

WEEK ONE: WALKING IN THE WAY OF JESUS - COLOSSIANS 1:1-14

message...*1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. 3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. 9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

meaning...Walking in The Way of Jesus involves living a life that is pleasing to Him, bearing fruit, and increasing in knowledge of Him. It is a dynamic growing life, not a stagnant complacent one.

muse...Ever considered what went into raising us? Regardless of our childhood, we can look back and recount how our parents, our teachers, our coaches—anyone who had any kind of influence on us—did their best to pour into our lives. While the both the objectives and goals may vary, the intent was the same: do what they think best so that we would grow up to be good people.

Not long into it, though, there came a point where we were instructed, taught, and given rules in order to teach us. The one constant was us. We may have heard different messages, we may have been modeled different things. It ultimately fell on us, though, to actually apply what we learned. We were responsible for taking what we were given and learning on our own, from simply following instructions to asking questions to doing some learning and work on our own. That takes place not only in school, but in life as well.

Paul gives the same input in this passage. We may have the same faith and belief in the same Jesus, but there is a responsibility when we accept Him to walk like Him. He gives us the power to do that through the Holy Spirit but it is up to us to dive in and make the right decisions. His Word gives us everything we need to live, directions, guidance, who He is, what He loves, what is right, what to pursue. Only when we take the initiative to know those things are we able to do what is pleasing to him, bear fruit in our good works, and increase in the knowledge of Him. Then we can walk this way...His Way.

memory...Paul talks about what it means to walk in The Way in Romans 12:1-2: *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and*

acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **2**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable. There he refers to a kind of life that is transformational, not simple a bit different. If it is not sacrificial, then it looks like much of what this world, this kingdom, has to offer. When it is sacrificial, when it is focused on an entirely different Kingdom, an entirely transformed way of thinking, then it is pleasing to God. And others begin to see the difference...and want to be a part of The Way, the New Kingdom.

meditation...v.1-2 Paul addresses his letters in a relatively similar manner each time. What is similar about these openings (check out the letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Philemon)? Why do you think he does this?

v. 3-5a For what things do you hope? Does what you are doing and living reflect your hope?

v. 5b-8 Paul gives a few identifiers that distinguish this group of people. Name a few things that others would use as identifiers for you (“birthmarks”)? Are they reflective of Jesus? What ones are missing? What ones need to go so that your re-birth in Christ is reflected in your life?

Read John 15:1-17, when Jesus uses the image of Him being the true vine. What does this say to you about your life? How much are you part of the vine? How gospel-centered is your life?

We all produce “fruit.” What kind of fruit has your life produced? What is hindering the growth and fruit-bearing process in your life? What do you need to be pruned by the Father?

v. 9-11 As mentioned earlier, Jesus said we cannot produce fruit that is everlasting unless we are abiding in Him, unless we are filled with the Spirit. Acts 1:8 only reinforces what Paul says: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.* Two questions challenge us from this: first, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Second, is your life—what you say, do, act, think, respond, *love*—a witness to that?

Read Romans 12:9-21. In this passage Paul talks about the marks of a true Christian. Which of those do you possess? Which ones are you lacking? What are you doing to transform some of those things that aren't pleasing to God?

While we so often think we have arrived, we forget the journey. Yet the journey is actually the important part, as it is where we meet others, where we share common experiences, where we can have the benefit of looking back to help us look forward. Are you focused on the destination or on walking in a manner that will get you there? Why is it important to walk with someone along the journey?

Paul goes about trying to encourage this group by praying. He gives no input, no direction, except through prayer and leading of the Holy Spirit. How much of your life involves prayer? The Holy Spirit?

v. 12-14 Compare the connotations that we get when we look at two words: domain and Kingdom. What do you think of when you look at these words? What is the difference between the two: Which ones suits your life better? Why? What do you need to do to live in the Kingdom of the Son?

The very idea of transference implies that we move our perspective, our trust, our faith—*our life*—from our control to submitting to Jesus. What we do instead is transfer parts, not the whole. Why? What parts of your life need to be transferred to Jesus? What is holding you back?