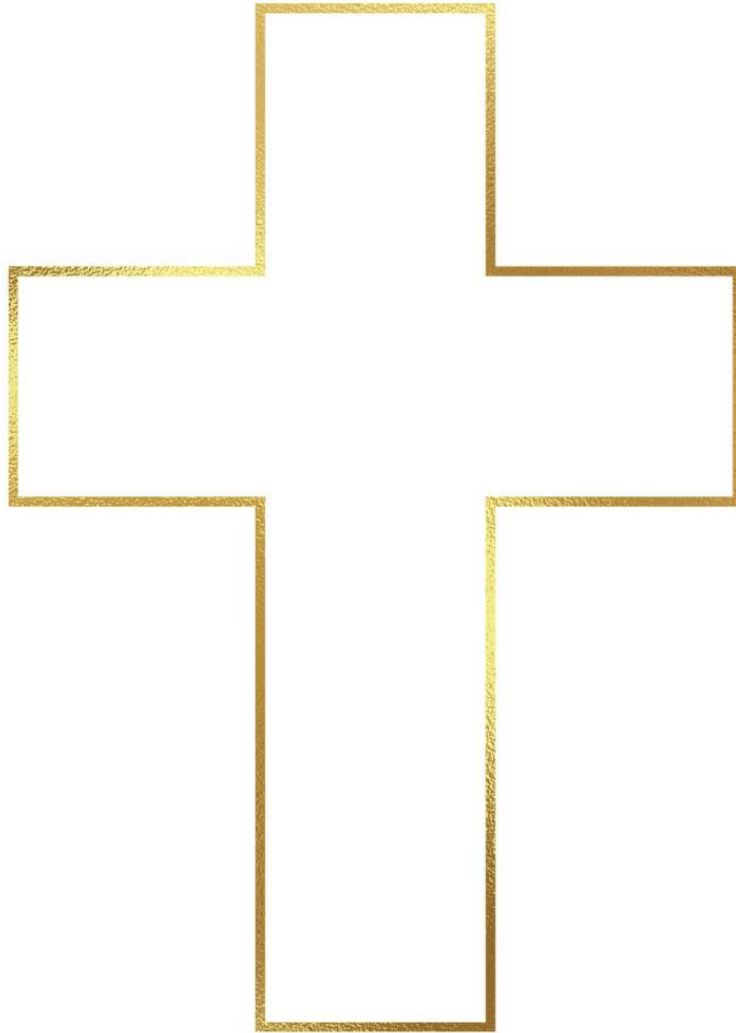


THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS



CHRIST + NOTHING = EVERYTHING

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THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

CHRISTIFORMITY

Walking out / Living in / Understanding that

CHRIST + NOTHING = EVERYTHING

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study on what it means to live a Cruciform life. Paul addressed this life to the church at Colossae in the year 60-61AD and still stands true more than ever in the 21st century. This writing is a timeless piece that captures the audience's attention in pursuing the life now lived as a "believer in Christ.

We will uncover:

- What the early church faced with the Halakic mystics, Jewish mysticism, Erroists and heretics, just as they are faced in today's culture.
- How understanding terms like,
- Christocenterism and Cruciformity are important in shaping the new believer's life
- Paul's constant reference to Soteriology and Christology
- Finally, we will cover how we walk this new life out under the headship of Christ

The major themes:

The Supremacy and Centrality of Christ

The Body of Christ

The True Gospel

The Christian Life

Course Name: The Book of Colossians

Course Number: _____

Course Structure:

Lesson 1: Colossians Chapter 1

Lesson 2: Colossians Chapter 1

Lesson 3: Colossians Chapter 2

Lesson 4: Colossians Chapters 3&4

Table of Contents

PROLEGOMENA	Page 1
LESSON 1	Pages 2 - 11
LESSON 2	Pages 12-20
LESSON 3	Pages 21 – 37
LESSON 4	Pages 38 - 53

Prolegomena

Author and Co- author: Paul and Timothy, Verse 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother.*

Paul is identified as the main writer: (Col 1:23 and 4:18)

Title: Colossians is named for the city of Colossae, to which the church it was addressed to was located. This letter would also be read in the neighboring church, Laodicea (*Col 4:16*)

Audience: mostly Gentile, mixed with Jews. All new converts to Christianity

Time period: 60-62 AD

Historical perspective:

- Colossae was an ancient city in the middle of a network of cities in western Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). The city lay next to the Lycus River.
- Its population was mainly Gentile, mixed with Jews, ancient writers such as Josephus¹ writes there was at one time 2000 Jewish families living there.
- Colossae was at one time a thriving city and one of the most celebrated in the 5th century BC.
- The city was situated at the junction of a main north-south and east-west trade route and was known for its wool and textiles.
- By the first century, when this letter was written, the city was less prominent, the main trade route had been rerouted through nearby Laodicea thus leading to a major decline.
- Historians speak of an earthquake sometime during 60-64AD that seriously damaged the city if not laid in total waste.
- The church is in its infancy stage, less than 30 years have passed since the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.
- Gnosticism and Old Testament rituals of Judaism have already crept into the early church. Religious cults thrived

The purpose of Paul's letter:

- To correct the false teachings of Jewish legalism and pagan mysticism within the church by reminding the saints of who Christ was.

The overall theme of the epistle:

- The entire narrative boasts one central substance, Jesus Christ is Lord of all. Christ plus nothing equals everything.

Colossians can be broken into two sections

- Chapters 1-2 doctrinal
- Chapters 3-4 practical

¹ (Jewish Antiquities 12.3-4)

Lesson 1

All scripture given is from the NKJV unless otherwise noted

Chapter 1

L1. I The introduction and greeting

In typical Pauline fashion

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

A. Paul's credentials:

- 1) He is an apostle of Christ: in Greek the word "apostle" means one who is sent. Paul describes himself as an apostle of King Jesus, an ambassador.
- 2) By the will of God or through the will of God: Paul was personally called by Jesus (Acts 9:4-5, 15) as a church -planting Gentile missionary. This was not to remove Israel from God's original plan but rather to graft the Gentiles into the tree of Israel (Rom 11:11-24)

***Paul's call to apostleship comes from the authority the was given to him
by Jesus Christ himself!***

B. Paul's audience:

Verse 2: To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colossae.

- Paul's letter is addressed to those who already believe in Christ and are part of the church in Colossae.

(NIV) To God's holy people, the faithful brothers, and sisters in Christ.

1) To the Saints

- a) The word "Saint" is a description used quite often in the New Testament to describe one who believes, and follows Christ. Referring to the company of God's people rather than to any individual.

- b) (Rom 1:7) *To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints. 'God's own.'*
- c) A person who is truly born from above, 'again,' biblically and doctrinally speaking has the presence of God Himself living on the inside of him, the **Holy Spirit**. Thus, a believer has all that is needed to make someone "holy" or a "saint." (John 14:16-17, 2 Co 1:20-22, Eph 1:13, 4:30).

2) To the Faithful

- a) Those who are steadfast in Christ.
- b) There are two distinctive acts associated with 'the faithful.' Believing and trust over time, faithfulness.

C. Grace and Peace greeting:

- In the Hellenistic era (the time period of this letter) it was common to start a letter with "greetings." The traditional greeting in the Hellenistic world was *chairein* . . . meaning simply 'Greetings!'
- In Paul's hands, he coins a new phrase, with a deeper meaning. Paul salutes his brothers and sisters in Christ with "grace to you **and peace**"

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

1) Grace

- a) Grace in Greek is *charis*, the spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace.
- b) *Grace*, as Paul stated, came from God the Father and Jesus Christ. Paul understood that it is a divine attribute, a uniquely Christian concept not found in other religions and belief systems.
- c) This transcended the common greeting and was exclusively Christian, (Rom 5:8 John 1:14, 17)

d) God's supreme love is called **grace**. Grace is the giving of every good thing to those who of themselves deserve *nothing* (John 3:16-17).

2) Peace

- a) Paul then adds the traditional Jewish greeting *shalom* ('peace' in the sense of 'wholeness' or 'well-being').
- b) Paul was very familiar with the Hebrew Shalom. Paul himself claimed that he was a Hebrew of Hebrews (Phil 3:5)
- c) In Hebrew 'peace' regarding God, meant *being reconciled to God and having God's peace in one's heart*.
- d) Paul was referring to an inner peace, a sense of well-being and wholeness
- e) He understood that "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" and "this grace in which we stand" (Romans 5:1-2). To be precise, this is a peace *from* God and peace *with* God.

D. Thanksgiving / Faith:

- (NIV) ³*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,* ⁴*because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people —* ⁵*the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel* ⁶*that has come to you.*

1) Paul brings together two facets in this text

a) We always thank God, the Father

- Paul's thanksgiving offered to God, is a grateful praise in response to God's salvation in Christ. and the work that He is doing in Colossae.

The Jewish context focuses on thanksgiving offered to God, because “what God has done is always the ‘perch’ (so to speak) from which Christian prayer takes its flight and to which it returns”

Scott McKnight

- b) Paul then ties Israel’s God into this new messianic faith found in Christ. “*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*”
- c) Paul is letting the Jews and Gentiles know that the same God who delivered Israel out of bondage from Egypt:
 - He is also the Messiah’s Father
 - And the Messiah, He, is also the Lord. Using the word Lord (kyrios) is the standard Greek translation of Israel’s one and only God, Yahweh

E. Characteristics of a believer:

- ***Verse 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people***
- 1) The early Christian triad: faith, love, and hope
 - a) Faith in Christ or their soundness in the sphere of Christ.
 - b) And that in their faithfulness a love for others has developed for all God’s people.

Love is a disinterested concern and active good will.... toward all saints, all believers in Christ, not with just those in whom they were in agreement with or toward whom they were naturally favorably disposed.

Bonnie Thurston

- Disinterested: not influenced by considerations of personal advantage.

- In other words, Love is an ecclesia shaped commitment to one another, Jews to love Gentiles, slaves to love the free, males to love females, Scythians were to love barbarians. (Col 3:11)

F. A believer's hope:

- *Verse 5a: the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven*

1) Paul now ties these two virtues of 'faith and love' to 'hope' that is stored up for them in heaven.

- a) The hope here that Paul is speaking of is future, final and eternal salvation.
- b) This hope is found in the gospel, the true message (Col 1:5) (Eph 1:13)
- c) This hope is reserved for all the saints (Rev 20-22) Eternal life with Christ and His eternal family.

Verse 5b: of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel

- Heard before: the hoped-for salvation before its realization (STRONGS G4257)

G. The gospel **Releases** the truth that **Reveals** the hope that **Ignites** the fire

1. They heard the word of truth, the gospel of hope (V5)
2. They absorbed the hope of the gospel and acted upon those words (V6)
3. They have been faithful to the word of truth of the gospel (V6)
4. They understood the word of truth of the gospel (V6)
5. They are attentive to the gospel the word of truth (V7)

L1. II Prayer and the call for the church to be spiritually minded

Vs 9-12 (one single sentence)

NIV ⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹²and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

A. Praying:

- 1) Observant Jews during this time period prayed 3 times a day. Once in the morning, during the afternoon daily sacrifice, and once in the evening.
 - Paul, did not cease being a Jew after he encounter Jesus, however his Jewish focus was now Messianic
 - They prayed that the church in Colossae be filled with the knowledge of God's will.
 - Not the knowledge, wisdom and understanding that is going on outside the church in Gnosticism and other mysticisms.
- 2) To be filled with the knowledge of God
 - a) **In "All wisdom"** that comes from the knowledge of God's will (or from that which the Holy Spirit gives)
 - *(Eph 1:11) ¹¹In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity **with the purpose of his will**, ¹²in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be **for the praise of his glory**.*

Ellen Davis writes this about wisdom:

"Wisdom is living in the world in such a way that God, and God's intentions for the world, are acknowledge in all that we do. This way of life is for all: the fruit of wisdom, a well-ordered life, and a peaceful mind of one whose heart fears the Lord and not from a high IQ."

- Psa 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever
- Pro 1:7 PT: *How then does a man gain the essence of wisdom? We cross the threshold of true knowledge when we live in obedient devotion to God. Stubborn know-it-alls will never stop to do this, for they scorn true wisdom and knowledge.*
- Pro 1:7 NIV *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

- *Pro 2:6 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;*
- 3) And to be filled with the knowledge of God
- a) ***In “All understanding”*** that the Spirit gives, which comes from the knowledge of God’s will.
 - Spiritual understanding
 - The text is saying here to know the will of God is to know God.
 - What has always been God’s will? Faith, trust, and obedience in His redemptive plan from creation to the kingdom now and yet future.
- 4) Why? That you may walk worthy
- *Verse 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;*
 - a) Or to: live a life worthy (NIV). The Greek translation for this phrase is “peripatein,” literally means “to walk.” A Hebrew term equivalent would a Torah-observant way of life.
 - From Genesis to the Book of Revelations there is a continuing connection between, redemption and practice. Walk worthy that you live a moral life, sound living, a worthy walk before the Lord.
 - This walk is: “fully pleasing to Christ.” Christ and Christ alone and not of this world.
- 5) The visible manifestations of a spirit led life:
- a) **“being fruitful** in every good work” (Rom 7:4) (Matt 5:16)
 - b) **“growing in God”** Spiritual maturity, increased knowledge of knowing God

- c) **“strengthened with God’s power,”** verse 11 continues expanding on walking worthy letting the church know they are empowered by the Glorious One. (*Rom 1:16-17*)
(Col 1:29)
 - d) giving one great patience and endurance **“for all patience and longsuffering with joy”**
- 6) Always giving thanks:
- As verse 11 ends, with joy, verse 12 picks up with, giving thanks.
 - Simply meaning “giving joyful thanksgiving.” **GRATITUDE** for what God has done.
- a) Thanks to the Father (Vs12) who has qualified us
- Sinful man can only be qualified by God through the redemptive work of Christ.
 - Without this divine act, it was impossible for mankind to go from spiritual death to spiritual life without mediator by the name of Jesus Christ.
- b) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light:
- The new believer now walks in the light of the world, opposed to darkness.
- 7) Paul now draws this prayer to a close
- By pointing to the One who has made it all possible
 - To the One who is responsible for this qualification
 - King Jesus

L1. III Reality of Redemption

(NIV) Verses 13-14 ¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins

- a) ***“For He has rescued us”***
- Paul is giving a lesson in Ecclesiology; we see this from verse 9 all the way through to verse 13.
- What is the known? Is that it is God who qualifies and rescues. This is the redemptive narrative throughout all scripture.
- When then did this rescue take place? At the cross.

- This rescue plan is for “all believers”
- b) *“from the dominion of darkness”*
- (Col 2:15)
- If we are rescued from darkness, the believer is now in the? Light.
(1 Thess 5:4, 1 Cor 4:5, 2 Cor 6:14, Rom 2:19, Col 1:21)
- Here we see evidence of the new creation (2 Cor 5:17)
- c) *“And brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves”*
- (EVS) *and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son*
- (MSG) *He's set us up in the kingdom of the Son he loves so much*
- **There is no middle ground**; one is either in darkness or in the Son’s kingdom.
- The kingdom here is synonymous with salvation.

What was lost back in the Garden in Eden was once again made available by the redemptive act of Christ on the cross. The main purpose of Christ coming into this world was not forgive us from our sins nor bring us to heaven. His main purpose was so that we could have right-standing with God the Father as Adam and Eve once did.

(Eph 1:11-14)

Mike Petramale ^cTTc3/3

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

- d) *“in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”*
- In the Old Testament redemption was provided by the Passover Lamb, a parallel to the work of Christ that was to come
- (Rom 3:24-25) ²⁴*and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.* ²⁵*God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished*

Christ death brought liberation, the Christus Victor theory, the atoning work of Christ that emphasizes the triumph of Christ over the evil powers of the world, through which he rescues his people from Satan and established himself as the rightful king of the cosmos and establishes a new relationship between God and the world.

- Forgiveness of sins is not something new to this audience, particularly to the Hebrews.

What is new, is that this forgiveness is no longer through the sacrifices done in the temple nor through Yom Kippur, but through the death of Christ. And it now includes the Gentiles.

Christ plus nothing = everything

Christ and Christ alone

Christos Victor

Lesson 2

L2. I Regarded as the most important text on all the bible (Christology at its finest)

Colossians chapter 1 verses 15-20

Verses 15-20 ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and 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.

(MSG) ¹⁵We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. ¹⁶For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. ¹⁷He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. ¹⁸And when it comes to the church, he organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body. He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he is there, towering far above everything, everyone. ¹⁹So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. ²⁰Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the Cross.

THESE SIX VERSES

- **Were in existence in Gen 1:1 started with “*In the beginning God created.*”**
- **Existed when God gave the Law to Moses and spoke to him at Mount Sinai.**
- **Were on the lips of all the Old Testament prophets, spoken of for centuries.**
- **Are still the most important doctrinal scripture in a believer’s life.**

Mike Petramale ^{CTT}C 3/3

A. There is a common word in these verses, “all”

*¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over **all** creation. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷And He is before **all** things, and in Him **all** things consist. ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in Him **all** the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and 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.*

1) “*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation*”

- In this text Jesus is given two titles
 - a) First, Christ’s supremacy shown in His relationship with God the Father (eikon)
 - b) Second, Christ’s supremacy shown in His relationship to Creation (prōtotokos)

First title: Image of the invisible God (image in Greek translation “eikōn” pronounced “i-kone”)

- eikōn means the very substance or essential embodiment of something or someone.
- Jesus is the eikōn of the invisible God, he is the essence of God now fully manifested in embodied form (Heb 1:3, John 1:18)

Second title: First-born over-all creation

- Firstborn in Greek is “prōtotokos” and has a dual meaning in the New Testament. Meaning as the first born of a mother (Luke 2:7)
- Second meaning indicates as it does in the context of this text: a figurative status of preeminence, and not that of a birthing order
- Jesus the prōtotokos (pro-tot-ok'-os) in the New Testament
 - Is the one into whom all are conformed (Rom 8:29)
 - Is the one whom all are to worship (Heb 1:6)
 - In Him is the identity of the church as the firstborn (Heb 12:23)
 - Is the first one to be resurrected (Rev 1:5)

2) “*For by Him **all** things were created*”

- By Him Vs16
- Through Him Vs16
- In Him Vs16
- For Him Vs16
- And He holds them all together Vs17

- God/Father created by/in/through Christ? (Vs 16b)
- The end of verse 16 “through” Christ, this verse is confirmed in (1Cor 8-6, John 1:3)

a) What was created?

- All things that are in heaven and the things that are on earth (two locations)
- All things seen and unseen (two realms)
- All thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers (a hierarchy of order in those realms)

b) For what propose?

- For Him! All for His glory
- Christ is the essential source of all life

***Everything that is not the Creator is created, and
the Son rules the entire created world as the
Creator***

Scott McKnight

c) Did Christ himself create “by him” as Christ? Or did the Father create “in Christ?”

- The word “in” is the sphere in which creation occurred (Col 1:2,14,17,19,28) leading to, it is Christ who created within the dominion of his own powers though
- Christ the Son, is the One “through whom the Father made the universe” (Heb. 1:2).
- The Father, then, is the ultimate source, and the Son is the mediating cause of the world.
- The Son was the “master Workman” of Creation, “the beginning (archē, primary sense) of the creation of God” (Rev. 3:14).

d) End of Verse 16 “All things were created through Him and for Him”

- Christ is the essential source of life in creation
- Christ is the agent of creation
- Christ is the *telos* of creation (Phil 2:9-11) where all creation is headed (the end fulfillment)
- His preeminence as Eikōn Prōtotokos is then made quite clear a second time in the following verse

e) Verse 17 “And He is before all things and in Him all things exist”

- A better rendering would read *He is above all things.*

- *(Heb 1:3) 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*
- *(Eph 1:20-21) NIV he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come*

In these two verses (16-17) Paul goes way beyond tradition and current linguistic understanding and points out:

- **Everything (all creation) is heading in one direction**, towards Christ the creator, universal unity. Stating the fact that since Christ is before all things, he is the one that holds it all together for all things.
- This is a bold theology at the time in which Paul's audience is accustomed to.

Verses 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.

- Christ, in whom we have redemption, who created all things, in whom all things consist is also the head of the church (body of believers) or universal church into which all believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit the moment they believe in Christ
- a) *"He is the head of the body, the church."* In context Paul is saying
 - Christ is the one who grants and sustains life (the head of the body)
 - Christ is the one who also brings unity (the body/believers/the church). A new fellowship has been formed, Jews and Gentiles. The (ecclesiā).
- b) *"He is the beginning and the first born among the dead so that in everything He might have supremacy"*
 - He is the beginning (archē) used absolutely, of the beginning origin of all things (John 1:1)

- The firstborn (prōtotokos) among the dead, Christ was the firstborn of in creation and the firstborn, resurrected from the dead.
- So that he might have supremacy (prōteuō), which describes his exalted status as a result of the resurrection. (Phil 2:6-11)
- Christ is the **beginning** of new life creation the first one raised from the dead.
- Here we have **the gospel**: Jesus who lived, died, resurrected, ascended, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father is Lord and King of the world. He is the Prōteuōn.

Verse 19 “God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Christ the exalted One”

- The fullness is God’s! The Son is preeminent because the fullness of God the Father dwells in Him.
- And God’s fullness is Christ’s fullness

***For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.
One of the most powerful descriptions of Christ’s deity in the
New Testament.***

(Eph 1:22-23) And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

1. Was this fullness an extension God’s glory described in the Old Testament?
 - ✓ That filled the tabernacle of meeting that Moses erected (Ex 40:34-35)
 - ✓ That filled the temple that Solomon built (2 Chron 5:14)
 - ✓ In Ezekiel’s vision (Eze 43:1-5)
2. Was this fullness the glory that John described in the New Testament?
 - ✓ *(John 1:14) And the Word became flesh, and we beheld His glory, the glory as the only and only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*
3. God’s fullness/glory that once dwelt in the holy of holies now takes on a new form and dwells in Christ in fullness.

Verse 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

a) *and by Him to reconcile all things*

- Through the work of Christ on the cross, peace was made between man and God, there, God, would reconcile all things to himself through the atonement of Christ.

- The **means** of the atonement: the cross and blood
- The **effect** of the atonement: reconciliation and peace

b) There is **no peace** without the incarnation, cross, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ between (Rom 5:1)

- Because of the atonement of Christ that brought reconciliation we have been justified before God. (Rom 3:24)
- Christ the creator is as well the reconciler (2 Cor 5:19)

Col 1:21 EVS: “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him”

a) “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds”

- Alienation describes an unsaved person’s overall condition that manifests itself in two ways:
 - First is a mental resistance (enemies in your mind)
 - Paul’s use of the word “mind” here is related to the Jewish concept of one’s heart. A deep-seated rebellion (Eph 2:3-5)
- Second manifestation: behaviors that are evil (wicked works)

It makes no sense to pretend and think that God makes friends with us apart of the incarnation, cross and resurrection. (Eph 2:14-18)

b) *“Yet now He has reconciled you.”*

- (1 Cor 6:9-11) Paul talks about even when you were _____, (you fill in the blank) God sent the Creator to Reconcile the evil doer, and they were:

Washed Sanctified and Justified.

c) *(Col 1:20) “through the blood of the cross”*

- God was reconciling the whole world to himself in/through King Jesus (2 Cor 5:19)
- Here again in this text we see God grafting the Gentile world into Israel and making one of the two (Eph 2:14-15)

1. The purpose of this act of reconciliation?

a) To present humanity in purity before God. *(Col 1:22) “Holy, blameless, and above reproach before God”*

- Holy: the believer’s position
- Without blame: now faultless
- Free from accusation: free from all charges

2. Paul concluded this section of reconciliation on this note:

- *(Col 1:23) 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.*

a) if indeed you continue/remain in the faith, or it can be stated this way: assuming you will remain

b) The churches response to all these gifts from God must be a continuance of gratitude, faith, and obedience.

c) The term “remain” (epimenō) connotes remaining and abiding drawing one’s strength from the source, which is God’s gracious work in Christ through the Spirit.

- d) “*In faith*” Paul is not referring to one’s personal faith here but that of faith in the gospel. To stay rooted and steadfast and not moved away from the truth. (Matt 7:24-27)
- e) To persevere *in the hope of the gospel*. Which is? Eternal salvation.

To close the first chapter

Verses 24-29 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.* 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.*

Verse 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

- a) Paul’s credential, his calling was personally given to him by God. To preach the Word of God, the Logos, the story of Jesus.
- Then Paul talks about a mystery hidden from all the ages and past generation, in which God has now called him to proclaim to His saints.
- b) The mystery? **Christ in you.**
- *Verse 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*
 - The term “you” here is plural. Paul is talking to the church body at large yet at the same time the individual.
 - *Christ in you:* Christ now takes up residence in the believer (Gal 2:20, 2 Cor 13:5, Rom 8:10)
- c) *The hope of Gory:*

- Here Paul is referring to the eternal salvation of God that has now been manifested in Christ himself and in God's people. The Colossians hope of life in the age to come.

Verses 28-29 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

Proclaiming

- 1) Christ is the center of their message; the main course preached every day.
- 2) Admonishing every man—correcting wrong beliefs and practice.
- 3) Teaching—guiding into correct beliefs and practice.
- 4) To present every man complete in Christ.
- 5) Can only be accomplished one way, by the strength and power of Christ and Christ alone.

Christ + Nothing

=

Everything

Lesson 3

All scripture given is from the NKJV unless otherwise noted

L3. I Oppositions to early church in Colosse

Halakah – is a Hebrew term for “Walking according to the Torah.” And/or related to observances in found the Talmud. A ritual performance.

Halakic mystics – walked according to the Talmud and not according to Christ. That God’s truth can be found in any location outside Christ. Or called Torah shaped transcendentalists, those who agree in multiple truths. This knowledge comes through intuition and imagination not through logic or the senses, and people can trust themselves to be their own authority on what is right Today we call it individualism.

Jewish Mysticism a Jewish set of ideas and practices in which the Gentiles were totally excluded from. Judaism was a halakocentric religion. The main religious activity was the performance of the 613 commandments, addressed to the God of Israel.

Erroists and heretics: refer to the Colossian Philosophy outside the church. Their focus was on the powers of the world and not that of the divine work of God in Christ. This led Jews to practice legalism in circumcision, Sabbath observances, and food restrictions. These practices would help them overcome the evil force in the world.

Today these “isms” and philosophies still thrive in the church, just in a different disguise and name.

The Book of Colossians is a timeless writing. As important as it was then, over some 2000 years ago, it is just as important today in the 21-century, if not more so, since we are 2000 some years closer to the second coming then Paul and the church body of Colossae was.

*It is imperative to know the truth in the message and in the gospel.
Christ the hope of glory.
For we are complete in Him.*

Mike Petramale ^{CTC} 3/3

Chapter 2

Verses 1-8 (NIV) ¹I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. ²My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, ³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. ⁵For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is. ⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

Chapter 2 starts out with Paul reiterating to the Church the importance in having a complete understanding of who Christ is. For the church body to grow, they must be:

A. “*Encouraged in heart,*” strengthened in the Lord

- the verb “encourage” (parakalēo) most times means to comfort or console, and sometimes it means exhort. However, in this text it stands more for a sense of “strength.” The idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence or heroic action. (*Rom 1:11-2, 1 Thess 3:2-3, 1 Sam 30:6*)
- Paul wants the new believers to be strengthened in heart (*Col 4:8, 1 Thess 3:13, Rom 6:17*)

B. “*United in love*”

- The term “united” translates *symbibazo*, holds several meanings.
- The first two are substantially different, which are to unite or to instruct, then there is joined, and knitted together, all correct.
- In this text however, Paul is paralleling this term specifically to:
 - ✓ (*Eph 4:16*) *From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

✓ (Col 2:19) *They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.*

- Not so much in affection for each other, rather they commit themselves to one another as they grow in Christ (Col 3:11) in fellowship. (Remember the audience)

C. ***“With the full riches of complete understanding”***

- Full riches are the believers: full assurance, with most certain confidence.
- Knowing most certain the character of Christ, the gospel, and their salvation.
- Why? So, they could flourish in the (riches) in Christ.

D. ***“That they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ”***

- The term “mystery” was indeed the inclusion of the Gentiles, the slave, the barbarian, to now be part of Israel. For this was God’s plan along, to expand Israel through His blessing to Abraham.
- The focus here however is not so much ecclesiology, rather Christology.
- In this text (*Chapter 2:2*) regarding the term “mystery of God,” Paul uses this term in describing **Christ Himself**.

1) Paul was telling the church body

- To be encouraged in heart and united in love,
- So that you would have the full riches of complete understanding
- In order that they would know the mystery of God
- Christ!
- Paul’s letters always speak of Christocentrism / Christocentric: the ground and goal of all history to be: Christ!
- Christ means Messiah; therefore, Jesus would become Israel’s one true King (Soteriology).

- Soteriology leads to Christology: the gospel is first about Jesus then only about salvation.
- The mystery was: Christ Himself in you, Christ takes up residence in the believer.
- Everything (all creation) is heading in one direction, towards Christ the creator, universal unity.

E. *“in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”*

- In whom? Christ
- What is hidden? Wisdom and knowledge.
- Where is this hidden? In Christ.
- What is hidden? All the treasures.
- All the treasures of what? Wisdom and knowledge.
- How much treasure of wisdom and knowledge? All the treasure.
- Who is the treasure? Christ, He is the final treasure.

*He will be your constant source of stability in changing times,
and out of his abundant love he gives you
the riches of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.
Yes, the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure*

Isaiah 33:6 Passion Translation

- 1) The Book of Colossians is the centrality of Jesus Christ and Christ alone.
 - a) If the message of the cross is not at the forefront of the church.
 - b) If the message of the gospel is not at the center of the church.
 - c) If the full assurance in Christ is not ascertained in a believer's life.
 - d) If a believer is not most certain that it is Christ Himself in him the glory of hope.

Then the gospel becomes FAITH + WORKS = SALVATION

Verses 6-7 *⁶As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

a) ***“as you therefore have received Christ.”***

- Here Paul states the churches present tense: According to this text, the Colossians had already received King Jesus (salvation).
- For the Jews in Colossae who now, had received Christ as their savior and King, they were at that time, rooted in what is called (reception of Jewish wisdom) e.g., (*Pro 1:1-7*).
- In this text (verse 6a) they had now rejected (worldly tradition) and accepted (a Christ tradition), this newly accepted tradition, continues with baptism *verse 7*.

**Scott McKnight comments on this verse (6a) with this statement:
“There is not one tradition (bad) and one nontraditional (Christ, good) but two traditions, one bad (the human tradition) and one good (the Christ tradition).”**

- Here again, Paul’s aim is to get the new believers to put off the old ways of tradition and false teachings.

b) ***“So now walk in Him”***

- Now live like it, be imitators of God, put off the old man and walk in the new man.
- Just as you received Him, now confess Him, as Lord and savior.

There can be no gap in believing and behaving!

c) **“Be rooted up in Him”** Vs 7, established, connected deep down, growth.

- Here is a picture of a tree rooted in a nourishing soil, producing a fruit, that is a blessing or benefit to others.

d) **“Built up in Him”** Vs 7, God gave us a firm foundation, now grow **in** Him,

Isa 28:16 (NLT) Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: “Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken.

2 Tim 2:19 (NLT) But God’s truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and “All who belong to the Lord must turn away from evil.

e) **“Established in faith”** Paul is saying here, stand upon the gospel that you heard and received your salvation from, be strengthened, firm and steadfast (walking in the Spirit) to prove its truth and divinity, (Mark 16:20).

f) **“Remembering what you been taught and abound in thanksgiving”**

- What were they taught? The gospel of truth.
- What were they abounding in? The gospel that they had received, this new life that they were given and now walking in.
- The term here “*abounding*” in Greek speaks of abounding and flourishing in the power of:
 - ✓ The Spirit. (*Rom 15:13*)
 - ✓ Grace (*Eph 1:8, Rom 5:15*)
 - ✓ Life (*1 Thes 3:12, 1 Cor 15:58*)
- Paul says do it all in a (continuous gratitude)

Why is (verses 6-7) so important for the church to follow?

- **Answer:** Verse 4 “to be careful lest you be deceived by persuasive words”

AND

Verse 8 Beware lest anyone cheat you (take you captive) through (hollow) philosophy and empty deceit (deception) according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

- 1) Paul wanted the church to know that real **wisdom** was not hidden in secret books, Gnosticism, halakic mystics or Jewish mysticism. But rather wisdom deposited in Jesus Christ so that “all” can access it.
- Paul was not against all philosophy, but against false philosophy, as the Bible also speaks of as in

James 1:26 NIV Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless

- 2) Some examples of Gnosticism, world philosophy and false teachings contrary the message of the gospel, that flooded the church, during the time period that Paul wrote this letter.
 - a) **Gnosticism:**
 - Taught that God (as a Perfect Spirit) could not come into direct contact with the material world. And since God could not have direct contact with the material world, that God Himself did not create the world, but He worked through lesser spirits or angels.
 - Also taught that God did not deal directly with man, but that He dealt with the world through a series of mediators (as did Jewish mysticism).

b) Other worldly influences:

- Common to both Jews and pagans was the basic idea of cause and effect and in a sense, it rules nature and the minds of men. We live under the idea that we get what we deserve; when we are good, we deserve to receive good; when we are bad, we deserve to receive bad.
- Jewish influence on Christianity emphasized dietary laws and emphasized the observance of particular days, as an obligation
- Cerinthianism, said that “Jesus the man” was separate and distinct from “the Spirit of Christ.”
- Docetism, which claimed that Jesus had no actual human body; He only seemed to have one

L3. II The Solution to all this these false teachings? (The Fullness of Christ)

- Verses 9-10 ride the coat tail of verses 6-7. These four verses should be read in this manner leaving out Vs 8.
- ***6As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving***
- ***⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; ¹⁰and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.***
- These two verses (9-10) also reflect verses (15-20) in chapter, chapter 1

1. God's Fullness

- *Chapter 1 Vs 19-20 (NLT) For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.*

a) In Christ dwells God's fullness

- Paul is declaring that in the Son, there, dwells all the fullness of absolute.
- This is a declaration of the full Deity of Jesus. Since all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus, He is not a junior god, or a half god nor some great prophet.

b) What is the fullness of God that dwells in Christ?

Creations story

All glory

Abundant life

Truth & Justice

Righteousness

Grace and mercy

Joy & Peace

Goodness & Knowledge

Redemptions plan

Victory over death

His eternal purpose for man

All authority and power

Unconditional love

Eternal praise

Psalm 111:7-9 (ASV) The works of his hands are truth and justice; All his precepts are sure. They are established for ever and ever; They are done in truth and uprightness. He hath sent redemption unto his people; He hath commanded his covenant forever: Holy and reverend is his name. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all they that do his commandments: His praise endureth forever.

- The indwelling of God now occurs in Christ's embodied condition

Verse 10 In whom (Christ) we are made complete or brought to fullness.

- This text parallels (Eph 3:19) "*to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God*"
- If all the fullness of God dwells in Jesus, and as believers we are united to Him in a faith-relationship, then we are also complete in Him.

- We are complete in Him, there is no need for any other substance. And not so much what we get in this fullness, but more so, whom we are now connected too.
- *1 Peter 1:3-5* ³*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* ⁴*to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,* ⁵*who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*
- Therefore, there was no need to go to the false promises and attractions presented by the false teachers among the Colossians, referring to the previous verses 4 & 8.

c) ***“who is the head of all principality and power”***

- “Christ” in whom we are now complete in. He is also the head of all principality and power.
- This text echoes back to chapter 1 verses 16-17
- *Eph 1:19-21* 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.*
- *Phil 2:9-11* ⁹*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,* ¹⁰*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,* ¹¹*and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

L3. III Circumcision, Baptism, Holy Spirit

Paul now goes to a brief catechism teaching, a teaching not of histories tradition.

Verses 11-14 (NIV) ¹¹*In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self-ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ,* ¹²*having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.* ¹³*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,* ¹⁴*having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us* ¹⁵*and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.*

- a) **The circumcision** spoken of in this text was inward, not performed by human hands (Spiritual), the creation of the new man who is now in union and joined with Christ. (2 *Cor 5:17*).
- Vs 11 “In Him” representing again the union that a new believer had with Christ that brings them to fullness (*Vs 10*).
 - Paul is talking of a spiritual circumcision not the physical circumcision, of the covenant rite that was established with Israel that marked Jewish identity. (*Rom 2:25-29*).
- b) **This circumcision** is a cutting away of the heart, a term that was familiar with the Jewish believers (*Deu 10:16, 30:6, Jer 4:4, Eze 44:7, 44:9*)
- However, this physical circumcision of the Old Covenant did not qualify them nor grant to them salvation.
 - Paul wants the Jews and Gentiles to know that true circumcision is in their baptism, and that Christians do not need to be circumcised; they need to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
- c) **This spiritual circumcision** led to physical baptism.
- This baptism illustrates our identification with the death and resurrection life of Jesus.
 - We were buried with Jesus, and buried under the water. We are also raised with Him, and raised up out of the water. (*John 3:5-6*)
 - Circumcision in Christ is baptism with Christ.

Scott McKnight puts it this way:

Baptism rendered theologically is an act of God that relocates a person into God's family.

Baptism is then not what we do, but what God does.

d) **In baptism** there are two dimensions: death and resurrection.

1) **Death:** “*having been buried with Him in baptism*”,.

- This text reads the earliest form of the gospel confession.
- He lived, He died, he was buried, He was raised, and He was exalted.
- (*Rom 6:1-11. 1 Cor 15:3-8*)

2) **Resurrection:** “*in which you were also raised with Him through faith,*”

- Paul was saying, for baptism to work, there must be faith in the work of God.
- Surrendering trust, faith.
- Paul understood that the power of regeneration was not in baptism or received by the act of baptism, but received through faith in the working of God.

e) **This theology** brings together these two acts: one over three thousand years old

“circumcision” and the second, “baptism” in which was relatively new, in that the crucifixion of Christ and His resurrection was less than forty years prior to Paul writing this letter.

- ✓ Circumcision was the entry rite for Jews into the covenant
- ✓ Baptism was the entry rite for those who believed in Jesus, Jew, and Gentile
- ✓ There is now one race of believers, one family onto God (*Eph 2:14-16*)

God made a way when there was no way

- *Verses 13-14* 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, ¹⁴having 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*

a) Prior to the conversion, the believers in Colosse, were all dead in sin and in the uncircumcision of the flesh. And the consequence of sin, is death! (*Rom 6:1-11*)

- The solution: Forgiveness of sins. A benefit of the gospel.
- The result: believers were made alive together with Christ.

We can never be made alive, apart from Jesus

Eph 2:5

- b) Not just alive, but alive in Him! A new creation *“alive together with Him.” God ushers in a new creation that is “made alive”*
- The victory? God took it all away and nailed it the cross, cancelling the written code that stood against mankind.
 - Mankind stood condemned (*Rom 3:19*) *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*
- c) This new life came when God forgave us all our sins, for He canceled the written code.
- And it was “taken out of the way” (*verse 14b*)
 - (*2 Cor 5:21*) *for He made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*
 - But in Christ the Law is fulfilled (*Rom. 8:2*) *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

L3. IV Christus Victor

The atoning work of Christ emphasizes the triumph of Christ over the evil powers of the world, through which he rescues his people and establishes a new relationship between God and the world

- *Verse 15 (NKJV) Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*
- *Verse 15 (MSG) He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross and marched them naked through the streets.*

- Verse 15 (PT) *Then Jesus made a public spectacle of all the powers and principalities of darkness, stripping away from them every weapon and all their spiritual authority and power to accuse us. And by the power of the cross, Jesus led them around as prisoners in a procession of triumph. He was not their prisoner; they were his!*

A. This implies that between the day of crucifixion and the day of resurrection while in the spirit-realm, Jesus destroyed:

- Death
- The powers of darkness
- And every work of the enemy through the blood of his cross.
- All the enemy's weapons have been stripped away from him and now the church has authority in Christ to enforce this triumph upon the dethroned rulers of this world.

B. God first disarmed the powers and then made a public spectacle of them.

- Paul writes in (*1 Cor 2:8*) that if the powers and rulers of the world understood who they were truly crucifying that they never would have done it.
- They were defeating themselves and they did not even know it!

C. Paul is using language in this verse that his audience would understand (*making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it*) It was this parade of celebration where Jesus "made a show of them openly.

- In the Old Testament, when a king and kingdom were defeated, the victor would cut off his thumbs and toes, strip him down and march him through the streets in the triumphal procession.
- Cutting off his thumbs and toes kept the enemy from wielding a sword or standing in battle ever again. And the stripping down was an ultimate act of humiliation.

D. On the cross, Jesus forever defeated death.

- *Romans 4:25 "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification"*
- The grave could not hold Jesus.

E. When He arose from the grave, he made a public spectacle of the defeated enemy. He marched Satan, death, and his entire dominion through the streets in shame, defeated and discredited them in every way imaginable.

- **Romans 6:10** *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God "The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God."*

F. Ultimately the cross becomes a place of **victory** and not one of shame. The accusations of the person being crucified were nailed to the cross condemning the person.

- However, the accusations against Christ when nailed to the cross sets then condemned free (*1 Cor 5:21*)

The cross was place of victory!

Let no one judge you:

What Paul is saying here in these **FIVE** words is:

- Since all the fulness of God is in Christ
- And since Christ is the head of all principality and power
- As a new believer you are now in Christ and are complete in Him
- Since it was Christ and Christ alone who has forgiven you of all your trespasses
- Since you were baptized with Him
- Since you were circumcised in Him
- Having abolished the law, the enmity that was written against you and nailed it to the cross
- And finally making a public spectacle of every demonic power which set you free forever

Let no one judge you!

*Colossian 2:16-19 So **let no one judge you** in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. ¹⁸**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, ¹⁹and 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.*

1. The reality is Christoformity, Christlikeness.

(Rom 8:29) For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,

2. God is the final judge and not man

(Rom 4:10) One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ

*Colossians 2:20-23 ²⁰**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**—²¹“Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,”²²which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³**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.*

- A. Therefore, since you died with Christ, stop living like the world! Do not subject yourselves to it anymore.
 - The “Do Not’s” in verse 21, are examples of a legalistic religion that the halakic mystics created and cannot produce sanctification. In the end, their system does not work.

- The Christians identification (Co- Crucifixion) is in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and not in a law or laws. (*Col 2:11-12*)
- *Vs 22 and 23* Paul warns the church, telling them all these things will perish. Man's doctrine is false and has no power to restrain the flesh.

**Man cannot justify himself to God
by trying to keep list of rules.**

**Genuine spirituality is found in
Christ alone.**

Lesson 4

Chapters 3 and 4

All scripture given is from the NKJV unless otherwise noted

Cruciform / Cruciformity / Christoformity: All terms, interrelated, and all hold the meaning of what is called the “cross shaped life.” The cross, representing the life, death, and resurrected life of Jesus as He is offered in the gospel.

Christian living is built on the foundation of theological truth.

Oswald Chamber said: Redemption is the only reality in life.

The core of the gospel that was preached by Paul and the apostles (*1 Cor 15:3-5*)

“Christ died, was buried, rose from the grave and appeared”

The teachings and views that came from the halakic mystics, Jewish mysticism, the Erroists and heretics of the time period all carried self-imposed wisdom, false religions were of no value and had no bearing on and towards one’s salvation.

Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling

Christ + Nothing = Everything

Christ in you – the hope of glory

L4. I The hope of glory

Chapter 3 Paul lays the ground work in how to live this new life and what is to be expected having this newly formed unity that the church body now possess and in Christ.

Colossians 3:1-4 (NIV) ¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

A. The word “since” refers to an assumption of fact.

- *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ.”*
- Since you have come to the saving grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you have been born from above and have put on the new man, being raised with Him.

Now live like it!

- Having been raised up together from mortal death to a new and blessed life dedicated to God

B. ***“Set your hearts on things above”*** or seek the things that are above.

- The Christian mind now united in Christ should be set on things above and not of this world.
- Seeking things above where Christ rules means a way of living. Godly, holy, ethical set apart from that which the world offers, which is sin and death.
- Why not earthly things? Earthly things are not under the rule of Christ but under the rule of flesh and sin and powers of darkness (Col1:13)

C. ***“Where Christ is seated at the right hand of God”***

- This text proclaims the supremacy of Christ.

- He was the first-born over-all creation, all things were created for Him, He is the hope of glory, first born among the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God.
- *Hebrew 1:1-3 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,*
 - ✓ *whom He has appointed heir of all things*
 - ✓ *whom also He made the worlds*
 - ✓ *being the brightness of His image*
 - ✓ *the express image of His person*
 - ✓ *upholding all things by the word of His power*
 - ✓ *by Himself purged our sins*
 - ✓ *sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*

1) At “the right hand” Christ rules:

- *(Acts 2:33-36) Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” “Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*
- *(1 Cor 15:25) For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.*

2) At “the right hand” Christ intercedes:

(Heb 7:25) Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

D. ***“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”***

- The reason for seeking, living, concentrating on things above, the old man has died, that was how the old man lived.
- Paul’s statement that is based a theological Christological fact, **“for you died”** past tense.

(Eph 4:24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

(2 Cor 5:17) Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation

1) Hidden with Christ, Christ who is in God, for all the fullness of God dwells in Christ.

2) The Colossians security is then, “In Christ” “By Christ” and “With Christ”

- At the moment of salvation, one dies to the evil of the “flesh,” the sin nature. (Rom 8:10)
- At the moment of salvation, the believer is united with Christ, this union is then furthered by the immediate indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

E. ***“When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”***

- The hope of glory (*Col 1:27*)
- The promise of the return of Jesus is not only that we will see His glory, but so that we also will appear with Him in glory.

L4. II Living the new Christ centered life

(Colossians 3:5-11) NIV ⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all

A. The letter to the Colossians shifts, from a theological stand point to how the church body should morally live this new Christ centered life. Paul starts with how they should no longer go on living.

- At the forefront, now being a new creation and united with Christ, they were to “*put to death*” all earthly desires.

- In other words, they were not to go on living as though they are still alive to sin, when in actuality, they are not.

- The Greek transliteration for “put to death” is nekroō, meaning: put to death. Mortify it! Do it now! Do it resolutely! Not just to suppress or control evil acts and attitudes.

But rather, to wipe them out.

B. Vs 5 lists the sins of desire:

- Sexual immorality, fornication
- Impurity, uncleanness
- Lust, passion
- Evil desires
- Covetousness, greed, which is idolatry
- Why? *Because of these sin’s God’s wrath is coming to the sons of disobedience.*

(James 1:14-16) But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived my beloved brethren.

- In the above verse we see a progression when a person is drawn away by fleshly lusts or desires. From this conception, “sin” is born. Then when sin matures it produces an offspring called death.
- Unchecked lust, yields sin, and unconfessed sin, brings death.

C. Vs 8 lists the sins of disunity “to put off” that come out of our mouths

- Anger
- Rage
- Malice
- Slander
- Blasphemy
- Filthy language
- Lying to another person
- Paul reminds the church body:
- Vs 7 “*that they themselves once walked and lived in these sins*”
- Vs 9 *but this “old man is dead”*
- *And they now “live as an image bearer of Christ their creator, and have been renewed with His saving grace and knowledge” Vs 10*

Colossian 3:12-17 NIV ¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The text in Vs 12, starts with another, "Therefore", here meaning, now that the old man is dead and you have put on a renewed image, a new man, here is how to live.

Col 3:12a NIV Therefore, as the elect (chosen) of God, holy and beloved.

- Those who believe in, walk with, image bearers, renewed in Christ are holy and beloved by God.
- The church is now called to put on or to cloth themselves with the ways of Christ in their personal relationships with each other:

Col 3:12 NIV Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

- a) *Tender mercies*: the KJV reads "bowels of mercy" these two-words in Greek denote a "deep-seated and affective compassion." A heart in which mercy resides.
- **Compassion comprises of three elements:**
 - i. a need expressed
 - ii. a response and mercy and love to that need
 - iii. and an action that alleviates that need.
- b) *Kindness*: The Greek translation *chrēstotēs*, the virtue of the man whose neighbor's good is as dear to him as his own
- c) *Humility*: was not on the top of the list in the culture of the day.
- In this text, "humility/humbleness, translates to a deep sense of one's (moral) littleness; modesty. And not like that of the pretentious false teachers of the day (Col 2:18, 23).

- d) *Gentleness*: Greek translation *praotēs*, as well means humility in the sense that meekness shows how humility will affect our *actions* towards others.
- We should not dominate, manipulate, or coerce for self needs, even if we have the power and the ability to do so.
- e) *Patience*: a virtue one needs when put into a difficult situation not to react in anger or rage, but rather endure in the light of the good. (1 Thess 5:14).

Col 3:13 NIV Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

- a) Furthermore, believers are to bear with each other (to put up with each other) with the attitudes just mentioned in *VS 12*. Also, they are to forgive whatever grievances (complaints) they may have against others.
- b) Through “forgiveness.” This Greek word translation is *charizomai*, meaning
- ✓ to show one's self gracious, kind, benevolent
 - ✓ to grant forgiveness, to pardon
 - ✓ to give graciously, give freely, bestow

“Forgiveness is a lovely idea, until you have something to

FORGIVE”

CS Lewis

- c) Colossae and the world were full of religious, cultural, economic, and social distinctions.
- ✓ The Jews being adamant they were God’s chosen and no one else was allowed in their sect.
 - ✓ Gentiles were looked at as dogs, but Christ has now taken down that wall and all peoples were allowed into God’s family.
 - ✓ Circumcised or uncircumcised, Jews were the only ones who thought they held the right to circumcision.

- ✓ Barbarians were looked at by the Greeks as a foreigner, they spoke a language not understood by Greeks.
 - ✓ Scythians were regarded as the wildest of barbarians and were looked at as savages.
 - ✓ Free man or slave
- With all these differences, Paul knew the only hope for fellowship in the church they need to walk and live these virtues.

Col 3:14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

- a) The text is stating that love will bind all these virtues together in perfect unity.
- The Greek transliteration for love is "agape," brotherly love. (1Cor 13:1-3)
- Without "Love" all the other virtues will become distorted and unbalanced.

Col 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

- a) The peace of the gospel of Christ should rule in hearts of the church body. The peace that Christ gave and gives should be our controlling principle. (2 Thess 3:16)
- b) *One body*: meaning the universal body of Christ, one in unity!
- c) To be grateful, thankful, that God rules through the death and resurrection and ascension of His Son and that the world will one day be reconciled under the Lordship of Christ. (Col 1:12)

Col 3:16 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.

- a) John 1:1 in the beginning was the word: (the Logos) Christ.
- b) Logos describes a verbal communication, the first part of this verse "*Let the word of Christ*" can be interpreted: "The ministry of the Bible."
- We are to study, meditate and apply the word of God in our lives.

- c) The gospel should dwell in us richly, or abundantly. And by doing so we should teach and counsel one another as we fellowship.
- d) Then when living in this Christocentric life, there should be a delight to worship in psalms from the Old Testament, hymns refer to the poetic songs about Christ in the early church and with spiritual songs, spontaneous or inspired from the depth of our heart.

Col 3:17 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.

- a) Whatever you do in speech or action, do it “all” in the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - At the end of the day before you lay your head down, the most important thing you can ask yourself is, “did everything I said or do today please the Lord”
 - There should be **no difference** between your **belief and behavior**.
 - Do everything unto the Lord (*1Cor 10:31*)

L4. III Christian life in the home

- A. Paul shifts his language from co-crucifixion and co-resurrection to Christofornity in household relationships.
 - Meaning: the new converts of Christianity should conform to the principles and disposition of Christ, in that the entirety of life is lived unto the Lord.

(Colossian 3:18-25, 4:1) lists these principles.

- B. Before exploring these principles: what was the culture of the day, what did the household consist of, and where was the church located?
 - 1) The household, in some instances, was more than just a husband, wife, and a few children.

- More of a “villa”: that housed, relatives, slaves, renters, homeless and migrants
- This villa was the “*Oikos*” (House) and “*Ekklēsia*” (Church setting)
- Not everyone was saved in the household.
- The church / *Ekklēsia* was held at someone’s house (*Acts 2:42*)

**Worth noting:
The “church” is not the building or the house,
but as a gathering and fellowship of followers
of Jesus, meets in a house**

- 2) Marriage customs: girls were married off at the ages of 12-15.
- 3) Sexual promiscuity: was ramped in the Roman/Greek culture
 - Not all males and females were faithful to their spouse, you also had parents having sex with their offspring, as with cousins, aunts and uncles intermixing.
- 4) Colossae at the time had been a major trade route, the influx of cultures, transients, mysticisms, mixed with the unchurched and the infant stage of the newly formed church body, were all at play.
- 5) Therefore, Paul, was ad nauseam, in his writings of what a Christian home should be like.

These principles were more than just a list of dos and don’ts within the household. Each one was tied to unity in the body of Christ, and reflected that the way you treated each other was also unto the Lord.

Col 3:18-22

¹⁸Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

²¹Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

²²Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

Wives submit to your husbands *Vs18a*

- The wife does not submit to her husband because he *deserves* it
- She should submit because the relationship of the husband and wife is a model of the union between Jesus and the Church.

As fitting to the Lord *Vs18b*

- Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands because it is a part of your duty to the Lord, because it is an expression of your submission to the Lord.”
- This has nothing to do with whether or not the husband is “right” on a particular issue. It has to do with Jesus being right.
- This means that a woman should take great care in how she chooses her husband.

Husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them *Vs19*

- In the ancient world, under Jewish, Greek, and Roman customs, all power and privileges belonged to husbands in regards to their wives.
- The husband was called to love one woman, and to be faithful to her
- The Greek translation here for “love” is *Agape*. Agape love gives, and loves because it wants to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given. It gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive.

Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord *Vs20*

- Why? Because this pleases the Lord.

Fathers do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged *Vs21*

- Parents can provoke their children by being too harsh, too demanding, too controlling, unforgiving, or just plain angry.
- Overabundance in provoking your children, they will lose heart and come to think that it is useless trying to please.

Bondservants obey in all things your masters in the flesh, not with eyeservice as man-pleasers but in sincerity of heart, fearing God *Vs22*

- According to history, during the time period more than half the people on the street during the Roman Empire were slaves.
- Biblical slavery was beneficial in many ways when done according to God’s laws. For the poor, it was a way to prevent people's lives from being destroyed by poverty.

- Slaves were under the ownership of their master, but they were also under their *care*. A master had the responsibility to sustain the life of his slaves.
- Paul encourages the slave that when they are being commanded to do something, to do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.
- To weary oneself in good deeds, living with integrity of the heart in reverence of the Lord.

Masters give your bondservants what is fair what is just and fair knowing that you also have a master in heaven *Vs1 Chapter 4*

- The same goes for the master of the slave.
- Now that the master has put on a “new man” he is to be fair and just to his slaves.

Verses 23-25 NIV Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism

Vs 23 is largely a repeat of *Vs 17*

- However, this time it is directed towards the slave, in their relationship to their fleshy master here on earth.
 - But in doing so, these two commands:
 - ✓ obey (v. 22)
 - ✓ and work (v. 23) turning their attention away from human masters to the one Master of all, King Jesus.
1. Work for the Lord who is their heavenly master
 - a) Work at it with all your heart, with every breath, enthusiastically.
 - b) With a redirected focus unto the Lord and not their master or man.
 - c) Their focus should be heaven bound, for there is no earthly inheritance at stake for them.

- d) Whatever they do: in secret or in the open is unto the Lord and is seen by the Lord.
Therefore, their work is their worship.
- e) This application can be applied today to Christian employees. If more Christian employees today served their employers with genuine concern and as though they were serving God, quality and productivity would increase dramatically.
- f) Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for wrong. Just as there is a correlation between obedience and inheritance so there is there between doing wrong and punishment. This is a theme throughout the scriptures, and there are no favoritisms.

FAITH – TRUST – OBEDIENCE

L4. IV Prayer as a devotion

The letter to the Colossians is coming to its close, before doing so Paul gives the new Christian converts some ecclesiastical instructions.

1. Paul urges them to devote themselves to prayer *Col 4:2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it.*
 - a) Make time, be disciplined, and commit to prayer. This is essential for the Christian life. *(Eph 6:18)* This devotion comes from the Spirit
 - b) Be vigilant in it, the Greek translation means to be *wakeful*.
 - One must guard their prayer life to make sure that it is not snatched away by the daily obstacles that come along. *(Mark 14:37)*

L4. V Walk with unbelievers / relations with outsiders

Colossians 4:5-6 NIV ⁵*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.* ⁶*Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

A. In this text there are three general instructions for how the new believers in Christ should live in relations with the unsaved/unchurched.

- This is practical lived out Christianity 101. The missional life.

- ✓ Be wise
- ✓ Make the most of every opportunity
- ✓ To have grace in all their conversations

1. Be wise in how we act:

- The verb here in “act” in Greek *peripateō*, means “to walk” how **to conduct one’s life**.
(Col 1:10) “to walk worthy of the Lord”
- (Col 2:6) “as you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.
- This describes living in God’s world, God’s way, to walk in this wisdom is to walk in a Christoforum life.

2. To make the most of every opportunity, to redeem time:

- The verb here “to make the most” *exagorazō*, means to buy up, redeem.
- This text refers the we should make the most, maximizing our opportunities to speak and do good.

3. Let all our conversations be full of grace and seasoned with salt:

- When prompted to speak the gospel we do it in grace towards the outsider. Our words should be full of grace or gracious.
- The amount of grace is unknown. What is known, the manner of speaking.
- Paul says our speech should be gracious, kind, considerate, forgiving, patient (Col 3:12)

- *Seasoned with salt so you know how to give the right answer:* salt was used to preserve and flavor; Paul’s audience would know how to interpret this phrase.
- In this way they could answer everyone who asked “the reason for the hope” they had.

(1 Peter 3:15) But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect

L4. VI Final Greetings

In the last 12 verses of chapter 4 Paul gives observations, greetings, and instructions.

A. Paul names his faithful co-workers, this was not a solo journey in proclaiming the gospel.

- Timothy: we know from the opening verse he was part of the letter writing
- Tychicus: he is called beloved brother and faithful minister
- Onesimus: another faithful and beloved brother
- Aristarchus: was bound in chains with Paul, a fellow prisoner. He was from Thessalonica Acts 20:4, he was also one of Paul’s companions (Acts 19:29; 27:2.)
- Mark: the cousin to Barnabas, who at one time Paul would not let him come with him on missionary trip. However, a reconciliation took place at some point, and they once again shared the gospel news together.
- Justus: A Jewish Christian, called Jesus, Paul's only fellow-laborer at Rome
- Epaphras: who started the church in Colossae.
- Luke: one of the original 12 disciples, who penned the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts

- Demas: a companion and fellow-laborer of Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome (Philemon 1:24; Col 4:14). It appears, however, that the love of the world afterwards mastered him, and he deserted the apostle (2 Tim 4:10).
- Nymphas or Nympha: who belongs to the church at Laodicea. According to some noted theologians in the wake of first century writings from Greece, this is a female name and her house is where the church is. (Found in the NU-Text Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament and the United Bible Societies)
- Archippus: a "fellow-soldier" of Paul's (Philemon 1:2, whom he exhorts to renewed activity (Col 4:17). He was a member of Philemon's family, probably his son.

B. Paul tells the church that after this letter is read to them, to go read it to the church in Laodicea *VS16*. Interestingly according to the text *VS16*, there is letter that was written to the church at Laodicea, and this letter was to be read to the church at Colossae

- According to history: the exchange of letters among the early Christians churches was common.
- The identity of this letter by Paul and Timothy to the Laodiceans is unknown/lost because no longer surviving.
- Paul finishes with: Remember my chains. In context this mean keep me in your prayers. To be mindful of me.

Paul then ends his letter the same way he started it

Grace to you