

Small Group Guide

Colossians 1 | The Supremacy of Christ and the Battle for Your Mind

OVERVIEW

This week's sermon opened the book of Colossians, a letter written by Paul to a church he had never personally visited. The church at Colossae was facing false teaching, particularly a form of early Gnosticism and Jewish legalism. Rather than cataloging every error, Paul pointed the church back to the truth of who Jesus really is. The central conviction of this passage is that knowing the real Christ is the best defense against every counterfeit.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Faith comes first, but it must be followed by growing knowledge and spiritual understanding of who Christ truly is.
- Paul's prayer for the Colossians was that they would be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that they could walk worthy of the Lord and bear fruit in every good work (Colossians 1:9-10).
- Jesus is not merely a reflection of God but the full manifestation of God himself. He is the creator and sustainer of all things, and in him all things consist.
- We have been delivered from the domain of darkness and brought into the kingdom of Christ through his blood. This is not something we earned but something God qualified us to receive.
- Paul's strategy against false teaching was not to expose every error in detail but to clearly present the true Christ. When you know the real thing, counterfeits become easier to identify.
- There is an active battle for your mind. The Christian life requires a conscious, ongoing decision to set the mind on Christ and to grow in the knowledge of his word.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question

1. Think about a time when you encountered a teaching, idea, or claim about Jesus that did not sit right with you. How did you recognize it was off? What helped you see through it?

Digging Into the Passage

2. In Colossians 1:9-10, Paul prays that the Colossians would be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Why do you think Paul emphasizes knowledge and understanding so heavily in a letter meant to address false teaching? What does that tell us about how we should respond to error?
3. Paul opens the letter by expressing gratitude for the Colossians' faith, love, and hope, even though he has never met them. What does that tell you about how Paul viewed the body of Christ? How does that challenge or encourage the way you think about fellow believers you may not know personally?
4. The sermon used the illustration of training bank tellers to recognize counterfeit bills by studying the real thing rather than memorizing every fake. How does that apply to your own spiritual life? Are there areas where you feel more equipped to spot a counterfeit, and areas where you feel less equipped?
5. Paul describes Jesus in Colossians 1:15-17 as the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, the creator of all things visible and invisible, and the one in whom all things hold together. What stands out most to you from that description? How does it affect the way you think about who you are worshiping?
6. In Colossians 1:21, Paul reminds the church that they were once alienated and enemies in their minds. How does the mind play a role in our separation from God, and how does it play a role in our ongoing walk with him once we are reconciled?
7. The sermon made the point that faith and intellect are not opposites. Faith comes first, but it does not replace the mind. It changes how we use it. Do you find it easy or difficult to hold those two things together? Where have you seen that tension in your own life or in conversations with others?

Personal Reflection

8. Paul says in Colossians 1:23 that the key is to continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, not moved away from the hope of the gospel. What are the things in your life right now that most threaten to move you away from that foundation?

9. The sermon described the battle for your mind as very real and very active. What are the voices, platforms, habits, or influences in your life that compete most with the truth of God's word? What would it look like to be more intentional about guarding your mind?
10. Paul rejoiced in his sufferings because he could see they were serving a greater purpose for the body of Christ. Is there a difficulty or season of suffering in your life right now that you are struggling to find purpose in? How might this passage speak to that?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This Week, Choose One

- Set aside time each day this week to read through Colossians chapter 1 slowly and prayerfully. Ask God to show you something new about who Jesus is each time you read it.
- Identify one false or distorted idea about Jesus that you have encountered recently, whether in media, conversation, or your own thinking. Write down what the truth of Scripture says in response to it.
- Follow Paul's example and pray specifically for someone in the body of Christ this week, someone you may not know well or may have never even met in person. Pray that they would grow in the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.
- Memorize Colossians 1:16-17, which describes Jesus as the creator and sustainer of all things. Carry those verses with you as a reminder of who holds your life together.
- Have an honest conversation with a trusted fellow believer about where you feel spiritually weak or uncertain. Invite them to pray with you and point you back to the truth of God's word.