



Morningside Church

Sermon Discussion Guide

Title: Why Do We Pray for the Church and Our City?

Date: July 12, 2026

Scripture Text: Colossians 1:3-8

Notes:

Jesus calls His followers to be the salt and light of the world in [Matt. 5:13-16](#). He wants His church to be a beacon of faith, love and hope to a world that is loveless and hopeless. But what happens when the culture starts to influence the church instead of the church influencing the culture? That was the threat of the church in the town of Colossae. The Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Colossian Christians to encourage them in their faith, love and hope. Their culture was heavily pagan, and the pagan values were threatening to creep into the Colossian church. Churches in our culture, including Morningside, can also be susceptible to cultural influences that are contrary to God's word. This is why we need to be intentionally praying for the church and our city.

I. Because of Our Gospel Witness ([Col. 1:3-4](#))

Paul had never visited Colossae, but by his co-laborer Epaphras he learned how well the Colossian Christians were doing in their faith and walk with Christ. He had heard how the gospel had come to them and they were bearing fruit by sharing it with others. As they were growing in the gospel, Paul states that it was having an effect "all over the world".

- The Colossian Christians demonstrated faith, love, and hope as they lived out their Christian walk.
 - What was their faith in?
 - Who did they love?
 - What was their hope in?
 - How can these three elements impact a Christian's walk and influence on others?
- Paul expressed his thankfulness in hearing about the Colossian Christian's walk based on these three elements. If you were to receive a letter from Paul, which of these would he give thanks for in your life?
- What could potentially be the impact a church could have by practicing faith, love and hope as the Colossian Christians did?
- How well do you think we do at Morningside when it comes to our witness?
- What can you do to improve that?
- Will you commit to pray for our church to impact our community by our gospel witness?

Remember; as professing Christians we are always a witness. The question is will we be a good witness or a bad witness.



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II. Because of Our Gospel Hope (Col. 1:5-6)

Paul mentions the hope the Colossian Christians have laid up for them in heaven. This *hope* is in something that, by their faith, is their heavenly inheritance. It is theirs and will be waiting for them. This hope is not *wishful thinking* i.e., 'I hope my ball team wins', but assurance because of their relationship with Christ. It is this future hope which motivated them in constant faith and costly love in the present.

- In your own words, how would you describe your hope reserved for you in heaven?
- How can being focused on that help us in our faith and love?
- How can this hope motivate us to share the gospel to others?
- How can you pray for our church to have the gospel hope and demonstrate it to our community?

III. Because of Our Gospel Investment (Col. 1:7-8)

Paul's fellow servant Epaphras was probably the person who started the church in Colossae. Paul describes him as a "faithful minister of Christ". His investment in the Colossians impacted the world. We see in [Col. 4:12](#) how Epaphras cared deeply for the Colossians and their spiritual growth and maturity. He had committed to always pray for them.

- How would you describe Epaphras' commitment to the Colossian church?
- How does your commitment to your church compare to Epaphras?
- How can investing in the body of Christ effect our community?
- Paul describes in [1 Cor. 3:6-8](#) how he planted and Apollos watered. This reflects the cycle how each of us has a role when it comes to spreading the gospel. We see Epaphras' example. How would you describe your role in the spreading of the gospel?
- How will you pray for our church as we invest in one another and the community?

"As Paul looks at the young church, what he sees is what God is doing: for, in personifying 'the gospel', he is really using a paraphrase to refer to the divine action through the gospel (and, of course, through its proclaimers, as in [v. 7](#)). The gospel has come to you: God has reached out to them, has visited them with his saving power, as indeed all over the world this gospel is producing fruit and growing. From his perspective as a converted Pharisee the important point was that the salvation promised in the Old Testament had now been unleashed upon the world irrespective of geographical or racial barriers. His own missionary activity was an embodiment of this truth, as Ephesians 2:11-3:13 indicates. It is in that sense that the individual churches are 'representatives' of the Gentile world as a whole. They were for Paul a sign and promise of the universal scope of God's saving purposes and hence of still greater things to come."

N.T. Wright