

5/2/99

**A Loving Shepherd**  
**Col. 1:1-2**

Mark Twain said that a lie makes it way all the way around the world before truth ever gets it's boots on.

How true that is particularly when it comes to the gospel message.

Paul the apostle had a great conflict for the Colossians and those of Laodicea because false teaching had entered in and was endangering their faith and the very gospel. 2:1-2. 4:16

None of these individuals had ever seen Paul's face in the flesh, he had only heard of their faith in Christ. 1:4, 9, 2:1

Epaphras who is believed to be the Pastor had come to Rome, a follow servant and faithful minister on their behalf, to inform Paul about the present situation of doctrinal error and to intercede for the Colossians. 1:7, 4:12

The false teaching dealt with a form of early Gnosticism which saw all matter as evil and spirit good, denying that God created the world and that emanations and aeons far removed from God were

really responsible for the creation, resulting in two extremes, licentiousness and asceticism.

The false teaching attacked the humanity as well as the deity of Jesus, seeing Him as one of the many emanations or aeons that went out from God but less than God.

There was also a mixture of Jewish legalism, asceticism and eastern mysticism, attempting to add to the work of Christ for salvation, through secret knowledge as initiatory rites.

For our study we want to look the salutation and greeting of Paul to the Colossians which follows the usual pattern of the day, identified by three things.

- I.** The writer. vs. 1
- II.** The recipient. vs. 2a
- III.** The regards. vs. 2b

**I. The writer is identified in three ways. vs. 1**

- A.** Paul declared his credentials. vs. 1a
  - 1.** The name by which he went by was Paul. vs. 1a
    - a.** Prior to his conversion he was named Saul in Hebrew which means ask, inquire or request.
    - b.** The name Paul means small, or little.

- \* The form is a derivative of the verb “pauo” meaning to pause, stop, restrain, or come to an end.
- c. A beautiful name reflecting what had happened to Paul on the Damascus road. Acts 9
  - \* John the Baptist said, "I must decrease, He must increase". Jn. 3:30
- 2. The office he held was that of an apostle of Jesus Christ.
  - a. The term apostle “apostolos” means one sent out, in authority and power of the one who sends.
  - b. Paul’s apostleship was not being questioned as in Galatians or Corinth but in view of the nature of the epistle, to confront the false teaching, he establishes his authority from the very beginning.
  - d. Paul was an ambassador of Jesus Christ, the message and authority was not his own!
    - 1) Jesus was the source of his authority.
    - 2) Jesus was the message.
    - 3) Jesus was the enabler.
- \* They were familiar without doubt of his three year ministry at Ephesus and all the outgrowth in Asia from it, as they most likely also were.

- 3. The Scriptures tells us that Jesus chose twelve apostles after a complete night of prayer. Lk. 6:12-13
  - a. We have the requirements of an apostle. Acts 1:21-22
    - 1) To be with Jesus from the time of His baptism.
    - 2) Till Jesus was taken up to heaven after the resurrection.
      - \* Mathias was picked by lot. vs. 26, Prov. 16:33
  - b. Whether Paul was the twelfth apostle or not is a matter of opinion, but it is interesting that Paul never called himself one of the twelve.
    - 1) He says, “I am an apostle to the Gentiles”. Rom. 11:13
    - 2) If I am not an apostle to others yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of my apostleship are you in the Lord. 1Cor. 9:2
    - 3) And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. 1Cor. 15:8
    - 4) He calls himself the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle because he persecuted the church, yet by God's grace he was what he was. 1Cor. 15:9

- 5) He says the signs of an apostle were wrought in him, wonders and mighty deeds. 2Cor. 12:12
- 6) In nothing am I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. 2Cor. 12:11
- 7) He was ordained a preacher and apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles. 1Tim. 2:7

**B. Paul's declared his call to the ministry. vs. 1b**

- 1. Paul's call was by the will of God, he did not choose the call himself.
  - a. He had been chosen by God on the Damascus road as he was on his way to persecute the church. Acts 9
  - a. He defended his call and apostleship to the Galatians, it was not of men, neither, by men, but by Jesus Christ. Gal. 1:1
  - b. He described it before he was even born, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." Gal. 1:15
  - c. He made it clear that it was not due to any value or worthiness of his own, "Not having my own righteousness which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ. Phil. 3:9

- 2. Paul, even in bonds, considered himself to be in accord with God's will and divine appointment. Phil. 1:12, Col. 4:10
    - a. He called himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Eph. 3:1
    - b. He declared to the Philippians that it was God's way to further the gospel. Phil. 1:12
    - c. The Lord told Ananias that Paul was a chosen vessel, to bear his word before the Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel. And that He would show him how great things he had to suffer for his name's sake. Acts 9:15-16
    - d. To the Corinthians Paul says that to some he was an aroma of death to others an aroma of life and asked, "Who is sufficient for these things". 2Cor. 2:16
      - \* Not of himself, "Our sufficiency is of God". 2Cor. 3:5b
  - 3. Paul demonstrates his humility by declaring that God had called and enabled him not man or himself.
    - \* He had nothing to boast about for he had received all. 2Cor. 4:7
- C. Paul declared his companion to be Timothy. vs. 1c**
- 1. He is mentioned 25 times in his epistles and six in the book of Acts.
  - 2. His name means he who honors God.

3. Paul took Timothy with him on his second missionary journey and circumcised him, his mother being a Jewess. Acts 16
4. He was young, timid, often ill and in need of encouragement. 2 Tim.
5. He was with Paul for much of his Ephesian ministry. Acts 19:22, 2Cor. 1:1
6. Yet Paul said that Timothy was his spiritual son, a servant, approved and like-minded as he, when it came to the care of the church, he had no other. Phil. 2:19-22, 1Thess. 3:2, 1Cor. 4:17
7. Paul sent him to Corinth to put them in remembrance of Paul's ways in Christ. 1Cor. 4:17
8. He left him as the pastor of Ephesus. 1 Tim. 1:3
9. Take note Paul's humility, though an apostle he identifies himself as a brother with Timothy and the Colossians, revealing that he was not acting alone nor that what he was going to say was his own idea.
  - a. Paul never went out alone
  - b. He always surrounded himself with men, being accountable

### **Illustration**

Spurgeon said, "He that should take on himself to be a policeman and go and do the work of arresting

others, without having received a commission, must be in danger of being taken up himself for being a deceiver. And if I had not been called to the ministry, I had better leave it alone, lest I go without God's commission." **#835 Ministry call:Spurgeon**

### **Application**

1. How do you use whatever credentials you have as a Christian towards people?
  - a. Do you use them to impress them?
  - b. Do you use them to intimidate them?
  - c. Or do you use them instead to help and benefit them?
2. How do you view your call in the body of the church?
  - a. Do you see it as due to your ability?
  - b. Do you see it due to your schooling?
  - c. Or do you see it as due to the will of God?
3. How do you do ministry, alone or with others?
  - a. Alone, you are limited and vulnerable!
  - b. Accompanied you are strengthened, protected and made more effective!

*Paul as the writer identified his authority to the Colossians!*

### **II. The recipient are also identified in three ways. vs. 2a**

- A. Paul declared their credentials.

1. He addresses his letter to the saints.
  - a. Their identification as saints should not shock us.
    - 1) The word saints “hagios” means to set apart, many times for particular use.
    - 2) The word sanctify, sanctified, sanctification, holy and saint, all have the same root word.
    - 3) The ones, who by their repentance lived in moral purity, dignity and honor to God.
  - b. A saint is not a person who is canonized by man, based on their past merit and works or special knowledge, but one who has trusted in Christ for salvation.
  - c. This speaks of God's divine call to salvation, Jesus said, “You have not chosen me, but I have chosen, and ordained you...” Jn. 15:16
2. The basis of the sainthood is in Christ. 1:2
  - a. Paul had heard of their faith in Christ. 1:4
  - b. Paul points out their hope laid up in heaven based on Christ. 1:5
  - c. Paul said they heard the truth of the gospel and received it. 1:6

- d. Paul called it the mystery of the gospel, “Christ in you, the hope of glory”. 1:27b
- B. Paul declared their common bond.**
1. They were faithful.
    - a. The word faithful “pistos” means believing.
    - a. Some have interpreted it to mean trustworthy or reliable.
    - c. I think that both are in order due to the nature of the letter, that these Colossians were being tempted to be moved away from Christ as their sole dependence for salvation.
  - d. Faith is active and by their believing.
    - 1) They had become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 1:12
    - 2) They had been delivered from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. 1:13
    - 3) They had been redeemed through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. 1:14
    - 4) They had become part of His body, His church. 1:24
    - 5) They had become new men and women. 2:10
    - 6) They were the elect of God. 3:12

2. They were brethren.
  - a. Though Paul is an apostle, he is also a saint and brother with them believing in Christ and his work for their salvation, due to the fact that they all have the same Father.
  - b. Rather than being defensive as if he wanted to lord over them, they would see his love for them, his humility and common relationship in the family of God the Father.
    - \* Clearly declaring from the very beginning of the letter, God's direct relation to us and not through emanations.
  - c. Their believing is not so much directed of their believing in Christ but the fact that through their believing in Christ, He is the One who has brought them into this new fellowship of being brethren, in the family of God.
  - d. They and the saints who are believing at Colossae were in union and communion with God and each other, for they are all brethren in Christ.
3. They were "in Christ".
  - a. This is the common identity between all saints.
    - 1) At no time does Paul use the name "Jesus" alone in the letter, due to

- the fact that the heretical false teaching was attacking the deity of Jesus Christ
- 2) He used "in Christ", "Lord Jesus Christ", "Lord", etc.
  - 3) In Christ, was due to the fact that they had received the gospel.
  - 4) In Christ, they continued in the gospel.
  - 5) In Christ, now they were believing to receive this letter as they first received the gospel to contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. Jude 3
  - 6) While saint speaks of divine call, faithfulness speaks of human responsibility to believe, having free-will and "in Christ" speaks of their position in salvation.
- b. This is the very person that was being attacked at Colossae as not being sufficient for the believer and his salvation.
    - 1) He is the visible form of the invisible God. 1:15
    - 2) He created all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, through Him and for Him. 1:16
    - 3) All things are held together by Him. 1:17

- 4) He is the head of the church, the first born from the dead, the preeminent One of all things. 1:18

C. Paul declared their location being Colossea.

- 1 It was located in Asia Minor in the upper Lycus Valley, on the eastern portion of the Roman Province of Asia, which Ephesus was the capital.
2. The city of Colossae was a Phaygian city, today in modern day, western Turkey, about one-hundred miles from Ephesus.
3. The Lycus River's southern banks was the home of the city of Colossae and straddled the tributary "The Little Meander" approximately twenty-four miles east and south of the confluence of the two rivers, the Lycus and the Little Meander.
4. The volcanic region was fertile and good for the raising of sheep and carried calcareous matter everywhere to be deposited and choked up the streams, making arches and fantastic grottoes.
5. The region also made the dying of wool ideal, in particular "black" that bore the name of Colossae.
6. The city stood in a strategic place on the important highway from Ephesus, a trade

route to the east, occupying the pass that led through the Cadmus range to the east.

- a. Laodicea was located about eleven miles down the Lycus on a hill and was a thriving center and populous, a chief city of the district and capital of one of the departments into which the province of Asia was divided for administrative and taxing purposes, it included twenty-five other cities.
  - b. Laodicea had great wealth and an important banking and political center, evident by the extensive ruins today.
  - c. The Lord's condemnation of her was that she was lukewarm and he would spue her out of His mouth. Rev. 3:14-22
    - \* When we visited Laodicea, I found the water to be lukewarm in my room when I showered.
7. The church as well as Laodicea and Hierapolis without any doubt were due to the influential ministry of Paul at Ephesus and these were an outgrowth, seeing he had not established it. Acts 20:31
- a. He had only heard of their faith and love. 1:4, 9, 2:1
  - b. His communication had been through Epaphras. 1:7

- d. Acts says, “All they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks”. Acts 19:10  
\* Acts 19:17-20, 26
  - e. Paul told the Corinthians, “the churches of Asia salute you”. 1Cor. 16:19
8. The city by Paul’s day was looking to its past glory and years after the letter an earthquake destroyed it completely.

### **Illustration**

Spurgeon said, “You cannot make a sinner into a saint by killing him. He who does not live as a saint here will never live as a saint hereafter.”

#1227

### **Application**

1. Each of us need to recognize our position as saints.
  - a. We are set apart for the Masters use, our body is not our own, our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, we have been bought with a price. 1Cor. 6:19-20
  - b. We are God’s workmanship in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before hand that we should walk in them. Eph. 2:10
2. Each of us needs to understand that our brotherhood is not of some elite group but with all who are believing in Christ.

- a. God forbid that we should respect people by their looks. Ja. 2:1
  - b. God help us if we favor those who are more wealthy than others. Ja. 2:2
  - c. God will write “icobod” over this church if anything but faith in Jesus Christ is the common bond we have with each other.
3. Each of us here at Pasadena are to live up to who we are in Christ.
- a. To be salt to the community. Matt. 5:13
  - b. To be a light to the community. Matt. 5:14-16
  - c. To be used of God to reach out with the gospel and warn them of false prophets and teachers, ravenous wolves. Matt. 7:15

*Paul addressing the recipients identified his love for the Colossians!*

### **III. The regards is two-fold.**

- A. Paul greets them with the constant supply of God. vs. 2b
  1. He says grace to you, which was the common Greek greeting having the idea of beauty and favor.
    - a. We are saved by grace. Eph. 2:8
    - b. We stand in God's grace. Rom. 5:2
    - c. We given gifts according to the grace given us. Rom. 12:6



2. God's grace is sufficient for all things. 2 Cor. 12:9
  - a. The gospel is called the “gospel of grace”. Acs 20:24
  - b. The gospel is opposed to any idea of works to merit the favor of God. Eph. 2:8-9
  - c. The gospel was based on the work of Christ for all Gentile to come into the kingdom, a mystery hidden in the past, a mystery among the Gentiles, Christ in them, the hope of glory.. 1:26-27
3. We are to do many things in relation to grace.
  - a. We are to abound in grace. 2Cor. 9:8
  - b. We are to be strong in grace. 2 Tim. 2:1
  - c. We are to grow in grace. 2 Pet. 3:18
  - d. We are to speak with grace. Eph. 4:29
  - e. We are to commend men and women to God’s grace. Acts 20:32
    - 1) The reason being is because it is all abundant and all-sufficient. Rom. 5:1-2, 2Cor. 12:9
    - 2) The apostle Paul wanted the Colossians to understand to magnitude of the grace of God!

**B.** Paul greets them with the confident rest in God. vs. 2b

1. He joined to the Greek greeting the Hebrew greeting Shalom, peace.
  - a. In the Greek the word peace indicated the antithesis to war, resulting from the cessation of war.
  - b. The word peace “eirene” means to join something that was previously fractured or separated.
  - c. That is really is what has taken place in the life of each believer as the was between them and God has ceased.
2. The Greek word is used to translate the Hebrew word “Shalom” more than 250 times in the Old Testament.
  - \* The only thing is that the Hebrew greeting “Shalom” communicated a wholeness or soundness to all of life, including prosperity, contentment and good relations, not so much the opposite of war like the Greek.
3. Paul uses the word peace in his greeting to describe the benefit of the Colossians having believed and continuing to believe in Christ.
  - a. Having made peace with God through repentance by grace through faith, now they had the peace of God available to them for their needs in life.
  - b. It is available to all the saints, which is beyond understanding and keeps

our hearts and minds through Jesus.  
Phil. 4:6-7

- c. Peace is always the result of grace.
  - d. It is that confidence that rests in total dependency on the grace of God to meet the need or accomplish the work.
4. Paul in fact calls the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of peace. Eph. 6:15, Acts 10:36, Eph. 2:17
- a. Christ is the mediator of this peace. Rom. 5:1, Col. 1:20
  - b. Christ Himself is that peace. Eph. 2:14-18
- C. Paul greets them, by pointing out the clear source to be the Father and the agent Jesus Christ.
- 1. Not one of the aeons, but from our God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - 2. The apostle once again makes himself one with a common identity by the word “our”, he is not superior to them but one like and with them.
  - 3. The phrase “Lord Jesus Christ” is not excepted by some due to the fact that it is not found in some manuscripts.
    - a. The fact that Jesus is plainly the basis of our peace on the cross, the source of our peace through the cross, the anointed of God and Lord of all

throughout the letter, is sufficient to except it without fear.

- 4. The apostle Paul wanted the Colossians to comprehend more fully the nature and experience of God’s peace in their relationship. Col. 3:15

### **Illustration**

When John Bunyan refused to give up preaching. They put him in prison and said to him, "Mr. Bunyan, you can come out of prison whenever you will promise to cease preaching the gospel." He said, "If you let me out of prison today, I will preach again tomorrow, by the grace of God." "Well," said they, "then you must go back to prison," and he answered, "I will go back and stay there if need be till the moss grows on my eyelids, but I will never deny my Master." #475

### **Faithfulness:Spurgeon**

\* God’s grace and peace was sufficient and super abounded to write Pilgrims Progress, the book that is read second to the Bible.

### **Application**

- 1. Are you living in God’s grace regarding your past life and present state?
  - a. If you are living under God’s grace, then you do not allow Satan or anyone else to condemn you for your past, if in fact you have repented and your life is changed. 2Cor. 5:17

- b. If you are living under God's grace, then you won't be condemning others but being more like your God, without being permissive or compromising. Col. 3:12-13
- 2. Are you experiencing the peace of God for your daily life?
  - a. If you are, then you are very familiar with the realities of life and how they are ever present to take your peace. 1Cor. 10:13
  - b. If you are, then you know how often you are tempted to take hold and control things, rather than wait and rest on God and see Him work. Matt. 11:28-30
- 3. Are you as a Christian trusting humanistic methods of counseling, psychology or new age methods for you peace in life?
  - a. Then stop it and trust the Lord.
  - b. The first step is repentance. Jn. 2:1
  - c. The second step is to call on Him and trust Him for your life situation. Prov. 3:3-5
  - d. The third step is to learn and apply God's word to your life to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Gal. 5:16

*Paul in his regards identified his care for the Colossians!*

### **Conclusion**

We have looked the salutation and greeting of Paul to the Colossians which follows the usual pattern of the day, identified by three things.

- 1. Paul as the writer identified his authority to the Colossians!
- II. Paul addressing the recipients identified his love for the Colossians!
- III. Paul in his regards identified his care for the Colossians!