

The Introduction to Colossians

Colossians 1:1-11

“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, 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; 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. 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.”

The Book of Colossians is by far the most interesting of Paul's writings for this age. The Book of Colossians is plainly applicable to the 21st century church of 2019 and beyond. Its content and subject matter is crucial for the believer who desires the truth concerning the "deep things of God.”

Historians tell us that Colosse was a celebrated city in Asia Minor. The historian Pliny tells us that Colosse, Loadicea, and Hierapolis were at the same time destroyed by a great earthquake in the latter part of the reign of Nero, not long after this Epistle was written.

Colosse recovered and was rebuilt. The ancient town is now extinct, but its site is occupied by a village called Chonas. The village is picturesque and beautifully situated in the valley near Mount Cadmus.

You will notice as we study this epistle, that it strongly resembles the Epistle to the Ephesians, and was written in view of the errors which were numerous and prevalent in the churches in that part of Asia Minor.

The central theme of the Book of Colossians is the dignity and sole sufficiency of Jesus Christ as the Mediator and Head of all creation and of the Church.

Today, the world needs the message of Colossians, as we have already mentioned. The Christ that our world needs to have proclaimed in every deaf ear and lifted up before blind and reluctant eyes, is not merely the perfect man, nor the meek example, but is God incarnate. Paul sounds a resounding “yes” to the truth of John 1:1-3, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

Paul begins this letter this way, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother." From the very outset Paul wants us to clearly understand that he is not an apostle by his own choosing, nor by man's election – but that he was called, ordained, commissioned, and sent by God.

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ. He bore His commission, enjoyed His inspiration, did His work, and in all things sought His acceptance.

Paul continues in verse 3-4, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints.” **In these two verses we are presented with the essence of the Christian**

life. Paul thanks God for those qualities in the church at Colosse, and take the time to name them for us: “faith in Christ Jesus” and “love to all the saints.”

It is clear from Scripture there are two sides of the Christian life. First, the Christian must have ***faith***, as seen in Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please him (God); for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Second, the Christian must have ***love***, as seen in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.”

Therefore, we conclude that the Christian has a double loyalty – a loyalty to Christ and a loyalty to man. This means, then, the Christian has a double commitment – a commitment to Christ and a commitment to our fellow man. The Christian life is ***faith*** in our ***hearts*** and ***love*** in our ***lives***.

After introducing himself to the church at Colosse, Paul begins his letter with one of the most powerful prayers ever recorded, as seen in verses 9-11, “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; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.”

Paul’s prayer for the church at Colosse was a prayer for: perception, prosperity, and for power. Lets take a look.

First, he prays for perception. Verse 9 says, “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.”

Paul prayed for the church that they would be able to understand or perceive the:

The will of God – “that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will.” How are you going to do God’s will if you don’t understand what it is that God would have you do? The phrase “filled with the knowledge” means “to have full-knowledge.”

Paul did not want the church to guess at God’s will for their lives. Neither do I want you to guess at God’s will for you. Therefore, I challenge you to ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will tonight. *Tell Him that you are willing to go wherever He wants you to go.* Surrender your *time*, *talents* and *treasures* to Him tonight. Don’t hold anything back. *Your life belongs to God.* Give it back and watch Him use you in His will.

One thing is for certain. If you are going to do the will of God this year you’re going to have to know what it is. God will tell you if you want to do it.

Therefore, Paul prayed for the church that they would be able to understand or perceive the will of God.

And he also prayed that they might be able to perceive the Word of God – “in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Child of God, it is impossible for me to fully explain how important the Bible is in your life. It doesn’t matter how long you have been saved – *the Bible is your roadmap in your Christian journey.*

Paul prayed for the church that they would be able to understand or perceive the will of God and the Word of God.

Secondly, he prayed for prosperity. Verse 10 says, “That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

He prayed that they might be prosperous (fruitful) in their walk with God – “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” Romans 8:29 reminds us that it is the will of God that we be conformed to the image of Christ.

I am praying for you, but I am not for you to make a million or to stockpile things that will rust and decay. I am praying for something of much greater value. I am praying that you will make wise and right choices that will cause you to prosper in your spiritual life. *I am praying that you will be the best example of what a believer in Christ should be.* If we will do that, we will be prosperous.

And he also prayed that they might be prosperous in their work – “being fruitful in every good work.” This reminds me of Paul’s words found in 1 Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

It was Paul’s desire that the believers at Colosse would be fruitful in their work for the cause of Christ. That souls would be saved, that lives would be changed, and that the kingdom of God would flourish. And as we serve God here at Mountain Grove, I pray that the work we do for Jesus Christ will produce more fruit than it ever has.

Lastly, he prayed for God’s power. Verse 11 says, “Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”

The Colossians needed the power of God in and on their lives and ministry. So do we. We have done without it too long, and we have not done without it very well.

Like the Colossians, we need God's power to endure – “unto all patience and longsuffering.” We are living in a time when commitment is very much lacking in all areas of our society. And this lack of commitment shows up in our *families* where half of all marriages end up in divorce. It shows up in our *social areas*, when more and more babies are being born into homes where there is no marriage commitment. It shows up in the work place where the greatest economic loss to companies is absenteeism. We live in a society where there is very little commitment.

And he also prayer that they might have power in the joy - “with joyfulness.” That might seem like a strange thing to have power in their joy. But, my friend, never underestimate the impact your joy and excitement in the Lord has on the people around you.

Unfortunately, our country, and our churches, seems to have lost their spirits for fun and laughter. And yet, the Bible describes the Christian life as “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” The one place on earth where life's burdens should be lighter, where faces should reflect genuine enthusiasm, and where attitudes should be uplifting and positive, it is here in this wonderful place of worship.

Therefore, Paul prays that they might have power in their joy.