

The Book of Colossians

THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)

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Passage: Colossians 1:1-2

Title: Greetings and Introduction of the Letter to the Church in Colosse

Colossians 1:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction - On fire

I am on fire today, I have been on fire for a week now, I felt the fire come upon me last Sunday in the second service..... unfortunately, the fire I am talking about is not a spiritual fire but a physical fire upon my body, my skin to be exact. I love the outdoors; give me the woods any day and I am a happy-happy man. I love the wonders of the great outdoors, from watch wildlife, to hearing the sounds of the woods, from the sunrise to the sunsets. But today I am suffering from the fall of the world, the fallen state of the great outdoors, as my skin is in great irritation from the vines that no doubt came in when Adam fell, and that is the vine of poison oak/ivy. My skin has been on fire, and the spreading is at a rapid pace, and ointments and soaps really can only offer a slight relief, as poison oil of the oak is now well under the skin.

Of course, I think the worse part of it all is beyond the skin irritation, but my personal irritation with myself, in that I let my guard down, I didn't take the appropriate action after returning from the woods. See if I would have been more observant I would have recognized the poison oak, but be that as it may, I should have returned with the knowledge that I was deep in the woods, and there lies the poison somewhere once I go off the path. So what is the action to be after every trip to the woods and going deep off the path, it is to come home and thoroughly wash my skin where exposed (arms and legs). A simple cleansing, and I would have been clean, and not suffering.

You don't get poison oak/ivy because you walked through it or touched it and came in contact with it, you get the rash and suffering because you did not wash it off. Your skin can take the contact, it is an oil called urushiol, and it can get on your skin, but if you can wash it off (aggressively I might add) within 2 hours, maybe even upwards of 8 hours, it will not get under the skin and cause the rash.

And so, the illustration for us today, as we walk the paths of the world..... is after our time in the world, we need to immediately be cleansed, washed with the Word. As we walk in this world it is so easy for us to pick up the poisons of the world, and not even recognize it, because they are so common, such a part of the world, blend in without easily being seen, this is poison. We need to bath every time we come back from the world, so the word of God can cleanse us, reveal to us, anything that we picked up along the way as we walked and lived in the world. Even, just wash away things we may not have even realized we picked up, but the word washes it nonetheless even when we don't see it.... That is the power of the word to wash away what we didn't even see was starting to infect us.

Another thing that got me was that I thought I had immunity against the poison; you see years and years ago I had such a severe case of poison ivy/oak that my body had built up an immunity to it (amazing how fearfully and wonderfully we are made). I could walk in it, work in it, and nothing. My severity that I had was so bad I had to probably 90% of my body covered with it, and had to be soaked in a tub to draw the poison and oil out of my body. Well that was many years ago and I was of the mindset that I didn't have to worry about it. Well like the world we can think and believe that we have built up an immunity to it, that we can walk through and not be affected but how deceptive is to think such a thing. We can never walk this world (internet, tv, just the streets) and be immune to it, we need to always be washing in the Word to be cleansed of this world, its thoughts, its images, its philosophies. And just one more parallel to this all, and that is this week's poison was so bad I had to go get a steroid shot to give my body a boost to fight this off.

By the way, regarding this poison ivy/oak, the cleansing of it, the oil on me (not the rash) can spread to others if I touch them, or if it is on my skin, or if it is on my hand and I pet the dog, it is

on his fur and is carried to the next person that pets the puppy. So too the picture of how the world can get on one person in the family and then be spread throughout the whole home, and even beyond. They have determined that the urushiol oil can remain on a surface (shoes, yard tools, fabrics) for upwards of two years! It is there, but can't be seen, the ever so invisible poison.

So the spiritual parallel is here we need to continually come, week after week, and get a boost, a big dose of the word so we can continually be cleansed by the Word of this world we are walking through.

Psalm 119:9–12 (NKJV) ⁹ How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. ¹⁰ With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! ¹¹ Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You. ¹² Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes.

Ephesians 5:26–27 (NKJV) ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

The State of the American Church Today

My illustration and analogy is ever so fitting for us today as where we are as a church in the days we live. America is divided with deep social unrest, the coronavirus is six months in and still going, the economy has been ravaged by the lockdowns and restrictions (and the Country has yet to even address the long-term economic impact as business close, unemployment and underemployment rise, and the National Deficit reaches all-time high, for at some point someone must pay the price for all this). But the main point, is the Church of America, where are they at with and in all this? I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the Church we are going to start studying over the next few months, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation..... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing's of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

The church needs to get back to the Word of God, and be continually cleansed from all the poisons and soils that rubs upon as we live in this world. We need today more than ever, come back to the Word of God, focus and saturate on the Word and the Word alone, so we don't get ourselves distracted by all these vain and distracting topics of the world (the world we are simply passing through, as this is not our home, we are simply travelers through it; this world is not it!)

Thematic Verses

Paul will make this the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

4409 πρωτεύω [proteuo /prote-yoo-o/] v. From 4413; TDNT 6:881; TDNTA 965; GK 4750; AV translates as "have the preeminence" once. 1 to be first, hold the first place.

Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

Don't Make the Mistake – This Epistle is Great

You know I have made the mistake of not placing this epistle in the height it deserves. We study through Ephesians (the Swiss Alps of the New Testament as I call it – as we soar into the heavenlies with Christ Jesus), then we roll right into Philipians the Epistle of Joy and Rejoicing regardless of the circumstances that surround us. It is easy to roll into the Epistle of Colossians and think that we are downshifting, when it is anything but, as this epistle covers some of the most vital Christian principles for life, and the greatest doctrine.... The Preeminence of Christ.

That Jesus is above all.... And is all..... and is all we need!

I was blessed to just slow down this week, and read, and reread, this glorious epistle. I read it 10 times, which was still only half of what I really wanted, and look forward to later today to just sit in front of the fire and read it several more times, and I encourage you to do the same.

The Outline

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is "doctrine" (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is "duty" how are we to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(Colossians 1:1 NKJV) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

(Colossians 1:2 NKJV) To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 1 - Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God

Since Paul will be addressing doctrine, he addresses himself as the "apostle of Jesus Christ". So he is speaking with his apostolic authority.

Now not all are called to be apostles, evangelist, or prophets. But whatever God has called you to be – be all of that. God has called men and women to every vocation in life. Has he called you to be a student, a clerk, a doctor, teacher, missionary, Sunday school worker, whatever it is be all that you can be in what He has called you to – For it is His will. Paul will tell us later in this book: *Colossians 3:23–24 (NKJV) ²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.*

Paul's first request for people as he prays for them is that we be filled with the knowledge of His will. We will only know the knowledge of His will, when we know the truth and obey the truth. We will study this in depth in a future study.

Colossians 1:9 (NKJV) ⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Verse 1 - and Timothy our brother,

Paul calls him the beloved son in the Lord. Timothy a companion of Paul, no one understood and was in harmony with Paul as was Timothy. How difficult it is to find people who have the same commitment and dedication to the Lord. How beautiful it is when God brings like-minded people together for the purpose of personal holiness, and reaching the lost and dying world around them. In our last study of this book, we will see brethren who have come alongside Paul and are ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Verse 2 - To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse:

Now heresy is creeping up in the church, he is writing to correct some of these heretical ideas; yet he writes to them as, saints, faithful, and in Christ. Saints aren't perfect and need Biblical truths so not to get fooled by the enemy.

Verse 2 - who are in Colosse:

Paul had never been to the church in Colosse and Laodicea, but most likely they were started as by-products of the church in Ephesus.

- Ephesus is only 75 miles from Colosse.
- This area was a meeting point of east and West because of an important trade route passed there.
- Colosse is about 25 miles southeast of Laodicea, it sat in the same circle as the seven churches in Revelation but it was not one of the seven.
- Today this would be modern day Turkey.
- This region was part of the Roman Empire, but the Greek culture was strong there, and there was a large Jewish colony there also.
- With this mix of Rome and Greek culture,
 - it was a center for heathenism, paganism, and the mystery religion.
 - This mystery religion, included the "exclusive spirit", in which they believed they had special knowledge that not everyone was privy to have (Paul refutes in Col 1:28).
 - They had the "speculative creation" in which they said God didn't create the universe (Paul refutes in Col 1:15-19 and 2:18).
 - And being so special, they felt they had a license to "unrestrained licentiousness" (Paul refutes this in Col 2:16,23 and 3:5-9).

So we have here a combination of Eastern philosophy, Jewish legalism, and the super spiritual. There was something for everybody, and this is what made it so dangerous. Paul brings the balance of the two dangers of being too ritualistic, or too liberal and philosophical.

There has always been the danger of adding something or subtracting something from Christ. The dominating thought in this epistle Christ is all. He is all I need; He is everything.

In this letter, Paul used the vocabulary of the false teachers, but he did not use their definitions. He used these words in their true Christian meaning. As we study Colossians, we will find words such as *fullness*, *perfect*, *complete*. all of which were used by the gnostic heretics. Over thirty times Paul used the little word *all*. He also wrote about *wisdom* which was a key term in the gnostic vocabulary; he had a great deal to say about angels and spirit powers too.

His main theme was *the preeminence of Jesus Christ* (Col. 1:18; 3:11). There is no need for us to worry about angelic mediators or spiritual emanations. God has sent His Son to die for us! Every person who believes on Jesus Christ is saved and is a part of His body, the church, of which He is the Head (Col 1:18). We are united to Christ in a wonderful living relationship!

Paul did not begin by attacking the false teachers and their doctrines. He began by exalting Jesus Christ and showing His preeminence in five areas:

1. the Gospel message,
2. redemption,
3. Creation,
4. the church,
5. and Paul's own ministry.

The people to whom Paul was writing had become Christians because of the Gospel message brought to them by Epaphras.

Colossians 1:7–8 (NKJV) ⁷ as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

If this message was wrong, then they were not saved at all! Once he had established the preeminence of Christ, then Paul attacked the heretics on their own ground. In Colossians 2, Paul exposed the false origin of their teachings and showed how their teachings contradicted everything Paul taught about Jesus Christ. The believer who masters this chapter is not likely to be led astray by some alluring and enticing “new-and-improved brand of Christianity

But Paul did not think his task completed when he had refuted the heretics, for he still had some important words for the church. In Colossians 3—4, Paul explained the greatest antidote to false teaching is a *godly life*. Those who say, “I don't care what you believe, just ‘as you live a good life’ are not thinking logically. *What we believe determines how we behave*. If we believe that matter is evil, we will use our bodies one way; but if we believe our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, will live accordingly.

Wrong doctrine always leads to wrong living. Right doctrine should lead to right living. In the two concluding chapters, Paul applied preeminence of Christ to the daily affairs life. If Christ is truly preeminent in our lives then we will glorify Him by keeping pure, by enjoying fellowship with other saints, by loving each other at home and being faithful work, and by seeking to witness for Christ serve Him effectively. Unless doctrine leads to duty, it is of no use to us.

The church today desperately needs the message of Colossians. We live in a day when religious toleration is interpreted to mean “one religion is just as good as another.” Some people try to take the best from various religious systems and manufacture their own private religion. To many people, Jesus Christ is only *one* of several great religious teachers, with no more authority than they. He may be prominent, but He is definitely not preeminent.

This is an age of “oneness” People are trying to harmonize and unite many different schools of thought and come up with a superior religion. Our evangelical churches are in danger of diluting the faith in their loving attempt to understand the beliefs of others. Mysticism, legalism, Eastern religions, asceticism, and man-made philosophies are secretly creeping into churches. They are not denying Christ, but they are dethroning Him and robbing Him of His rightful place of preeminence.

As we study this exciting letter, we must heed Paul's warnings: “Lest any man should beguile you” (Col. 2:4), “Lest any man spoil you” (Col. 2:8), “Let no man therefore judge you!” (Col. 2:16)

Colossians 2:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

Colossians 2:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Colossians 2:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Getting Back on Track

This book of Colossians is one of the those messages that has certain troves in it that is desperately needed today, because of the tendency today, as I would say in every age, since it was the tendency back then to get off track, to get off center, to swerve other emphases. It's always a danger for God's people to get off of what is most important and get sidetracked on important issues that aren't the most important issues, and they can take precedence over that which is all important, as we will see tonight.

I remember when I was in college or working out of state and be driving back home to visit my parents, and I would find myself driving on the freeway, falling asleep, swerving off, only to be caught by those little markers that are little bumps. So your tires are going, and I would wake up. It's a good thing, because on the other side of those bumps was at least a 30 foot drop. So it just showed me, hey, stay awake so that you can get to your destination. I see that as a real issue then, 2,000 years ago, when this was written, and today.

Now, the dominant theme of this book is to keep Jesus Christ dead center, right in the middle of your life, for a Christian He is it, He is everything, He is the pinnacle, nothing else matters as much as Him. That cannot be overstated, and Paul certainly states it over and over again in this letter.

Because there is winds of doctrine that blow from time to time. There is other voices out there telling me, well, it's good that you have Jesus Christ, but you need more than Him, it's not quite enough. It's great that you are a Christian, but if you only experienced what we have experienced in our group, or if you only had the special knowledge that we have in this other group, you would be so much further ahead than you are know.

And I have discovered from reading Colossians, that it's not some new experience or some new revelation, what I need is a fresh experience of the old revelation, of the most important revelation, which is Christ. In fact, what Paul would say is this, and we will amplify it as we go through it tonight, "If you have Jesus Christ, you have it all, you don't need anything else."

How the Church Began:

Over time Colosse gradually turned into a small town, yet the church in this small town was important enough to merit the attention of the Apostle Paul. Thus an important application for us, a church is a church, an important whether it is 3000, 300, 30, or 3, cause the Lord is ministering to all of them.

How did the Colossian church begin? It was the outgrowth of Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19; 20:17-38). So effective was the witness of the church at Ephesus that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). This would include people in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis

When we examine the persons involved in the prison correspondence of Paul (see Ephesians., Philippians., Colossians., Philemon., **and** 2 Tim.), we can just about put the story together of how the Colossian church was founded. During Paul's ministry in Ephesus, at least two men from Colossae were brought to faith in Jesus Christ—Epaphras and Philemon (see Philemon. 19). Epaphras apparently was one of the key founders of the church in Colossae, for he shared the Gospel with his friends there (Col. 1:7). He also had a ministry in the cities of Hierapolis and Laodicea (Col. 4:12-13).

Philemon had a church meeting in his **home** (Philemon. 2). It is likely that Apphia and Archippus, mentioned in this verse, were respectively the wife and son of Philemon, and that Archippus (Col. 4:17).

There is a good lesson for us here: God does not always need an apostle, or a "full-time Christian worker" to get a ministry established. Nor does He need elaborate buildings and extensive organizations. Here were two laymen who were used of God to start ministries in at least three cities. It is God's plan that the Christians in the large urban areas like Ephesus reach out into the smaller towns and share the Gospel. Is *your* church helping to evangelize "small-town" mission fields?

So Epharatus was the Pastor or a leader of the church in Colosse, and he visited Paul while he was in prison. He related some of the dangerous heresies that were spreading the area of Colosse. So Paul is writing the epistle to correct these heresies that were becoming popular in that area.

Verse 2 - Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A love letter from the Father to His beloved children. The year was somewhere around 62-64AD and four messengers left Rome unobserved, each carrying a scroll, at the time just ink on paper, not realizing what they would mean to the world for the next 2000 years. Words of hope, words of love, all from a creator outside our time domain, but active and interested in every little detail of our life. The four prison epistles:

- Tychicus was carrying the Epistle to the Ephesians over in Ephesus where he was the pastor or church leader.
- Epaphroditus was carrying the Epistle to the Philippians as he was the pastor in Philippi.
- Epaphras was carrying the Epistle to the Colossians.
- Onesimus was carrying the Epistle to Philemon. Philemon was his master and Onesimus, who had run away, was returning to him.

The four are companion epistles and together have been called the anatomy of the church. We can see that the subjects of these epistles cover all aspects of the Christian faith:

- Ephesians is about the body of believers called the church, of which Christ is the head.
- Philippians shows the church walking here on earth. Christian living is the theme; it is being on the outside of the circle looking in where Christ is the center, and how we can have a mind like Him. Philippians emphasizes the “kenosis”; Christ becoming a servant
- Colossians directs our attention to the head of the body who is Christ. The body itself is secondary. Christ is the theme. He is the center of the circle around which all Christian living revolves. Colossians emphasizes the “pleroma”; Christ is the fullness of God.
- Philemon gives us Christianity in action. We would say it is where the rubber meets the road. It demonstrates Christianity worked out in a Christ rejecting world.

We can see why these four documents have been called the anatomy of the church – they belong together to make a whole.

Grace to you and peace / The Gospel

Man will never have peace with God, until first they have accepted His grace, the gift of the cross. Man will never have peace in his life, until he first has peace with God.

- **G – God** - is Holy, which means He is perfect and pure, and cannot look on sin (impurity) – Habakkuk 1:13
- **R – Right** - Only the Right, those who have done no wrong, can come into His presence – Romans 3:10, Romans 3:20
- **A – All** – All have sinned (wronged) and fall short of His glory (perfection) – Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23.
- **C – Christ** - (means sent one), as God gave (sent) His Only Son to take our penalty for sin – John 3:16
- **E – Everlasting Life for Everyone** that asks for forgiveness, says they are sorry for their sin against the Holy God, and turns and follows Him (repentance means to turn and follow). – Romans 10:8-13, Romans 2:4

Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV) ¹³ You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

Romans 3:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;

Romans 3:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:23 (NKJV) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 (NKJV) ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Romans 10:8–13 (NKJV) ⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

Romans 2:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Conclusion

Today in our world, knowledge has increased greatly, in fulfillment of prophecy in Daniel chapter 12

(Daniel 12:4 NKJV) "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

It has spilled over to the church. People are having trouble today digging into the doctrine and truths. People today no longer want to engage the mind, and grasp deep truths, and to chew on the meat of the Word. Things have changed, really changed, from substance to stimulus.

People today are just not into the foundational stuff, so we have a church today with Christians who won't dig into the truths of the Word of God. The church in Colosse was facing the same thing, they were turning from the truth to stimulus. They were being invaded by untruths, and being caught up in touchy-feely philosophy. Heresy was creeping into the church, and Paul was writing to crush it with the truth before it got a foothold. In this letter to the church in Colosse and Laodicea (Col 4:16) Paul is going to deal with what they really need to hear. Paul is going to argue for the truth, for Colosse was in a battle over the truth. Paul wants them to be grounded in truth and focused on the truth.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon told of the time when, in the glory days of Rome, during a severe famine in the North African colonies, Nero sent Roman galleons to the stricken area. When the starving people saw the ships on the horizon, they rejoiced greatly, saying, 'Caesar has sent the ships! They're on the way! There's hope for us!' And then Spurgeon recounted the tragic end of the story. For when the ships sailed into port, the North Africans discovered they were full of sawdust to lay on the floor of the circuses Rome was exporting to the colonies. The people longed for food and got sawdust. They craved substance but got a circus. Truly, what they needed in North Africa — and what we need as believers in our day is neither sawdust nor circuses but food: meat, doctrine, truth. And in Colossians, we get it.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

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- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

End of Study

Passage: Colossians 1:3-5

Title: Faith, Hope, and Love – The Marks of Christ and His Church

Book Theme – Preeminence of Christ

The Church in Colosse (which was located in the area we know as Turkey), was greatly distracted, and thus greatly divided, as they were embracing, focusing on, errant and wasteful things; the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing's of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them). Paul is writing to correct their errancy of doctrine, and to bring them back to making Jesus Christ first and foremost in their lives personally and their church corporately.

Paul will make this (preeminence of Christ) the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

4409 πρωτεύω [proteuo /prote-yoo-o/] v. From 4413; TDNT 6:881; TDNTA 965; GK 4750; AV translates as “have the preeminence” once. 1 to be first, hold the first place.

Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

The Outline

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is “doctrine” (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is “duty” how are we to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Today's Passage

Colossians 1:1–5 (NKJV) ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

Title

Title: Faith, Hope, and Love – The Marks of Christ and His Church

Overview of Today's Passage

In our passage today Paul brings to the forefront the three marks of a solid Christian church, (faith, hope, and love); he is reminding them of where they began, and he is refreshing their memory of “The Three”, so we never forget them, nor drift from them. Before I pray and start our study today, I would like for us to read devotionally (with warmth and passion), the “love” chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, and let it shape our study today:

1 Corinthians 13:1–13 (NKJV) ¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I

have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. ¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Colossians 1:3 (NKJV) ³We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

Paul is writing to correct some wrongs in the church, but he doesn't start with the Holy Ghost Gun, he starts with what is good, he starts with commending them on their faith, love and hope. This is a good point for us to glean, I think we so often can always point out the wrong in others, and forget to point out the good, thus missing the opportunity to encourage them and strengthen them before we correct them.

By the way, errancy doesn't mean they are not saved. Now heresy is creeping up in the church, he is writing to correct some of these heretical ideas; yet he writes to them as, saints, faithful, and in Christ. Saints aren't perfect and need Biblical truths so not to get fooled by the enemy. Sometimes I hear amazing music on the Christian radio, and then read the doctrinal statement of the church that wrote the music, and see it full of errors, maybe even heresy, and I say how in the world did they write such worship music. So I remind myself of Colosse, I remind myself that a saint can be a saint, saved, yet still need correcting to their errancy.

Colossians 1:2 (NKJV) ² To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul gives thanks for them, he genuinely does, because they are on his heart. They are on his heart, because he prays for them. He can love them, give thanks for them, and not come at them with a heavy hand and harsh word, because he is praying for them. God will give us a heart for the person or people when we pray for them, rather than become critical of their wrongs and ills, our heart will break from them and the state they are in, because You can't pray for someone, true heart connected prayer to God for someone, without your heart connecting to them. Imagine a cross without a garden.... The two are inseparable, the heart of Jesus being knitted to the people:

Luke 22:41-44 (NKJV) ⁴¹ And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." ⁴³ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Here is Jesus prayer for us..... there is wondering what Jesus prays for us, He recorded it so we know exactly how He prays for us, and what His desire is for us, and thus how we should be praying for others.

John 17:20–26 (NKJV) ²⁰ “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. ²⁴ “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. ²⁶ And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

We see Paul giving thanks for the believers in Colosse, (even though they were mixed up in some errancy and it was causing serious issues in the church and amongst each other) – because without a doubt, he loved them because through prayer his heart was knot to them. May we be and do the same!

Can I ask you a question? Is there anything based on what the Lord has just spoke to us about that may be needed to adjust how we have been praying, or maybe just not praying for other believers?

(Colossians 1:4 NKJV) since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints;

v.4: Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus . . .

The Church at Colossae was characterized by three qualities; faith, love and hope. These are the three marks of any solid church.

The **first** mark of a mature fellowship is faith. Because it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6)

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) ⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

If a church gathers together without believing God is going to do great things, that church will not move into renewal, revival, or blessing. If people can go to church week in and week out, yet not believe that God can change their life, help their marriage, control their flesh, then they are not pleasing God and are a faithless church. If a church can sit in the midst of a lost and dying world, and believe that they cannot make a difference, then they are not pleasing the Lord. God wants to move, God wants to work in people's lives – both inside the church, and outside the church through the people of the church.

Sometimes I catch myself saying what are you doing, why would anyone come.....then it always comes flooding back, “it's a venture in faith”. A bunch of nobodies in Pasadena Maryland start a work and things start happening, everybody will know it was the Lord. I know the Lord loves the people in this county, and He wants to reach them, and touch them – and if it is not me (not us) it will be someone else.

I remember several years ago doing street ministry in California. We were done and heading back to our meeting point with the others who went – I think it was a Pizza Hut. As I came up, I saw a police officer putting a couple people in the back of his car, and I saw the friend of the two getting arrested just standing there (he was not being arrested). I suppose it was their night out for partying that got a little out of hand. As I approached, and the police car pulled off, I said I should go talk to him, then I said no he is not going to be in any mood to hear. So I walked into the Pizza Hut, and when I came back out my one friend was out there sharing with him, and the guy was listening, hanging on every word. Now my friend wasn't cool (as the world would categorize), compared to the guy he was witnessing they were almost opposites. But it didn't matter with the Lord because tonight was this man's night. The man had to call his sister or

girlfriend to come pick him up, and as she pulled up, he ran to her car saying check this out (holding a tract) remember we were just talking about this stuff, come over and listen to him.

As I watched from a distance, God spoke to me, almost audibly. He said, if not you, then I use somebody else.

A simple definition of faith comes from Hebrews,
Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV) ¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

That is truly what the beginning of a church is, it is hoping and believing in ministering to people you haven't even seen or met yet.

I believe God purposefully makes it difficult to establish and maintain churches, to weed out the faithless. God doesn't need another social club that uses His name for a tax break. God wants to build health clubs that restores bodies, and strengthens them.

If a church gathers together without believing God is going to do great things, that church will not move into renewal, revival, or blessing. I like what God has already done, can't wait to see more.

v.4: . . . and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

The **second** mark of a strong church is love — defined nowhere more clearly than by Jesus when He said,

John 13:35 (NKJV) ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

I love it when we all get together, smiles on faces, hugs, ahh we say, it is so good to see you. The breath of fresh air we are to each other in this world, in this week that sometimes feels like a drought.

Psalms 133 (NKJV) A Song of Ascents. Of David. ¹ Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* For brethren to dwell together in unity! ² *It is* like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. ³ *It is* like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing— Life forevermore.

It is so beautiful when brethren get together to love the Lord and one another.

Ever see the day after Thanksgiving, 100's of people lining up outside of Walmart, Best Buys, just waiting for them to open. The world should be lining up outside churches just waiting for them to open because the church has what everybody wants – love. Our loving one another is the great unspoken witness to the world. The Amish have a saying, “if all else fails, use words.”

I remember my first mission trip to Russia in 1993. We were teaching the Inductive Bible Study Method there over 4 day seminars. We had about 50-60 students and over 4 days you can imagine the relationships that were made. Well after the last day we had to catch a train to our next city late in the evening around 9-10pm. The station was about an hour away from where we taught, so we said good bye to everyone, had a graduation party....it was beautiful. Being American we could afford to rent a taxi to get us down there, so we get there, load our stuff onto the train, and then a couple people from the class show up. They walked, hopped several different buses, taking an hour to get there to say goodbye - all in the snow I might add. So we hop off the train and we out on the platform, and then here come another 10, another 20, I believe every last person came to say goodbye. It was so beautiful. So Pastor Ted said lets pray, as we say goodbye. So we all hold hands in this huge circle, and pray – there was barely enough room for the rest of the passengers to get through the door of the train. I remember looking up, and snow was falling across the dim lights of the night, and then Igor starts to sing a praise song. So here is 50-60 people holding hands, singing praise to the Lord as the snow fell through the dim lights of the night. Then the most amazing thing happened, a Russian hockey team arrived to get on the same train. As they approached the platform, they all got in a single file line, big duffel bags filled with hockey gear, and slowly and quietly slipped by us to not disrupt what was going

on. It was beautiful, then when we were done I turned to the train, and every window was down, and people were leaning out watching in silence. We were able to share the gospel that night with the woman who was the train conductor of our boxcar.

Behold how good and how pleasant it is, when brethren dwell together in unity.

(Colossians 1:5 NKJV) because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

Finally, a solid Fellowship will have “hope in its heart”, which is constantly focused on the eternal. The absolute expectation of coming good, hope says, 'Sure it's tough down here, but this is the worst it's ever gonna be. The coming of Jesus Christ is nigh. Life is short. We're going to heaven!'

Hope, is proportionate to faith. The deeper your faith, the more the hope of heaven will be in your heart. The reason being, if you are not focusing on heaven then you will be focusing on earth, and the cares of the world will suck away the hope of heaven – because your mind will not be thinking of heaven, but how do I get through another day here.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The deeper we grow in the Word, the deeper our faith will be, and the greater our eyes will be fixed on Jesus, and the clearer we will see Him high and lift up, seated on the throne – saying I have a place prepared for you, just a little while longer, finish what I've called you to do down there.

When you are in the Word, and have the hope of heaven, so much so that you can see Jesus seated on the throne as if you were right there.....you will overhear conversations in heaven.

It is interesting in Isaiah 6:8, the Lord said whom shall I send.

Isaiah 6:8–9 (NKJV) ⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” ⁹ And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

Do you notice that the Lord wasn't talking to Isaiah, he was talking to someone else, Isaiah overheard the conversation? God told Philip to go Gaza (Acts 8:26), He told Peter to go to the Gentiles (Acts 10), yet here He is asking who we can send, who will go, and Isaiah responds. Isaiah was in the presence of the God, and he overheard the call, and realized there was nothing else for him to do but in conscious freedom say, here I am send me. God will not come to person with compulsions and pleadings in order we respond – ever. God may call, or He may let you overhear, but then He will allow the Spirit to work on your heart and honor your freewill.

If we let the Spirit of God bring us face to face with God, we too shall hear things like Isaiah heard.

The hope of heaven will translate into our actions here on earth, and our actions for the King here on earth will translate us into heaven.

Conclusion

I firmly believe that a church, family, or individual who is focused on faith, love, and hope will be stable, solid, seasoned.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)

- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
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Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

End of Study

Passage: Colossians 1:6
Title: The Christian Benchmark: Fruit

Colossians 1:3–6 (NKJV) ³ We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as *it has* also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

(Colossians 1:6 NKJV) which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

If it says the gospel had come to the whole world, therefore I believe he meant the whole world.

It is a gospel of grace, noting that can be earned, simply received by faith. People hear it, and believe it (knew it is the truth).

It goes to the whole world, that means anyone here to \day, anyone “hears” today, God invite you to a personal relationship. Gospel means Good News, and that is the Good News, God loves you, so much so He took the punishment of you breaking His Holy Law (that is what sin is – it is breaking God’s Law – lying, stealing, lusting, using Lord’s name in vain – see Exodus 20).

John 3:16–21 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

Bringing Forth Fruit

And is “bringing forth fruit”, to those who receive the gospel, and those there at the church in Colosse.

Fruit – Mark of Believer

Fruit of the gospel is the mark of a believer; fruit is the proof of the gospel in a person’s life. Jesus said you will “know them” by their fruit. Jesus will also say that any branch that does not bear fruit is not attached to Him, and will be thrown into the fire.

Matthew 7:15–20 (NKJV) ¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

John 15:1–13 (NKJV) ¹ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. ⁹ “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

Deceitful Heart

The Bible says, the heart is deceitful. But the Lord promises to search the heart, to show man his own heart, to use fruit as the proof of salvation.

Jeremiah 17:8–10 (NKJV) ⁸ For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit. ⁹

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? ¹⁰ I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

True & False Conversion/Transformation

What I am going to share today is “true and false conversions”. Conversion means transformation..... a life that is transformed from the old to the new.

- Why is divorce, alcohol and drug addiction, immorality, and abortion are so prevalent within the church today. Are our churches really filled with true believers?
- D. James Kennedy said, “The vast majority of people who are members of churches in America today are not Christians. I say that without the slightest fear of contradiction. I base it on empirical evidence of 24 years of examining thousands of people.”
- A. W. Tozer said, “It is my opinion that tens of thousands, if not millions, have been brought into some kind of religious experience by accepting Christ and they have not been saved.”
- And, of course, Jesus warned that on the Day of Judgment, many would come to Him and say, “Lord, Lord,” and He will say, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you worker of iniquity” (Matthew 7:22,23). That word “iniquity” means “lawlessness.”

We are told when a person receives Christ as Lord and Savior, that Christ takes up residence within the person (Col 1, 1 Cor 3); and we are told the same power that raised Jesus from the grave (that is the mighty resurrection power) lives in us (Eph 1). The question has to be asked, begged, if Christ and His power lives in a person, is speaking to the person of personal sin, how can it be that a person can continue to live in sin, have no sorrow for sin and no desire to turn from sin (2 Cor 7), and say they have no power to overcome sin if the resurrection power lives in them (Eph 1:19-20). Does Christ live in them? Jesus gives us the answer to this question by saying, you will know them by their fruit.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Matthew 7:15–20 (NKJV) ¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV) ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Romans 8:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ¹⁰ And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Ephesians 1:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Colossians 1:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Well Done Good & Faithful Servant

And for those that you are sure that you are sure, there is a reason to be sure that you are investing wisely, that your heart is not deceiving you by being wrapped up in this world and not

the world to come. It is “well done good and faithful servant, you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things”. What does that mean, to hear those words after this life as we stand before Him, when will we rule with Him? The answer is, we will rule with Him in what is called the “Millennial (1,000) Kingdom”, it will be after the “Tribulation Period”, when Christ sets up His Kingdom on earth and will rule and reign from Jerusalem for 1,000 years. Yes you heard me correctly, 1,000 years, and we will rule with Him for those 1,000 years. See Revelation chapter 20. And what we do for those 1,000 years will all be based on what we did here and now, hence Matthew 25.

Matthew 25:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

Matthew 25:24–30 (NKJV) ²⁴ “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷ So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. ²⁹ ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Revelation 20:1–6 (NKJV) ¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Fruit Knows

You will know them by their fruit Jesus said; thus the fruit we are producing will be a true indicator on true or false conversion, and fruit (producing and investing) will be a good indicator am I investing wisely with the talents and time that I have in the world to come, or the things of the world here.

Not Talking Sinless

Am I saying a genuine convert never sins? Of course not! A Christian, every Christian, has a battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil. And sometimes he does fall into sin, but that’s the point: he falls into sin, while the hypocrite, the false convert, dives into sin.

The Scriptures specify several types of fruit.

- Matthew 3:8 says bear fruits worthy of Repentance
- Hebrews 12:11 says that Righteousness is a fruit:
- Romans 6:22 says that Holiness is a fruit:
- Hebrews 13:15 names Praises as a fruit.
- Galatians 5 describes the fruit of the Spirit
- Colossians 1:10 labels Good Works a fruit:
- Romans 15 calls Financial Giving a fruit:
- Roman 1:13 says that Soul-winning is a fruit:

Matthew 3:8 says bear fruits worthy of repentance:

Matthew 3:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

If we are soundly saved, we will have evidence of repentance. There will be a proof of a changed life. Zacchaeus said, “Behold, Lord, I give half my goods to the poor; and if I have wronged anyone, I will pay back fourfold” (Luke 19:8).

Luke 19:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”

First words of Jesus public ministry, was the very word repent, and the ministry of John the Baptist was a ministry of the calling to repentance. Churches today are leaving that out of the gospel, and thus are making false converts:

Matthew 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.*”

Matthew 3:1–2 (NKJV) ¹ *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”*

The scriptures are clear, without repentance (turning away from sin) there is no forgiveness (sending away) of sin.

Luke 13:1–9 (NKJV) ¹ There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? ³ I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” ⁶ He also spoke this parable: “A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ ⁸ But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize *it*. ⁹ And if it bears fruit, *well*. But if not, after that you can cut it down.’”

Acts 2:38 (NKJV) ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 3:19–20 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

Romans 2:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

2 Corinthians 7:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. ¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

So Two Things for Evaluation:

- **Depart From Me:** *Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV)* ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’
- **Well Done Good and Faithful Servant:** *Matthew 25:20–21 (NKJV)* ²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

Hebrews 12:11 says that righteousness is a fruit:

Hebrews 12:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

In Isaiah, a Messianic prophecy that Jesus quoted when He started His public ministry (Luke 4:18), calls us to become and be, trees of righteousness:

Isaiah 61:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, ³ To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

Luke 4:18–19 (NKJV) ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

So a fruit to be born has to be the fruit of righteousness. Righteousness in its simplest definition means “right standing with God”. Our sin has been judged at the cross, and we can now approach the Holy God and be received by His loving arms. Righteousness is being guiltless before the Holy God, and that can only be through the finished work of Christ on the cross.

How do we apply this daily, once we are saved? Righteousness once we are saved takes on another dimension, and that a continual contact with our Creator. Although we will never be separated from Him physically (damned to hell), sin in our lives will cause separation from fellowship with the Lord.

We were created to fellowship with God, sin soils our fellowship with Him:

(Revelation 4:11 KJV) Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

How do apply this daily, once we are saved. It is that continual right standing before Him – the confession of sin in our life. If I wrong someone, then there is a friction, a tension between us, until we clear this thing up. If I do not say I am wrong, and just go on my way thinking all is well, I deceive myself because next time I am in that persons presence, to them we still have something to clear up, and until we do we cannot move forward in our relationship

1 John 1:8–9 (NKJV) ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Confession means to “Agree with”. We agree that we have offended the Holy God. We agree His ways are right and we went against His ways in either thoughts or actions.

The joy of being clean and forgiven:

John 15:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments

So Two Things for Evaluation:

- **Depart From Me:** *Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV) ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’*
- **Well Done Good and Faithful Servant:** *Matthew 25:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

Romans 6:22 says that holiness is a fruit:

(Romans 6:22 NKJV) But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have **your fruit to holiness**, and the end, everlasting life.

(Ephesians 5:9 NKJV) (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

Holiness means to be set apart.

Righteousness and holiness are so close, yet so different. Righteousness – Right Standing, once we are right, then we can be set apart for the Master both in fellowship and in use.

Your life begins to take on a new wholeness, not eroded by sin, not wiped out by the world. Holiness begins to grow in you, and a new wholesomeness begins to be worked out through you. Holiness means “purification”, and “sanctification”, we are set apart for God. An easy self-examination is this, Lord how am I doing in terms of keeping your Word? Lord how different am I now compared to before I was saved.

(Romans 6:21 NKJV) What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

When I first got saved, for the first six months only me and the Lord knew I was saved. I was right before Him, but not set apart for Him. My lifestyle bore and shown no fruit.

Holiness is a healthy fear of the Lord. Loving the Lord will make you fear doing anything that would hurt Him.

(1 Th 4:7 NKJV) For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

1 Peter 1:15–16 (NKJV) ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

The test is how am I doing in terms of being set apart from my old life, and old ways. Am I still doing the same things I use, am I an instrument in the Masters hand.

So Two Things for Evaluation:

- **Depart From Me:** *Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV) ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’*
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Hebrews 13:15 names praises as a fruit.

Giving thanks to the Lord is fruit in His eyes

Hebrews 13:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

Praises to God not only come in the form of worship, but during our prayer time of just giving Him thanks, also when we just tell people how great He is – and I’m not talking witnessing, but general conversation of my how good the Lord has been to me.

Pastor Malcolm told a story about a man that came to him and said, no offense Pastor, but your worship team just doesn’t do anything for me. Malcolm said to Him, did you ever consider that worship isn’t about you, it to Him and about Him.....he said ohh yea, thanks now I get it.

Praise to God is a fruit, and indicator, because it becomes a natural outflow of the gift of the gospel of grace, the overflowing joy of being forgiven, and given eternal life, and the praise for being set apart, pulled out of the miry clay and having our feet (life) set upon the solid rock (Jesus Christ) in the midst of a sinking and fading world.

Psalm 40:2–3 (NKJV) ² He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps. ³ He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the LORD.

So Two Things for Evaluation:

- **Depart From Me:** *Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV) ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’*
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Galatians 5 describes the fruit of the Spirit

The needs to loving relationships.

Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV) ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

If we do not exercise these fruits of the Spirit, exhibit these fruits of the Spirit, we are not loving our neighbor. We can justify it away – ohh he cut me off, ohh their dog dumped in my yard, ohh they took my parking space, I can't believe they just said that to me or about me, we can justify it away, but the fact is we are not loving our neighbor.

If Christ lives in us, we should therefore exhibit that in our daily lives:

Colossians 1:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ *To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

Forgive them Father, He said as He hung on the cross, for they know not what they do.

Luke 23:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.*

I ask you, how many of the fruit of the Spirit did Jesus display that day of the cross.

Love - *Luke 23:34 (NKJV)* ³⁴ *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.*

Joy - *Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV)* ² *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Peace – *Luke 23:43 (NKJV)* ⁴³ *And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

Patience – *Matthew 26:40–41 (NKJV)* ⁴⁰ *Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?" ⁴¹ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

Kindness – *John 19:26–27 (NKJV)* ²⁶ *When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.*

Goodness – *John 3:16–17 (NKJV)* ¹⁶ *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

Faithfulness – *Matthew 26:42 (NKJV)* *Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."*

Gentleness – *Matthew 26:53–54 (NKJV)* ⁵³ *Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"*

Self-Control – Instead of doing what was best for Him, calling fire down from heaven, never yelling out I'll be back, not jumping off the cross and saying who wants a piece of me, or jumping down and saying ok – I will prophecy – you hit me, you hit me and you. Instead of quitting, instead of saying forget it, Ray Bollas just isn't worth all this. I'm naked, I'm in pain, humiliated, he isn't worth it – Instead He said, It is Finished.

John 19:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ *So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*

So Two Things for Evaluation:

- **Depart From Me:** *Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV)* ²¹ *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*
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Colossians 1:10 labels good works a fruit:

The works of God become our interest, because we are becoming like Jesus.

(Colossians 1:10 NKJV) that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Serving others is a fruit, it is the natural outcome of Holiness. It is what Jesus demonstrated.

(John 4:34 NKJV) Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

John 9:4-5 (NKJV) ⁴ I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Good works cannot save a person, good works simply reveal the changed life that come with salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV) ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Doing Good works can happen anywhere, we need not have to go far to do good works. At home, school, play, or the workplace, we have plenty of opportunity daily to do good works.

Helping someone I might also point out, a piece of fruit has no say in who picks it or who eats it. And so too it is with us, we are to give our fruit away freely with no conditions attached. Helping someone and figuring they owe us one is not fruit, probably the greatest blessings come when we help someone who has no ability to ever pay us back, this includes the financial fruit too.

So Two Things for Evaluation:

- **Depart From Me:** *Matthew 7:21-23 (NKJV) ²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*
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Romans 15 calls financial giving a fruit:

Just like the works of God become our interest, because we are becoming like Jesus. So too does giving.

The church in Jerusalem, because of their persecution, was so poor, that the Apostle Paul was taking up a collection to take to them so that they might have money just to buy food.

*(Romans 15:26-28 NKJV) For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them **this fruit**, I shall go by way of you to Spain.*

I know sometimes it is hard to write that check, but we have to remember financial giving is a fruit. Sacrificial giving means to give to something greater than yourself.

Just like the works of God become our interest, because we are becoming like Jesus. So too does giving.

Matthew 6:19-21 (NKJV) ¹⁹ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

It has been determined that if every believer tithed, then within one year every church building would be paid-off, and every hungry person in the world would be fed. Financial giving is a fruit.

So Two Things for Evaluation:

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Roman 1:13 says that soul-winning is a fruit:

Paul said “I wish to come to Rome that I might have fruit among you” - or, see souls saved. I believe this because of the context it is said; Paul immediately goes into that powerful verse on preaching the gospel

Romans 1:13–16 (NKJV) ¹³ Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. ¹⁴ I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. ¹⁵ So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

And we can see the same in the context of Proverbs:

Proverbs 11:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise.

I find it interesting how these 7 fruits cover the greatest command, love the Lord and love people *Matthew 22:34–40 (NKJV)* ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

So Two Things for Evaluation:

- **Depart From Me:** *Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV)* ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’
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Conclusion

So are we fruitful, we have benchmarks to examine ourselves by. I think it is a good idea to lay these fruit out in our devotion time each day and say “God how’s my fruit in these area, what type of fruit have I been producing? If little or none, then change me Lord; if lots, then Praise you Lord, lets do more.

The Scriptures specify several types of fruit.

- Matthew 3:8 says bear fruits worthy of Repentance
- Hebrews 12:11 says that Righteousness is a fruit:
- Romans 6:22 says that Holiness is a fruit:
- Hebrews 13:15 names Praises as a fruit.
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- Roman 1:13 says that Soul-winning is a fruit:

So Two Things for Evaluation:

- **Depart From Me:** *Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV)* ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’
- **Well Done Good and Faithful Servant:** *Matthew 25:20–21 (NKJV)* ²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

End of Study

Passage: Colossians 1:7-11
Title: Paul's Prayer for the Body

Paul is going to show and instruct the power of specific prayer.

Going for the Gold

The 1980 Olympic hockey was probably the greatest sports event in the history of the USA. The country was in a great crisis with the oil crisis (getting gas was like getting toilet paper at the beginning of this COVID pandemic), inflation was crushing the economy, the Iran hostage crisis had just begun, and the great American military was impotent to do anything about it, and Russia, as they became known as the Russian Bear, had invaded Afghanistan and the world was powerless to do anything about it. The cold war with Russia was bitter cold, Jimmy Carter was president and didn't have an answer for it, this was before Ronald Reagan's strong stance against Russia. America was in a depressed state and everyone felt it. Bring on the Olympics and hockey spoke a strong political statement, the Russians rule. The Russian hockey team had won the last 4 Olympics. The rule of Olympics was amateurs only, so for Russia their team was basically a state sponsored team that was paid as professionals, and most of the team had played and skated together for several years, not like the American team that would skate and play together for only several months. The average age of the USA team was 22, basically all the players were college kids, and of course not one of them every played in the NHL. And to boot, the games were played on American soil up there in Lake Placid New York. Well on a Friday night in February, those kids did the unthinkable, and they beat the greatest's hockey team in the world, the Russians (who by the way just a few months before beat the NHL All-stars in an exhibition game series). A bunch of kids shocked the world, it became known as the "Miracle on Ice". The USA was stirred, the country came alive, all because of a bunch of kids and a hockey game. But as it was said to them, as thousands upon thousands of telegrams were sent to them before the game from around the country by Americans cheering them, they beat the Russians; that was way more than a game at this point, it was American pride and honor.

But most forget, the game wasn't for the gold medal. The winner would play for the gold medal two days later against Finland. Before that game the head coach told the American players, if you lose this game you will take it to the grave with you. Anything less than the gold at that point would have been a great disappointment, it would have diminished the "miracle on ice". The USA would come from behind in the 3rd period and beat the Fins 4-2. I remember it well as I can still remember watching it that early Sunday morning in February 1980 as a teenager.

I am sensing and feeling, that many Christians are forgetting we may have beat "THE BEAR", the Devil, but there is still a gold medal round to be played. Yes truly the ultimate victory is the victory in our lives of salvation, receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior, but I hope you see what I am trying to instill here, there is still way more to come after salvation! I sense, I fear, most Christians, most of the American church, lulling into the place "I'm saved, I beat the Bear", but church there is so much more hockey to play, we are skating and playing for the gold medal. Don't settle for the silver medal!

I want to hear, last week's message, well done good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, receive ye the gold medal (Ray's emphasis added).

Matthew 25:20-21 (NKJV) ²⁰ "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' ²¹ His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Paul is going to pray for the church of Colosse, which had errors and issues, and as we study this prayer, we see prayers that are laser focused, prayers that I will tell you will cut through all the stuff of the world, of the flesh, and the Devil. Pray it for yourself, pray it for your spouse, pray it for your church family who is too weak and tired to pray it for themselves, and..... oh and..... pray it for the prodigals

5 points to Paul's prayer:

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v.9)
2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)
3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)
4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)
5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

Let's pray.

For context lets go back to verse three and start there.

(Colossians 1:3 NKJV) We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

Ask anybody that works in the Post Office, address is everything. You can have great content in your letter, the right postage, even a return address, but the addressee is everything. Slow down in prayer time and start your prayer by focusing on whom you are praying to. For us the address means who am I able to call upon for help, who am I privileged to pray to. Problems can become so big in our life, that all we can see is our problem. From the waking of the morning there it is, and the restlessness of night they will haunt you in your sleep. For as vast as our God is, our problem can be so overwhelming to us that it blinds us from seeing his power. Address is everything, it puts the power before the problem.

(Colossians 1:4 NKJV) since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints;

Do you notice what Paul says here, He prays for what is good in their life. I encourage you to do the same thing. When you hear something good about someone, pray for them. My tendency is to pray for those I hear are hurting or back-sliding. That is needed indeed, but it's also vital to pray for people who are doing well because the enemy will inevitably launch an attack against them in order to destroy their witness and tear down their testimony. Be like Paul. When you hear or see someone doing well, thank the Lord for him and intercede on his behalf to keep them strong and doing well.

(Colossians 1:5 NKJV) because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

(Colossians 1:6 NKJV) which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

(Colossians 1:7 NKJV) as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,

(Colossians 1:8 NKJV) who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

I like Epaphras. He goes around speaking good things. He says, 'I have good news about great things happening with those guys in Colossae.'

I want to be like Epaphras — talking about how great someone is behind his or her back, for not only does this please the Lord, but it has an impact on me as well. How? To a very real degree, you are who I say you are when you're not around. You see, if all of you leave here tonight and, on your way home, talk about what an idiot I am, I will become that person to you the next time we meet. Talk negatively about me, and, even if those things are not totally true, that's what I will become in your sight. On the other hand, if you speak well of a person behind his back, that is the way you will tend to view him. The next time you see him, you will approach him with an entirely different mindset than if you had come down on him.

The power of words is awesome. For that reason, we must be very careful. Gossip good stuff. That's what Epaphras did.

(Colossians 1:9 NKJV) For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Although Paul had never been to Colosse, what he heard about the believers there caused his heart to rejoice and to respond by praying continual blessing upon them. This letter was written at the same time the Ephesian epistle was written, around 64AD – during Paul's first imprisonment, yet he is praying for others.

Again, Know the things of this prayer, and you will know truth; the truth was under attack at Colosse, just as it is today in our society. These are the important issues. These are the issues of eternity. So if you want to know how to pray for your kids, grandchildren, parents, or husband — listen to Paul pray.

5 points to Paul's prayer:

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v.9)
2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)
3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)
4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)
5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v9)

Now last study we saw that the will of God is for us to love the Lord and our neighbor. We also saw the fruits to use as a benchmark to see how we are doing. Now here in Paul's prayer we see Paul praying specifically that the people in Colosse will be filled with the knowledge of God's will.

The general will of God for all His children is given clearly in the Bible, Love the Lord and thy neighbor. The specific will of God for any given situation must always agree with what has already been revealed in His Word. The better we know God's Word, the easier it will be to determine His specific guidance in daily life.

Matthew 22:34–40 (NKJV) ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Knowledge means to become fully acquainted with.

Understanding means, "flowing together." It is the melding of the heart and mind. It is moving knowledge from your head, into your heart – letting the two become one. It is spiritual understanding, for only the Spirit of God can bring the two together. We can know not to do something, we can know it is wrong, but without spiritual understanding we will not see His purposes in saying to do or not to do something.

Wisdom is the application of that knowledge and understanding in our lives. There is a place in prayer to say help me understand what this means to me, help me to apply it to my life, reveal to me what I don't see so I can change it.

Filled - This word "filled" means to be controlled by. When we are filled with anger, we are controlled by anger. When we are filled with the spirit, we are controlled by the Spirit. Paul's prayer here is that the believer would be controlled by the full knowledge of God's will. This word

“filled” carries the idea of being fully equipped. It was used to describe a ship that was ready for voyage. The believer has in Christ and His Word all they need for the voyage of life.

Colossians 2:9–10 (NKJV) ⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰ and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Paul didn't pray for them to seek visions or wait for voices, he prayed that they might get deeper into the Word and have all wisdom necessary for making decisions and living to please God.

The specific will of God for any given situation must always agree with what has already been revealed in His Word.

Parents pray this prayer for your children. That is what Paul is doing here, he is praying for his spiritual children. Pray this for new believers, and weak believers, and pray this for believers that are doing well so they continue to do well.

(Colossians 1:10 NKJV) that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)

5 points to Paul's prayer:

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v.9)
2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)
3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)
4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)
5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

There is a place in prayer to say help me understand what this means to me, help me to apply it to my life, reveal to me what I don't see so I can change it. So I can become fully pleasing to you!

Fully pleasing – not partially, mostly, almost all, no “fully” pleasing. The word percentage means amount less than a whole. What percentage are you pleasing the Lord.

This word for pleasing, *areskeia*, ar-es'-ki-ah, is not found anywhere else in the NT but here. It means, “a preference of the will of others before our own.” This is a powerful word, it is a powerful prayer.....consider that in your daily prayer, and the power it will carry long into the day.

Prayer - at the Right Hand of God

James 5:16–18 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

And the earth produced its fruit

Matthew 7 - you will know them by their fruit. We are to be bearers of fruit. We are told here in James how to produce fruit, and it is through effective and fervent prayer.

Matthew 7:15–20 (NKJV) ¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Effective & Fervent

Effective - energeo - energy

Fervent - energeo - energy

You know why prayer is difficult? Because prayer is difficult! Prayer takes energy and thus it drains energy, and it tires us, and our flesh always wants to resist things that are energy draining. *Luke 8:41–48 (NKJV)*⁴¹ And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, ⁴² for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. ⁴³ Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, ⁴⁴ came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. ⁴⁵ And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." ⁴⁷ Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. ⁴⁸ And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

Of a Righteous Man avails much -

Righteous man therefore counts me out.... Not so, Jesus makes us righteous positionally, and the relationally we can cleanse ourselves from all unrighteous through confession

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV) ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

*1 John 1:9 (NKJV)*⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Prayer

Prayer - divine entreaty

Right hand depicts power and favor! (Root word prayer here means "right hand")

*Hebrews 8:1 (NKJV)*¹ Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

*Romans 8:27 (NKJV)*²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

*Hebrews 4:14–16 (NKJV)*¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Dek - Right

From the stem *dek-*, this means "right" a. as the opposite of left; b. as a noun (*hē dexiá*) for God's right hand as a symbol of his power; c. for the favorable or honored side, e.g., birds on the right as a good omen in Greece, the worthy walking on the right, or the law on God's right hand in the OT and rabbis; d. for what is eminent or good, e.g., studying the law on the right hand for proper application to it; and e. in connection with treaties or compacts (on the basis of giving the right hand when concluding agreements).

1. In the NT, Jesus in the parable of judgment says that the sheep will be set at God's right hand and the goats at his left; the right side is that of favor or salvation, as in Plato and the rabbis.

2. The NT depicts Christ himself as exalted to God's right hand. In Acts 2:34 Peter refers to the session at God's right hand, and in 5:31 he says that God exalted Jesus to his right hand. This is a fulfilment of the royal psalm 110 messianically interpreted; cf. Mt. 22:41ff., where Jesus himself shows that Davidic sonship does not exhaust his messiahship but becomes a riddle in view of the greater glory which goes far beyond a mere restoration of David's throne and kingdom. Jesus belongs at God's right hand because he is Lord of the world as well as King of Israel. Throughout the NT his exaltation to God's right hand comes to expression (cf. Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22). What follows his death vindicates his claim to a place of honor alongside God. In fulfilment of his claim, he has been declared Christ and Lord, the messianic age has dawned, and he shares God's glory and deity, as manifested by his sending the Spirit. Older rabbinic writings refer Psalm 110 to Abraham or David, but later exegesis adopts again a messianic interpretation. Another rabbinic view sets the law at God's right hand but sees the Christ replacing it in the messianic age.

Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (pp. 143–144). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)

5 points to Paul's prayer:

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v.9)
2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)
3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)
4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)
5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

It says every, not some, or mostly, but every good work.

Good work, this is not a good ministry, but life. It means what is right and proper for me to do in each circumstance. This is truly the WWJD verse.

Now we are going to notice a progression here. Wisdom, to walk, to work. The sequence is important. I cannot work for God, unless I am walking with Him; but I cannot walk with Him if I do not know His will. The believer who spends time daily in the Word and prayer will know God's will and be able walk with Him and work for Him.

As we obey God's will in our life, we can work for Him and bear fruit. We will not just occasionally serve God; but we will be fruitful in every good work. Christian service is the result of Christian devotion. The work we do is the outflow of the life we live. It is abiding in Christ that we can produce fruit. Everywhere Jesus walked "good works" happened. If we are walking with Him, then it will be natural that "good works" happen again.

Now in reference to our daily ministry, daily we should say Lord my life is yours, I want to be your servant today, I want you to lead me by your spirit, I want you to overrule any wrong decisions, Lord just take control of my life. We thus just yield ourselves to the Lord, and as the day unfolds, it becomes a progressive revelation of what God has purposed and planned for me. Each day will be what He has planned for me that day, and when you cum the days together, and the years together you can see what the will of the Lord is for you in the grand scheme.

I remember years ago on a trip to Florida, I end up sitting next to a young man from Israel on the plane. We spent two hours talking about the Old Testament, and the prophecies of the Messiah. Now that morning I didn't wake-up saying Lord sit me next to an Israeli so I can witness to him. Rather God will just put things in your day, and it becomes His will for your life.

Now, daily our lives can become the progressive revelation of God's will in our life, but yes there are times when we have to make tough decisions – where should I live, where should I work, whom shall I marry. Besides the progressive revelation, we also see God work by telling us to take a step of faith and he will show us the next step after we take the first. Our problem is that we want God to give us His will first, and then we will decide if we want to go along with that.

God told Phillip to go down to Gaza, a desert place. Now where he was in Samaria God was doing great and mighty things through him and in his ministry. Phillip had reason not to go, he was in the midst of a successful evangelistic campaign. He could have rationalized that it was really what the Lord wanted, and that he was hearing wrong – after all He would never call me out of this great revival. Had he not gone to Gaza he would have never gotten the next instruction, go up to the chariot. We never get the second order because we never heed the first order – go

to Gaza. Is there a Gaza in your life today, has God called you to do something but you haven't heeded the call, then you need to go to your Gaza, WHATEVER IT IS.

Acts 8:26–27 (NKJV) ²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. ²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,

Besides progressive revelation and God calling us to take the first step, there are times when God clearly calls people out. In Acts when the Lord separated Paul and Barnabas, they were "ministering" to the Lord. The word for minister can be applied in two ways, praise and worship, and religious service. I suggest to you that it was both. For in the context they were ministering before this time, and then during a time of worship, God called them out. So if you are waiting to hear from God on something, then be active in your wait, serving Him, and prayer and worship.

Acts 12:25–13:4 (NKJV) ²⁵ And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark. ¹ Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. ⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

And finally, if what you want to do does not contradict the Word, time has not erased that desire, you have a peace about it (not a feeling), if godly counsel sees nothing wrong, then you know what – choose one and go with it. If there is no sin involved, then go do what you want, because if you are loving the Lord, and loving your neighbor – then God will be in it. We care more about where we live and work than God does. He can use you anywhere, as long as He can speak to you.

Whatever God puts before you that day, be fruitful in it.

4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)

5 points to Paul's prayer:

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v.9)
2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)
3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)
4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)
5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

Point one was knowledge of His Will, how we are to live. This point is Knowledge of Him, His very being.

Why is it that we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, and don't receive it all at once (when we get saved), because if God showed all of Himself to us at once, our little minds couldn't comprehend it all and we would have a mental meltdown.

Can I suggest something here, notice here, this is a progressive prayer. First we are filled with the knowledge of His will. This in turn leads us to walk worthy, as we walk worthy we naturally produce the fruit of good works. As we walk with the Lord, serve with the Lord, we will also naturally increase in the knowledge of the Lord. The reason people who serve grow in the knowledge of the Lord is because they see God work and believe. Their faith grows because they say I've seen God do this in others lives, I know He can do it in my life.

Besides seeing His Power in Action, as walk with Him and face the challenges of doing good works, we will see a need, and have a burden to know Him more. Challenges cause you to dig deeper in your prayer life and study life.

Ephesians 4:11–15 (NKJV) ¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴

that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

We mentioned the three marks of a mature church, thus the same three marks of the mature believer, faith, love and hope.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

A mark of maturity is faith. God at various times will show us our faith, not to test you for He is omniscient, He knows where you are at, but He will test you to show you where you are at – where your faith is. As your faith grows, the farther you will step out. I'll give ten percent and watch God meet all my needs. I'll take my hands off this situation, and watch God handle it. Or, it may be that the test shows you how weak you really are. God will show you how overrated you are, either in your mind or by your peers. We so often think we are such people of faith until a situation that requires faith comes, and we crumble. We don't seek the Lord, we let fear control us, or we try to handle it in the flesh and everything falls apart. As our knowledge grows, so will our faith

Increase in the knowledge of God, and you will withstand any heresy, and walk through any trial.

(Colossians 1:11 NKJV) strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

5 points to Paul's prayer:

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v.9)
2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)
3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)
4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)
5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

all might, dunamis, doo'-nam-is. Same word used in Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8 (NKJV) ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Notice the tie here, we are strengthened through His power. He doesn't ask us to be powerful in ourselves.

See the progression of this prayer – strengthened with might. First we are filled with the knowledge of His will. This in turns leads us to walk worthy, as we walk worthy we naturally produce the fruit of good works. As we walk with the Lord, serve with the Lord, we will also naturally increase in the knowledge of the Lord. The reason people who serves grow in the knowledge of the Lord is because they see God work and believe. Their faith grows because they say I've seen God do this in others lives, I know He can do it in my life. Then as I see His power, I am strengthened, because His power isn't some story I read about, but saw experienced in real lives.

Patience and Longsuffering. It's a long-haul brethren. But it is to be with Joy. Suffering with joy. Every see people suffer with those suffering faces. They will depress you.

I use to run the 440 back in High School Track, at Elizabeth Forward HS. It was 440 yards of grueling pain and suffering. You see one lap around the track is 440yds. You couldn't sprint the whole way, but nor could you run anything less than a near sprint. 440 yds of grueling pain. For me the middle was the worst part. At the start I have the excitement (this could be the day I set

the record), the finish I can see the end (yes it is almost over), but the middle – it was the middle (at that point I really didn't care about records and awards, all I cared about was not embarrassing myself by heaving in front of 1000 people). I was too far in to quit, and ohh I have such a long way to go. I am dying here, and I am only halfway done.

Well the same can be true in a sense of our Christian Walk. In the beginning we have all this excitement. Maybe I'll be the next Billy, or now that I'm favored of the Lord He will bring me that dream mate, or if God be for me, who can be against me – hmmm little did we know that Satan the world, and the flesh would be against us, at time we would even question is God was for us. In the End, hopefully we should say "Soon and very soon, I'm gona see the King". But it is this middle part, it is long, and yes sometimes even grueling. Lord we need strengthened with all might, according to your glorious power to make it through.

It is not talent or training that guarantees us victory, it is perseverance.

- *By perseverance the snails reached the ark.*

It is always too soon to quit – Charles Spurgeon.

5 points to Paul's prayer:

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v.9)
2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)
3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)
4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)
5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

End of Study

Passage: Colossians 1:12-23
Title: The Preeminence (Supremacy) Of Jesus

Church in Colosse & America

I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the church we are studying here, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation.... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing's of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

Thematic Verses

Paul will make this the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

4409 πρωτεύω [proteuo /prote-yoo-o/] v. From 4413; TDNT 6:881; TDNTA 965; GK 4750; AV translates as "have the preeminence" once. 1 to be first, hold the first place.

Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

Don't Make the Mistake – This Epistle is Great

You know I have made the mistake of not placing this epistle is height it deserves. We study through Ephesians (the Swiss Alps of the New Testament as I call it – as we soar into the heavenlies with Christ Jesus), then we roll right into Philipppians the Epistle of Joy and Rejoicing regardless of the circumstances that surround us. It is easy to roll into the Epistle of Colossians and think that we are downshifting, when it is anything but, as this epistle covers some of the most vital Christian principles for life, and the greatest doctrine.... The Preeminence of Christ. **That Jesus is above all.... And is all..... and is all we need!**

The Outline of the Book

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is "doctrine" (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is "duty" how are we to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Title: The Preeminence (Supremacy) of Jesus (1:12-23)

- The Preeminent Christ – is our Qualifier (1:12-14)
- The Preeminent Christ – is Exact Image of God (1:15)
- The Preeminent Christ – is the Atomic Glue of the Universe (1:16-19)
- The Preeminent Christ – is our Reconciler (1:20-23)

I was blessed to just slow down “AGAIN” this week, and read, and reread, this glorious passage and be brought back to the reminder, brought to the calling, and brought back to the power of the passage before us, “The Preeminence (Supremacy) Of Jesus”

Prayer:

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Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

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(Colossians 1:12 NKJV) giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

(Colossians 1:13 NKJV) He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

Daytona 500 – Qualifying

When I live in Daytona Beach, Florida, where I went to aviation school, of course it's known for that great, great race, the Daytona 500. And I would have loved to just make one lap on that track. And I had the car to do it. Maybe some of you remember the car brand, the Oldsmobile. And I had the Delta 88. Classic car. Somewhat of a boat, at that. I had it all the way down, I was looking NASCAR like as the headliner started dropping down, and rather than spend the money to fix it, I just ripped the whole thing out. So my whole roof was just metal. Look like a NASCAR itself. But I couldn't get into the race, and nor would they let me take a lap, even though I went to the Daytona 500 and other races when I lived down there. And the reason being is that I did not qualify. The only way to race in the Daytona 500 is you have to qualify. And if you're not qualified, you can't get on the track and you can't be part of the race.

We Must Qualify – We Qualify Through Jesus / Opposite is Disqualified

And here is what the Lord is saying to us, is that we are qualified for this race of eternal life, this relationship of life that we have with Jesus, that ends in the inheritance, all the promises of God, all the inheritance of the eternal kingdom and riches thereof are given to us because we have been qualified to receive them. And the beauty is, and the qualifying is not based on us. It's based on Jesus Christ. He did the qualifying so that we could enter in.

The opposite of qualified is disqualified. And we're given the listing of what would disqualify us. We're given the listing of what qualifies us into this personal relationship with Jesus. What has to be done for us to gain entry into this relationship. And look at these four things that he has done for us, and look at these four things that if you have not received, then you have not been received. You are not qualified through the work of Christ. You have been disqualified by not

receiving the finished work that Christ has done, all on the cross with his own blood. The gift of eternal life.

John 6:44 – The Father Draws

And we see the beauty in this as we see that it is the Father who draws us to the Son. The Father is calling us, drawing us, to come away with Him.

John 6:44 (NKJV) ⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

(Colossians 1:13 NKJV) He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

(Colossians 1:14 NKJV) in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Thankful – Man’s Greatest Need is “Forgiveness”

What have we to be thankful for? Man’s greatest problem is sin, and therefore man’s greatest need is forgiveness of that sin that separates us from the Holy God – a problem that can never be solved by a philosopher or a religious teacher. Sinners need a Savior, and here is what our Savior has done for us:

v.13 – Delivered Us: means “rescued from danger.” The sword of God’s judgment was hanging over our heads. Also, we were delivered from the authority of Satan and the power of darkness.

v.13 – Conveyed Us (Translated Us -KJV): this word was used to describe the deportation of a population from country into another. IE, the Jews were moved from Israel to Babylon. Jesus has translated us from Satan’s kingdom of darkness and hate into His kingdom of light and love.

v.14 - Redeemed Us: this word means “to release a prisoner by payment of a ransom.” Satan’s accusations are futile for the debt of our sins have been paid in full. Jesus is the ultimate Special Ops Warrior. He stormed the gates of Hell and released the all the prisoners that were/are loyal to Him. He is a Warrior, He is the Mighty God.

v.14 – Forgiven Us: this word means “to carry away” or “cancel a debt”. Redemption and forgiveness go together. Satan can not find anything in the files that will indict us, the files have been purged clean. If Jesus has a file cabinet, then every folder in it is empty. Now if satan has a file cabinet, his accusation files, there may be a folder with your name on it, but the contents are empty because Jesus purged your files, deleted your records of wrongs. I go on to wonder, if there is a Lambs Book of Life, I wonder if there is a Wolf’s Book of Death; if so your name wouldn’t be in there either. If satan has an accounting system, a database (probably Microsoft, cause sometimes I think he helped design it), then next to your name it would read, “Paid in Full”, then next to everyone else it would say, “played the fool.”.

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(Colossians 1:15 NKJV) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Hebrews – Expressed Image

Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. In the Book of Hebrews, it says the “expressed image”, lending more detail to as in, the “exact image”. The word translated image (the ancient Greek word eikon) expressed two ideas.

- Likeness, as in the image on a coin or the reflection in a mirror.
- Manifestation, with the sense that God is fully revealed in Jesus.

The Greek word translated “image” is eikon, from which we derive our English word icon. This means “an image or representation.” Sometimes the Greek word itself meant picture, as when an ancient soldier sent a portrait to his father with the note, “I sent you a little portrait (eikonion) of myself painted by Euctemon.” From this kind of usage we can say that Jesus is the portrait of God. However, the meaning goes even beyond this because being the eikon, the image, of God also carries the idea of revealing the personal character of God.

Hebrews 1:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³ who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

False Teachers Confused on Deity and Body of Jesus

These false teachers of that day, and specifically there in Colosse, were very confused about the deity and humanity of Jesus, which is very much still a confusion today. They had all kinds of theories, but none true; they said Jesus really wasn't in a body, because God couldn't become human, therefore Jesus was like a apparition, a ghost, just spirit, not physical. Others would teach that Jesus was born of God, created of God, but not really God, therefore He was not eternal.... Nor God. Some cults today still teach that. This is a big deal to be error on, because if Jesus isn't God, just another “thing” God created, then God didn't come down, God didn't take on the sins of the world, and therefore the price for sin really wasn't that expensive. But change that to the truth, that God came down, gave Himself, now everything changes.... The price of sin, and the worth of the purchased person. So in many ways what it boiled down to in Colosse, and still today, man's wisdom and reasoning, couldn't grasp that God would come down, and step into not only human form, but sin, so they came up with a reasoning, that they could comprehend in their finite minds..... thus missing an infinite God, with infinite love.

First Born Over All Creation

'The firstborn of every creature' doesn't mean first in chronology, but first in priority. Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults will use this verse to erroneously say that, because Jesus was the firstborn, He was created, and therefore not eternal. But such is not the case, for God refers to Jacob and Ephraim as firstborn (Jeremiah 31:9), even though both had older brothers, illustrating the fact that the Greek word, 'prototokos', translated 'firstborn', doesn't speak of chronology but of priority. Solomon was not the first born of David's children, yet he was named the firstborn (ps 89:27). Isaac was born after Ismael, but was first in priority (Gen 17:19). Jacob was born after Esau, but was first in priority.

(Jeremiah 31:9 KJV) They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

(Psalms 89:27 KJV) Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

(Genesis 17:19 KJV) And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

(Genesis 17:20 KJV) And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

(Genesis 17:21 KJV) But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

(Genesis 25:25 KJV) And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

(Genesis 25:26 KJV) And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

Expressed Image – Want to Know God is Like – Look at Jesus /

Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. That is what is being said. He is the expressed image, meaning he is the exact image of God. If you want to know what God is like in Heaven, we only need to look at Jesus as he lived here on Earth. He came down from heaven as the expressed image of God.

- If you want to know the heart of God, you look at the heart of Jesus.
- If you want to know the grace of God, you look at the grace of Jesus.
- If you want to know the love of God, you look at the love of Jesus.

- Or not. If Jesus expressed no love, no grace, no heart, then that would be the express image of God. The exact image of God.
- But God speaks here in this word, "If you want to know me, know my son. If you want to know about Me, know about my Son."

Stay in the Gospels – The Passageway into Heart of God

When we study the gospels, especially, and we say this passage of scripture, a better way of saying it is the passageway into the heart of God. The passageway before God and who he is. That's what these gospels declare to us, and passage. We can walk in and we can see the exact image of God. Hence the importance that we continually stay in our systematic reading, the gospels of Jesus Christ. When you read through the Bible in a year, that's great. I don't want to diminish that. Problem being is, then you can go nine, 10, 11 months before you come back to see Jesus. Read at least the chapter a day of the gospels. Walk with Jesus daily. Join us in our mid week study as we walk with Jesus and see the heart of Jesus. It's truly one of my greatest times of the week is opening the gospels and going back to the passageway into the heart of God. The expressed image of God.

Colossians 1:10 – Become Fully Acquainted – Increase in the Knowledge of God

And as we studied last week, to become fully acquainted, to know more of God, to grow greater in our understanding of God was the prayer. And now we're being told and taught more about God.

[Colossians 1:10 \(NKJV\)](#) ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

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(Colossians 1:16 NKJV) For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

All Things

Jesus created all things, seen and unseen, which includes the spiritual and angelic realm (such as angels, which would include the Devil).

Can't be Created if Created All Things

Some will take the last verse to say, see Jesus was created. Because it says he was the first born. Truly what it means is first in priority. Above all, that's what the theme here is. First and foremost, Jesus is all and above all. And our conclusive proof that Jesus was not created is that it says right here that by him, all things were created, and nothing was created without him. So if he was created, how could he be the all and great creator? But if he is the all creator, then he can create all things. That puts together many of the calls. It puts an end to their errancy and heresy.

Jesus Creator – All Things for His Pleasure / Anything Else is Diminished State

This, gang, is the secret of life. Jesus is not the created one, He is the Creator. So we're told all things were created through him and by him and for him, revelation four says, "All things were created for his good pleasure," and therefore what we're being told very clearly, if we live for anything other than what we were created for, we will be living in a diminished state. We will fall short of the intention of our creation. What does that mean? It means this day is made for Him and the only way it will work is if I live for Him because, in so doing, I will be fulfilling the only reason I was created

[\(Revelation 4:11 KJV\)](#) *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

Christmas - Jesus is the Reason for the Season - & Everything

As Christmas approaches, you'll see many of the signs out on the street and cards saying Jesus is the reason for the season, but actually Jesus is the reason for everything. He holds all things together. He holds you together. He holds your life together. He holds every season together. Whether it's the seasons of the climate or the seasons of our lives, Jesus holds them all together. Jesus is the reason for everything.

(Colossians 1:17 NKJV) And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Jesus is Holding it All Together

That word consist means "to hold together" There's an interesting law of science called Coulomb's Law of Electricity which very simply says like charges repel. If you have a magnet in your right hand and a magnet in your left hand, and you push the positive ends towards each other, they push away. Opposite charges attract; like charges repel. But here's a great mystery: In the nucleus of the atom, protons are packed together which are *all* positive-charged particles.

What keeps these positive-charged protons from repelling like the magnets? What holds them together? Science doesn't know. You can study Quantum Physics and learn lots of hypotheses and theories, yet to this day, it's a mystery to scientists — but not to believers, for Scripture tells us the real answer. It is Jesus Christ Who holds all things together. Jesus is the "Atomic Glue" that holds all things together.

Someday He Will Let it Go

And the day is coming when, suddenly, He will let go . . . This was written, of course, before man knew anything about nuclear physics or about things being dissolved instantaneously. But now we know if the 'atomic glue' which holds the atom together were to suddenly disappear, everything would dissolve in zillion-degree 'fervent heat' accompanied by a 'great noise' so powerful and quick it wouldn't even be heard.

(2 Peter 3:10 KJV) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

(2 Peter 3:11 KJV) Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

Everything will vaporize, evaporate as if it never existed. Not only that, but in heaven, even the memory will be taken away. Think about that next time you're hammering, painting, fixing your house. Of course, we should be good stewards of the things with which God has blessed us, but we must have the right perspective, always remembering that the things of this earth are temporary. My favorite escape clause when everything seems to stinks is "its all gona burn."

(Isaiah 65:17 KJV) For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Holds All Things – Active Voice / That Means The Nail – Held it Together for You!

It says he holds all things together and the voice ends here is called active. Meaning that he's actively still holding it all together. No holding it together, everything would fall apart. Interesting how these words work themselves together into this beautiful story of power, of the preeminent one, the first and foremost, the one who's in all and should be, and is, above all.

If Jesus holds all things together, then that means He held the nails together that pierced His hand and feet. It means He held the whip together that shredded His back. Means He held the wood together of the very cross that He was hung on. Jesus held all those things together while He was holding it all together for you and for me.

BUT – Not Just Physical but Personal / Jesus Atomic Glue Holds Your Life Together

By *Him* all things are held together — not just physically, but in my life personally. My emotions, my family, my mental stability — He holds it all together. I forget that sometimes.

So a day or two pass by and I've spent no time with Him, and it seems like everything starts falling apart in my life; it is because I am not letting Him hold all things together in my life.

My marriage is falling apart — when was the last time you prayed with her husband. The kids just don't respond to me — when was the last time you walked and talked to them about the things of the Lord.

Things fall apart, and I fly off the handle whenever I take myself out of His custody and say, 'Lord, that's MY thing. That's MY situation, MY problem, MY challenge. I'll deal with it!' No. By *Him* all things are held together. By *Him* all things consist.

All Things Are Flowing to Him

Beloved, hear this. It's all going towards Jesus. This world, as it's going away from Jesus, going in different directions from Jesus, going its own way and doing its own thing, whatever it may be. But for us, everything is going to Jesus. Everything is flowing to Jesus. It's the whole point that it has a flow, and the flow is onto him. And someday we will be in his presence because we're in this flow going to him. And when we do, you know what? All of this will be behind us. There'll be no more sorrow, no more tears, no more crying. The former things will pass away. Death's sting will be done. Cancer will be gone. COVID will be not even a memory to us. All of it's flowing to Jesus. All of it has a point, and the point is him. And we will see him, and we will be before him as the flow takes us.

Growing up in western Pennsylvania, one of our favorite things to do was we would get in the cars and we would drive all the way to a head of the river, where the waters would start to pick up movement. And we would get in and our inner tubes, everyone had their own inner tube, and we literally would just float and float together. Yet, there was always a point, because the flow always flowed in the same direction. The flow always ended in the same place, and we would park a car down at the bottom place, and then have another car and drive to the top place. But we always had a destination of the flow, and it was beautiful as we just went with the flow. So there's the flow of the world, but there's the flow of Jesus. And I suggest to you, I said, remind me to get in where's Jesus' flow. Get into the flow of Jesus, and just be caught up in the beautiful river of the living water and where it's going and what he wants to do. And that will be life, and that will be life more abundant. Invites us to grab an inner tube and hop on and just float and flow where he's going, because it's all going to end with him and at him before the very throne of grace.

(Colossians 1:18 NKJV) And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Destroy the Head

Verse 18 says He's the head of the body, and that's what's trying to be done here in this Church of Colossae. People were trying to destroy the head, Jesus. They're trying to tear him down, just making less than preeminent.

First to Rise and Resurrect

Others have risen from the dead — like Lazarus, and the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7). Even in the Old Testament, there was the widow's son in the day of Elisha (II Kings 4). But they all died again. Jesus alone has priority, has preeminence, is the Firstborn from the dead because He alone rose never to die again. The firstborn of the dead. Oh, others have died and risen: Lazarus, the widow's son in Nain, Jairus' daughter. But they would all die again. Jesus is the only one that died, rose again, never to die again. That's what makes Him first, and then we will be all that follow. We'll never die again, because He's the first and the foremost over the power of sin and death.

that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Father's Intent – Jesus is First and Foremost in Everything

It is the Father's intent that in all things the Son should have preeminence over each day you begin and every decision you make. He wants preeminence over you, your family, and every detail of your life, every decision you make.

What should this mean to us? Simply this: "that in everything he might have the supremacy" (v. 18). "Everything" extends his "firstness" to as wide a scope as is conceivable and beyond. There is no room for a "Parliament of Religions" here—only Christ preeminent. He must have first-place in everything.

- First-place in our families.
- First-place in our marriages.
- First-place in our professions.
- First-place in our mission and ministry.
- First-place in matters of the intellect.
- First-place in time.
- First-place in love.
- First-place in conversation.
- First-place in pleasures.
- First in eating.
- First in play.
- First in athletics.
- First in what we watch.
- First-place in art.
- First-place in music.
- First-place in worship.

Let us give him first-place!

Does He Have Preeminence? / For Every "NO" – Go Back to Last Weeks Prayer

Verse 18. That in all things, He may have the preeminence. What does He have preeminence first and foremost, above all? Nothing competes. What does He have in your life that's preeminent? Does He have preeminence over your body? Does he have preeminence over your tongue? Does He have preeminence over your thoughts? Does He have preeminence over your marriage.

But for every answer that I said no to ... Oh, and how about that one? Is forgiveness preeminent in my life? There just never seems to be a lack of people who offend us and hurt us, say evil things to us. Do I forgive like He forgives? Do I hear His heart to say, "Forgive them?" Is He preeminent in every area of my life.

In all the areas where I say no and all the areas where I know I can't say He's totally preeminent: with my time, with my money, with my service. Then you know what I do? He's speaking. Then go back to last week's message. Pray. Pray for me. Pray for that person or to become fully acquainted with Your will and understand the wisdom that flows from Your will, as it regards to letting You and making You be preeminent, first and foremost, in my life. Or that I may be fully pleasing and walk worthy, that You would be preeminent in my walk. My pleasing You would be preeminent in my mind. For every good work bearing fruit, that I would live a life of preeminence, first and foremost to bear fruit for my Lord, to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And increasing in the knowledge of who He is. Is that preeminent? Is that first and foremost, or am I just content? I'm saved.

Colossians 1:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

5 points to Paul's prayer:

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v.9)
2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)
3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)
4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)
5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

Colossians 1:9–11 (NKJV) ⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Preeminent Christ – Died For You / Remember Preeminent Christ when World Falling Apart

The preeminent Christ sits on the throne, was laid upon the cross. Why would the preeminent Christ, who created all things, do such a thing? Dwell on that. Think about that. What significance and worth will you come to the conclusion of when you consider the preeminent Christ died for your sin.

And when I look at this world as it's falling apart, when I cry for my right, demand my rights, look upon injustice seated before me, may I go back to that place of prayer and long suffering. And I can be when I remember You're preeminent.

(Colossians 1:19 NKJV) For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,

Fullness – Sum Total

The word translated “fullness” is the Greek word “pleroma - play'-ro-mah”. It was a technical term in the vocabulary of these false teacher at the time. It meant “the sum total of all the divine power and attributes.” Paul uses their term against them, applying their word to describe Christ. He uses their lingo they can relate too, but shows them where they should truly relate it too.

Do You Feel Empty

Do you feel empty? Well all the fullness is in Jesus. All fullness is in Jesus. Therefore, the closer I am to Jesus, the fuller I will be as a man. Conversely, the further I pull away from Jesus, the emptier I'll feel inside. All of creation centers around Jesus, is held together by Jesus, points to Jesus, and finds its fulfillment in Jesus.

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

Remember TV Dinners?

I like what Pastor John said, It's all about Jesus. Some people compartmentalize their Christianity like a Swanson's TV Dinner. They've got their recreation section, their relationship section, their financial section, their hobby section, and their Christian section. So on Sunday they concentrate on church; Monday through Friday on money; evenings on relationships, and Saturday on sports and hobbies. But ultimately, they find it frustrating and ineffective because God intended our lives not to be TV dinners, but chicken pot pies - all stirred together, so that when we're skiing, we're praising God for the beauty around us; when we're at work, we're praying, 'Lord, help me use this as a point of ministry'; when we're with family, we're seeking not a break *from* service, but an opportunity *to* serve. It's all mixed together. It is not compartmentalized. It is everywhere you go, everything you do, it is Jesus.

People are depressed today because they don't get this. If you continue to 'TV-Dinner' it, you're going to be depressed and discouraged. But it won't be because God is punishing you. It will simply be the result of your failure to understand that Jesus holds all things *together*, that in Him all fullness dwells.

This is the key to life: All things were made by me, and for me, and I hold all things together, and in me is the fullness you are longing for. God has given you the secret of life, and it is so simple

anyone can grab it. So in all we do, we say ok Lord I want you to be the focus of it, and included in it.

Title: The Preeminence (Supremacy) of Jesus (1:12-23)

- The Preeminent Christ – is our Qualifier (1:12-14)
- The Preeminent Christ – is Exact Image of God (1:15)
- The Preeminent Christ – is the Atomic Glue of the Universe (1:16-19)
- **The Preeminent Christ – is our Reconciler (1:20-23)**

(Colossians 1:20 NKJV) and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. (Colossians 1:21 NKJV) And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled (Colossians 1:22 NKJV) in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight; (Colossians 1:23 NKJV) if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Preeminent Christ – Can Do the Following

Verse 19 through 23, as it follows what we've just studied. The preeminence of Christ speaks to us what only a preeminent God can do, make us holy and without blame, perfect, acceptable before the holy God in heaven.

What Does Reconcile Mean

What does 'reconcile' mean? Reconcile simply means "to be off." Simply this: If I said to you, 'Meet me at McDonald's at 7:45, and don't be late,' you would probably say to me, 'What time do you have right now?' — and we would reconcile our watches. In other words, we would come to a common ground; we would align ourselves one with the other so we wouldn't be off. Notice Paul says we are reconciled to God — not He to us. God didn't change His watch. No, we were the ones who were messed up and out of sync. But Jesus came to reconcile us to the Father.

Presents Us

This word present means to bring alongside. So when Jesus is saying he presents us, he brings us alongside and he presents us to God, the man that said, "This is my beloved. Present them faultless without blame." When I do a wedding, I always say, "I now present to you Mr. And Mrs. A new union, a oneness, a threefold cord that cannot be easily broken." That's what God does to us through the blood on the cross, it says here in Colossians chapter 1.

Verse 22 says that we are presented spotless, blameless, the same word that's used for Jesus. The same word that used for the lambs that were meant for sacrifice at the temple. They had to be spotless, without blemish, inspected and approved. And here's the word that said for us just as Jesus was the spotless lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world, who Pilot would say, "I find no fault in this man." So too, now we get the same approval, seal, stamping spotless, I find no fault. And then the next word says above reproach. It means that no accusation can stick. Oh, accusations can come, but no accusation can stick. We are spotless and blameless.

John 19:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."

(Colossians 1:23 NKJV) if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Can't Give Assurance if You are Not Walking it Out

Now remember the context of this epistle. The truth was under attack, cults were moving in, people were being turned. Paul writes to correct heresy – and he give a stern warning.

Because of Jesus' work on the Cross, we can be presented to God as holy and blameless if we continue on in faith. Therefore, I cannot in good conscience assure a person who walked forward at a crusade twenty years ago, or who was baptized six summers ago in the sanctuary but has not kept on with the Lord, that he will be presented to the Father as being holy and blameless.

"I no longer listen to what people say, I just watch what they do. Behavior never lies."
WINSTON CHURCHILL

Look at the definition of the words used here:

- **If** - eige, i'-gheh; if indeed, seeing that, unless, (with neg.) otherwise:--if (so be that, yet).
- **Continue** - epimeno, ep-ee-men'-o; to stay over, i.e. remain (fig. persevere):--abide (in), continue (in), tarry.
- **Grounded** - themelioo, them-el-ee-o'-o; to lay a basis for, i.e. (lit.) erect, or (fig.) consolidate:--(lay the) found (-ation), ground, settle.
- **Settled** - hedraios, hed-rah'-yos; (to sit); sedentary, i.e. (by impl.) immovable:--settled, stedfast.
- **Away** - metakineo, met-ak-ee-neh'-o; to stir to a place elsewhere, i.e. remove (fig.):--move away.

Only Depart from Something Part of

You can't depart from something that you were never part of or in. So that is a hard passage in 1 Timothy 4 to cast away and hold the once-saved-always-saved position. I struggle greatly with these things, and I get plenty of emails from people when I say such things, but here is what it says. And in 2 Corinthians 13, Paul says to the church goer, examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. So rather than wrestle theologically today, I have to ask everyone, are you in the faith?
1 Timothy 4:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

2 Corinthians 13:5-6 (NKJV) ⁵ Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. ⁶ But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

Back to Our Study – True and False Conversion

If you missed our sturdy on true and false conversion, based on the fruit in your life, I beg you to listen today, examine yourself today, and then determine..... am I disqualified? I am truly saved and in Christ?

Colossians 1:6 (NKJV) ⁶ which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

CONCLUSION

Title: The Preeminence (Supremacy) of Jesus (1:12-23)

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What a Beautiful Place to Be

What a beautiful place to be because the preeminent Christ, first and foremost. And as I think of that, how could I let anything else be anything more? How could I let Jesus be anything less than preeminent? In all that I do, that I might walk worthy of him, being fully pleasing and fruitful in every good work. I love how the Lord ties these passages together, as we said, passages, pathways into the very heart of God.

What Does All this Mean

What should this mean to us? Simply this: “that in everything he might have the supremacy” (v. 18). “Everything” extends his “firstness” to as wide a scope as is conceivable and beyond. There is no room for a “Parliament of Religions” here—only Christ preeminent. He must have first-place in everything.

- First-place in our families.
- First-place in our marriages.
- First-place in our professions.
- First-place in our mission and ministry.
- First-place in matters of the intellect.
- First-place in time.
- First-place in love.
- First-place in conversation.
- First-place in pleasures.
- First in eating.
- First in play.
- First in athletics.
- First in what we watch.
- First-place in art.
- First-place in music.
- First-place in worship.

Let us give him first-place!

Simple Prayer – Jesus be Preeminent

How do I take this volume that we just studied, volumeness of overflowing, amazing information, how do I apply it? Where do I begin? I honestly believe we begin with the simplicity of a simple prayer. We made a simple prayer, Jesus save me and he did, and now I believe we just come to a simple prayer. "Jesus be preeminent in my life."

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.
Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

End of Study

Passage: Colossians 1:24-27

Title: Christ in You, the Hope of Glory

Colossians 1:24–27 (NKJV) ²⁴ I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, ²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, ²⁶ the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Church in Colosse & America

I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the church we are studying here, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation..... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing's of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

Thematic Verses

Paul will make this the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

4409 πρωτεύω [proteuo /prote-yoo-o/] v. From 4413; TDNT 6:881; TDNTA 965; GK 4750; AV translates as “have the preeminence” once. 1 to be first, hold the first place.

Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

Don't Make the Mistake – This Epistle is Great

You know I have made the mistake of not placing this epistle in the height it deserves. We study through Ephesians (the Swiss Alps of the New Testament as I call it – as we soar into the heavenlies with Christ Jesus), then we roll right into Philippians the Epistle of Joy and Rejoicing regardless of the circumstances that surround us. It is easy to roll into the Epistle of Colossians and think that we are downshifting, when it is anything but, as this epistle covers some of the most vital Christian principles for life, and the greatest doctrine.... The Preeminence of Christ.

That Jesus is above all.... And is all..... and is all we need!

The Outline of the Book

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is “doctrine” (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is “duty” how are we to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Three things we'll see in our passage today: Paul's purpose for suffering, and then Paul's purpose for ministry, and then we end with Paul's proclamation of the mystery (Christ in You, the Hope of Glory). Truly one of the greatest statements, declarations, made in all the Scriptures, Christ in you!

Title: Christ in You, the Hope of Glory (1:24-27)

- Paul's Purpose for Suffering (1:24)
- Paul's Purpose for Ministry (1:25)
- Paul's Proclamation of the Mystery, Christ in You, the Hope of Glory (1:26-27)

Paul declares, Christ in you.....

- So we have to ask, if Christ is in us, then why do we still suffer?
- So we have to ask, if Christ is in us, then why isn't every ministry we do not only bear fruit, but bountiful fruit, and why sometimes the ministries we do even seem fruitless?
- So we have to ask, if Christ is in us, why do I still struggle with my flesh and fallen nature?

Let's pray, and ask the Lord to reveal the depth of this passage to us, and let the depths take us deeper in our walking and faith living with Him.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
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Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Title: Christ in You, the Hope of Glory (1:24-27)

- **Paul's Purpose for Suffering (1:24)**
- Paul's Purpose for Ministry (1:25)
- Paul's Proclamation of the Mystery, Christ in You, the Hope of Glory (1:26-27)

(Colossians 1:24 NKJV) I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,

Was the Cross Incomplete?

Wait a minute, Paul. Are you saying what Jesus did on the Cross is incomplete, that the reason you suffer is to fill up or complete that which He began on the Cross? It's a tricky verse because it is the basis for the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, which states that there must be a continuance of suffering, particularly by those who have not fully embraced the work of the Cross.

Is that what's being said here? No because in the verses 17-19 says that Christ is the center of all things, He holds all things together, and in Him alone is fullness. And, in verses 20-22 says we are reconciled, made blameless through His death. So clearly in the context of this chapter that is not what he is saying. That is why verse-by-verse teaching is so important, so you read in context.

Colossians 1:17-19 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. ¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,

Colossians 1:20-22 (NKJV) ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. ²¹ And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—

As we talk about suffering today, when you go into and through suffering, we need to remember our God is preeminent.....a key to victory in suffering, is remembering, our God is preeminent, above all, and in all!

Suffering is not Redemptive Work

The suffering of Paul was not a redemptive suffering:

1 Timothy 2:4-6 (NKJV) ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

Suffering was Foretold to Paul

Paul's suffering was the fulfillment, of what God said would happen to Paul when he started to minister in the name of the Lord (the next study will cover Paul the minister to the body).

Acts 9:15-16 (NKJV) ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

Not Completion – But Conformity - Identification

Paul is saying it is not the completion of, but rather conformity to Christ's suffering, it is identification with Christ . . .

Philippians 3:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Sacrifice Our Lives – Not Our Life

This mistake we make is in thinking that the ultimate God wants of us is the sacrifice of death.

What God wants is the sacrifice **through** death, which enables us to do what Jesus did, that is, sacrifice our lives. Not—"Lord, I am ready to go with You . . . to death" (Luke 22:33). But—"I am willing to be identified with Your death so that I may sacrifice my life to God."

Luke 22:33 (NKJV) ³³ But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

Loosening the Bands Which Hold Us Back

It is a matter of loosening the bands that hold back our lives. Those bands are loosened immediately by identification with the death of Jesus. Then we enter into a relationship with God whereby we may sacrifice our lives to Him.

It is of no value to God to give Him your life for death - **only**. He wants you to be a "living sacrifice"—to let Him have all your strengths that have been saved and sanctified through Jesus (Romans 12:1). This is what is acceptable to God.

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

One of the things I find, and even being saved at any given moment, there is a battle of the flesh and the spirit going on inside me. Freewill and a fallen world, a body that is still in a fallen state, battling against the spirit that is within me. When you look at suffering, when you look at trials, when you look at fasting, God uses all of these things to detach us from the world and our flesh, and to keep us looking upward, detaching from this earth. And the things of the world, that attaches me to the world, compared to the things of the spirit, which detaches me from the world and attaches me to the heavenly, spiritual things.

Again, I stress, Paul is saying it is not the completion of, but rather conformity to Christ's suffering, make us like You, Lord,' we pray, and the Lord says, 'OK, but it cannot happen without suffering.'

Suffering does some amazing things . . .

First, suffering draws us closer to Christ..

It must be remembered that God Himself left the throne, became man, and suffered the same things we do. He understands rejection, death of a loved one, to be hungry, cold, tired, stressed, unemployment, friends who leave ya, friends who turn on you.

Precious people, God will allow suffering in your life in order that you can relate to Him in a deeper way than you ever did before. But if you get thrown by it, you miss the opportunity for the fellowship of His suffering.

- You can say, Lord, when that loved one past away, I can relate to what it must have been like for you to give you only Son.
- I sat with a mother and father in North Arundel hospital who had just lost her 19 year old son in a traffic accident. They asked why would God allow this to happen, where was God, and where is He now. I told here God is here now, His ever loving arms are holding you right now, receive Him, because the Heavenly Father knows what it is to lose a son, for He gave His only begotten Son freely on the cross for your and mine sin, and prove no greater love for us. He knows what you are going through. And when we suffer a loved one death, we know He can relate, and we can somewhat relate to what the Lord Himself suffered.
- I can remember when I lived in Louisiana and I was in a car accident. I had to take my precious Alex to the emergency room, ambulance ride and all. She had a major gash over her eye, and my heart would break when I looked into those beautiful six years old blue eyes. She was so innocent, so gentle and loving. The doctor came and said we will have to use stitches to close it up. I'll never forget the look on her face, those beautiful eyes saying Mr Ray you won't let them do that, please don't let them do that she cried. My heart broke, and I said Alex I'll do what ever is best for you. So they wrapped her in a blanket to keep her still, injected the needle to numb the area, and she cried a cry that would break any fathers heart, and I wasn't even here dad. All the nurses were even crying, nobody could stand to see her in that pain. I remember her holding my hand throughout the surgery, and so many times I said ohh Lord if only it were me, if only I could take her place and her pain. At that moment, I had just a glimpse of what it must have be for God the Father to watch Jesus suffer that day on the cruel Roman cross.
- You can say, 'Lord, when I lost the election for study body president because I was a Christian, I felt a tiny bit of what You must have felt when they said, 'We will not have this man rule over us. Away with Him.'
- You can say, 'Lord, I was dating him for years and he told me to pack sand. Now I can relate to how You must feel when people You love turn their back on You time and time again.'

You can be a friend of God in a deeper way if you embrace suffering.

Secondly, suffering produces assurances in our hearts.

Suffering is a promise to all believers.....note, I say all believers:

John 15:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV) ¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

If you're not suffering, guess what. It means you're not living godly. It could even mean you're not a Christian. So when you suffer say, 'Thank You, Lord! This is great! I know I'm one of Yours because they're beating up on me just like they beat up on You.'

Thirdly, suffering promises rewards in heaven.

(2 Corinthians 4:17 KJV) For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

I promise you, when you get to heaven, you won't say, 'It wasn't worth it! I suffered through cancer without murmuring. I accepted it as a way to bring You glory, Father — but now that I'm in heaven, it isn't so hot. No. When you get there, you're going to say, 'My goodness. I made such a big thing about my deal on earth. But it was nothing compared to this! Even though I murmured, cried, and maybe even cursed, You loved me enough to allow suffering in my life. Thank You, Lord.'

What are some of those rewards in heaven? Next point:

Fourthly, suffering results in the salvation of others.

In Acts 28, Paul writes about a snake, which fastened its fangs onto him. The islanders looked at the serpent hanging from his hand and thought, 'This guy's a murderer. That's why the snake has bitten him.' But when Paul didn't fall down dead and instead shook the snake off, the barbarians changed their minds, saying, 'He's a god.' And Paul used the opportunity to say, 'I'm not a god — but God in Christ Jesus lives inside me.'

Acts 28:1–6 (NKJV) ¹ Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. ² And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. ³ But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. ⁴ So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live." ⁵ But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶ However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

Acts 28:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. ⁸ And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. ⁹ So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. ¹⁰ They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

Why does God allow suffering? Because it gives you the opportunity to show the barbarians who are very skeptical about us the reality of faith. When your spouse leaves you, when the child is taken Home unexpectedly; when the doctor says, 'It's malignant', when the boss says, 'you're through' — people expect us to fall down dead. But you have the chance to shake it off and embrace the suffering. And if you make that choice, cynics change their minds about Christians because they see the reality of your faith.

Finally, suffering silences Satan.

Job 1:20–22 (NKJV) ²⁰ Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD." ²² In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Job lost everything — his health, family, and wealth. Satan took everything but his wife — and even she said, 'Curse God and die.'. But Job wouldn't, and Satan was defeated once again.

God will declare in our passage today, and continually through the scriptures that we study, that there is a glory in suffering. And immediately some would say, "Good night, I'm out of here. This kind of preaching is one of those over the top." This isn't the Christianity that I know of, and sadly to many, this is what Christianity is to them. A religion that is supposed to be all peace, all comfort, all prosperity, and surely nothing to do with suffering or hardship. Those that do, rob themselves..... and are greatly deceived.

Title: Christ in You, the Hope of Glory (1:24-27)

- Paul's Purpose for Suffering (1:24)
- **Paul's Purpose for Ministry (1:25)**
- Paul's Proclamation of the Mystery, Christ in You, the Hope of Glory (1:26-27)

(Colossians 1:24 NKJV) I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, (Colossians 1:25 NKJV) of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,

Paul Lived Before Declared It

Paul had to live it before he could declare it. And so he gives us the reason for his suffering, and it was because of the purpose of his ministry, which was to lead people, declare to them and have them understand the mystery that was spoken in times past in the Old Testament, which now has come to pass. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Paul's Life Proves God Grace

Paul's very life proves out Christ in you, as Paul would be the widow maker and the orphan maker. Yet, God would live in him and give him the ministry to declare to the Gentiles and the Jews, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Suffering was Foretold to Paul

Paul's suffering was the fulfillment, of what God said would happen to Paul when he started to minister in the name of the Lord (the next study will cover Paul the minister to the body).

Acts 9:15–16 (NKJV) ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

If someone offered you the choice of either being on Mount Hermon with Jesus, seeing Moses and Elijah, hearing a voice from heaven—or having the Old Testament, most of us would choose to see the Lord glowing, to see Moses and Elijah, to hear a voice from heaven. But Peter would choose otherwise. Why? Because experiences fade, but the Word endures.

The problem with experiences is that all they produce is a craving to see more. How do I know? Because the people who saw more experiences than any other were the children of Israel. They saw God part the Red Sea miraculously. They were fed from heaven daily. They saw miracles constantly. Yet why couldn't they enter into the Promised Land? Because of unbelief (Hebrews 3:19).

Having been around for a while, I would rather hear a great Bible study and be fed from the Scriptures than see a bunch of experiences unfolding. There was a time when this was not true in my life. But the longer I walk with the Lord, the more I realize that experiences fade—even the valid ones, even the wondrous ones. Only the Word endures.

2 Peter 1:16–21 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷ For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

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- Paul's Purpose for Suffering (1:24)
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(Colossians 1:26 NKJV) the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

(Colossians 1:27 NKJV) To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

How Big is Your God

Verse 26 and 27. That's amazing, good news. That's amazing statement and information. That's amazing knowledge regarding God and His people. But notice through the divine inspiration of

the scriptures, that it doesn't come until verse 26, 27. You would have think, I would have started with this statement at the beginning of the book and go, wow, everybody is going to lock in and be totally drawn in and say, "Tell me more." But not here. What Paul does is he builds to this point. The point that we're building through is verse 10, to grow in the knowledge of God, how big God is. How big is His love? How big is His grace? Paul now makes the declaration statement to this church in Colossus. He's huge. His grace and His love extends to every man, woman, and child; every nation, tribe, and tongue. It extends to anyone who will receive it, and it's greater than a distant grace and love. It's a love and grace that takes up residence within the person. That's how near it is, and that's how intimate it is.

Colossians 1:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Answer to All Failures and Frustrations

Here it is folks, the answer to all our failures and frustrations, and it is not a mystery, it is Christ in YOU.....

A Mystery in the Scriptures

When you come across the word, 'mystery' in your Bible, understand this: It doesn't mean something which cannot be known, but rather something now made known which was previously incomprehensible. *That's* the idea of biblical mystery. It's something that was talked about previously and prophesied historically, but was unable to be understood practically until the veil was lifted spiritually

The mystery is Christ living in you, not just telling you what to do, but doing it if you will allow Him to, and that takes us back to our study and prayer points from 1:9-11.

5 points to Paul's prayer:

1. filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (v.9)
2. that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him (v.10)
3. being fruitful in every good work (v.10)
4. increasing in the knowledge of God (v.10)
5. strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy (v.11)

Colossians 1:9-11 (NKJV) ⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Verse 10 is to grow in the knowledge of God. And here Paul is laying in here in verse 27, how big God is, Christ in you, the hope of glory. Then as verse 11 goes into the prayer, it's to be filled with the power of God, to which anyone would say, "That's impossible. It will never happen. Not me." But here Paul is saying you're already preloaded with power because the power of the living God lives in you, Christ in you, the hope of glory. So as Paul opens up this power statement, it becomes a power statement in life. What could ever overcome me? What could ever defeat me. If I call on the power of God that lives in me? I have a choice. And the choice is to yield to the power that comes against me or to unleash the power that is within me. Amen.

Paul, in the passages prior to that, is opening up who this Christ is, the preeminent God who creates all things, has created all things, and holds all things together. And he, the preeminent God, is living in you. That's power.

Colossians 1:15-18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Pete Rose Audiotape

At the age of 9, I spent hours upon hours listening to the audiotape and reading the book my parents gave me that year - 1972. I was playing little league baseball, where I desired to bat over 300. The audiotape and book was of Pete Rose the major league record holder of most hits, it

was also the year after my baseball hero, Roberto Clemente of the Pittsburgh Pirates had died in a plane crash – in his last week of playing Roberto reached the 3,000 hit milestone.

I listened to the audio, followed in the book the way Rose pivoted his feet. I watched him on television the way he snapped his hips. I watched the way he kept his arm behind him until the chest broke through the 'glass wall' before it came through and snapped those wrists. Truly, it was a thing of beauty! But although I listened and watched a hundreds of times, and although I tried an equal number of times in the batting cages to duplicate what Rose did, I never came close.

So too, a lot of Christians are looking at the film loops. They study the Scriptures by the hour, which is wonderful, but it will ultimately lead to frustration until they understand the mystery. You see, if Pete Rose could have left that audiotape and taken up residence within my body, I would have planted my feet just right, have pivoted my hips perfectly, , snapped my wrist just right, and batted to be the all-star I desired so much to be.

'This is the mystery,' writes Paul. 'This is what I'm coming to share with you. It's not you being like Christ. It's Christ *in* you, showing you how to pray, what to do, and how to spend your time as He writes His will on your heart.'

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NKJV) ³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Not Imitation – But Impartation – Christ in You

- It's not imitation.
- It's impartation.
- It's Christ *in* us — the hope of glory!

Perfection in Christ is singular, based not upon anything we can do, but upon all He has done — not upon our works, **but upon His work in us.**

This word hope isn't like our hope we use here. "I hope it's sunny tomorrow." No, it's a word of confidence. The hope that is promised and guaranteed to us that is now ours to have, not something future that is a possibility. It is a positivity. That's what our hope is. And it's Christ.

Conclusion

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Is Christ in You

Verse 27, Christ in you, the hope of glory. That's the question for anyone and everyone. All of life flows, we studied last week, to the throne of God, where every man will give an account, is Christ in you. How does that happen, Christ in you? It's John 3:16. It's the promise of Jesus, that I'll be in you. That's what being born again is. Born of a new spirit, of a new life, Christ in you.

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NKJV) ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

End of Study

Passage: Colossians 1:28-2:3
Title: Paul the Minister to the Body

Colossians 1:28–2:3 (NKJV) ²⁸ Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily. ¹ For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Church in Colosse & America

I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the church we are studying here, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation..... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing's of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

Thematic Verses

Paul will make this the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

4409 πρωτεύω [proteuo /prote-yoo-o/] v. From 4413; TDNT 6:881; TDNTA 965; GK 4750; AV translates as “have the preeminence” once. 1 to be first, hold the first place.

Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

The Outline of the Book

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is “doctrine” (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is “duty” how are we to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Our Passage Today

So the theme of the epistle, the preeminence of Christ, who (v18) is the head of the body, the church! Paul in in (v.23, v25) says he has been made a “minister”, a servant, to the body (the body of Christ, the church). And in verse 25, according to the stewardship from God, maybe your translation says “dispensation”. The word stewardship/dispensation, literally means “house-manager”. A house-manager was a servant to the master, and he was entrusted to manage the house and the affairs of the master, in accordance to the will of the manager, and to bring a return unto the master. We discussed in a prior study as we looked at the parable of the talents as taught by Jesus in Matthew 25.

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 1:23 (NKJV) ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Colossians 1:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,

Matthew 25:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

So in our study today, we will see these three things

Title: Paul the Minister to the Body

- Paul’s Message to the Body (1:28)
- Paul’s Labor for the Body (1:29)
- Paul’s Reward for the Body (2:1-3)

So our fruit today is two-fold, God’s purpose and desire of what ministry is to do for us personally, and secondly what God’s purpose and desire of our ministry unto others who we serve. Mind you, the church in Colosse is confused, has lost that Christ is first and foremost, is above all, and is all, He is preeminent! Verse 27, Christ in you the hope of glory, it is a glorious thing the Living God living in us, and the Living God living through us.

Matthew 22:34–40 (NKJV) ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Colossians 1:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

So let’s pray, and ask the Lord to reveal the depth of this passage to us, and let the depths take us deeper in our walking and faith living with Him.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
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Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

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- **Paul’s Message to the Body (1:28)**
- Paul’s Labor for the Body (1:29)
- Paul’s Reward for the Body (2:1-3)

(Colossians 1:28 NKJV) Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Paul Wants to Mature Them

Notice here in verse 28, **that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus**. Paul wants them to be perfect, perfect here means mature. He wanted to bring them to maturity in Christ

Paul Warns and Teaches / We All Serve in This Sense

Errant teachings and philosophies have crept into the church in Colosse, and Paul even though never have met them, has a heart for them, writes them to warn of the errors, and to teach of the truth, the right way, so they may grow and mature.

Verse 28 Paul sums up Pastoral Ministry, as he wants to bring people to maturity in Christ: he warns, and he teaches. Warning and teaching; The role of the preacher is to comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable.

Although not all serve in the Pastoral sense as we see it, a man behind the pulpit who we seek counsel from. Truly we all serve in the Pastoral role in our lives. Husband's Pastor their homes, Wives pastor the children, maybe even more than the husbands do. Christians should bring Pastoral leadership in the workplace (warning and teaching, ministering to the hurting). We all serve in this role

Best Commentary on Bible is the Bible – Acts 20

Paul preached, he warned, his life was to present every man perfect in Christ. Always the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible, Acts 20 gives the best commentary on this extra ordinary Minister.

Acts 20:17–26 (NKJV) ¹⁷ From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. ¹⁸ And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; ²⁰ how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. ²² And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴ But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵ "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

Innocent – Clear / Sleeping on the Couch

Verse 26, he is innocent of blood. The KJV says "pure". The word katharos, kath-ar-os'; means clean (lit. or fig.):--clean, clear, pure. - Paul is saying I've done all I could do, I can only present, the rest is up to them - it is their decision. My conscience is clear.....

Now precious people, should someone you know perish without knowing the Lord, it is not your fault; they made their own decision. We see the biblical example:

Acts 18:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. ⁶ But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

If your family or friend was sleeping on the couch, and the house caught on fire, you would be considered a nut case if you went around the house straightening the pictures up rather than waking them because you didn't want to wake them and risk upsetting them because they were resting. Don't wake up someday and wish you would have said something, you are one person remember! The cleansing is for our sake, our peace of mind of knowing we did all we could do.

Whole Counsel

Verse 27, the whole counsel of God. Folks don't get on pet peeves, end times, abortion activists, gay agendas, give them the whole counsel. Verse by verse, because the whole counsel always brings to the central theme, and central message, God loves you, and demonstrated it on the cross. That is what gets people saved, and that is what will change lives, not being an activist for

your cause, however just and true it is; if you leave the whole counsel out, you will miss the central message, and so will they.

(Acts 20:27 NKJV) "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

Protect From the Wolves

Verse 29-30, his teaching and warning was to protect them from the wolves. It is heart breaking to watch satan chewing people up and then leaving them lay in the gutter. It is not a matter of I told you so, but a matter of a heart that breaks to see people hurting unnecessarily. There is so much suffering in the world (illness, unemployment, loved ones lost), it hurts so much to see people suffer for something that could have been avoided. If only they would have listened to the whole counsel of God.

Acts 20:28–30 (NKJV) ²⁸ Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

He Warned Day & Night / Why We Share - - - Will Determine How We Share

Verses 31-32, he warned night and day – with tears. He pleaded with people, and it was never for gain. Check your motive of why you share. Is it pride because you want people to get saved so they quit thinking you are a nut, is it because a saved spouse or child will make your life more enjoyable....ohh we can go to church together and talk about the Lord, or is it because your heart breaks at the thought of them spending eternity in hell. You need to examine your heart to see why you plead, because it will make a difference in your witness and prayer for the lost.

Acts 20:31–32 (NKJV) ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. ³² "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Verse 28 – Him We Preach / Not Theology but a Person

Listen church, be set free.....Paul says, "Him I preached." He doesn't preach theology. He preaches a person. We don't come here to study a theology, and that's what the word means, theo, God, ology, study, study of God. We come here to study a person who is Jesus Christ, the expressed image of God, Verse 15, that we studied. That's who we come to study. And as we study the person, we are also therefore then studying God, we're studying theology. Because out of the person comes the theology, the doctrine, it's based on a person, the person's not based on a doctrine. And the difference about that is He's not an intellectual study. He's a personal, intimate study that passes understanding and explodes in our hearts as we explore Him and all that He is. And as we studied, if we want to know the heart of God, we look at the life of Jesus. He is the expressed image of God.

Gospel – Sing Out / We have New Song in Hearts // Present as Such

In Matthew 10 when Jesus sends the disciples out, He says go to Israel, the Jews first. Tell them the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Tell them the King has come. The Greek word for preach is kerusso, it means "to sing out. That's the word for preach. Sing it out. Sing out the gospel! God has given us a new song, in our hearts to sing, a new song, praises for the King. Don't turn sharing into some crybaby cowboy song where the dog dies, the girlfriend leaves, and the ranch burns down. This gospel, this song, is a wonderful, it is a joy to be alive, love song. Present it as such we you share it. It isn't I got bad news you are going to hell, but I have great news heaven's doors have been opened for you, let me tell ya how to walk through them.

Matthew 10:5–7 (NKJV) ⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. ⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

George Whitefield

George Whitefield one of the men used mightily by the Lord in the Great Awakening in this Country. The Great Awakening was a religious revival that impacted the English colonies in America during the 1730s and 1740s. The movement came at a time when the idea of secular rationalism was being emphasized, and passion for religion had grown stale.

He said:

Other men may preach the gospel better than I, but no man can preach a better gospel

Folks, we have the greatest news in the world, and our world, our Country needs it now! Don't worry about how well you can preach, just sing it out from your heart, and let the Lord take it from there.

Title: Paul the Minister to the Body

- Paul's Message to the Body (1:28)
- **Paul's Labor for the Body (1:29)**
- Paul's Reward for the Body (2:1-3)

(Colossians 1:29 NKJV) To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

His Working – Not Mine

It's His working in me, and His workings in me are mighty. Yes, Paul labors and strives, but he points out that it is not him, but the Lord working in him. Folks ministry can be tough at times, we will be tired, it will be agonizing, but that doesn't mean God is not into whatever work it is you are doing. Paul himself said he ministered with tears. Look at the words used here:

- **Labor/Work** - kopiao, kop-ee-ah'-o; to feel fatigue; by impl. to work hard:--(bestow) labour, toil, be wearied.
- **Striving according** - agonizomai, ag-o-nid'-zom-ahee; to struggle, lit. (to compete for a prize), fig. (to contend with an adversary), or gen. (to endeavor to accomplish something):--fight, labor fervently, strive.

If you are facing opposition in the direction you are going as you live to glorify Christ, then that means you are going in the right direction.

Youth – any dead fish can float downstream with the current.

The earth is not a playground, it is a battleground, ask Paul, ask Christ!

Don't Quit – It is Hard – Don't Sweat

Today so many people are quitting the ministry because things are tough. The Priest at the OT Temple wore linen garments, in typology it means you are not to be sweating in the ministry, if you are sweating then you are in the flesh. So many people are quitting the ministry cause things are tough. If they are not tough, then I'd be worried. If I were Paul, at which point would I quit and say, I must be in the flesh; God's not supporting this ministry:

2 Corinthians 11:24–28 (NKJV) ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, *in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;* ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

On fourth and goal at the one, I always expected severe opposition from my opponent. Christian, it is fourth and goal on the one-yard line, eternity is at stake, of course the enemy is going to be throwing everything he has against you. He will cause disruption in your family, child rearing, mission trips, and ministries inside and outside the church. Keep working, agonizing if need be, but don't quit.

God's Power – Not Ours

But Paul gives the key, it is through God's power, not ours. Jesus agonized in the garden, but He kept ministering, for it was the joy that was set before Him that he finished the work God called Him to.

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV) ² *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Let his power work through you. When the Lord is working in us, there is an efficiency thing that is going on. It is His energy working in us

- **To His Working** - where we get our word Energy. *energeia*, en-erg'-i-ah; efficiency ("energy")--operation, strong, (effectual) working /
- **Which work** -. *energeo*, en-erg-eh'-o; to be active, efficient--do, (be) effectual (fervent), be mighty in, shew forth self, work (effectually in).
- **in me mightily** - en, en; a prim. prep. denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state), and (by impl.) instrumentality (medially or constructively), i.e. a relation of rest (intermediate between "in,"
- **mightily** – The word “*dunamis*”, the Greek word for power!

Acts 1:8 (NKJV) ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

It is an energy and power to continue against all the oppositions and struggles.

Key to Not Striving / Share What Works for You

We will struggle against opposition, but here in lies the key to not striving in ourselves:

Mom and Dad, that which you will most effectively communicate to your kids is that which works in you. Sunday School teacher, youth worker, home group leader — what will ultimately be fruitful in your ministry is that which has personally been worked through and lived out by *you*. So many ministries lack power because they are based on sharing concepts which are true but lack impact because they haven't been worked out in the life of the teacher.

Gang, I'll tell you what to share with your kids, neighbors, Bible study group, or third-grade Sunday School class: Share what works in *your* life. It's not how much you know, it's how well you know what you know. Has what you're teaching been worked through you? Has it become a part of you? When I have a week of solid prayer and morning devotion, I am walking in power because I am so intimately close to the Father. When someone tells me they are struggling, I share with them the power of prayer and devotion with the Lord and how you will be drawn close to Him.....those words just flow from me, they impact people because they can see it works for me. When I tell them how I've committed to putting my wife's needs before my own, and how beautiful our marriage has become, they can see it. How at my job I go to work to serve the Lord first, not worrying that boss man recognizes me, they can see the peace peace I have, and know that it is something I've worked out in my life.

If you share only what you've heard from others, your teaching will be dry. However, if, like Paul, you share that which 'worketh in you mightily', your teaching will be anointed because it will truly be Christ *in* you, ministering the hope of glory. You just minister what works, and as God brings you into deeper maturity with Him, you will share more of what works for you. You will never be striving in your flesh, it will be the things of the spirit naturally flowing from you. The striving will be the opposition of the enemy, and that is a good thing, cause you will know you are on the right track.

Title: Paul the Minister to the Body

- Paul's Message to the Body (1:28)
- Paul's Labor for the Body (1:29)
- **Paul's Reward for the Body (2:1-3)**

(Colossians 2:1 NKJV) For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,

Colosse and Laodicea were sister cities. Paul will later suggest that this letter be read to the saints in Laodicea. Paul had been to neither city. He had a big heart. It was full of concern for people he'd never met.

(Colossians 2:2 NKJV) that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, (Colossians 2:3 NKJV) in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Paul Begins Direct Attack on the Heresy

Paul's words in verse 3 are a direct assault on the heresy in Colosse. The Gnostics claimed they were the secret-keepers of the mysteries of the universe. But Paul says the treasures of divine knowledge were unfolded - not in eastern mysticism, or Jewish legalism, or Roman paganism - but in Jesus Christ!

Paul's Want for Them

Paul wants to come and teach them so that they may grow in understanding and knowledge, and that they be knitted together in love.

What's In It For You

What is in it for you? Christ in you the hope of glory. The more God uses you, the more he will be working in you, and you will be brought into maturity, more and more. Your marriage, your children, your relationship will be richly blessed because of Christ in you the hope of glory.

[**Colossians 1:27 \(NKJV\) ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**](#)

Jonathan Edwards

Edwards, Jonathan (1703–1758). Puritan Congregationalist pastor, revivalist and theologian, Edwards was one of the most influential thinkers of colonial America. A child prodigy, Edwards was awarded both a B.A. and an M.A. from Yale University before joining his grandfather, Solomon *Stoddard, in pastoring the Northampton Congregational Church in Massachusetts. In 1729 he became the sole pastor and led the church in a celebrated revival in the mid-1730s. Attacked by academic critics of emotionalism in religion, Edwards wrote *A Faithful Narrative*, the first salvo in the divisive "religious affections" controversy. In 1748 a dispute in the church regarding who may receive the Lord's Supper led to Edwards's departure. He worked as a missionary among local Native Americans. A decade later, he was invited to become the president of the College of New Jersey, later to be named Princeton, but died as the result of a smallpox inoculation just prior to his inauguration.

Feldmeth, N. P. (2008). In Pocket Dictionary of Church History: Over 300 Terms Clearly and Concisely Defined (pp. 56–57). Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

HOW WILL YOU LIVE?

Edwards possessed a burning commitment to God's glory that permeated everything he did, said, and wrote, and overshadowed every competing ambition. This became his controlling passion and consuming desire. The God of glory had captured his heart.

Living for God's honor must be the chief aim in every person's life. But what brings the most glory to God? This is the interpretive key for every life decision. Do you want to know God's will for your life? Do you want to know who to marry? Do you want to know what job to take? Do you want to know what ministry you should pursue? Do you want to know how to invest your resources? Do you want to know how to spend your time or how to use your tongue? Every decision and direction must come under this overarching goal of bringing glory to God.

A life of resolve comes with a price tag. You will be tested by the lure of the world. But you must turn a deaf ear to the crowd and live instead for the approbation of Christ. There will always be a cross before a crown, sacrifice before success, and reproach before a reward. The call of discipleship will cost you popularity, possessions, and position. But God will use your commitment. The grace of God will be multiplied in you if you cultivate a fixed resolution to live for the glory of God.

May you not settle for living for what is merely good. May you pursue what is best—the glory of God in all things.

*Lawson, S. J. (2008). *The Unwavering Resolve of Jonathan Edwards* (pp. 75–76). Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

End of Study

Passage: Colossians 2:1-13

Title: *Christ the Answer to Man's Philosophies*

Colossians 2:1-13 (NKJV) ¹ For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. ⁵ For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. ⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. ⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰ and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. ¹¹ In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Church in Colosse & America

I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the church we are studying here, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation..... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing's of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

Thematic Verses

Paul will make this the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15-18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10-11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

4409 πρωτεύω [proteuo /prote-yoo-o/] v. From 4413; TDNT 6:881; TDNTA 965; GK 4750; AV translates as "have the preeminence" once. 1 to be first, hold the first place.

Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

The Outline of the Book

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is "doctrine" (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is "duty" how are we to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Paul Writes because Truth Under Attack

Paul is writing this church in Colosse because the truth was under attack, they were being hit with all kinds of untruths. There were all kinds of add-ons going around Colosse. Man's philosophy that totally took away from the gospel, or man's philosophy that added onto the gospel - some were so close, others way off, but in either case it took away from, and diminished Christ work on the cross.

Chapter 2 Outline

- Christ the Answer to Man's Philosophy (2:1-13)
- Christ the Answer to Man's Rituals (2:14-23)

Doesn't Condemn Knowledge – But Be careful Doesn't Distract Us

God doesn't condemn knowledge, but the wisdom of this world. He is not calling us to be anti-intellectual. To be uneducated, and ignorant in sciences, history, medicine, etc, but to watch that the wisdom of this world doesn't sneak into our understanding of these things and distract us from the fact that

Colossians 1:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Troubling – Christians Running to “Professionals”

Let me preference this teaching with this: if there is cancer, broken bones, blindness, etc, then that would also mean that there is mental illness, and that illness needs to be treated just as a broken bone would need treatment. If a doctor has diagnosed you with a chemical imbalance, then by all means get on the medication. But be careful that they don't overmedicate you.

Along that same thought, there is wrong teaching or a self-condemnation that Christians are not capable of depression. That is totally wrong, if you are capable of experiencing joy and exhilaration, then you would also be capable of experiencing depression and anxiety. There are things in life that fill us with joy, and things in life that depress us. Christians we have to recognize and accept that in ourselves and just as importantly, in others.

However I am troubled to hear and see the ever-increasing number of believers who are pouring their money and time on unbelieving psychologists and psychiatrists when their problems are specifically dealt with in the Bible. Folks, if your car breaks down, I wouldn't tell you to read your Bible. I would tell you to read an automotive manual. If your arm breaks, I wouldn't tell you to read your Bible. I would tell you to go to a doctor or read a medical manual. But for matters of the heart and soul, I would implore you to read your Bible, for it alone contains the answers you need.

Before you allow someone to medicate you for depression or anxiety, I ask you this, how has your prayer life been, and the reading of the word. Before you go and see them, take care of the basics. Make sure that it is not spiritual warfare. Make sure it is not because you have not covered yourself with prayer and the word. I recommend this, two weeks of solid prayer and the word, and then see if things have changed.

The Wisdom of the Wise

Too often man's philosophies are used to distract or divide from the true power available in Christ. Here is the problem with man's intellectual philosophy, these men are so smart, that they don't believe in Jesus Christ, therefore what power do they have to offer you to make you well in matters of the soul and heart. And counsel that doesn't include Christ is not only anemic, it is foolish according to the Lord:

1 Corinthians 1:17–21 (NKJV) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. ¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” ²⁰ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

Verse 8 – Beware It is Empty

In verse 8 Paul tells us to beware — of the philosophy and traditions, and trips the world values,' warns Paul. `They're vain; they're empty; they don't work.'

Colossians 2:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Outline: Christ the Answer to Man's Philosophies

- Christ the Answer to Lukewarmness (2:1)
- Christ the Answer to All Wisdom and Knowledge (2:2-6)
- Christ the Answer to Emptiness and Incompleteness (2:7-10)
- Christ the Answer to Man's Guilt (2:11-13)

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

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In Every Study

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Empty Philosophy Produces Lukewarmness

This letter was to be shared with the sister church Laodicea; I think we can see that the church in Laodicea did not receive and apply the wisdom and warning in this letter, because Jesus will speak of them in about 30 years from this writing and say what, they are lukewarm. World wisdom and philosophy brought into and applied to any church will result the same....

Lukewarmness at best:

Revelation 3:14–22 (NKJV) ¹⁴ *“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:’* ¹⁵ *“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.* ¹⁶ *So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.* ¹⁷ *Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—* ¹⁸ *I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.* ¹⁹ *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.* ²⁰ *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.* ²¹ *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.* ²² *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ’*

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Wisdom is In (not from) / Hidden – Secret Knowledge / No - All Treasures in Jesus

A definition of a true philosopher is said to be a person, who is searching for true wisdom and knowledge. All wisdom, all knowledge **is in — not from** — Jesus. Whoever desires wisdom to navigate life successfully must come to the realization that there is nothing more, nothing less, nothing else than Jesus. All treasures of wisdom are in Him.

When Paul said this wisdom is hidden in Christ, he used the ancient Greek word apokruphos. “His very use of that word is a blow aimed at the Gnostics.... Gnostics believed that a great mass of elaborate knowledge was necessary for salvation. That knowledge they set down in their books which they called apokruphos because they were barred to the ordinary man.” (Barclay) Paul wanted all to know that real wisdom was not hidden in secret books, but deposited in Jesus Christ so that all can access it. Hidden’ does not, however, mean that they are concealed but rather that they are laid up or stored away as a treasure.” (Vaughn)

William Randolph Hearst – Famous Artwork / You Get it All in Jesus

William Randolph Hearst, the billionaire publisher, became rather eccentric in his later years. One day, looking through a book of famous artwork, a painting caught his eye. ‘I want this painting for my collection,’ he said to his aides. But after making some inquiries, his aides reported that they were unable to locate the particular work. ‘If you value your jobs,’ Hearst barked, ‘do whatever it takes to find that treasure, and secure it for me immediately.’ Three and a half months later, the aides returned to Hearst. ‘Did you find the treasure?’ he asked. ‘Yes,’ they replied. ‘After much searching and painstaking research, we found it.’ ‘Did you purchase it?’ he asked. ‘No.’ ‘Why not?’ Hearst demanded. ‘Because we found it in your warehouse.’

So too, Paul says to the Colossians, ‘You already have all the wisdom and knowledge you will ever need to get through life successfully. It’s all in Christ. When you got Him, you got it all.’

(Colossians 2:4 NKJV) Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

Persuasive – Empty Sweet Talk / Building the House

Persuasive/Enticing words are a lot of oratory or sweet talk, a lot of hot air and steam.

I liken psychiatrists to this; for a house builder, the sooner he can finish the house, the sooner he gets paid and moves on to another home to build. But for a psychiatrist once the house is built, the money stops, so over and over they want to talk, and talk ---- they say you are getting better, but come back next week. It’s a temporary fix that needs continual patching.

Steam – Ice - Water

Philosophy and Rituals. On one extreme Christianity is in danger of evaporating into a philosophy—where it becomes nothing but steam. The opposite danger is it will freeze into a form where it becomes nothing more than a ritual. These rituals are the opposite but the same, you just keep doing and doing but nothing ever changes.

There is a real peril on either side. But the Lord Jesus called Himself the *Water* of Life. He is neither steam nor ice for neither can sustain life. That is why we need to guard against following the line of philosophy or following the line of ritual. Christianity is Christ!

John 4:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

(Colossians 2:5 NKJV) For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

Colosse Church was Steadfast

At this time the word that was coming back to Paul was that this church was standing. The Colossian church had a reputation for steadfastness, and Paul wanted them to continue like that and not be led away by some sweet talker.

To see your good order – order is a military term and it meant to stand shoulder to shoulder.

Steadfastness means, “to have a solid front, to be immovable.”

A Key to Steadfastness – Stand Together

Here is a key to steadfastness, we stand together on this, we stand as a body shoulder to shoulder. I shared with you before the human tank the Romans would use, they would lock their battle shields together, walk side by side, and flaming arrows and chariots would bounce off them. We must do the same.

Christian you can not be an island, you have to be in fellowship with other believers and you have to be in a study of God’s Word with others.

[Hebrews 10:24–25 \(NKJV\)](#) ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Steadfast – By Keep Walking

This may sound like a play on words, but how do you standfast, be immovable? You gotta keep walking.....verse 6

(Colossians 2:6 NKJV) As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

Walk

Over and over, the Scriptures tell us to walk:

To walk in love (Ephesians 5:2),

[Ephesians 5:2 \(NKJV\)](#) ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

to walk in light (Ephesians 5:8),

[Ephesians 5:8 \(NKJV\)](#) ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

in wisdom (Colossians 4:5).

[Colossians 4:5 \(NKJV\)](#) ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.

And here we are told to walk in HIM – for in Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

We gotta keep walking.

Rio Rivera / Psalm 1:1-3

The banks of a river in Arizona called the Rio Rivera are lined with a substance called ‘near quicksand’. It’s almost quicksand — but not quite. If you keep walking on this near-quicksand, you don’t have a problem. But if you stop, you’ll start sinking, and you’ll get sucked in.

So too, the Christian experience is a walk. If we don’t keep moving, we’ll start sinking. And the way to keep moving is not to seek some deeper truth. The way to keep moving is to walk in simplicity, in the same way we received Christ.

Psalm 1 shows what happens when you quit walking, you'll be standing with sinners, and sitting with the scornful.....gotta keep walking gang.

Psalm 1:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

Outline: Christ the Answer to Man's Philosophies

- Christ the Answer to Lukewarmness (2:1)
- Christ the Answer to All Wisdom and Knowledge (2:2-6)
- Christ the Answer to Emptiness and Incompleteness (2:7-10)
- Christ the Answer to Man's Guilt (2:11-13)

(Colossians 2:7 NKJV) rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

(Colossians 2:8 NKJV) Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Cheat – Word Used for Slave Trader

Cheat/spoil you – this was the word used for a slave trader who would kidnap someone and force them into slavery.

As we spoke of, philosophies and rituals are according to the principles of the world – not according to Christ. They will imprison you from the freedom and joy of life when we see that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Bases of Philosophy

Philosophy is based on what man thinks, the way man thinks something works. Philosophy according to Webster's dictionary means "a system of principles for guidance in practical affairs; aka – *a philosophy of life*. A philosopher is one who is deeply versed in philosophy. But I find it interesting, the verb philosophizes means "to speculate or theorize, usually in a superficial or imprecise manner. With philosophy, you just talk and talk, but you never get anywhere, you just keep talking

Paul encountered philosophizers in Athens there on Mars Hill. It says these philosophers spent their time in nothing else but to tell or hear some new things.

Acts 17:16-21 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. ¹⁷ Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ **Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers** encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new doctrine *is* of which you speak?" ²⁰ For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." ²¹ **For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.**

Let's break man's philosophy into 3 major categories:

- philosophy of false religions
- philosophy of false teachers
- philosophy of man's intellect

Philosophy of False Religions:

False Religions are they that totally reject our God of the Bible and Jesus Christ. False Religions: Buddhism, Islam, New Age.

Why do men add-on?

1. If Jesus is preeminent (first in priority) then that would mean that they are not. Therefore their pride will not allow that, and thus they seek a philosophy that will draw men to them.
2. Secondly, quite simply, they say we will not have this man rule over us.

Luke 19:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

Philosophy of false teachers:

False teachers and cult religions take the bases of Jesus and the Bible, then they add their slant onto it. Many are so close, but just add one thing to it, that pretty much is what was happening at Colosse. They will say they are Christians, but they have a deeper understanding or some special revelation.

- Mormonism – you too will be a god. – Jesus and Satan are brothers, and Jesus death on the cross does not bring full atonement, you got to be a good Mormon too for salvation.
- Jehovah's Witnesses – the 144, 000 elite, salvation comes through knocking. Jesus is not God, but Michael the archangel.
- Christian Science – man is already saved, sin, evil, sickness, and death are not real, and it's not hot in hell. Jesus was not Christ because God cannot become flesh.
- I believe without a doubt there are false teachers in churches today, who water the word and the gospel down. These churches may have all the doctrine that line up with true Christianity, but in practice they are far from it. Dangerously, it is hard to truly separate the false teaching churches from false religions.

Why do men add-on?

1. People want add-ons because it boils down that they can't believe the gospel is that simple. They believe there has to be more to it, therefore they add on to it.

2 Kings 5:1–15 (NKJV) ¹ Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, but a leper. ² And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. ³ Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." ⁴ And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel." ⁵ Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. ⁶ Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy. ⁷ And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me." ⁸ So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." ⁹ Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰ And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean." ¹¹ But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.'" ¹² Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. ¹³ And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. ¹⁵ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant."

2. People have trouble believing the gospel can be so simple, therefore they add onto it. But for others the gospel will make them face their sinfulness. It will call you to repentance, therefore people will change it to ease the revelation of themselves.
3. People will change it so they can do something other than just receive it, so that they can do something in and of themselves so they can say see what I have done, I've earned my salvation. It is self-righteousness. And that's what happened in Judaism is, they took the scriptures and then go, "That's not enough. Let's write a whole bunch of rules to explain it. Let's write, really in the sense, procedures." And so then you come up with these volumes, in the Talmud it's called of all the rules that go with the word of God. And so the Talmud, the rules became superseding the heart of God, because the heart of God is the word of God. And so some things just never change.

Philosophy of Man's Intellect

The Philosophy of man's intellect, how man thinks things should work. Man's philosophies are innumerable. Men have philosophies on life, creation, love, marriage, happiness, forgiveness, sickness, and God, you name it. The first Internet site I hit had an Index categorized from A-Z.

As we mentioned before, man's philosophy is anemic, it has no power because it has no Christ.

So why then do people, even Christians, follow after man's philosophies, seek these counselors for how to live life or help them out with life? Why are so many people drawn to it?

1. First, for Christians, they can be drawn to it because they don't read the Bible for themselves and are not in a Bible teaching church. Therefore, they will listen to what the world around them says is good stuff, today it is almost a cultural thing. They just don't know there is power in the Word. You'll never know there is water in the faucet unless you lift the handle.
2. For others, they like man's philosophies because it has no rules, it has no absolutes, and therefore there is nothing to hold the hearer accountable to. There is no black and white, therefore they can continue on in their ways. How often man's philosophy will look to blame your past, your family, or your environment, anything but you. Man's philosophies will call it an addiction, say it's not your fault. God will call it sin, and say repent. The hearer that doesn't want to admit their sinfulness takes comfort in man's philosophies.
3. Another reason so many people buy into man's intellectual philosophies is because these counselors allow people to talk. People need to talk; they will pay someone 150/hr just to hear them talk. I read an article that a man in California put an ad in the newspaper saying I will listen to you talk for 15 minutes for 10 dollars. He was getting 15 calls a day. We as a church have to recognize this, and apply it to our ministry. Invest in people by listening to them, making time for them. There is therapy in conversation, if there is one thing we can apply from man's philosophies this it.

Whatever the case, the counsel they receive may be somewhat good, somewhat comforting, but it will lack power, because it lacks the divine Word, therefore it will only be a temporary fix.

I can meet people suffering from depression, suicidal, and I don't have to study psychology, get a 4-year degree in human behavior, or go to some seminar, all I have to do is point people to Christ and His word. I had to quit reading the training manual for the Chaplain because it had so much of man's philosophy in it. I had anxiety because my mind couldn't absorb it all. I finally just closed it up and said I'll show up with my Bible, and the Spirit of the Lord, and say here I am Lord.

Christ is the answer to man's philosophies.

Church Using Corporate America Philosophies

So Paul is tearing down many of these errancies, and one of the errancies is man's wisdom and philosophy. And it's amazing how they're the same yesterday today and forever. Nothing's changed since Paul's writing to today, man, and his wisdom and his philosophy. But it's also interesting to me, little subtle philosophies that the church doesn't even realize. And one of the ones I recognize over and over in the church, rarely is it ever discussed because it's rarely ever truly seen, but it's the man's philosophy of the wisdom of corporate of America. And so lots of people, lots of churches, they want to run the church like it's a business, like one in corporate of America. And so they take the philosophies of business and then they want to apply them to the church.

And what happens is, people start getting frustrated and people start getting very exhausted because those of you that work in corporate America, it can be very tiring. You wake up every day and go, "Another other day in corporate America, with all of its bindings. Got to have a bunch of meetings, got to have a bunch of written policies and procedures, got to have a bunch of reviews and evaluation." And people try to bring that in and put the square box of corporate America in the round peg hole of the church, which the church is really set to operate in the spiritual realm. "Oh, let things be done decently and in order," but there is a place of, "But don't let everything be limited to the box." And so I see man's philosophy over and over frustrating people in the church. "We want more meetings. We want more rules. We want more procedures written." Whereas I always say, "Here's the procedure. It's right here, it's 31,102 verses. It's called the Bible. That's how it's to be operated on."

(Colossians 2:9 NKJV) For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

Jesus is the God-Man / Errancy Jesus Wasn't God / My Christmas Manger

So one of the attacks that's happening here at the church of Colossae, and we can really read it in its depth there in First John, this special knowledge. And again, these things, they're the same yesterday, today and forever. Some things have never changed in 2,000 years. And the cults today are no different from the cults of the time of this writing. And so the struggle is the incarnation of Christ. The struggle being the God-man. Now First John again addresses this, but John chapter one, "In the beginning was the word. The word was with God and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning." And then verse 14, "And the word became flesh and dwell among us." The Christmas story, Christ has come. Every Christmas I put up my manger outside my house and then 10 yards behind it, I put up a cross, a six foot cross that is behind it with the picturing of the babe that came to the manger would be the man, the God-man, that would go to the cross for the sin of the world.

John 1:1 (NKJV) ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Errancy – Jesus Wasn't in Actual Physical Form

But what the continual battle is, is the God-man. So people struggle, and here in Colossae as in today, Jesus was merely a man, he was not God in the flesh, which is totally contrary to the scriptures that we just read. And then there's this errancy that flips is, Jesus was not a man. He was a spirit form, like an angel in a sense, and so he was never fully man. And so the struggle with that of course is then, if he wasn't fully a man, then he could not feel the pain of the sin of the fallen world. But our high priest can relate to us because he was tempted in every way in the flesh, but never sinned. He was perfect. But as man He was also felt every pound of the nails, every lash of the whip, every poke of the spear that bled him out.

Physical Matter Doesn't Matter – Once Saved Always Saved

So the errancy that would be applied with Jesus was not a man, he was just spirit, then was used for the errancy that see that physical matter doesn't matter. And so whatever's done in the body doesn't matter. And I know it's kind of hard to grasp the errancy that they're trying to say, but really what it boils down to is they're trying to put this picture in that if Jesus wasn't man, therefore only spirit matters. Then therefore, whatever happens in the flesh doesn't matter. And so it was a license for sin, carnality. And so to the same thing, many doctrines today is based on that place that the spirit has redeemed man, all is covered by the spiritual work of Christ. And therefore, no matter what I do in the body, I'm still saved. And hence why many people, like the doctrine that they want to jump on and say, "Once saved, always saved." But of course the first thing has to be, "Did you make it to the once yet?"

Today Physical Doesn't Matter

So let's address the wants. Have you been saved? Have you received Christ? And the means of salvation come with for godly sorrow produces repentance. A person feels the conviction of their sin before the Holy God. And therefore they see that their sin in the body separates them from the Holy God, and therefore they need to call upon the Lord for the forgiveness of sin. But then there's the errancy that comes with many that, who say, "Once saved, always saved. I'm now in the spiritual realm. I'm in the spiritual forgiveness. And therefore I can live and do anything I want, even if it is against the word of God. And I can live in carnality because I made that profession to Christ, once saved, I'm always saved. And I cannot be separated from him." To which I say that's a dangerous place to be than any person could live in a habitual, unrepentant sin and think that they're still right before the Holy God.

Nothing New Today – Same Heresies and Errancies 2000 Years Later

So Jesus, who walked this earth 2,000 years ago, was fully God and fully man. And these heresies that will be reading and studying are the same yesterday, today and forever. They do not change as man tries to add to and take away from the word of God.

(Colossians 2:10 NKJV) and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

The Lie – Jesus is Good – But More

The lie says Jesus is good, but adds this, this and this onto Him and it will be better. The truth is, we are complete in Jesus.

Marcellus

The story is told that in the days of the Roman Empire, a certain wealthy senator became estranged from his son. When he died unexpectedly, his will was opened. "Because my son does not appreciate what I've done, I leave all of my worldly possessions to my loyal slave, Marcellus," the will read. "However, because I am a man of grace, I bequeath to my son one of my possessions of his choosing."

"Sorry," said the testator to the son. "You can only take one of your dad's possessions. Which will it be?"

"I take Marcellus," said the son.

Brilliant! That's the idea. When you take Jesus Christ, you get all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. When you open your heart to Him, you find everything you need. It's all in Him. Why is this understanding so important? Because it is the only way to keep from being sucked into "enticing words," cults, and other dead-end pursuits of pseudo-spirituality. That's what was happening in Colosse. People were coming on the scene, saying, "What Paul is preaching is fine, but there's much more."

"No," Paul says. "Be steadfast in your faith in Christ. All of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him."

Outline: Christ the Answer to Man's Philosophies

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(Colossians 2:11 NKJV) In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

(Colossians 2:12 NKJV) buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

We will talk about circumcision and baptism in the next study.

(Colossians 2:13 NKJV) And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Plato – Saw Problem – Missed Solution

Plato (400BC), the great philosopher, said the unfilled desire in his heart was a divine word that would come to him and make all things plain and clear, he called the desire – Logos. Socrates (400BC) said to Plato, it may be Plato that the deity can forgive sins, but I don't see how.

Profound enough to see the need for sins to be forgiven, but not how a holy God could. He saw the dilemma but missed the solution.

Key to Biblical Counseling – Forgiveness of Sin

This is the key to Biblical counseling and ministry. Paul says the issue is this: the forgiveness of sin. What does man need? Forgiveness. It's so simple. We are forgiven because of Christ's work on the Cross. Therefore, we must forgive the person who bothers us, the parent who abused us, the spouse who left us because Jesus died for them, just as He died for us.

World Philosophies Try to Cover or Cleanse Themselves of Guilt

People will add on, they will follow philosophies and rituals, to try to cleanse themselves of the guilt they have, or the shame over things of the past, or the unforgiveness of the person that hurt them. The forgiveness part is huge for both philosophies and rituals where men are trying to earn God's forgiveness.

In your biblical counsel, include in there, share it often with the people, you are forgiven.

False Teachers Have No Good News for the Sinner / Hence Why go to Church not World

The false teachers have no good news for the sinner. And the false teachers never go to the world, they always go to the church where they can find people who are already prepped to receive their errancy.

The false teachers have no good news for the sinner, even those who have come to faith, because the false teachers will always put people under something type of bondage, legalism, or errancy that does not give people the power to overcome sin. And it becomes compounded when people are, as we say, seeking the things of the Lord, but have not yet come to the understanding of the gospel. Then when these false teachers come, they lead them into a place that the errancy can't even deliver them from sin that will cleanse them and bring them into salvation before the Holy God.

False Teachers Today – Won't Teach the Whole Counsel – Thus Powerless

There are many false teachers today who will not teach the whole counsel of God. And so though someone may think they have a relationship with Christ, the fact is, they've been deceived that they do because they haven't been given the whole counsel of God, which the gospel is, a gospel of repentance. But then there's also the place that people who have received the Lord, the false teachers won't teach repentance, but some type of feel-good message. And everyone feels good about it, except the person who's in bondage to sin, because they haven't been told how to be free from sin and how to overcome sin, and addiction, and anger, a temper, a past that they can't let go of, because the false teachers won't teach them the power of Christ and the power that comes with repentance. And you know what, church? Repentance is faith. It's faith believing that if I can turn from this, that God will meet me in this, and that I will be given the power to overcome. Repentance is good news, unfortunately false teachers won't preach it and teach it because they're afraid to upset the people.

False teachers don't answer guilt issue..... but Jesus does!

Conclusion

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However I am troubled to hear and see the ever-increasing number of believers who are pouring their money and time on unbelieving psychologists and psychiatrists when their problems are specifically dealt with in the Bible. Folks, if your car breaks down, I wouldn't tell you to read your Bible. I would tell you to read an automotive manual. If your arm breaks, I wouldn't tell you to read your Bible. I would tell you to go to a doctor or read a medical manual. But for matters of the heart and soul, I would implore you to read your Bible, for it alone contains the answers you need.

Before you allow someone to medicate you for depression or anxiety, I ask you this, how has your prayer life been, and the reading of the word. Before you go and see them, take care of the basics. Make sure that it is not spiritual warfare. Make sure it is not because you have not covered yourself with prayer and the word. I recommend this, two weeks of solid prayer and the word, and then see if things have changed.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: Colossians 2:9-23

Title: Christ the Answer to Man's Rituals – 2:9-23

Church in Colosse & America

I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the church we are studying here, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation..... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing's of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

Thematic Verses

Paul will make this the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

4409 πρωτεύω [proteuo /prote-yoo-o/] v. From 4413; TDNT 6:881; TDNTA 965; GK 4750; AV translates as "have the preeminence" once. 1 to be first, hold the first place.

Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

The Outline of the Book

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is "doctrine" (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is "duty" how are we to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Paul Writes because Truth Under Attack

Paul is writing this church in Colosse because the truth was under attack, they were being hit with all kinds of untruths. There were all kinds of add-ons going around Colosse. Man's philosophy that totally took away from the gospel, or man's philosophy that added onto the gospel - some were so close, others way off, but in either case it took away from, and diminished Christ work on the cross.

In the first fifteen verses of this chapter we see that Christ is the answer to Man's Philosophy. The remainder of the chapter will show He is the answer to Man's Ritual. Paul will warn us of the crooks who will rob us of our peace and joy.

Again, Paul is writing this church in Colosse because the truth was under attack, they were being hit with all kinds of untruths. There were all kinds of add-ons going around Colosse. Man's philosophy that totally took away from the gospel, or man's rituals that added onto the gospel - some were so close, others way off, but in either case it took away from, and diminished Christ work on the cross.

False teachers were coming into this church at Colosse and saying, "hey what Christ did on the

cross was great, but now you have to do your part”, and they started to try to lay all these trips on the people saying you have to do this, this and this to be super spiritual. These teachers were trying to tell them what to eat, what day to worship, they needed to be circumcised, etc.....just one big legalistic trip.

Paul is writing them to comfort them, and to warn them, that they have Christ therefore they have it all – they are complete in Him.

Why do men add-on Rituals? What is it in people that they like rituals? That they like the idea that if I do this, this and this, then I am right with God.

1. People will change it so they can do something other than just receive it, so that they can do something in and of themselves so they can say see what I have done, I've earned my salvation. It is self-righteousness, it is pride in its worse form. The danger here is, that this is where it can cross over into being a cult, that it is your ritual that saves you, not Christ.

Side Note: I'm not going to get into a study on cults other than to point that out to you so that when you meet them, you will know where they are coming from – they are working for their salvation. Rituals become entrenched in people, it becomes a part of their very being. You are not going to root that out of them easily. First and foremost, these people are conditioned literally to the point of being brainwashed. If you witness to them, they have been taught how to counter what you have said. Once you start witnessing to them, they go on the defensive, and have their preprogrammed answered to who Christ is, who Satan is, end times, etc. If you challenge them, they consider that religious persecution, and that plays so well with working your way to heaven and self-righteousness. I find the best approach is to let them witness to you, then come with the offense, and then for me to say after they are finished – I'm confused for you said this but this is what the bible says, or to point out how they conflicted their own story. I have never one a cult member to Christ – but the day isn't over yet.

2. People want Ritual add-ons because it boils down that they can't believe the gospel is that simple. They believe there has to be more to it, therefore they add on to it. Remember the last study's story on Naaman.

Hebrews 9:12–14 (NKJV) ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

3. People like rituals because then they can measure how they are doing spiritually. The problem is they are so focused on how they are doing on their little checklist that they get so caught up in it, and they lose focus on the Risen Lord, who has the power to wipe the checklist clean.
4. Believers will add rituals on because of guilt. They believe they are saved only through Christ's work on the cross, but guilt forces them into the bondage of legalism, rituals and works, that they are somehow trying to cover their guilt. Nowhere in the scriptures does God try reform the flesh, He gives them a new heart.

(Galatians 3:3 NKJV) *Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*

A new heart comes with a fresh start, and that start comes daily:

Lamentations 3:21–24 (NKJV) ²¹ This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. ²² Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

Paul is going to crush man's rituals and legalism:

(Colossians 2:9 NKJV) For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; (Colossians 2:10 NKJV) and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Complete – lacking, nor needing, anything else. Jesus is our all and all.

Refresher - The word translated “fullness” is the Greek word “pleroma - play'-ro-mah”. It was a technical term in the vocabulary of these false teacher at the time. It meant “the sum total of all the divine power and attributes.” Paul uses their term against them, applying their word to describe Christ. He uses their lingo they can relate too, but shows them where they should truly relate it too.

Do you feel empty? Well all the fullness is in Jesus. All fullness is in Jesus. Therefore, the closer I am to Jesus, the fuller I will be as a man. Conversely, the further I pull away from Jesus, the emptier I'll feel inside. All of creation centers around Jesus, is held together by Jesus, points to Jesus, and finds its fulfillment in Jesus.

Ephesians 1:18–23 (NKJV) ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Whoever Takes the Son Gets It All

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man who, with his devoted young son, shared a passion for art collecting. Together they traveled around the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection. Priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others adorned the walls of the family estate. The widowed, elder man looked on with satisfaction as his only child became an experienced art collector. The son's trained eye and sharp business mind caused his father to beam with pride as they dealt with art collectors around the world.

As winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His beloved son was missing in action. The art collector anxiously awaited more news, fearing he would never see his son again. Within days, his fears were confirmed. The young man had died while rushing a fellow soldier to a medic.

Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the season, a season that he and his son had so looked forward to, would visit his house no longer. On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home.

As he opened the door, he was greeted by a soldier with a large package in his hand. He introduced himself to the man by saying, "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you." As the two began to talk, the soldier told of how the man's son had told everyone of his, not to mention his father's, love of fine art. "I'm an artist," said the soldier, "and I want to give you this." As the old man unwrapped the package, the paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the son.

Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the soldier, promising to hang the picture over the fireplace. A few hours later, after the soldier had departed, the old man set about his task.

True to his word, the painting went well above the fireplace, pushing aside thousands of dollars of paintings. And then the man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been

given. During the days and weeks that followed, the man realized that even though his son was no longer with him, the boy's life would live on because of those he had touched. He would soon learn that his son had rescued dozens of wounded soldiers before a bullet stilled his caring heart.

As the stories of his son's gallantry continued to reach him, fatherly pride and satisfaction began to ease the grief. The painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far eclipsing any interest in the pieces for which museums around the world clamored. He told his neighbors it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man became ill and passed away. The art world was in anticipation!

Unmindful of the story of the man's only son, but in his honor, those paintings would be sold at an auction. According to the will of the old man, all of the art works would be auctioned on Christmas day, the day he had received his greatest gift. The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings. Dreams would be fulfilled this day; greatness would be achieved as many claim "I have the greatest collection." The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid. The room was silent.

"Who will open the bidding with \$100?" he asked. Minutes passed. No one spoke. From the back of the room came, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son. Let's forget it and go on to the good stuff."

More voices echoed in agreement. "No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?" Finally, a friend of the old man spoke, "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it."

"I have ten dollars. Will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer. After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice. Gone." The gavel fell, cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and we can bid on these treasures!"

The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced the auction was over. Stunned disbelief quieted the room. Someone spoke up and asked, "What do you mean it's over? We didn't come here for a picture of some old guy's son. What about all of these paintings? There are millions of dollars of art here! I demand that you explain what's going on here!" The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son...gets it all."

Puts things into perspective doesn't it? Just as those art collectors discovered on that Christmas Day, the message is still the same: the love of a Father, a Father whose greatest joy came from His Son, who went away and gave His life rescuing others. And because of that Father's love, whoever takes the Son, gets it all.

– Unknown

You don't need these things (man's philosophies and rituals), because you are COMPLETE in Him. Whoever takes the Son, gets it ALL!

(Colossians 2:11 NKJV) In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

Circumcision – the cutting away of the flesh. Your rituals won't cut away the flesh. God didn't take a knife to your heart to cut away the flesh, He gave you a new heart. God wants to operate on your heart, cutting away the things keep you from seeing Him for all He is, all He has for you. A slice here, a snip here, as he conforms your mind to think and see things as He does.

Jeremiah 31:33–34 (NKJV) ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Jeremiah 31:3 (NKJV) ³ The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

But you may ask then why did God have the children of Israel circumcised? God was setting them apart from the rest of the world, a people that would be governed by Him. He was given a physical example of what he would later do spiritually.

God instructed that the child be circumcised on the eighth day, and studies show that vitamin K which causes blood clotting necessary for healing reaches it peak on the eighth day.

Also, there was a health issue. In the early 1900's a hospital in NYC was noticing the high rate of cervical cancer in woman, so they started a study and found that Jewish woman's rate was a fraction of the other woman. They realized it was because Jewish woman would only marry Jewish men, who of course were circumcised. These men were cleaner and did carry bacteria that uncircumcised men did. So God's OT laws had reasons behind them.

You don't need these things (man's philosophies and rituals), because you are COMPLETE in Him. Whoever takes the Son, gets it ALL!

(Colossians 2:12 NKJV) buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

(Colossians 2:13 NKJV) And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Baptism has turned into a ritual. Some churches say if you are not baptized you are not saved. Baptism is merely an outward display of the commitment you have made in your heart to Christ. You tell the world, don't come looking for that old man anymore, we buried him last week out in the river, a new man has rose from the dead (just like Jesus) and lives for Christ now.

Baptism is a public proclamation to the world that I now follow Christ. It shouldn't be a ritual but a celebration of the revival that has happened in your heart.

Romans 6:1–14 (NKJV) ¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

This is the key to Biblical counseling and ministry – going back to guilt issue. Paul says the issue is this: the forgiveness of sin. What does man need? Forgiveness. It's so simple. We are forgiven because of Christ's work on the Cross. Therefore, we must forgive the person who bothers us, the parent who abused us, the spouse who left us because Jesus died for them, just as He died for us.

The forgiveness part is huge for both philosophies and rituals where men are trying to earn God's forgiveness. In your biblical counsel, include in there, share it often with the people, you are forgiven.

You don't need these things (man's philosophies and rituals), because you are COMPLETE in Him. Whoever takes the Son, gets it ALL!

(Colossians 2:14 NKJV) having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Two things were nailed to the cross that day, our beloved Jesus, and a sign that read:

John 19:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹ Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

They would write the persons crime and hang it over their head on the cross so when all passed by, they would know why that person was punished. In this case the sign wasn't accusation, but a statement. The King of the Jews, could only be the Messiah.

The Messiah would come and take handwriting that was against – the 10 commandments – and nail them to the cross.

(Romans 3:20 NKJV) Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

In Exodus 20, god gave the 10 commandments. The first four has to deal with our relationship to the Lord, that vertical plane between Man and God – thou shall not have any other gods, nor worship idols, nor use the Lord's name in vain, and to honor the Sabbath. The other is horizontal plane between man and man – respect thy parents, not kill, not commit adultery, not steal, not lie, and not to covet thy neighbor's goods. The horizontal intersecting the vertical, making the cross.

Here in Colossians 2:14, Jesus would say these commandments condemn you, but I have now paid your penalty on the cross..

Handwriting of requirements - means the Certificate of Debt. If you were convicted of a crime, you went to prison and upon serving your sentence you got a "Certificate of Debt" which said "paid in full". They would roll it up and give it to you. As you traveled through the Roman Empire you could never be charged for that crime again because you had your certificate.

The Certificate of Debt was Paid in Full on the Cross at Calvary by Jesus. All of our sins past, present, and future were paid there at Calvary. The sentence of Death against us, lifted never to be brought against us again. If satan would come, we throw our Certificate in his face.

*(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. **It is Finished** – from the greek word "teleo (tel-eh'-o); means to end, i.e. complete, execute, conclude, discharge (a debt):--accomplish, make an end, expire, fill up, finish, go over, pay, perform", ----- Bottom Line: **PAID IN FULL***

Jesus said teleo, it is finished...**Paid in Full.**

How interesting that in the time of this writing if a prison guard let the prisoner escape he had to pay the escaped prisoners debt, and maybe even put to death for allowing the prisoner to escape (hence why the Philippian jailer was going to take his own life when he thought all the prisoners had escaped).

Acts 16:25-31 (NKJV) ²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself: ²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." ²⁹ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

How awesome when you piece it all together, in a sense we escaped, and Jesus who set us free, paid the price, finished our sentence, which was death, and thus the Certificate of Debt we can now carry – Paid in Full!

Many Not Healthy – Because Don't Fully Know – Paid in Full

Many Christians aren't healthy because they fail to understand this foundation and profoundly simple element. They know they are going to heaven, but guilt from their past keeps them from moving forward – therefore they add a ritual here or there to make them feel they are earning His forgiveness. Jesus says you don't have to do that, Paid in Full.

For others, they know they're forgiven, but they can't believe the one who hurt them is. 'You can't ignore the abuse, the trauma, the anxiety which has been inflicted upon you,' they are told. 'It must be dealt with.' Wait a minute! It wasn't ignored, and it *has* been dealt with by Jesus' blood on the Cross. He hung on the Cross of Calvary dying for the very sin which bugs us in others. Therefore, for us to say, 'We gotta dig it up and talk it through,' makes a mockery of what Christ did on Calvary. 'It is *finished*,' He cried. It's done. It's paid for. So be forgiven and forgive one another.

(Colossians 2:15 NKJV) Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Romans 8:38-39 - God's not impressed w/ principalities and powers.

Romans 8:38–39 (NKJV) ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When a Roman General conquered an enemy, he would return to Rome in a triumphal procession. The General would ride in the lead chariot, followed by his soldiers. Behind the soldiers walked the conquered men, chained and often naked, to the derisive jeers of the crowds which lined the streets. Paul borrows this image in this verse for our application.

The only toe hold or hand grip a demon has on someone is his sin. But if the sin has been washed away by the blood of the Son, the demon has nothing upon which to cling. Once forgiveness is understood and blood is appropriated, the powers of darkness are rendered powerless. That's why Peter tells us that when Jesus died, He went into the lower parts of the earth and told the demonic spirits they no longer had authority over us (I Peter 3:19).

I Peter 3:18–19 (NKJV) ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

Ephesians 4:7–10 (NKJV) ⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." ⁹ (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

If I understand and rejoice in the blood of Christ, demonic powers are nakedly impotent. But the funny thing about demonic powers is that they are squatters. They won't leave until I say, 'Hey, you gotta go! I'm not going to listen to this depression you're whispering in my ear this morning. I'm not going to buy it because of the blood of Jesus Christ.' That's what is meant by pleading the blood. It's not a phrase you use, it's an understanding you have. Wherever I plead the blood of Christ, Satan doesn't have influence over me. Let this sink in, gang, and you will really be set free.

When the cross is understood, when forgiveness is understood, guilt and self-righteousness will be washed away by these understanding, not covered by some ritual.

Christ will say you are forgiven, you are complete in Me. Soooooooooooooooooo, let no one judge you, verse 16, nor judge yourself.

You don't need these things (man's philosophies and rituals), because you are COMPLETE in Him. Whoever takes the Son, gets it ALL!

(Colossians 2:16 NKJV) So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, (Colossians 2:17 NKJV) which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Paul says watch out for legalism, for this horrible bondage. There were those in Colossae saying that the way to be more spiritual was by keeping the Sabbath and festivals, and by not eating or drinking certain things.

food or in drink

Jesus said it's not what goes in the mouth that defiles, but that which proceeds out of the mouth, for our tongue reveals what is truly in our heart.

Matthew 15:16–20 (NKJV) ¹⁶ So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? ¹⁸ But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹ For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. ²⁰ These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

regarding a festival

This refers to the Jewish feasts they celebrated (Leviticus 25), these false teachers said you have to honor those or you are in sin. God warned them no doubt knowing they would esteem the feast greater than the Christ. These feasts were what would call holidays, hence see how Christmas the holiday is esteemed greater than the reason for the season. – the Christ in Christmas.

or a new moon

New moon refers to the Jewish calendar, they would calculate their crop planting based on the cycles of the moon. For some they believed it had special powers. God hated this.

(Isaiah 1:13 NKJV) Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies; I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. (Isaiah 1:14 NKJV) Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.

Today how many believers are fooled into reading their horoscope, and what's your zodiac sign.

or sabbaths

A woman came to a pastor and said Saturday is the Sabbath, the bible says so, do you not agree. He said yes I do agree, and she got a gleam in her eye and said then why do you not honor it if you agree it hasn't changed. The pastor said the day hasn't changed, but I have been changed, I am a new creation, and all things are made new.

That sums up those who want to put you on some trip about baptism, food and drink, holidays (new moons).....those things might not have changed, but you have been changed, they are all just shadows of the reality to come.

Just Shadows

A shadow of things to come. This word shadow is where we get our word "photograph" (from the Greek word – shade). A shadow is an image of the real thing. The Old Testament practices were shadows, pictures of the real thing to come – Jesus Christ. The Passover was celebrated when the children of Israel left Egypt, but it was all a picture of Jesus being the sacrificial lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

Christ has come, there is no need to go back and look at a picture, we can just look at the real thing. I read a story about a young couple who got married right before the young man was shipped overseas to fight in WW2. He was gone for two years, but when you saw his wife around

town, you could spot her from afar because had this huge purse she would always carry. Inside the purse was a wall size photo of her husband. When she would meet people she would pull out his picture and talk about him. But, the day he returned, as she waited at the pier for his ship, they said didn't have that big purse. She didn't need it to recognize him, and she didn't need it to see his face, for she was going to see the real thing, hold and kiss the real thing, walk and hold hands all the way home with the real thing.

You don't need these things (man's philosophies and rituals), because you are COMPLETE in Him. Whoever takes the Son, gets it ALL!

(Colossians 2:18 NKJV) Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,
(Colossians 2:19 NKJV) and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

taking delight in false humility and worship of angels

People who say I am such a sinner, I cannot approach God, I am such a sinner. Therefore I will pray to His mother, or Michael the Archangel. That is false humility, because it is blasphemy to say such things, because that person is saying Jesus' work on the cross wasn't enough, it wasn't enough to reconcile me to God, therefore I have to go another way to God.

The extremes of this is Ouija boards, palm readers and psychics – people thinking they can reach the spirit realm by some means other than Jesus.

You don't need these things (man's philosophies and rituals), because you are COMPLETE in Him. Whoever takes the Son, gets it ALL!

(Colossians 2:20 NKJV) Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations;
(Colossians 2:21 NKJV) "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,"
(Colossians 2:22 NKJV) which all concern things which perish with the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men?
(Colossians 2:23 NKJV) These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Philosophy and Rituals, so close, yet so far away because they take away from the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Satan's mission, battle plan, is to deceive the believer. His mission is to deceive and counterfeit the reality. If you steer a ship on a long journey, all he has to do is introduce a 1 degree error in your gyrocompass, and though you won't be far off in a day or two, but let that error accumulate and you will be lost and way off.

(Colossians 2:9 NKJV) For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;
(Colossians 2:10 NKJV) and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

You don't need these things (man's philosophies and rituals), because you are COMPLETE in Him. Whoever takes the Son, gets it ALL!

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do His mighty work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Chapter 3

Passage: Colossians 3:1-16

Title: Things Above

Colossians 3:1–16 (NKJV) ¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. ⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. ⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. ¹² Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Church in Colosse & America

I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the church we are studying here, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation..... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzings of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

Thematic Verses

Paul will make this the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

4409 πρωτεύω [proteuo /prote-yoo-o/] v. From 4413; TDNT 6:881; TDNTA 965; GK 4750; AV translates as “have the preeminence” once. 1 to be first, hold the first place.

Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

The Outline of the Book

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is “doctrine” (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is “duty” how are we to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER’S DUTY TO THE PREMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Paul Writes because Truth Under Attack

Paul is writing this church in Colosse because the truth was under attack, they were being hit with all kinds of untruths. There were all kinds of add-ons going around Colosse. Man’s philosophy that totally took away from the gospel, or man’s philosophy that added onto the gospel - some

were so close, others way off, but in either case it took away from, and diminished Christ work on the cross.

But before Paul starts this warning, he takes us for a little field trip, up into heaven, to remind us where we are seated – in heaven, that our salvation is secure – for we are hidden in Him, and because we are hidden in Him, our life is in Him.

The world around us can change dramatically in a blink of an eye as we live in the midst of global wars, pandemics, domestic unrest, economic uncertainties, and government confusion and even tyranny.

It is an awesome thing to be a Christian, because we see the big picture. God conforms my mind, and as I see things going on around me I'm not freaked out, because I know the big picture. I know God is working out his plan of salvation in man, and that He sits on the throne and has a plan for me.

These verses are key for the days we live in, and this specific moment in time. The only people who can have peace in their hearts are those whose hearts are in heaven.

Chapter 3

- Things Above – 3:1-16
- Things at Home – 3:17-21
- Things at Work – 3:22 – 4:2

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(Colossians 3:1 NKJV) If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Raised with Christ – Paul saying you are alive, brought up from the grave, the resurrection power of the resurrected life.... Live like it!

Sitting at the right hand of God – actively alive and living and available for power to us to live the God-Life, the abundant “Zoe” life.

How do you want to live today Christian?

(Colossians 3:2 NKJV) Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Set – we set things, we place things, where want them to stay and be. Here we chose where we set our mind.

(Colossians 3:3 NKJV) For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Hidden – My life and my identity is hidden, concealed in Christ.

(Colossians 3:4 NKJV) When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

The Power of Setting Our Heart Above / This World Not It – Try to Make it “It” (Frustration)

Every year whether it is Christmas break coming up, or the end of the school year, I am amazed how youth have an extra spring in their step of getting up and going to school, because they know school break is near, and thus consequently, it causes them to go through the last couple days of school eagerly.

I am thoroughly convinced from watching people and studying the Word that the people who are truly content are those who constantly realize that this world is not where it's at. On the other hand, those who try to find happiness here are perpetually frustrated. The possessions they purchase are never quite what they were supposed to be. The relationships they form are never as satisfying as they thought they would be. The dreams they pursue are never as fulfilling as they hoped they would be. Nothing is ever quite right until we realize, `Hey, it's not here!'

I believe this is why the Lord constantly tells us in the Word to set our hearts on things *above*. People are bogged down, with stomachs churning, brows furrowing, and hearts breaking because they are taking life on earth far too seriously. When a person finally understands heaven is where it's at, he is free to enjoy life. It doesn't matter where he lives, what he does vocationally, what kind of car he drives, bike he rides, or skates he gets around on. All of that is irrelevant because he sees the finish line — he realizes that Christmas break is only 2 days away.

Set your heart on things above. It's a central message not only of Paul's but throughout all of Scripture. Live for heaven and you'll enjoy life. How does that happen? How do we set our hearts upon heaven? Many ways, but I'll suggest three . . .

One – Treasure:

Jesus said,

(Matthew 6:21 NKJV) "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

I remember a year before I got saved I bought mutual funds, I had a 401K at work but wanted to invest more deeply. Everyday I would check the stock page to see how I was doing, gains and losses. But then I needed that money for something else, so I went and cashed it out. Guess what. Once I sold my shares, I never turned to the stock page again. I just lost interest.

When Jesus tells us to lay up treasure in heaven, it's not God's way of raising money.

(Matthew 6:19 NKJV) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

(Matthew 6:20 NKJV) "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Knowing that where our treasure is, our heart will follow, it's His way of raising our hearts and minds out of this world and up into heaven. You see, if you invest your treasure in mutual funds, that's where your heart will be. If you put your treasure in your house or hobby, your heart will be there as well. Your heart follows your treasure — so one of the ways we get our hearts on things above is by investing in the Kingdom.

Secondly – Trials:

We live for heaven through our trials. I am convinced God will send a trial a day your way just to keep you homesick for heaven, from getting too comfortable in this world. If He didn't, we would become bound up in this earth, and would miss out eternally on what He has in store for us.

Diseases, pandemics, economy, wars and rumors of wars.....oh Lord come quickly.

Thirdly – Transfers:

The Lord gets me to set my heart and mind on things above is by transfers — when the people we love precede us into heaven. This process is very important because when you have transferred friends, parents, and spouses in heaven, your heart longs to be there all the more keenly.

3 Things Set Heart Above – Remind us This Earth Not It

Treasures, trials, transfers — three ways our hearts can be constantly set on things above. And no matter what happens down here, we can deal with it because our hearts are up there.

And if you need reminding or refreshing, Colossians 3:1-4:

The days are going by rapidly, gang. We are going to see Jesus soon, and when we do, we will say, `This is it! This is what we've been craving and longing for all our lives

That is why I believe we can't talk too much about heaven. And that's why Paul says, `That's where your heart should be because when Christ appears, it's going to be glorious. Talking about heaven daily, will make heaven a reality.

(Colossians 3:5 NKJV) Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Written to Believers

These things we are going to study was written to believers, it wasn't about salvation, it was about setting our mind, and living above. Yes there were some false teachers coming in and telling them hey you can live any way you want and still be saved, but the Lord is writing because he wants to protect and provide for us.

We are going to study this today in terms of godly relationships in the Body of Christ, setting our mind above, on the Head of this body.

These things may sound like basic I know things, but I believe if we allow, God will put His finger on each and every one of our hearts and show us something we need to adjust in our life.

Now If we don't set our minds on the things above, then nothing here below will ever work out the way God truly intended for them. A fruitful blessed marriage is powered by setting our mind on the things above. Child rearing begins with being a child above and watching and learning from our Heavenly Father. Our interpersonal relationships go astray when we take our eyes off the things above, and apply the things below to handling conflicts with one another.

This letter was to go to Laodicea also, the lukewarm church. Living for this world will make you lukewarm. There are too many lukewarm marriages and families.

Paul here will name things that take us away from and distracts us from setting our minds on the things above. Things like pornography, covetousness, anger, and blasphemy.

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth:

Send your friends your obituary, you are dead to those things.

Put to death – Mortified (OKJV), means depriving of power, or destroying the strength there of. We want to be angry or curse, but God says I want you to destroy the power of that thing. How? The replacement principle, fill yourself up with the love of God, then where will be room for anger. Fill yourself up with peace and where will there be room for turmoil.

Take a glass filled half way with dirty water and you can dump it out to get the dirt out, but you'll be empty. But if you take a picture of fresh clean spring water, and pour and continue to pour, not only will it be cleaned, it will be filled – to overflowing.

If you are struggling with any of these sins, the first thing you are to do is to kill it, and then deprive the power of those things so they can't come back again. Kill it through repentance, deprive it through replacement.

Now do it: **moses when faced with the red sea in front and pharaoh behind, God said move it**

The Lord said why do you cry to me, tell the children of Israel to go forward.

Don't pray about repenting, repent. Don't meander and let the world catch up to you – move on and away

Exodus 14:1–16 (NKJV) ¹ Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ² "Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. ³ For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' ⁴ Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD." And they did so. ⁵ Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" ⁶ So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. ⁷ Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. ⁸ And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. ⁹ So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon. ¹⁰ And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. ¹¹ Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? ¹² Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." ¹³ And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." ¹⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

God calls sin, sin, to protect and to provide for you.

When I see marriages, friendships, and or families struggling or falling apart, I can most usually put my finger on one of the following in the next few verses.

Fornication:

Fornication - porneia, por-ni'-ah – where we get our word pornography. The Scriptures do not distinguish the difference between the two

The reason so many people are dissatisfied with their spouses is because of pornography and fornication (on TV, Movies, click-bait in the side of your internet browser). They see these images and their spouse cannot match up to what they see. You have to put it to death, you can not let it into your mind, and thus your marriage. That stuff will torment your mind. You don't need to go to therapy or counseling to analyze the problem, you just need to kill it – right now. Don't compromise, just say that is it, it is over right here, right now. God will never ask you to do something that He hasn't given you the power to do. Doesn't matter how good the story might be, or how many awards it has won, stay away from movies and TV shows that have fornication in them. The scriptures do not clearly define the difference between pornography and fornication, the reason being is that the two are the same.

The epistle of Romans says those that watch on are as guilty as those doing – so keep that in mind next time you say "its just a movie", for that is not how God sees it:

Romans 1:32 (NKJV) ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

If you are dating and want a sure-fire way to ruin it, sleep together. God will not be a part of a relationship that is in direct violation of His Word.

A story in USA TODAY, headlined 'Fate Of the Union: Living Together First Means Divorce Later', stated that new evidence proves living together before marriage is no guarantee to marital bliss. On the contrary, those who do so have a 50% greater chance of divorce than those who don't — sobering news for the country's 3 million opposite sex couples who are unmarried yet living together.

For years, the proponents of premarital sex have used the logic that since 'you wouldn't buy a car without test driving it', if you're going to have a successful marriage, a 'test drive' is in order. The problem is, coming together sexually before marriage is like taking a test drive in a demolition derby. When the test drive's all over, you're shocked to find the car is all beat up and doesn't work right anymore. Sin of any kind carries its own repercussions, and because God is neither a respecter of persons nor parsons, none of us is exempt

The next four, all consume our minds that take us away from setting our minds on the things above, where Christ is seated:

uncleanness,

Means impurity, specifically our words, looks, gestures, your thought life, and the jokes we tell or hear. Dirty jokes desensitize us to the harsh reality that sin takes on those who partake of them.

passion – inordinate affection,

Means uncontrolled passion or lust in the sexual sense - perversion. The person who cultivates this type of appetite can always find opportunities to satisfy it, especially with all that is available on cable and the Internet.

There is always free cheese at the mouse trap.

evil desire – evil concupiscence,

Longing for what is forbidden. The person is one step away from putting these above three into action. A continual planting in the mind will eventually cause the body to respond.

and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Means you have to have it. Anything you got to have, let it go, don't get it. Anything materially that you feel you can't part with, then get rid of it, because it is dominating you.

How many marriages and families are ruined every year because of the pursuit of things. Our culture says, 'Live for your earthly desires' — yet covetousness is the cause of wars among nations and in relationships; pornography is a major reason for the breakdown of families and society; evil desires have caused entire countries to collapse. Read history and you will find this to be so. Living for earthly desires brings death. Putting to death our earthly desires brings life.

(Colossians 3:6 NKJV) Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,

(Colossians 3:7 NKJV) in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

(Colossians 3:8 NKJV) But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

Put Off Old Man – Put on New Man

And now the call to put-off, and to put-on. Put off the old man and to put on the new man. Put off, rid yourself, throw out the old clothes. These things have no part of any relationship: friendships, marriages, parenting.....these things destroy relationships and God says put it off, it is not your style anymore, that was the old you.

If I came in here, wearing my 70's look, you would say you are so out of style. That's the way it is when we put on the world in anyway. If we put on anger, malice, etc, it just doesn't fit us anymore. Even people recognize and say that's not your style.

How many marriages and friendships have been ruined because of these things.

put off all these:

anger,

The Greek word translated 'anger' is 'orge', which refers to a slow, simmering emotion. I'm angry with my boss, my spouse, my lot in life. It's a festering, smoldering feeling — and it's got to go.

wrath,

Anger becomes wrath when we develop an unforgiving spirit. When anger explodes, it is like shrapnel flying in a war zone, people are left wounded, some critically.

malice,

Malice: Anytime you're humored by someone else's misfortune — that's malice. Heehee he is getting fat, bald, lost job...heehee. It is pride, because their misfortune makes the other person feel better. Malice also comes in the form of revenge. We need to be rooting for each other, not against each other. Husbands don't feel threatened if your wife is learning the Bible deeper than you, excelling at work, root for her. Friends do the same, teach your children to root for their brothers and sisters, not against them.

blasphemy,

Blasphemy is speech that slanders others and tears them down. This is the gossip realm here, but Christians call them prayer request. Gossip is so prevalent in the church, it has caused churches to split, or at the minimum, friendships to split.

filthy language out of your mouth.

This just doesn't mean foul language, but also abusive language. The mouth brings the attitude. Men sit around and curse, like one of the tough guys, it goes straight to their heads, and then they bring it home.

KEY: - Some consider this being legalistic, but the truth is people are always looking for some secret to victorious Christian living, we overcomplicate things. The Scriptures say take it off. You got to say it has to go.

(Colossians 3:9 NKJV) Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

(Colossians 3:10 NKJV) and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Lying, yes even those little white lies, put them off. The image of Him, Jesus is the truth, and the truth shall set you free. Truth is so freeing, no guilt, nor shame, no worries about getting caught in a truth. Base, and then build every relationship off the truth, and you can be sure that relationship will be built on solid ground.

(Colossians 3:11 NKJV) where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

A superiority complex in any relationship will damage or doom the relationship.

- Circumcised nor uncircumcised – is a religious division
- Barbarian was a non-greek – not in our clique
 - Scythian – this was a group of people that lived north of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. Possibly the most barbaric the world had ever known. You talk about pagan, heathen,

brutal, and just downright mean. They would kill their enemy, then use their skull as a cup to drink their blood. But these people were being won to the Lord.

Everything in heaven is based on what went on inside of you, while everything on earth is about what went on outside of you.

Heaven is the great reversal. Because man looks on the outward appearance (I Samuel 16:7), those who know how to package and promote themselves are the most successful on this earth. But because God looks on the heart, everything will ultimately be judged not on external appearance, but on internal experience. Consequently, a lot of folks we might have brushed aside as weird or ugly on earth are going to be incredibly honored in heaven. And a lot of 'beautiful people' on earth will take a back seat to those who were unnoticed here on earth.

(Colossians 3:12 NKJV) Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Now by putting these things, using the replacement principle, and setting our mind above, this will lead us to personal holiness, which will lead to holiness in our relationship to others.

put on:

tender mercies - bowels of mercies,

This where they considered the seat of the emotions, in the bowels. How heartless the world around us can be. We need to display tender feelings of compassion towards one another. Husbands your wife need to be reassured with tender feelings of compassion.

kindness

This word meant being profitable. It means being helpful to others. What can I do to bless you today my wife, child or dear friend.

Humility

Humility the opposite of pride and domination. Humility is not thinking poorly of oneself, rather it having a proper estimate of oneself in the sight of God. The person with a humble mind, is never judgmental, for they know, there goes I except by the grace of God.

meekness

Meekness is not weakness, it is power under control. Meekness does not fly off the handle because he knows everything is under control. Men, are you displaying meekness in the household, or are you lording over your wife and children.

longsuffering;

This word literally means long-tempered. A person who is long-suffering can endure provoking people or circumstances without retaliating. How many times if you could have just endured another hour with keeping your mouth shut, you could have diffused that situation that exploded in your home or friendship.

All the above are summed up in the next verse.

(Colossians 3:13 NKJV) bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Forgiving one another:

Interesting word here for forgive: charizomai, khar-id'-zom- ahee; to grant as a favor, i.e. gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue:--deliver, (frankly) forgive, (freely) give, grant.

It means, yes you are in the right, they are clearly wrong, but as a favor I forget the debt. It is a pardon. The government grants pardons, not because new evidence proves they are innocent, but for the reason of mercy and grace.

(Colossians 3:14 NKJV) But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

This is the agape love – unconditional love. We all want to be like Jesus, preach to the multitudes, raise the dead, walk on water, but do you realize we all have the opportunity, everyday in our own homes, to be just like Him – by being that agape love, that unconditional love, to our spouse, children, and friends.

'Put on the new man,' says Paul. 'Put on mercy, kindness, humility. Put on meekness, longsuffering, and love.' In short, put on Christ.

Now the "Replacement Principle"

(Colossians 3:15 NKJV) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

(Colossians 3:16 NKJV) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Fill your heart with these things - ,
in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

and there will be no room for the other things like anger, wrath, gossip, and covetousness in your life. That is why we exist here in this church, so that we can do some replacement every time we open the Word of God.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

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Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: Colossians 3:17-21

Title: Things at Home

Colossians 3:17–21 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. ¹⁸ Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Church in Colosse & America

I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the church we are studying here, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation..... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing's of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

Thematic Verses

Paul will make this the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

4409 πρωτεύω [proteuo /prote-yoo-o/] v. From 4413; TDNT 6:881; TDNTA 965; GK 4750; AV translates as “have the preeminence” once. 1 to be first, hold the first place.

Strong, J. (1995). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

The Outline of the Book

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is “doctrine” (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is “duty” how are we to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Paul Writes because Truth Under Attack

Paul is writing this church in Colosse because the truth was under attack, they were being hit with all kinds of untruths. There were all kinds of add-ons going around Colosse. Man's philosophy that totally took away from the gospel, or man's philosophy that added onto the gospel - some were so close, others way off, but in either case it took away from, and diminished Christ work on the cross.

But before Paul starts this warning, he takes us for a little field trip, up into heaven, to remind us where we are seated – in heaven, that our salvation is secure – for we are hidden in Him, and because we are hidden in Him, our life is in Him.

The world around us can change dramatically in a blink of an eye as we live in the midst of global wars, pandemics, domestic unrest, economic uncertainties, and government confusion and even tyranny.

It is an awesome thing to be a Christian, because we see the big picture. God conforms my mind, and as I see things going on around me I'm not freaked out, because I know the big picture. I know God is working out his plan of salvation in man, and that He sits on the throne and has a plan for me.

These verses are key for the days we live in, and this specific moment in time. The only people who can have peace in their hearts are those whose hearts are in heaven.

Chapter 3

- Things Above – 3:1-16
- Things at Home – 3:17-21
- Things at Work – 3:22 – 4:2

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(Colossians 3:17 NKJV) And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Go back to verses 1-4 for perspective, we need to put our minds on things above if anything is going to work right here on earth.

Colossians 3:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Do We?

Do I, do we, in all that we do, “do in the name of the Lord Jesus?”

Live Like It

If you were raised with Christ, then live like it. Live like a man of God. Live like the image bearer that we studied last week. Live like a resurrected life, a person filled with the resurrected power.

Now We Can Talk About Marriage

Now we can talk about marriage and parenting. We have to go back and apply everything we learned in the last study into our marriages and parenting.

(Colossians 3:18 NKJV) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands Love to Quote This Verse

Husbands love to quote this statement, whether here or in Ephesians. So the question I'd like to always ask is, husbands, how would you like to submit to you? Would it be sweet or would it be bitter?

Pretty much, the Bible gives two commands for marriage. Though, if you go into Christian bookstores you'll find a couple of million books online and thereabout. Go to Barnes and Noble online and you'll find tens of millions of books regarding marriage. But God gives basically two commands. Wives, submit to your husband. Husbands, love your wives.

So wives, why? Why is it in this order? Well, because man was created and called to lead. He's the head of the home. It's by God's design. When you go against God's design, you will never reach fulfillment because you're diminishing his desire by diminishing how he has designed things to be. And more on that as we continue on.

Military Term

Verse 18. The word submit is a military term. This word submit, it's a military term, and it didn't mean that there was no say in the matter. That is such a misrepresentation of the word. The word submit in the military term would be, as in our military today, we're going to go to a battle zone, a war zone, and the commander in chief calls the Air Force and says, tell me what your plan would be and how you would serve in this mission. And they'll talk about their bombardment from above. And then you would talk, the commander in chief, he would talk to the Army. And they would say, after the bombing from above, we would come in with a ground movement. We would send in special forces. And the Navy over here would be saying, and we will protect in the shoreline and et cetera. And the point that would be made here is, each of the military branches would say, here's what we can do. Here's what we supply. Here's our expertise of how we can complement and contribute to this mission.

But then it's the commander in chief's responsibility to take the information and then put the final plan together. And the submission would be that each of the military branches then would do exactly what they were told to do in the battle. Even if it was different from what they propose, because if the Army went in while the Air Force was bombing, obviously it would be a disaster. But many times that's what happens in marriages.

They're not on the same page. One person's doing something while another person's doing something, and it's literally bombs dropping upon one another. But submission is that the wife says here is my expertise. Here is what my heart is saying. And the wife's husband will listen, but then a wise husband, he's the one who should be constantly seeking the Lord. He's the one who will answer to the Lord.

He will stand before the Lord for his decision. Then he will say, here's what we're going to do. And the wife's job would be, I will support you. And the husband's job says, and I will lead you even if it costs me my own life. As Ephesians says, husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church, and gave himself, died for her. Husband. That's your ultimate charge. You die yourself. And if you will be willing to die to yourself, and die for your family, you'll see that your family will follow you anywhere, any time.

Submit to Own Husband

Here's how you're to live on earth, wives,' says Paul. 'Submit to your husband.' But notice Paul says wives are to submit to their *own* husband — not to submit to men generally, but to their own husband specifically. Women, don't let anyone say, 'Sister, I need to correct you on this, or deal with you on that,' because, unfortunately, there are men who seem to feel it's their calling to go around the Church correcting women. They have a 'women's ministry', wherein they talk to

women about the way to dress, behave, talk or think — and they are un-scriptural in doing so, for Scripture says, 'Wives, submit to your own husband exclusively.'

Where was Adam, the question is always asked? But how about where was Eve? Why was she not with her husband? Why was she out seeking spiritual things apart from her husband. Wives you are to ask your husbands the questions, and let him seek out the answer. Don't go to the pastoral staff, let him go to the staff if he can't get the answer.

As Fitting

Verse 18 says as is fitting. See, world's philosophy, young women, any woman, God knows better than the world. That's why he says as is fitting. He knows better than CNN. He knows better than Vogue magazine and the likes.

(Colossians 3:19 NKJV) Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

Bitter When Expectations Not Met

People get bitter whenever expectations are unrealistically high, when promises are broken. Husbands, your wife is not going to be God for you. She will not satisfy your deepest longing. Only the Lord will satisfy you, as only the Lord will satisfy her. Truly, if you love the Lord with all your heart, you will have no reason to be bitter with your wife, let her failures go, pardon her of them. Husbands.....you can not change your wife, only the Lord can. You can only take her deeper in the Lord by going deeper yourself. Pray for her and with her. Be a man of God, cause godly woman love godly men. If you are not being a godly man, don't expect her to be. Your wife is a reflection of you.

Love Must Be Purposeful & Intentional / Purpose 3:1-16

Verse 19. Husbands love your wife. To love, love must be purposeful and intentional. I don't believe in the busy-ness of our lives, and so often the self-centeredness of our lives. And even just the sin nature that we live in, that love is just naturally going to flow from us. Love has to be purposeful and intentional.

And part of the intention is a guarding. And we just studied verses one through 16, and if you look at that for both husband and wives, we see what we read in first John, the big three we call it. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. You'll find pieces of that all through, and somewhere in chapter three, verses one through 16. And so there's the calling truly to be watchful, and that watchfulness is to be a guarding watch on our marriages and our love. And it must be intentional and purposeful. And if any of these three things, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life creep in there, it will surely diminish what we're being called here to do. Husbands love your wives and wives submit to your own husbands.

1 John 2:16-17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Remember Your Vows

Both, husband and wife, you've made a commitment before the Lord for better and for worse. Do you remember your vows that you made on that day? Do you remember looking into each other's eyes, and do you remember seeing those types of things? I speak to whoever this applies to at this moment, I would believe it applies to all. But I want you to go back and think of those eyes that you looked into and those words that you said to them. That you said not only to them, you said it before the testimony that you gave to all your witnesses of what you said you were going to do. And of course, and above all, you said it before God and to God.

Your vows were to each other and to God. It was a vow you made to God to do and uphold in your marriage. And you need to remember that when your marriage may be straining and struggling. And the days that we're living in under this COVID restrictions and all that's going on in our world, marriages are stressing because the stress of everything around us that we're trying to balance and manage has increased tremendously. And there's going to be a time where tension

is going to rise. There's going to be a time that you may question whether you want to stick it out or just step out. Remember the vows, you made it to that spouse and you made it to your Lord.

When Marriage Struggling on Earth – Set Your Mind On Things Above

And this takes us back to verse one. When your marriage is struggling here on Earth, set your mind on things above. Set your mind, verse three, that you died with Christ. Your life is hidden in Christ. He has you concealed in him. Therefore, let him wrap you in the shadows of his wings. Remember your identity is in Christ. Your identity is what he thinks of you and what he paid for you. And your spouse's identity is in Christ. When you look at your spouse, you must remember they are concealed in Christ. And you must remember what Christ thinks of them, that he has hidden them and concealed them. And you need to make that your base of how you view your spouse.

When a Marriage Loses Its Sweetness

Verse 19 speaks of not being bitter. When a marriage loses its sweetness, then things get bitter. How do you put sweetness into your marriage? How do you put sweetener into your coffee? You purpose it. You have to open the pack. You have to pour it in. You have to stir it. You have to be intentional. And that's how we put sweetness into our marriage. It's purposeful and it's intent. And therefore, I believe it's a place that we ask the Lord, as we pray for our spouses every day, we intercede for them. God will speak. There's a time to just wait and sit. There's a place in prayer of just listening. Receiving spiritual instruction from the Lord. And as you interceded for someone and then you wait and listen, God will speak. And he'll give you a direction on what to do. Oh, it's glorious, but it must be purposeful and it must be intentional.

Be Watchful

Be watchful. It's a continual theme that I would encourage over and over and over. Be watchful because Satan wants you to literally be unaware. Be watchful of, wives, am I submitting to my husband as is fitting to the Lord? Do I give him the respect and honor? He is designed to want to lead, and if I threaten his leadership, then he will become defensive. Once he becomes defensive, he's never going to become loving because he's going to constantly be trying to prove that he is not anything less than the man of God. And the man that can lead.

But husbands, be watchful. Because if you're not loving your wife, she will become insecure in that you don't love her. So then she will take it and begin to want to protect herself. And she'll enter into the protecting of herself by not submitting to you. She won't give her heart to you because she's afraid you can't and won't cherish her heart. It's a catch 22 that continually loops itself around and around and around. But if just one of you, even better if both of you will just say, regardless, I'm going to honor my husband. I'm going to submit to my husband. I'm going to give him the honor that he deserves. I'm going to let him lead as is fitting to the Lord. You watch how things will change with your husband loving you.

(Colossians 3:20 NKJV) Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Written Simple Enough for Child to Understand

This is written simply enough for any child to understand: Kids, obey your parents in all things. Don't argue with them, but do what they say, for by this is the Lord well pleased.

In all things.....that includes doing the dishes, taking the trash out.

Again – obey, back to that military idea, we are all in the battle together; what is your role in the battle? The word here for obey was the word for a door attendant, a porter, to listen for the knock of a door and to answer it.

Well Pleasing

Verse 20. It says it is well-pleasing to the Lord. Children, your obedience to your parents is well-pleasing. Young adults, youth, your obedience to your parents is well-pleasing. I think there's a place in life, if you want to live a life that is powerful. You want to live a life that is just full of glory, the glory of God. Live a life, as we've studied in the past it is, Lord, how can I please you? How can I glorify you today? Lord, I want my life to be pleasing to you. Husband and wife apply that in your marriage and say, Lord, what can I do today, that my marriage can bring you glory? Not my glory or my satisfaction, but what can I do today to bring glory to you through my marriage? And you'll always hear the Lord speak to you.

He may speak. You'll bring me glory in your marriage by loving your spouse. You'll bring me glory in your marriage by forgiving your spouse. You'll bring me glory in your marriage by putting away all the other things that are distracting right now and just investing yourself in your relationship. And kids, you can do the same. Lord, how can bring you glory today? Lord, I want my life to be pleasing to you. How can I do that? And he'll speak to you. Lord. How can I bring glory into my life regarding my family? And he'll speak to you. Obey your parents. Minister to your siblings. Serve your family and you'll find that you're bringing God's glory. And you will find God's glory being revealed to you and expressing and exploding in your life personally, it's a glorious thing.

Children Pray for Parents

You children, you youth that are here, the application for what I'm saying actually applies to you. Pray for your parents. Pray for their marriage. Satan hates your parents' marriage. He wants to destroy your parents' marriage. He wants to rip it apart because marriage is a picture of his relationship with his bride, the Bride of Christ. Satan wants to destroy that.

That's why we see the destruction of a definition of male and female in terms of gender. That's why we see in a world trying to change and destroy the definition of marriage between a man and a woman. We see the world wanting to tear down the purity before marriage, as it was intended by God to be a gift for one another. And then we see the literal destruction that divorce brings, as it destroys the bond and the binding that Christ has spoken to his bride, that he will never leave her nor forsake her.

(Colossians 3:21 NKJV) Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

What Honor

Verse 21. Fathers, what an honor to be called a father. But of course, this obviously applies to both a mom and dad. What an honor it is to be called a mother. What an honor it is to be called a father.

Don't Put Great Demands on Children

Similar to Paul's injunction to put away bitterness towards their wives, Paul warns fathers that unrealistic demands lead to anger and discouragement in the hearts of their children.

Parents Worry To Much Kids Happy

There has to be a balance, you have to raise them up, but not to the point that all you are doing is yelling at them. We can see today in the home. Parents are so worried about their children being happy. Look at today's children. They have computers on their desks, Internet connection, stereo on the shelf, and a television next to that – all in their own room. They have a closet full of Nike clothes with Reebok shoes. They get to choose what the family eats for breakfast and dinner. They come home from school, and immediately tunes into the television, or fire-up the Playstation.

Parents are so worried about meeting their kids wants, they no longer see what the needs are. Parenting has shifted from parents saying "I have to teach my child **truths**", to I hope they are happy, I hope they think well of me, I hope they are not upset or offended with me, what can I do

to please them and meet their needs. Parents have drifted from I need to teach my children truths, what is right and what is wrong, and this is what you need to know to prepare you for life properly.

Chip Away at Faults

Chip away at their faults, teach them through example the replacement principle, and watch the Lord bring their eyes to the things above.

Truth Still Truth – Even When We Failed at it

And I say this as you speak to your children, and the word here is not to provoke them, least they become discouraged. I think there's a place where we just have to be real that you were and you are not perfect. But let me say this. Parents, just because you failed at some truth that God spoke, maybe you failed miserably and greatly, it does not negate that truth. That truth of the word of God, whatever it may be, is still the truth. So don't be afraid to teach, even preach a truth that you failed at, because the truth is still the truth even when you failed at.

If anything, you get to say to them, I know I failed. I know I wasn't perfect. But let me tell you, I reaped what I sowed. It was painful. It was this diminishing and it was damaging to my life. But I think many parents, many people period, are afraid to speak a truth because it's a truth that they failed in. And it's a great work of the enemy to try to negate the word the truth. It's still the truth, regardless how well you lived up to it.

But of course, we can't preach in hypocrisy and try to tell someone to do something we couldn't do. We need to give disclosure that we didn't do well on that, but give the disclosure that it's still the truth. And of course, the worst is trying to tell someone to do something that we are habitually in disobedience to, that's just hypocrisy.

As Long Live in Home – Parents Head / But When Leave They Own Person

Let me say this regardless of your age. As long as you live in your parents' home and are supported by them, you are subject to them as the head of the home. That's just the way it is when you're under their roof and their support, they're head of the home. But when you move out, and you become your own person paying your own bills, you're now your own person. There's a respect and an honor that you give your parents. But you are no longer under your parents. You'll obey them and respect them in terms of just the honor, do them. But now being your own person, you are your own person and make your own decisions. When do you make your own decisions? It's when you move out of the home.

So parents, honor that. It's when you say, here's my thought on the matter, but I support you because you're your own person. You're on your own at this point. Parents need to be careful that they don't try to continually be head of the home, of the home that the child lives in that's not under their roof. You can't be head of the home of that relationship that they've entered into in holy matrimony. You have to respect that, step back and honor that and distance that, of trying to control your child.

And many parents still try to control their children even after they leave the house. Many parents still try to control their children even after they're married. And that is not how it is to be. They're their own person. They need to seek the Lord. You can give counsel, you can give support, but you should not be then telling them this is what you must do. You can no longer control them. Let them seek the Lord and let them be led by the Lord.

Conclusion:

Put off these old things, put on these new things, and the Lord will protect and provide for all your relationships. Kill those things first by repentance, then reduce them powerless through the replacement principle, and you will not be distracted by the earthly things, but will have your eyes set on the things above.....and every relationship you have, marriage, parenting, and friendship will be blessed abundantly.

Set Above

Well, how do you apply all that we've studied today? And you do it by these things that we've studied in chapter three. Set your mind on things above, and how do you set your mind on things above? You set by sitting. You'll never do any of these things. Love your wife, submit to your husband, obey your parents, not provoke your children to wrath, if you are not setting your mind on the things above. Because you will find yourself setting your mind on things here on Earth, you'll be consumed with the things on the Earth. You'll be consumed with the philosophy of the Earth. You'll be consumed with all the distractions of the Earth. You set your mind by sitting. We set by sitting.

So how do I do that? You hide your life in Christ. Identity in him. In 1 John 2, the big three as we've studied, it's got to go. As we read these things from last week's study, we have to evaluate them and say, well, how am I doing in these areas? That's how you start to set your mind on above, by sitting. And as you sit, God's going to speak to you. These types of things.

1 John 2:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Set Mind by Sitting

But just sit and spend time with him. That's how you set your mind, by getting my mind on the things above where Christ is sitting, and I just spend time, and then he gives me his mind.

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
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- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
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Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Passage: Colossians 3:22 – 4:2
Title: Things at Work

Today - Topic

Want to speak to you today about something I consider very vital, a core of our faith. What topic would that be you may be thinking, what might you be running through the list of vital topics on a Sunday morning. The topic is the topic of work, it is what I see in the scriptures one of areas that is core to the faith.

Work – Importance & Significance

The Lord places such an importance on our performance and behavior in the workplace, that He places it right after marriage and parenting in this chapter of setting our minds on the things above. If there was ever anything that can set our minds on the things here on earth, it is work, but God wants to change that way of thinking in us, and therefore why this topic is so vital.

Colossians 3:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

The man/woman God uses is a man who knows how to work.

- It was when Moses was tending his father-in-law's sheep that God appeared to Him in the burning bush (Exodus 3).
- It was when David was tending sheep when he was called from the field and Samuel anointed him with oil (1 Samuel 16:11-13).
- It was when Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen that Elijah cast the mantle of ministry upon him (I Kings 19:19).
- It was when Peter and Andrew were casting their nets that Jesus called them to be fishers of men (Matthew 4:19).
- James and John were mending their nets when Jesus called them (Matthew 4:20)
- Matthew was sitting at his desk working as a tax collector when Jesus called him (Matthew 9:9)

How about me you might say, you mothers. The NIV translates the word “bondservant” as a slave. Therefore this is for you.

Colossians 3:22 (NIV) ²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

You students, I've yet to hear a child who does not call it - school work.

As for you young guys and gals, in reference to working around the house, I remind you of the story of a young man named Samuel. He was busy working around the temple, sweeping and cleaning, when the Lord tapped him on his shoulder.

1 Samuel 3:1–4 (NKJV) ¹ Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation. ² And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, ³ and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the LORD where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down, ⁴ that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, “Here I am!”

I believe work, whatever that work is, absolutely is an indication of our heart and relationship with the Lord.

Our Passage

Colossians 3:22–4:2 (NKJV) ²² Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. ²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵ But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. ¹ Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. ² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
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Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(Colossians 3:22 NKJV) Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

Bondslaves

Good place to make some clarity on slavery as spoken of here in the NT. The Greek work here for bondslave is “doulos”. A bondslave was someone who wanted to be owned by their master. If you took a loan from someone in Israel, and you defaulted on your loan, you didn’t get to claim bankruptcy and stick the person with your debt; no you would be required by law to work for them as a servant until your debt was paid off (this would motivate you to be wise about your finances that is for sure). Usually the term was for 7 years. Now at the end of 7 years you may say, wow my master (and this was to be expected and required of them) has been so good to me, he has given me lodging, daily food, clothing, and in some cases even a spouse, that the person would say I don’t want to leave you, I have it so good here, I want to be your “bondslave”. To which they would go to the door of the home, and the owner would pierce the ear of the person, put an earring in, and that was symbol they were together as bondslave and master.

But lets be real clear on what the New Testament teaches about slavery, in the terms as we know it, the stealing away of a person from their home and made a slave against their will. In 1 Timothy 1:10, kidnappers (slave traders – NIV) are classified and categorized as evil doers.

1 Timothy 1:8–11 (NKJV) ⁸ But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

1 Timothy 1:8–11 (NIV) ⁸ We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹ We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹ that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

Our Context is Bondslaves – Workers

Our context is bondslaves, or servants, or those paying off their debt.... And our correlation for us today is “workers”.

obey in all things

‘What if I don’t agree with the policy?’ you ask. Too bad. It might not be your flavor, or what you would do as a boss, but you are to obey those in authority over you unless what they demand is immoral — and then you better have Scripture and wise counsel to back your objection.

I am amazed when companies have to offer incentives and bonus for people just to do what they were hired to do. A company will say we are going to give a bonus check to whoever makes

100% on their audit, when the fact is, 100% is just doing what their job description calls them to do.

(Colossians 3:23 NKJV) And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

(Colossians 3:24 NKJV) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

Work Stats

- If you work 40 hours a week from age 20-65 you will work just over 90,000 hours in your lifetime.
- Every year, the average American spends over 100 hours commuting
- The average office chair with wheels travels about eight miles per year
- 80% of American workers are dissatisfied with their job.

I Like NIV Translation

Colossians 3:22–24 (NIV) ²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Do It Heartily

Do it heartily, actually comes from a Greek phrase containing the word “soul – psuche”. The statement serves as good proof that more than body is involved. The terminology used shows that attitude is just as important as physical condition.

Church in Colosse & America

Paul is writing the church in Colosse because the truth was under attack. I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the church we are studying here, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation..... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing’s of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

Thematic Verses

Paul will make this the heart of this epistle, and the two key verses for us to grab the theme of this letter (epistle) are:

Colossians 1:15–18 (NKJV) ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 3:10–11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Preeminence

Preeminence means: To be first, to hold first place.

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Expounding on that simple meaning:

- Supremacy, Superiority, Primacy, Prominence, Incomparability, Dominance, Authority, Excellence, Eminence.

The Outline of the Book

The outline of the four chapters are much like how Ephesians was split, the first half of the book is “doctrine” (who Jesus is and what He has done for us), and the second half is “duty” how are we

to apply that doctrine to our daily lives. As in Ephesians, if we try to walk with God and as He calls us to walk, we have to first sit with God and know His heart and His ways.

- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Man's Philosophy About

Christians need to be on guard about man's philosophy about work, how they think work should be. Today so many workers, too many workers, miss what work is from God's perspective.

W-O-R-K

W – Whatever, you do, do it heartily unto the Lord, for it is Him you serve not man.

Because work gives you an.....

O – Opportunity, to witness for Him, not in word, but in deed. Hey rejoice if you get all the junk jobs. People will say why are you always so pleasant, even though you get to do all the rotten jobs. Let's face it, good workers get more work, and not always more pay. If there are 100 bricks that need to be moved, and ole Joe is moving kinda slow and can only do 40, that means you get to do your 50 and Joes 10. Hey rejoice that the company sees you work over and above your minimum requirement. Companies should be calling churches and saying do you have anybody there that needs a job, we find the best workers are these people who say they are born-again Bible Believers, man they really get the job done.

The Amish have a saying, "witness for Christ, and if all else fails use words." Let your first witness at work be your hard work, your work ethic and integrity. If you can't witness first through that, if you are a 40 brick worker causing others to pick your 10 short up, then please just keep your mouth shut, you will give people reason to blaspheme the Lord.

But you hard workers rejoice in your job, because you are witnessing for Christ in deeds and actions, and be assured people are watching.

Now an important side note before we move on, be careful with the words you use at work in regards to conversation about the work environment or situation. In order to keep your witness be careful that someone doesn't take your statement about work and think you are talking negatively. Example, you talk about how difficult this work is, just in an ordinary conversation. Now it is true that the work is difficult, but the person with the bad attitude will use it as a means to complain about work, and think they have found a fellow complainer, and may even use your name as a reference when you are not around. There are a lot of complainers in the workforce, the first key to be a good witness in the workplace, is not be a complainer like the rest.

3. **W-O-R-K**,

Whatever you do, do it heartily unto the Lord, because work gives you a.....

R – Reason, to praise Him with thanksgiving for His provisions. Tell ya what, miss a paycheck or two, you will get a whole new perspective on your job. Let the rumors of layoff come around, and you'll realize what is at stake.

Our Father who art in heaven we pray.....give us this day our daily bread. Work is our daily bread.

Matthew 6:9-11 (NKJV) ⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

When I worked at Sikorsky Aircraft, I can remember Supervisor Demarco saying, "I want all you complainers to go down to the unemployment line and complain to that guy standing in line; and after he punches you in the nose, he will then come down and apply to take your job."

The children of Israel wondering in the wilderness complained about the daily bread, manna, that supplied their physical needs everyday. Be careful about complaining about your job or you may find yourself purging quail through your nose.

[Numbers 11:33–34 \(NKJV\)](#) ³³ But while the meat *was* still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.

Father, thank you for "giving us this day, our daily bread".

4. W-O-R-K

Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, - Verse 24

K – Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ (Colossians 3:24 NKJV)

You have to know who your real boss is or you will continually be frustrated at work.

Hey Gang, the more they treat you poorly, and you keep your witness, the more your reward in heaven will be, and here on earth because you will become more like Jesus. It keeps us in the right perspective, invest in heavenly things, not earthly things. If I work to please man, so the boss man recognizes me, he is man and he will let me down. More times than not, they will take it as an opportunity to use me for their advantage.

I should work hard while I am there, but not get so wrapped up I neglect my family, devotion time, and ministry.

How often I'll be driving home thinking about what I need to do. Or I'll skip my morning devotion so I can hurry to work to get working...sometime 10-12 hours a day.

Then I say after weeks on a big project, and I get overlooked, or taken advantage of, why did I trade temporal things for eternal things. I can't get that time back. There is always opportunity to make money another day, but never an opportunity to get the time back. Once our time is spent, it is spent for life.

I believe there is a place, that we do have to say, this is as far as I can go, I cant take that promotion because it will cost me my family, my ministry, and my intimacy with Jesus. Work may be upset, and they will be upset because you are such an awesome worker, and they were looking forward to you being their answer. But I have, by faith, said it myself that this is as far as I can go, I cant take that role because it is too much regarding time and travel. God ahs always honored me in that. I am reminded when I worked at the Space Center the top manager, after giving a rating as exceptional worker, commented on my comment sheet – Ray needs to consider this company as his own. See he was upset that I wouldn't go further, and take that supervisor role..... and I didn't take it because it would mean I would had to work Sunday's and also stop teaching Sunday school. However, the job I did, I scored "exceptional worker". God honored me, and always has. I told my employer in another job, I cant take that job, nor can I travel, and they were not pleased at all, still yet I scored out as exceptional worker, but there was a place where I said that is as far as I can go else my family, my ministry, and my intimacy with the Lord will be impacted.... God honored it, always had.

Hey can you imagine how awesome a tent made by Paul would be, and a table made by Jesus? They would no doubt had been the best ever made, and highly sought after to buy and have. Imagine the business enterprise they could have made and credited, and yes even gave 10% to the church and the poor. Aren't you glad they both came to a place that this was as far as they go.

[Matthew 6:33 \(NKJV\)](#) ³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Important – Your Identity is In Christ

Of vital importance, as we seek things above, a reminder that we are hidden (concealed) in Christ. You are hidden in Christ, because you are in Christ, therefore your identity is in Christ. Believer, your identity is in Christ, don't try to find your identity in work, else you will lose your identity in Christ because work is what you will seek first, and find your worth in, which in the end will simply you an empty and shallow Christian.

Colossians 3:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Work, and work faithfully, and then God will tap you on the shoulder and say I've watch you work, I got something else for you to do, join me in this ministry. It may be part time, it may be full, but when He does call, apply these same things. Whatever you do, do it heartily unto the Lord, you'll have opportunity to witness for Him, it will give you a reason to praise and thank Him for the opportunity, and always know in ministry, that your reward will come from the Lord.

Watching Mother Theresa care for people with their open sores, bodies smelling, and wounds bleeding, an observer said to her, 'I wouldn't do what you do for a million dollars.'
'Neither would I,' Mother Theresa replied.

Truly, the only motivation big enough for such service is an eternal reward.

Whether it is feeding the hungry or making money for your boss, work as if you are working for the Lord.

(Colossians 3:25 NKJV) But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

and there is no partiality.

And, in this context, God is looking at the motive of the heart, of why a person did and does what they do, even if it all appears wonderful on the outside. I believe work, whatever that work is, absolutely is an indication of our heart and relationship with the Lord. Is all that we are doing, are we doing it for His glory? Whether work, school, home, marriage, or family.... Are we doing it for His glory.

Colossians 3:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Colossians 3:23 (NKJV) ²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV) ³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Gang, everybody at work may get away with it, but you won't. That extra 15 minutes for lunch, the pens, the long distance calls. Hey if you had a housekeeper, how upset would you be if you found out she was making long distance calls on your phone, and charged you an extra hour wage to boot. God has called you to a higher standard. Means there is no justification. Even if your boss ripped you off, you don't get pay adjustment by any other way than company policy.

(Colossians 4:1 NKJV) Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Now Bosses Treating Workers / You Will Stand Before Your Master

Here God talks to bosses on how to treat their workers.

You will stand before your master. We all have someone working for us in some sense, whether it is your maid, gas attendant, the worker at 7/11, or you manage a fortune 500 company.

Bosses, make sure you're acting justly, lovingly, equitably. Sure, you might be in a place of power and prominence now, but never forget you will one day stand before *your* Master and give account of what went on through your life and in your heart.'

Bosses Pay Justly

'Masters,' says Paul, 'you have an obligation to be just.' The boss is responsible to see his workers are justly paid How does this happen? Read on . . .

Workers – Don't Look Around

Having said that, let me say this to those who are not masters, but employees. When things are done justly and equitably, sometimes it causes a problem in the hearts of the rank and file.

'What's the big idea of him making as much as I do? He only got as far as fifth grade — and I went through my junior year in high school!'

Jesus spoke to just such an issue in Matthew chapter 20. Spiritually this applies to salvation, but Jesus was using an illustration of the the workplace, that still applies today.

A master goes to the marketplace at 9 a.m. and says, 'I need some guys to help me bring in my crops. I'll pay one denarius to anyone who works for me.' A denarius being the wage of a soldier, it was a good day's pay. 'We'll do it!' said some unemployed men looking for work. 'We were wondering how we were going to feed our families today — and now we have the opportunity to make a good wage. We're so blessed!'

The master then goes back to the same marketplace at noon and finds more unemployed men whom he takes to his vineyard to join those he had hired previously. At 3:00 in the afternoon and again at 5:00, one hour before quitting time, the master returns to the marketplace yet again, and brings back more workers.

At the end of the day, he pays the laborers he had hired at 5:00, a denarius — a full day's wage. The first guys, the ones hired at 9 in the morning, immediately whisper among themselves, 'If he's paying those guys a full day's wage for only an hour's work, can you imagine what he's going to pay us?!' But their dreams of Lexuses and Sharper Image are abruptly cut short as the master pays them a single denarius.

'Unfair!' the 9:00 gang cries. 'Why?' the master asks. 'I paid you the exact wage for which you welcomed the opportunity to work. Now, why is it a problem for you that I choose to be kind and treat everyone equally?'

In this account, Jesus underscores our tendency to be happy only until we see what someone else gets. The vineyard workers began the day excited, and ended the day murmuring because they looked at the other guys. It's a problem with which we all struggle.

Matthew 20:14–15 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. ¹⁵ Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

So what's the key?.....Don't look around. You see, once I start looking around, I inevitably get discouraged. I start to say, 'Hey, why is that guy getting the breaks?' or 'Why does that blessing go to him when I've been working harder and longer?' Gang, if you're going to be bummed every time someone else is blessed, you really shouldn't be in the field of ministry or blessing.

Bosses Pay Justly

Again, 'Masters,' says Paul, 'you have an obligation to be just.' The boss is responsible to see his workers are justly paid How does this happen? Read on . . .

(Colossians 4:2 NKJV) Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

Want to Be Master in Home or Work - Pray

Want to be a good master in the home or job? The only way I know to do it is to pray. 'Father, Your Son taught us to ask You to give us our daily bread. And now, Lord, help me to properly distribute the bread You send.'

Bosses you have to be in prayer continually to determine what is right in your sight, how do I run this ministry, this business, this family. As the Philistine's continually attacked the children of Israel, Finances will continually stalk and attack us in the ministry, business, and home.

Workers – What if Job is Bad?

Now a big question, if the job I am at - stinks - when is it time to move on to another job? I suggest to you, before you go jumping jobs, you make sure your heart is right first. During prayer time, go and seek the Lord and say I have truly applied W-O-R-K. Am I bringing God glory in whatever I am doing, is my work a witness or am I a complainer, am I thankful for the daily bread, do I really know who my boss is?

If you don't work hard for the Lord, don't expect Him to work hard for you. If you want to be blessed, then you have to bless.

If you are right in these areas, then you can bath your decision in prayer, then you can have peace in knowing you are making the right decision, a decision that is led of God, not your emotions, and is best for you and your family.

being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

Be Thankful Applies to Everyone

Be a thankful person. This applies to everyone — masters and servants, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters.

One morning during an eclipse in the Middle Ages, people woke, expecting day to dawn. When it didn't, they freaked out. 'Oh no!' they cried. 'The sun didn't rise today.' What was at first sort of a curiosity became a real concern — and they began screaming, wailing, and howling. When the sun did at last appear, the people cheered, clapped, and blessed God for the sunshine which they had previously taken for granted.

How good it would be for us to wake up and say, 'Thank You for a new day, Father. I'm alive. The sun is out. There's air to breathe.

Prayer Includes Thanksgiving

When I pray, thanksgiving is always before my supplication. Thanksgiving reminds what God has done in my life, it is a demonstration of what he will do for me in the future, thanksgiving keeps my prayer time from turning into some big whining session, of what I need or don't have.

Personally, grumpy believers amaze me, don't they realize how good God has been to them? They're going to heaven. They have the Scriptures. The Spirit indwells them.

I don't think there's a single excuse for a rational person to be grumpy. Thanksgiving should be flowing from our lips constantly. Apply thanksgiving to Life, apply it to Work.

Our Passage

Colossians 3:22–4:2 (NKJV) ²² Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. ²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵ But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. ¹ Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. ² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Colossians: Chapter 4
Passage: Colossians 4:2-18
Title: Servants in Action

Colossians 4:2–18 (NKJV) ² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; ³ meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴ that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. ⁷ Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. ⁸ I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, ⁹ with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here. ¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. ¹⁵ Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house. ¹⁶ Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.” ¹⁸ This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

Church in Colosse & America

I believe the Church of America is in the exact same place as the church we are studying here, the Church of Colosse. In the simplest summation..... the Church of Colosse had left Jesus being their primary focus, their all-in-all, and was distracted by the noises and buzzing's of the world around them, the voices, words, philosophies, and reasonings of man (both in the church and in the world around them).

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- **THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (Chapters 1-2)**
- **THE BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE PREEMINENT CHRIST (Chapter 3-4)**

Paul Writes because Truth Under Attack

Paul ends this letter with “remember my chains.” And here in chapter 4 we see servants in actions, and we see them stepping up, taking up ministry to reach out where Paul's chains confined him, kept him from going and ministering.

Prayer:

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Colossians 4:2 NKJV) Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; (Colossians 4:3 NKJV) meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, (Colossians 4:4 NKJV) that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

Not Pray Get Me Out Here – But the Words Gets Out

Intriguing. Paul says, 'Pray for me, pray for us — not that we'll get out of here, but that the Word will go forth from here.' I think if I was writing this, I would say, 'Please pray for me that I'll get outta here. I'm tired of being in prison.' Not so Paul. He says, 'My desire is that God's Word will go forth from here, that those around me will really see that Christ lives in me.' Truly, this is the way to pray. Paul's prayer was answered. The Word was spoken and spread. First by this very letter to the church in Colosse and Laodicea, then later read over the centuries, and right here today at fellowship.

Prayer – Not See Things my Way – But God's Way

A sign said: Pray . . . it works. 'True — but what if it doesn't work?' Most of the time we pray small prayers like, 'Get me outta here'. And when they don't work, we stop praying instead of learning what prayer really is. Prayer is not to get God to see things my way, but rather to get me to see things His way.

AP Story of Burglar

AP story: Walking into her house to answer the phone, Cindy Hartman of Conway, Arkansas, was confronted by a burglar who, after ripping the phone out of the wall, ordered her into the closet. Hartman dropped to her knees and asked the burglar if she could pray for him. 'I want you to know that God loves you and I forgive you,' she said. The burglar looked at her and apologized for what he had done. Then he yelled out the door to a woman in a pickup truck, 'We gotta unload all this. She's a Christian lady. We can't do this to her!' Hartman remained on her knees, and the burglar returned the furniture he had already taken from her home. Then he took the bullets out of his gun, handed her the gun, and walked out the door.

Fascinating story. You see, Cindy Hartman could have prayed, 'Get me out of here,' but instead she prayed like Paul. 'Could I pray for you?' she asked the burglar. *That's* in harmony with the heart of God. How do I know? Because of what Jesus said on the Cross. He didn't say, 'Get me out of here,' He said, 'Father, forgive them. They don't understand what's going on,' (Luke 23:34).

Remember Context is - Preeminence

Remember, the context and theme of this whole epistle is the preeminence of Christ, and here prayer and the vital importance of it is tied in right after godly living (3:1-16), family (3:17-21), and work (3:22-4:1)

(Colossians 4:5 NKJV) Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.

Red light

I should be dead, but God was gracious and jumped the breaks in superhuman time (aka – miracle) so that I stopped in time to be missed by a car doing at least 70 running a red light; the guy who was following me later after we got out of the cars says wow, he would have careened you, he was flying, and we both shook our heads saying “and I would be dead right now”. So, what am I going to do with the time giving me today.

You May Think Place at is Waste – Not God – Use it Wisely

You may think the place God has you is a waste of time, but God doesn't – He says this time is precious, don't waste it – redeem it.

Walk Wisely Because People Watching / Sharper Image Clock

Walk wisely because people are watching you. Time is moving rapidly, so redeem it. Sharper Image has a clock for about \$80 which, on the basis of insurance projections, will calculate how many seconds you have left to live. Let's say the number is 500,000 seconds. That number flashes on the screen and begins counting down each second. It's a great idea!

Walk Wisely – Life is Shorter than You think

Somehow we think we're going to live a long time, but James was right when he said life is a vapor, a puff of steam (4:14). It's going so fast. Make it count. How? Redeem it. Find ways in which you can say, 'I don't need to waste this time because I don't have a lot of time left!'

James 4:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

Spend 6 Months at Red Light – You Have Time to Pray

According to USA Today, the average American will spend six months of his life waiting at red lights. People say, 'I just don't have time to pray' — but what if they decided that at every red light they would pray for people in the Fellowship, for people in Anne Arundel County who don't know Jesus, for people in the world who have never heard His Name? What if they decided to keep an open Bible on the seat next to them in order to read a verse or two during every red light? Don't worry if it turns green, the guy behind you will let you know. People say they don't have time to read, to pray, to memorize, to study. Yes they do. And I'm not even talking about getting up at 3 a.m. I'm talking about just using the time they're at stoplights. Redeem the time!

(Colossians 4:6 NKJV) Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Salty Speech – Create a Thirst

Even in periods of hard times, helplessness, let your speech be seasoned with salt. Salty speech? Years ago, salty speech connoted swearing. That's not the salty speech Paul is talking about. No, the idea here is of salty french fries. I love salty french fries, but I've got to have a Coke to go with them, because they make me thirsty. So too, the speech we use should create in people a thirst for the wine of the Spirit in our hearts.

Betsy Ten Boom – Talked About heaven Like Already Been There

A prisoner in the concentration camp with Betsy Ten Boom said, Betsy talks about heaven, like she had already seen it." That how our speech should be, we talk about the things of God with a passion, a passion because we live it daily, not just something we read about like a history lesson; and then people will thirst for what they know we have already taken in.

(Colossians 4:7 NKJV) Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.

Tychicus – What Wonderful Qualities

Tychicus - Beloved brother, faithful minister, fellowservant — what wonderful qualities.

Each a New Person / Search for Him – His Heart

Each of these people listed in the rest of this chapter is a new person in Christ, so first there was a transfer from the old man to the new. They had to put off and put on as we studied. All transfers begin at the cross, as new life begins in man. I like what Herod said in Matt 2:8 Go and search carefully for the child.

(Matthew 2:8 NKJV) And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

When man searches for Christ, he is not seeking Him like a lost coin, rather what he is searching is his very heart, and he sees a need for a Savior, and it is there that we find life.

His Name is Jesus (Immanuel) – What's in a Name

His name is Jesus, Hosanna means "save now", Immanuel, "God with Us".

(Matthew 1:23 NKJV) ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

(Luke 1:30–31 NKJV) ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.

What's in a name we might say, it is always interesting studying someone's name in the Scriptures, many of them have a deeper meaning to them. Jacob means heel-catcher, Moses means wanderer, but I am most fascinated with Sara and Abram, when God changed their names. He changed them simply by adding a letter, the letter 'h', Sarah with an "h", and Abram, to Abraham.

The Lord adds a simple "h" to the name, insignificant at first glance, but powerful at second.

For God with us - Immanuel, becomes God in us, as the Spirit of the living God takes residence in us:

(1 Corinthians 3:16 NKJV) Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

The Hebrew word for Spirit is ruwach, roo'-akh; it meant wind; by resemblance breath. ruwach in the Hebrew is a word spoke with just a breath, the "h". When God breaths His breathe in you, it's just a breath, an "h" that changes you forever.

This wind, is also a fire; that when allowed will consume all those things that keep us from setting our mind on the things above, that allow Christ in us, the hope of glory to rule and reign in my life in all situations and circumstances.

(Colossians 3:1–4 NKJV) ¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

We will receive a new name in heaven, I wonder if it our name now, with an "h" added to it.

(Revelation 2:17 NKJV) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

When God breathes His Spirit into us, we are changed forever. We need this "h", this Spirit in our life so we have the power to walk the walk He has called us to. Like Sara and Abraham, we are barren and impotent without the "H", the Spirit of God living in us.

(Colossians 4:7 NKJV) Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.

(Colossians 4:8 NKJV) I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts,

3 Marks of Tychicus

Look at the three marks that Tychicus was know for:

1. A beloved brother
2. A faithful minister
3. A fellow servant in the Lord

This is what the “ruwach” does in a person's life.

(Colossians 4:9 NKJV) with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here.

Onesimus – Book Philemon

If you're a student of the Word, you know Onesimus plays a key role in the book of Philemon. A runaway slave who ended up in prison as a cellmate of Paul, he got saved, was released, and now turns out to be a faithful friend and minister.

Philemon 8–11 (NKJV) ⁸ Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, ⁹ yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ—¹⁰ I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, ¹¹ who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.

Onesimus Chains Brought him to Christ / A Common Testimony

Onesimus chains brought him to Christ, and little did he know a letter written about him would become an epistle to lead many others to Christ.

How many people have a testimony just like Onesimus. A testimony of how it seemed that all was lost, nothing would ever seem right, this divorce, illness, relationship, nothing good can ever come of it. I imagine that is what Onesimus thought himself.

(Colossians 4:10 NKJV) Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him),

Aristarchus

His name means “to greet”,

Mark – Acts 15 / Ever Feel You Have Missed the Mark

Marcus is John Mark. Remember the story in ' (Acts 15:36-41)? Setting off on their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas take John Mark, Barnabas' nephew, with them. Then somewhere in the early part of the journey, John Mark freaks out, and runs home. At the outset of their second missionary trip, Barnabas says, 'I'll get John Mark and we'll be on our way.'

'Hold on,' Paul says. 'John Mark flipped out and failed us last time. He's not coming again.'

'Yes he is,' said Barnabas, Son of Comfort.

'No way,' said Paul. 'There's work to do. We can't have this guy tag along with us. He just doesn't have what it takes.'

'I'm taking John Mark,' said Barnabas.

'Fine,' said Paul. 'Go your way. I'll take Silas and we'll go in a different direction.' (Acts 15:36-41) And they parted company.

Years later, we see that Barnabas' work was successful with John Mark, for here in Colossians Paul salutes him.

Acts 15:36–41 (NKJV) ³⁶ Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.” ³⁷ Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. ³⁸ But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. ³⁹ Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. ⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Abraham Lincoln

So too, you who feel like you 'missed the mark', that God opened a door for you to do something, but you failed — take heart. I don't care how badly you messed up, He's not through with you. Talk about failure! He had less than three years of formal education and failed in business in '31. He was defeated for State Legislature in '32, and failed again in business in '34. Finally elected to the State Legislature in '35, he ran for Speaker and lost in a landslide. He was defeated again for Elector in '40, and for Congress in '43. Elected in '46, he was tossed out of office two years later, defeated in a re-election attempt in '48. Failing in business once again, he ran for Senate, but was defeated in '55. He ran for Vice President in '56, was crushed, and was defeated for Senate another time in '58. And then in '60, 1860, Abraham Lincoln won — and went on to become perhaps the greatest political leader in American history.

Could it be that the wit, wisdom, and understanding of human nature which he exhibited so powerfully came as a result of the setbacks, failure, and defeat Lincoln had experienced previously?

John Mark Failed – But Came Through Ultimately / The “h”

Don't despair, precious people. John Mark blew it badly, but came through ultimately. So can you. Don't despair your failures and setbacks, the chains that bind you, you have a robe of righteousness, you have the "h", the ruwach, the Spirit of the living God inside of you.

(Colossians 4:11 NKJV) and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

They Were Comfort to Paul / Don't Prepare Sermon – Prepare a Meal

Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus proved to be a comfort. When people are hurting they don't want a sermon, they want comfort. Don't prepare people a sermon, prepare them a meal. Don't share Scripture then go home, share yourself, your time. Provide comfort to them.

After Sermon on Mount – A Leper Comes

Matthew 5-7, the greatest sermon ever preached, and what happen immediately after that sermon, when Jesus came down from the mount? It says a leper came to Jesus and said if you are willing you can make me clean.....and what does Jesus do, He says I am willing and then he stretched forth His hand and touched the man. A leper, how long had it been since someone touched him? How many times did those words echo in his ears as he walked the streets.....unclean...unclean, how many times was he the brunt of children's mocking, and self-righteous people's sneers? Yet Jesus didn't just heal him, He touched him. Jesus didn't give him a Bible Study tape from the Sermon on the Mount, He touched him.

Matthew 8:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. ² And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." ³ Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Prove to be a comfort.

(Colossians 4:12 NKJV) Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

(Colossians 4:13 NKJV) For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

Epaphras Prayer as Birthing a Child / Prayed Until Breakthrough

Epaphras labored fervently in prayer. The idea here is one of giving birth, going through pain to bring forth prayer. Sometimes that's what it takes. Do you ever feel like not praying? Am I the only

one who begins to pray, but then gets distracted and succumbs to the list of other things to tend to first? Such wasn't the case with Epaphras. He labored in prayer until there was a breakthrough, a birth of renewal and revival in the hearts and lives of those for whom he prayed.

Note: I put a slip of paper next to me when I pray, so when a distracting thought comes, I write it down, so I can handle it later, for I have a tendency to want to take care of it then, and of course it reduces my prayer time.

God gives people burdens for other people and places, it is truly a gift from the Lord, that he would entrust you with a specific person or place so that you might intercede on their behalf.

(Colossians 4:14 NKJV) Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

Doctor Luke / Faith Healers / Generational Curses

Luke, the beloved physician . . . Luke, a doctor? Why did Paul call Luke the *beloved* physician if Luke didn't even have enough faith to be a faith healer? Because Paul, the one who saw such powerful healing miracles happen that even the sweat bands and aprons he wore were used as instruments of healing (Acts 19:11-12), knew the necessity of a physician given intellectual gifts and training to help people physically — and welcomed Luke's presence on his missionary journey.

Acts 19:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

You will hear every so often this teaching on generational curses, that a person is sick or bound because of the sins of their family past, a sin that they were not party too. Their decree is that no one should sick, if you are, then there's a sin somewhere in your family's past that you have not confessed and dealt with.

Paul not only calls Luke a physician, but a beloved physician. Shame on you Paul, what's a person need a physician for, what they need to do is confess great granddaddy's drinking problem.

Jesus himself acknowledges the blessings and needs of a physician:

(Matthew 9:12 KJV) But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

I'm not going to dwell here on this, but want you to know that it is out there, and here is your Biblical counter to it.

Also:

(Deuteronomy 24:16 KJV) The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

(James 1:17 KJV) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. —

doctors fall in as good gifts from above, as did Luke, the beloved physician

and Demas greet you

Fellow Servant – 6Years Later Forsaken

In the book of Philemon, which preceded the book of Colossians by a couple of years, Demas is called a fellow servant (verse 24). Approximately six years after this, there's a third mention of Demas, where right before Paul dies, he says, `Demas has forsaken us, having loved this present world (II Timothy 4:10). So Demas went from being a fellowservant to one who turned his back on the Lord because he loved the world.

2 Timothy 4:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

[Philemon 23–24 \(NKJV\)](#) ²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, ²⁴ as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

How did this happen? Here's how: the Christian life is like a steam locomotive. When you're first saved and on fire, you stoke the boiler with the Word. You come to church, you're involved in ministry, and you're moving along in your faith. But there can come a time when you start to think, 'Hey, I'm cruising along fine. I don't need to feed the fire so fervently. I don't need to study Scripture so consistently. I don't need to have devotions daily. I don't need to go to church regularly because, look, I'm really moving!' But here's the deal, gang. Once the fire stops being fed, the engine starts slowing down, although imperceptibly at first. Yes, the train keeps moving down the tracks for a time and everything appears to be going fine, but little by little the engine goes slower and slower until finally it stops dead in its tracks. You might be able to go weeks, months, even years on the momentum you gained in the early days — but if you don't continue to feed the fire, eventually you'll stop altogether. And, like Demas, you'll say, 'What happened? How did I end up *here*?'

(Colossians 4:15 NKJV) Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.

If Have Family – Have Church in House

'The church which is in his house' — that's a great little phrase. If you have a family, you have a church. Husbands, wives, parents, is your house a church, a place of worship. Let's be honest, how differently we act in the church in our homes, than we do right here in the public church.

(Colossians 4:16 NKJV) Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

Exchange Letters w/Laodicea

In other words, 'Pass this letter on to the church at Laodicea, and they'll pass theirs on to you.' We don't have the letter, but it was evidently written by Paul at this time to the Laodiceans.

(Colossians 4:17 NKJV) And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

Do What God has Told You

'Do what God has told you, Archippus,' — which is a good word for us as well — to do whatever it is God has told us, to keep on with whatever it is He has laid upon our hearts individually and corporately in order to bring it to completion.

What is that you may ask, well for all I know whatever was spoken of in chapter 3. Then from there what God has spoken directly to do in your personal calling.

(Colossians 4:18 NKJV) This salutation by my own hand; Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

Remember My Chains

Remember my chains he says, and may you remember that God is always working in your chains, just as He worked in Paul's chains.

Grace be with you. Amen.

Paul opened his epistle with the salutation of grace, and now closes it with the benediction of grace. As it began, so it ends because grace is the whole deal. Amen.

Conclusion

Prayer:

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.