submit to God is put in an extremely vulnerable/bad position. She can be abused.
    - Men may have been following Roman customs which provided the head of the family unlimited power, lacking respect and love.
  + Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the Church and gave himself up for her (Eph. 5:25)
  + The love of a husband is demonstrated by Jesus.
  + Men are to lay down their lives on daily basis for their wives. (I.e. putting her desires, likes and dislikes first, before your own.) This is what Jesus did for us. He was equal to God but laid his life down for us.
  + It’s a fearful thing for a woman to submit to a weak man that doesn’t love as Jesus does.
* In men loving as Christ loves the church it’s an unconditional love
  + Not an eros or philio love (not romance on eroticism), but a willful decision to love as Christ loves us.
  + Pray that God strengthen us to love as we should.
  + Philio love is selfish. The love is given with an expectation of something in return. It is given with reciprocation in mind.
  + Agape love is one sided – all for the recipient.
  + God calls for men to love their wives in a fashion that is completely contrary to our flesh.
  + This is hard and impossible in a fleshly sense. The power of Jesus is needed. WARNING LABEL
* Children in this passage refers to minors that are still living in their parents’ homes under their authority.
  + This reference to the child parent relationship is not an excuse for parents to impose their will on adult independent children.
  + The passage is addressed to children, but the passage is for parents to teach their children, as the next comment refers to parent.
  + Children need guidance and good parenting.
* Fathers don’t make your kids angry, or this will discourage them.
  + Ephesians 6: 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
    - The passage applies to parents operating in the role of the father.
    - How are children provoked to anger, frustration and discouragement?
      * Being too harsh
      * Never expressing affection
      * Always criticizing
      * Never apologizing for being wrong
    - Good intentions don’t make you right all the time. [LA]
* Work diligently as though we are working for God and not only when the master/supervisor is watching, but even when they are not watching.
  + Modern day, this can refer to the employee/supervisor relationship.
  + bond servants (after working for the master for a while, the bond servant makes a willful decision to remain a servant for life)
  + Work hard all of time as though you are working for God.
  + There are eternal ramifications of how you work for your supervisor. There is a reward for diligence and hard work in heaven.
* Is Paul okay with slavery?
  + Paul honored what was going on in his day and time.
  + It is clear the Lord did not have Paul serve as an agent for social change.
* Good or bad God sees everything we do. (Remember this message was for the believers) and God responds without partiality.

Chapter 4

* Supervisors should respond to employees as God has responded to them. With grace, mercy and love.
  + NIV says “....masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair....”
* For those striving to live Godly, our Master, Jesus is in heaven.

Paul Sends More Instructions and Final Greetings (2 – 18)

* Be devoted to prayer in an ongoing manner.
* It’s a struggle to keep praying., it’s hard work
  + Prayer is like wrestling (our flesh, the enemy, God, etc.)
  + Ephesians 6:12 “...we do not wrestle against flesh and blood....”
* Be watchful (awake) in prayer.
* What are the challenges to prayer?
  + Our expectations.
  + Timeliness of God’s response - - Do you like to wait?
  + Not getting the answer we desire.
  + Not getting an answer at all.
* Paul solicits prayer for his ministry. He wants open doors so he can clearly continue sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ
  + This is what put him in prison.
  + Are there any doors that you need the Lord to open?
  + Why do you want the doors open? [LA}
* Walk in wisdom when dealing with outsiders (unbelievers). They are watching our lives.
  + Does your walk, match your talk?
  + Let’s make sure we are not turning people away from the Lord because of our actions, attitudes, conversations and behavior.
* Let your words always be gracious (full of grace)
  + Are you words full of grace, gentle, restorative around unbelievers? (I.e. full of compassion and grace)
    - If they hear your complaining, back bighting, what would they think?
    - If you can’t respond with wisdom and insight, then don’t respond.
    - Be cautious of how you respond to people (I Corinthians 9:20-23)
      * This doesn’t mean change who you are or water down the truth of the gospel.
* Tychicus will bring the details of what Paul is going through and he is an encourager.
* Onesimus will accompany Tychicus.
* We don’t know much about Jesus, other than he is a Jew.
* Paul sends instructions on how to deal with John Mark. He has been forgiven.... accept him.
* Epaphrus is who brought the gospel to Colosse.
  + He wrestles in prayer.
  + He was a hard worker.
* Luke sends greetings.
* Demas was a travelling partner of Paul.
  + Demas abandoned Paul because he loved the world.
* He sends the letter to the church of Laodicea, which we don’t have.
* Archippus was encouraged to finish his Godly work.
  + Paul is good for encouraging (2 Tim. 1:6 – he encouraged Timothy to fan the flames.)
  + Have you left your work unfinished? [LA]
* Paul had distinctive penmanship, which was a sign of the authenticity of this letter.
* Paul says to remember his chains... he is reminding the readers/hearers as his badge of authority that he was doing what God has called him to do. (Gal. 6:17)
* Grace be with you! (God’s unmerited favor)