

Colossians

Christ In You the Hope of Glory

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This study was written using the ESV.

Day 1: Background and Introduction.

The city of Colossae was located in what is now modern day Turkey. It was about 12 miles from Laodicea and about 100 miles east of the city of Ephesus. Locate these on the map below. Many Jews and Greeks came to Colossae because it was located on a major trade route. The mixture of backgrounds made the city a melting pot of new ideas and doctrines. With all these ungodly influences, it was on Paul's heart to write to these believers. Paul wrote it sometime around A.D. 62, but as we will see, the message in this book is still very relevant for us today.



Today read the four chapters of Colossians in one sitting. This is a letter so it is helpful to read it all at once to get an over-all feel of the book.

Note everything you learn about the recipients of this letter from verses 1-8.

- v. 2 _____
- v. 3 _____
- v. 4 _____
- v. 5-6 _____
- v. 7 _____
- v. 8 _____

From Colossians 1:1-8, what kind of testimony did the Colossians have?

How did the gospel get to the Colossians? Who preached to them?

What things do we learn about this man from Colossians 1:7-8 and 4:12-13?

What was Paul's desire for the Colossians? Why did he write this letter? Read Colossians 2:1-5.

In a nutshell, Paul wants the Colossians to be mature and grounded in their faith. What are the marks of a mature Christian? We like to compare ourselves with each other, but we need to compare ourselves to God's Word. He tells us what a mature Christian looks like.

Read the following verses and note the marks of maturity mentioned.

Ephesians 4:11-14

Colossians 4:12

Hebrews 5:12-14

Maturity takes time, but as we grow in our relationship with Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the “fine sounding arguments” will not be very enticing. I pray that as you study this book, you will come to understand in a deeper way what it means to have Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Day 2

Read again the four chapters of the book of Colossians in one sitting.

Now that we know a little about the recipients of this book, let's take a look at the author. Note what you learn about Paul from chapter 1.

- v. 1 _____
- v. 3-4 _____
- v. 9 _____
- v. 23 _____
- v. 24 _____
- v. 25 _____
- v. 28 _____
- v. 29 _____

Read chapter 2 and continue noting what you learn about Paul.

- v. 1-2 _____
- _____
- v. 4-5 _____
- _____

Read chapter 4 and note what you learn about Paul.

- v. 3-4 _____
- v. 18 _____

Where was Paul when he wrote Colossians?

What dangers were facing the church? What does he warn them about in chapter 2?

The teaching of Gnosticism was infiltrating the early church. Gnosticism had two main aspects to its teaching. The Gnostics taught that you had to have a higher, "secret" knowledge to be saved, and only a select few could ever attain it. Secondly, it taught that all matter (the physical world) was evil. So the Gnostics denied the humanity of Christ and taught that Christ was a phantom and only "seemed" to have a physical body.

The simplicity and truth of the gospel of grace was being corrupted, so Paul felt compelled to write to these believers. The message of Colossians is relevant for us today, because we are often confronted with error that we must be on guard against. The word "gnosticism" is never mentioned in this book. Instead of focusing on the incorrect teaching, Paul focuses our attention on Christ. As we will see in our study of Colossians, Christ is our hope of glory (Col. 1:27), our treasure (Col. 2:3) and our very life (Col. 3:4). He is all we need. Instead of knowing some "secret" knowledge, we are privileged to know Christ himself! May we take advantage of this wonderful treasure and make it our lifelong pursuit to know Him more!

Day 3: Colossians 1:1-8

Read Colossians 1 again. Mark the following words as you read this chapter.

thank, give thanks

knowledge

wisdom

mystery

Some instructions on marking key words:

It is easier to look for and mark one key word at a time. This means that you will be reading through a chapter or passage several times, but that helps you to become very familiar with it and see things you might otherwise have missed.

Mark each word in a different color or in a different way so that they all stand out and you can easily pick them out later. You will be amazed at the things you see when studying the Bible this way, and by the time we get to the end of the book, you will see key themes and messages that are lined out and highlighted. You will have a good understanding of each chapter and see how they all tie together in the overall theme of the book. Inductive Bible study helps you to discover the truth for yourself!

Now it's time to dig in verse by verse!

Why is Paul thankful for the Colossian believers? (v. 4)

What is it that motivates their faith and love? (v. 5)

Sometimes we think that heaven doesn't really affect us right now. But here Paul says their actions were affected by their knowledge of the hope that they had.

How would remembering your hope of heaven have an impact on the way you act today?

From verse 5, where did they hear about this hope?

The gospel is a message about hope. First we have to tell people the bad news that they are trapped in their sins and are guilty before a holy God. But then we can tell them the good news about what Christ has done for them. Because his blood covers our sins, we can now have an abundant life here on earth and we have the hope of eternity with the God who saved us in heaven! No matter how difficult things get here on earth, we have hope!

Also from verse 5, what is a synonym Paul uses for the gospel?

What effect has the gospel had? (v. 6)

What has to take place in people for the gospel to bear fruit and increase? (v. 6)

It is important for us to understand the truth of the gospel in order for us to grow. We should be able to clearly communicate it to others. For people to get saved, they have to understand God's character and holiness, how people can never measure up to God's perfect standard and the solution that God offers us through Christ. It is good for us to think through the basic tenets of the gospel so that if God provides us with an opportunity to share it, we will be ready!

Write the gospel out in your own words.

Like we saw earlier, Epaphras was the one who shared the gospel with these people and he has been ministering faithfully to them ever since.

According to verse 8, what were the Colossians known for?

Epaphras was spreading a good report about the Colossian church! The thing that stuck out to him about this church and that he communicated to Paul was that they were characterized by love! Wouldn't you like to be described in this way? The love they had for the Lord and for each other is the basis of Paul's prayer for them. We will look at that prayer tomorrow.

Day 4: Colossians 1:9-14

Now we come to one of the great prayers in the Bible. So many times our prayers are limited to requests for health or other physical concerns. Certainly, God wants us to bring those needs to Him, but what we really need, is spiritual strength to deal with the physical difficulties.

In verse 9, what is Paul praying for?

When speaking about being filled with the *knowledge* of God's will, that word knowledge refers to a complete knowledge or understanding. It is not just head knowledge about facts, but God wants us to understand completely what his will for us is. The Bible actually tells us what God's will is for us. Look up the following verses and note what it says about God's will for us.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

1 Thessalonians 5:18

1 Peter 2:15

These are just three examples. There are many more. God wants us to completely understand what his will is for us. He is not trying to keep it a secret from us.

In order to know God's will, we have to have spiritual wisdom and understanding. How do we get that?

In verse 10, what four things are the results of knowing God's will?

The word worthy means "pertaining to having a relatively high degree of comparable merit or worth."¹ So to walk worthy of the Lord, our lives should show the value and worth of our Savior. The way we conduct ourselves should "measure up" so to speak, to the Lord's worth. Wow! That is quite a challenge! There is no way we can do this on our own, only in the power of the Spirit. And remember, we can only walk worthy, if we are filled with the knowledge of God's will. What a great thing to pray for yourself and others - that you would walk worthy of the Lord.

As we know and live out God's will in our lives, we will be fully pleasing to Him. I certainly want my actions to please the Lord. Just to clarify, we can never do anything to make the Lord love us any more or any less. His love is unconditional. But our actions can please or displease him. If we are not living in God's will, we will not please Him. When we know, understand and obey His will, He is pleased.

As we live in his will, he promises we will bear fruit in every good work. Do you think this means that whatever we try to do for the Lord will be successful? Is fruit the results of our labor or something else? Look up the verses below to help you determine what fruit this might be.

Galatians 5:22

Ephesians 5:9

Philippians 1:11

Hebrews 12:11

So what do you think Paul means when he talks about bearing fruit in every good work?

¹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (621). New York: United Bible Societies.

The last result of being filled with the knowledge of his will is that we will increase in the knowledge of God. This is the same word for knowledge that we looked at earlier. Interesting that as we are filled with the knowledge of the will of God, our knowledge of God will increase too! And remember this is not head knowledge, but our understanding of who God is. We will never know everything about God, but our knowledge should always be increasing as we walk with Him and experience Him each day.

The next thing Paul prays for is that they would be strengthened with power. According to verse 11, where does this power come from?

From verse 11, why do we need this power?

The word endurance means "a state of emotional calm in the face of provocation or misfortune and without complaint or irritation."² Sometimes life can get very hard, and we need the Lord's power to be able to endure.

The word patience means "capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances—endurance, being able to endure."³ It is one thing to endure, it is another thing to endure with patience - without complaining, without becoming irritated, always staying calm. This is why we need God's power. We don't have it in ourselves to respond this way during difficulty. That's why we all need prayer in this area!

Paul adds two little words to the end of verse 11 - "with joy." How are we to have joy when life gets hard, circumstances are against us, people are unkind, or things are just not going our way?

Look up the following verses and note why God says we should have joy in the midst of hardships.

² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (306). New York: United Bible Societies.

³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (307). New York: United Bible Societies.

James 1:2-4

Romans 5:3-4

1 Peter 4:12-13

In verse 12, what is the last thing that Paul is praying for the Colossians?

Sometimes it is hard to be thankful for our circumstances. Paul understood this as he was sitting in prison! But we can always be thankful for what Christ has done for us.

What 5 things does Paul list that should we be thankful for from verses 12-14?

Let's look at each of these things more closely. First, it says that God has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints. We certainly could not qualify ourselves for this inheritance! To be qualified for an inheritance, you have to be in the same family. Before Christ, we were not in His family, but were rather enemies and separated from Him.

What is our inheritance? (Hebrews 1:14)

How does God describe our inheritance? (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Who guarantees our inheritance? (Ephesians 1:13-14)

This is certainly something to be thankful for! We could not make ourselves eligible for such a wonderful inheritance! But Jesus has qualified us for it by his death on the cross for us.

The next thing we should be thankful for is that God delivered us from the domain of darkness. To deliver here means "to rescue from danger, with the implication that the danger in question is severe and acute."⁴ We were rescued from the domain of darkness. Domain means that we were under the power, authority and control of darkness.

Sometimes we need to remember where God has brought us from so we can be thankful. Look up the following verses and note **what** it says about what it was like apart from Christ.

Romans 6:16-19

Ephesians 2:1-3

Titus 3:3

Whenever you start to feel sorry for yourself, remember what you have been rescued from!

⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (240). New York: United Bible Societies.

We saw how we were delivered from the control and power of darkness. But not only did God deliver us from that great danger, he also moved us into the kingdom of his own Son! That word transfer in verse 13 has an interesting meaning. It means "to cause a change of state, with emphasis upon the difference in the resulting state—'to change to, to turn into, to cause to be different from, to transform."⁵ Not only were we moved from one kingdom to another, but that moved changed and transformed us.

Two things happened that transformed us when we were moved from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of Hi Son. What are they from verse 14?

Because of this transfer, we have been redeemed and forgiven. To redeem means "to release or set free, with the implied analogy to the process of freeing a slave —'to set free, to liberate, to deliver."⁶ In forgiving us, God has removed the guilt resulting from all of our wrongdoings. He has pardoned us! Being redeemed and forgiven are certainly reasons for us to be very thankful. Remember this is part of a prayer, and Paul is asking God that the Colossians would be full of thankfulness as they remember what He has done for them. Spend some time now in prayer, using Colossians 1:9-14 as your model.

5 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (155). New York: United Bible Societies.

6 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (487). New York: United Bible Societies.

Day 5: Colossians 1:15-29

Read chapter 1 again.

Verses 15-20 focus on Christ. Some of the things mentioned in this section, we often think refer to God the Father, but here they specifically refer to Jesus.

Verse 15 says Jesus is the image of the invisible God. What do you think this means?

See Hebrews 1:1-3 for another explanation of this.

It also says Jesus is the firstborn over all creation. This carries with it the idea that Jesus existed prior to everything that has been created, but it also implies that he is superior and above everything as well.

What else do we learn about Jesus from verse 16?

**In verse 17, what do you think it means that in Jesus all things hold together?
See also Hebrews 1:3.**

In verse 18, what three things are mentioned about Jesus?

**Write what you think each of those things means.
Head of the Body: See also Ephesians 4:11-16**

The Beginning: See John 1:1-3

The firstborn from the dead: See Acts 26:23.

There were certainly other resurrections recorded in the Bible before Christ's but all of those people died again. Jesus was the first one to rise from the dead by his own power and the first one to remain alive forever.

Because all of the above things are true about Jesus, he should be preeminent. This means "to be in the first position, with the implication of high rank and prominence—to be the first, to have superior status."⁷ Jesus should have the first place in everything. The fact that he is God's visible representation, He created everything, he existed before everything and holds everything together, and He conquered the power of death gives him a place above everyone and everything else. There is none like Him!

In what ways should Jesus be preeminent or have first place in your life? Is there an area you recognize that he is not #1?

According to verse 21, what does it say about us before Christ?

To be alienated means to be a foreigner or to be excluded. What were we excluded from? (See Ephesians 2:12-13)

⁷ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (737). New York: United Bible Societies.

To be hostile literally means to be an enemy of. Read Romans 5:8-10.

What does it say God did for us in verse 22?

To reconcile means “to reestablish proper friendly interpersonal relations after these have been disrupted or broken.”⁸

By what means were we reconciled? How did he do this?

What does verse 22 say is the purpose of our reconciliation?

What is the qualifier Paul lays out in verse 23? In other words, what do we have to do in order to be presented holy and blameless?

Now we need to clarify a few things. Paul is not saying that if are not steadfast and stable and if you drift away from the gospel that you will lose your salvation. That is completely secure. It is also still true that God sees us as holy and blameless in Christ. But God is not only concerned with us getting saved, He also wants our actions to reflect that salvation. If we have walked away from the Lord and gone our own way, we will still be saved but Jesus will not be able to present us before the Father as holy, blameless and above reproach in our actions. It really reminds me of all the warnings mentioned in Hebrews. It also makes me think of 1 Cor. 3: 10-15. Look up these verses. How sad to one day stand before the God who saved you and to have lived a life with no good works to bring Him glory. 1 Corinthians 3:15 tells us that we will still be saved, but we will forfeit the reward. I certainly want to be presented before the Father as holy, blameless and above reproach, and that can only happen if I have walked in a manner worthy of Him.

⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (501). New York: United Bible Societies.

In verse 24, what is Paul's attitude toward his sufferings?

Who does he say his suffering will benefit?

Did you catch that? Paul understood that God was using his sufferings for the good of the Body of Christ. Certainly, if Paul had not been in prison, we would not have any of the prison epistles that he wrote (Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians). We need to remember that when we are going through a difficult time, God can use it to grow us and others!

From verse 25, what was the stewardship that God gave to Paul?

In verse 26, Paul refers to a mystery that was not fully understood in the Old Testament and before Christ. What is the mystery that has now been revealed in verse 27?

In verse 28, what is Paul proclaiming?

To proclaim means to report throughout, to tell with conviction. There are two aspects involved in Paul proclaiming Jesus. What two things does he do?

Based on what you have read in chapter one, what might be some things Paul is warning people about?

From chapter 1, what things might Paul teach them about Jesus?

How are we to warn and teach people?

What is the end goal?

In verse 22, we see Jesus presenting us before the Father, and now in verse 28, Paul talks about presenting people mature in Christ. To present means to establish evidence to show that something is true, or to prove.

The only way for someone to see that you are mature in Christ is through your actions. The way we live will prove, or give evidence to, that we are mature. You get the idea from this word that our actions are very important to God. He wants our lives to reflect the salvation we have received.

Verse 29 shows a great picture of us working alongside of God. Paul says he is struggling and working hard, but where does his energy to serve God come from?

This little verse is a great description of what serving the Lord should be about. We are to do our part and be faithful, and we are told to work hard and even struggle, but we don't do this in our own strength. We are to work with the Lord's energy that is so powerfully at work within us. The same power that raised Christ from the dead, is the power that gives us energy to serve the Lord. When we serve God in our own strength, it will be exhausting. When we serve in His strength, it will be God's work and He will get the glory.

What is the theme of chapter 1?

Colossians 2

Day 6: Colossians 2:1-8

Read Colossians 2.

Mark the following words as you read:

knowledge

mystery

no one

thanksgiving

in whom, in him, in Christ, etc.

with him

What do you learn about Paul's care for the Colossians from verse 1?

What 3 things does he desire for them from verse 2?

What does Paul say the mystery is?

Why do you think he calls Jesus a mystery? We talked about the word mystery in the last lesson so you can look back if you need to.

What amazing thing does Paul say about Jesus in verse 3?

In Colossians 1:9, Paul prayed that they would be filled with spiritual wisdom and understanding. Read 1:9 and then read 2:3. So if you want to be spiritually wise, how does this happen?

Paul says the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are *hidden* in Christ. Think about that for a minute. When something is hidden, normally it takes some effort to find it. You normally make a concerted effort to find something that is important to you. This tells me that I am going to have to put forth some effort and initiative if I want to be spiritually wise. Since that comes from Jesus, I have to spend time getting to know him.

In verses 2 and 3, Jesus is referred to as "the riches" and "the treasure." That word treasure can refer to a treasure room or a storehouse where valuables are kept. So the treasure is not hidden **from** us, it is hidden **for** us and it is all available through Jesus! If you want to have wisdom and knowledge of how to live the Christian life, get to know Jesus.

In verse 4, why does Paul say he is telling them this?

This is the first of four warnings Paul gives to the Colossians. This is a warning against being deceived. If you remember, the Gnostics taught that you had to search for a higher knowledge and the ordinary Christian could not attain this. Those few "spiritual ones" who did attain this special knowledge were then saved.

Paul's fear is that they will be deluded or deceived by plausible arguments. Plausible arguments sound believable but they are not true. It is "speech resulting from the use of well-constructed, probable arguments—convincing speech."⁹

That is the reason we have to stay close to Jesus. It is easy to be deceived with arguments that sound like they are true. They might even make sense logically, but they are a lie. If we have a close relationship with Jesus, we will be able to discern what is true through His wisdom and knowledge and reject the lie.

⁹ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (392). New York: United Bible Societies.

What 2 things does Paul commend the believers for in verse 5?

The phrase "good order" means something done in an orderly manner. Paul may be referring to the orderly manner in which the church at Colosse conducted its affairs or carried on its worship.

Paul was also pleased with the firmness of their faith. It is the idea that their faith was steadfast and not easily moved.

The church at Colosse, was known for their faith (1:4) and their love (1:7-8). Now Paul commends them for being firm or steadfast in their faith.

Based on our lesson today, why do you think these believers were steadfast and firm?

From verses 5-6, how did you receive Christ?

So how does Paul say we should live the Christian life?

Paul uses two analogies in verse 7 about what our faith should be like. The first analogy is that our faith should be rooted in Christ. Recently, I pulled up the roots out of a flower bed for a plant. It was hard work because the roots ran deep and had spread out, some of them even being intertwined. No wind was going to blow those plants away and it took a lot of work for me to pull them out by hand because their roots were strong and deep. That is the idea of how our faith in Christ should be.

The next analogy is of a building. The word for built up means "to make more able or to strengthen." Normally, when buildings go up, they are strong and secure. Interesting that the picture of roots goes down and the picture of a building goes up. It is important that both of them are strong. If the foundation is weak and the building is strong, the house will not be secure. The converse is

also true. If the foundation is strong but the structure is weak, the house will sway in strong winds. When our roots are strong in Christ, we are strengthened and made able to walk in faith!

If our faith is strong, it is interesting that we will abound with thanksgiving.

Charis is the Greek word for grace. The word for thanksgiving is *eucharistia*. Notice the word *charis* in thanksgiving. So our thanksgiving should be rooted in our understanding of how God has poured out his grace upon us. All the blessings and benefits that God gives us, spiritual or physical, are given to us out of his grace. We do not deserve any of them! When we understand that, we should overflow and abound in thankfulness to Him!

In verse 8, we come to the second warning. Hopefully you have already circled the words "no one" in this verse. This is a warning against being taken captive.

In the Greek, to be taken captive means "to carry off as booty or as captive in war, to take over complete control of a person as one would a captive—'to control completely, to take control of.'"¹⁰

What are two ways we can be taken captive?

The word philosophy means "human understanding or wisdom and, by implication, in contrast with divinely revealed knowledge." So philosophy is the opposite of the spiritual wisdom that Paul talked about earlier. Spiritual wisdom comes through Christ, philosophy comes from man.

The other way we can be taken captive is through empty deceit. Deceit is "to cause someone to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth." Lies take us captive, but the truth sets us free!

According to verse 8, where are philosophy and empty deceit found?

¹⁰ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (472). New York: United Bible Societies.

Human tradition that is not rooted in God's Word can be dangerous. We always need to make sure that our traditions are in line with God's truth. Elemental spirits can also be translated elementary principles or basic principles. Paul refers to this again in Colossians 2:20-23.

Read these verses and then write what you think Paul is referring to by elementary spirits (principles).

I think you can see how important it is for us to be rooted and grounded in Jesus. He alone is the true source of wisdom and knowledge, but when we stray away from him, it is easy for us to be taken captive and deluded by human reasoning. Paul is building the case that our protection and security is only found in knowing Christ, not in possessing a secret knowledge like the Gnostics taught.

Day 7: Colossians 2:9-12

Read chapter 2 again.

Now Paul turns our attention back to Jesus, who He is and what he has done for us.

Rewrite verse 9 in your own words. What does it mean?

Verse 10 tells us that we have been filled in Christ. An easier translation might be "to make complete." The word in the Greek means "to make something total or complete."¹¹ Since the Gnostics were always looking for and trying to attain this higher knowledge, here Paul is telling the believers they are complete in Christ. They don't have to look anywhere else. If we have trusted Christ as our Savior, we are complete. Christ has finished the work on our behalf.

What does Paul tell us about Jesus in verse 10?

Again Paul emphasizes Jesus' preeminence. Everyone has rules and authorities they have to answer to, but Jesus is the head; he is above them all.

In verse 11, Paul tells us that we have been spiritually circumcised. He tells us that this means we have put off the body of the flesh.

The phrase "put off" is an interesting one. It literally means "to take off or strip off clothing—to undress, to disrobe."¹² The same Greek word appears a few verses later in verse 15. The word "disarm" in verse 15, is the same Greek word as "put off" in verse 11. In verse 15, we see the picture of Christ figuratively disrobing or disarming the spiritual rulers and authorities. This is a picture of Christ being triumphant and stripping them of any power. Christ is victorious. So back in verse 11, when we see that in Christ, we have put off the flesh, I believe he is

11 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (597). New York: United Bible Societies.

12 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (526). New York: United Bible Societies.

talking about how Christ has defeated the power of the flesh or the sinful nature. We still live with it, but it has no power over us. The flesh no longer has the power to force us to sin.

In verse 12, what two things does Paul say happened to us?

The word for buried means “to bury someone along with someone else—to bury together with.”¹³ This is very strong imagery here. What Paul is telling us is that when Christ died and was buried, I died and was buried together with him. That is why my old sinful nature has no power. It is dead, rendered weak and ineffective, completely powerless. Christ death accomplished the victory over sin and death, and since I was buried right along with him, I too have victory over sin and death!

This was accomplished through baptism. I do not believe he is speaking of water baptism here. The word baptized means "to be placed into."

Read Romans 6:3-4. What were we baptized into?

Read 1 Cor. 12:12-13. What were we placed into?

So when Christ died, we died and were buried along with Him. Because of this, we were transferred from the kingdom of darkness into His kingdom (Col. 1:13) and were placed into the body of Christ and are now identified with Jesus.

Not only were we buried with Christ, we were also raised together with him. Again the imagery is very strong. Just as we were co-buried with Christ, we were also co-raised with him. This is of course not speaking of a physical resurrection, but a spiritual one. When we trusted Christ, we were raised to a new life spiritually. We are no longer dead in our sins but alive in Christ!

¹³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (530). New York: United Bible Societies.

What does verse 12 say our part in being raised was?

We had to believe the truth, but it was God who did the work. We were raised by God's power. The same power that raised Christ physically from the dead, also raised us up spiritually and gave us a new life in Christ.

God has given us so many privileges simply because we believe in His Son. I hope you have seen in this lesson what happened to us "with Christ." The Bible mentions this phrase "with Christ" several times. We have already seen that we were crucified, we died, and were buried with Christ. Look up the following verses to see what else we have because we are identified "with Christ."

Romans 6:8

Romans 8:17

1 Corinthians 6:17

2 Corinthians 6:1

Ephesians 2:6

Colossians 3:4

2 Timothy 2:12

Spend some time thanking God for all the things you have because of Christ!

Day 8: Colossians 2:13-23

Read chapter 2 again.

What does verse 13 say our condition was before Christ?

Who did God make us alive together with? Who does the "him" refer to?

How does verse 14 say God forgave all our sins?

What was the legal demand for our sin? See Romans 1:32.

This is one of my favorite verses in the whole Bible because I love the picture it paints. We had a record of all the things we had done wrong that stood against us. We were in debt to God because of our sin and had no way to repay it on our own. It says that God cancelled that debt when Jesus died on the cross. The price had been paid by someone else so the debt was cancelled from our account. Imagine owing \$100,000 and you only made \$25,000 a year. It would be impossible to pay that off. Imagine the relief you would feel if someone paid that off for you. The joy and elation you would have would be immense. This is exactly what Jesus did for us, but it has far more important ramifications than a monetary debt. He nailed the record of debt against us to the cross and claimed victory!

Who do you think the powers and authorities in verse 15 refer to?

What does it say that God did to them?

To disarm is to strip someone of their weapons and make them incapable of causing harm. Satan's power had been stripped away!

It says that God triumphed over them "in him." Who is it referring to?

This verse portrays the picture of a victorious general coming back from battle with prisoners of war. They have been stripped of their weapons and have been humiliated in their defeat. I picture the general giving a victorious battle cry. His foes have been conquered and he has won the battle! Not only did God defeat the enemy, but he rescued those the enemy had taken captive. What a wonderful picture of what Jesus has done for us through his death and resurrection.

In verse 16, we come to the third warning. What is it?

Rewrite the warning in verse 16 again in your own words.

What is the fourth warning in verse 18?

What do both of these warning have in common? What is the main point of both of them?

In recap:

Don't let anyone delude you (v. 4)

See to it that no one takes you captive. (v.8)

Don't let anyone pass judgment on you. (v. 16)

Don't let anyone disqualify you. (v. 18)

Verse 16, starts out with a "therefore." Because of what Jesus has done for us, don't let people impose on you a bunch of man-made rules and false religious practices. Verse 23 tells the reason for the therefore.

Why should we not live like that?

This chapter tells us that what Jesus has done for us is far better than any rules in enabling us to live the victorious Christian life. Rules don't have the power to stop the cravings of our flesh. That change has to come from the inside, from the new life that God has given us in being raised with Christ.

Read Acts 13:38-39. According to these verses, what could the law not do for us?

See Romans 3:20 and Hebrews 7:19. From these verses, what else could the law not do for us?

Read Romans 8:1-4. What did Jesus set us free from, that the law never could?

According to Romans 8:4, what is the result in our lives because of Christ's work?

The law required righteousness, but it was powerless to provide it for us. God demanded righteousness from us too, and since he knew we couldn't produce this righteousness on our own, He gave it to us for free through His Son!

So rules and regulations can't produce a changed life or make us right with God. Read Titus 2:11-12. What does teach and train us to say no to sin?

Grace is our teacher! The more we understand how gracious God has been to us, the more it will change and transform us. Rules condemn us, but grace changes us and sets us free to live godly lives!

In order for these things not to happen, where does our focus have to be? v. (17)

When we are focused on Christ and connected to Christ who is our head, what does God promise will happen? (v. 19)

Who causes this growth?

I think that is so neat! We can try as hard as we can, and try to obey a bunch of rules and regulations, but they don't have the power to produce a lasting change in our hearts. But when Christ is our focus and we are plugged into a relationship with him, he promises that He is the one who causes us to grow. It is his work in us through Christ! We can struggle and strive on our own or we can let God do the work in our hearts. As we read his Word and focus on Him, he changes us! We can't live the Christian life on our own, but God can do his work in us. Freedom!

What is the theme of chapter two?

Colossians 3

Day 9: Colossians 3:1-11

Read chapter 3.

Mark the words as you read:

with Christ, with him
put off, (and all related phrases)
put on
thankful, (and all synonyms)

Chapter 3 starts out with the word "if" but in the Greek, it really means "since." He is referring back to what he talked about in Colossians 2:12. Read that verse again to refresh your memory. Remember that being raised with Christ literally means being co-raised with Jesus. We were raised together.

Where does Paul say Christ is now that he has been raised?

Where does Paul say we are now that we have been raised? (See Ephesians 2:6.)

It makes sense that if we were buried and raised with Christ, that we should also be seated with him! That's a pretty awesome thing to think about!

Because we are seated with him above, where should our focus and our thoughts be?

From verse 1, the word seek means "to desire to have or experience something, with the probable implication of making an attempt to realize one's desire."¹⁴ There is always more to learn about God and his Word and that should be our pursuit for the rest of our lives.

¹⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (289). New York: United Bible Societies.

Not only are we to seek after the things that are above, but we are to set our minds on them too. The word set means “to keep on giving serious consideration to something—to ponder, to let one’s mind dwell on, to keep thinking about, to fix one’s attention on.”¹⁵

Wow, this is a challenging verse! How easy it is to dwell on and fix our attention on things that we can see, but Paul encourages us to concentrate on, to dwell on things that are above.

Write below what sort of things might be "things above" that we should think about. (Be specific- don't just say the Bible!) You can look back over what we have already studied in Colossians to give you some ideas.

Verse 3 tells us the reason we should do this. Write it below.

The old person that we used to be has died with Christ. That's the old man who was separated from God, was God's enemy and only cared about pleasing himself. That old sinful nature has been rendered powerless and now we have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. We used to be dead **in** our sins, but now we are dead **to** sin! Sin used to control us, but now through Christ, we can have power over sin. That is the reason we should dwell on things above. Our position has changed.

Because our position has changed, what hope do we have in verse 4?

¹⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (351). New York: United Bible Societies.

See Col 2:12,13,20; 3:1,3 and 4. You should have already circled the phrase "with him" or "with Christ." Note all the things from these verses that we have because of our position "with Christ".

Now we can see what Paul means in verse 4 when he says that Christ is our life! Everything we are, is wrapped up in Christ!

In verse 5, we see a change in the tone of the book. Up to this point, Paul has told us who Christ is and what he has done for us. For the rest of the book, now Paul is going to address how that should affect our everyday lives.

Put to death means "to cease completely from activity, with the implication of extreme measures taken to guarantee such a cessation."¹⁶ In the Greek it is a command!

Sexual immorality is "to engage in sexual immorality of any kind, often with the implication of prostitution—to engage in illicit sex, to commit fornication."¹⁷ Impurity refers to moral impurity, especially sexual sin. Passion is another word for lust. Evil desire also refers to coveting or lust. Covetousness is "a strong desire to acquire more and more material possessions or to possess more things than other people have, all irrespective of need—greed."¹⁸ Idolatry is simply idol worship.

These should have no part in the life of a Christians. Christ is our life (3:4) and since he has no part in these things, neither should we!

What does Paul say is coming as a result of these things?

16 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (660). New York: United Bible Societies.

17 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (770). New York: United Bible Societies.

18 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (290–291). New York: United Bible Societies.

I believe that Paul is talking about unbelievers who practice these things. God certainly does not want a believer to act this way, but as a believer we will never have to experience God's wrath because Jesus took the full brunt of God's wrath for us on the cross. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 tells us that Jesus has delivered us from the wrath to come! Because of what he has done for us, we should live holy lives and walk worthy of the one who has saved us.

In verse 8, Paul tells them again to "put them all away." It means to get rid off and was often used of taking off clothing and throwing it aside. Again, this is a command.

Let's take a closer look at the things we are to put off.

Anger and wrath are expressions of selfishness. We get angry when things don't go our way or we don't get what we want. Malice is "a feeling of hostility and strong dislike, with a possible implication of desiring to do harm—hateful feeling."¹⁹ Slander is "to speak against someone in such a way as to harm or injure his or her reputation."²⁰ Obscene talk refers to vulgar or dirty speech.

How do the two lists of sin differ from verses 5 and 8?

Why does Paul say we should not lie in verses 9-10?

This phrase "put off" is not a command like we saw earlier in the chapter. Paul reminds us that the old self or the old sinful nature has *already been* put off.

The phrase "put off" is an interesting one. The same Greek word is used in Colossians 2:15 for "disarm". It means "to undress or disrobe. Figuratively, Paul used the same word to describe how Jesus disarmed the authorities and powers through his death and resurrection. So the old self has been thrown off and the

19 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (763). New York: United Bible Societies.

20 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (433). New York: United Bible Societies.

power it had over us has been stripped away. You might be saying, "But I still sin!" The only way we sin is if we choose to sin. Sin can't make us do anything. The power has been broken.

Think of it in terms of an electrical cord for a fan. When Jesus died and was raised, he unplugged the cord that connected us to sin. The power source was broken. So now sin no longer holds any power over us. The only way we give sin any power, is to go over and plug the cord back in! But from what Paul has been saying, why would we ever want to do that?! Jesus has won the victory for us so why would we want to go back to our old life?

This is a truth that has to be claimed by faith and sometimes it is hard for us to believe it. Our experience and our feelings may tell us that this is not true, but we have to go back to what God says.

Not only has the old self been stripped away, but it has been replaced with a new self, a new nature that wants to honor and please God. This new self is being renewed. The word renew means "to cause something to become new and different, with the implication of becoming superior."²¹

How does Paul say we are renewed?

Now remember that the Gnostics taught that only a select few could have this secret mystical knowledge and be saved.

What knowledge do you think Paul is referring to? Knowledge about what?

As we are renewed, who are we changed to look like?

In verse 11, Paul says this is available to everyone! Social class, nationality, gender or spiritual background - none of those things are important. Christ is available to all!

21 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (593). New York: United Bible Societies.

Day 10: Colossians 3:12-25

Read chapter 3.

How does Paul describe the Colossian Christians in verse 12?

Why do you think he reminds them of this right before he addresses how they should act?

When we take something off, we have to replace it with something else. Let's look at each of these more closely. These things should describe a follower of Jesus!

Compassionate hearts speaks of showing mercy and concern for others. Kindness is to provide something beneficial for someone else. Humility is to act without arrogance. Meekness is "gentleness of attitude and behavior, in contrast with harshness in one's dealings with others."²² Patience is "a state of emotional calm in the face of provocation or misfortune and without complaint or irritation."²³

In verse 13, Paul tells us to bear with each other. To bear with means "to be patient with, in the sense of enduring possible difficulty."²⁴ I love that! Sometimes we rub shoulders with difficult people. A follower of Jesus will show patience with those who are not easy to get along with.

Paul also says that if you have a complaint against another person, we are to forgive them. Many times people legitimately hurt or offend us. Instead of holding on to that complaint, we are to forgive.

22 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (748). New York: United Bible Societies.

23 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (306). New York: United Bible Societies.

24 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (307). New York: United Bible Societies.

What is our motivation to forgive from verse 13?

What is the most important characteristic for a Christian from verse 14?

What does Paul say is the result when we show love?

When we put on love, the result is unity in the body of Christ. All of the character traits that Paul listed above, could all be summed up in love!

In verse 15, what is to rule in our hearts?

The word rule means to control. The peace of Christ should control our thoughts and our hearts. Paul reminds us that we are one body and that one body should be controlled by peace.

What is to dwell in our hearts from verse 16?

To dwell in means "to live in and influence for good." If we have sin in our life or are not submissive to the Lord, the Word will not feel at home in our heart.

What word describes how the Word should live in us?

The word richly means abundantly. When I think of abundance, I think of something overflowing or spilling over. That is how the Word should be in us. It should flow out of us into others.

What 3 ways does Paul say the Word can dwell in us richly? (Look for the verbs in this verse.)

Note the phrases *peace of Christ rule* and *word of Christ dwell*. For the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts, God's Word has to dwell there first!

Teach simply means to impart instruction or to explain. This does not have to be a formal thing. We can casually teach one another as we are talking about the Lord. As the Lord teaches us new things in his Word, we should be sharing that with others.

Admonish is to warn or exhort; we need to come along side a brother or sister in love if we see them going down a path that is going to cause heart ache. Warn them – you will be disqualified for the prize if you go down this road!

Paul says the key in teaching and admonishing one another is to do it with all wisdom. If it is done in wisdom, it is more likely to be accepted and heard. Know the right time to speak, know what should be shared.

The last result of having God's word dwell in us richly, is that we will be singing with thankfulness. When our nose is in the Book, we will be less distracted with things of the world, and more focused on all that Christ has done for us. This should produce thankfulness in our hearts.

Paul sums it up in verse 17. What should our motivation be in everything that we do?

Let's take a closer look at this phrase, "in Jesus name." When someone does something in the name of someone else, they basically are acting as a representative for that person, or doing something on behalf of that person. Paul tells us that everything we do and speak, should be done in a way that represents Jesus to others. This makes the most menial, simple task an act of worship. So if you are going to work, doing dishes, on the computer, visiting with a friend, whatever it is, we should act in a way that represents Christ and his name. And of course, Paul says it should all be done with thankfulness to the Lord.

Doing everything in Jesus name sets the stage for the rest of the chapter. Now Paul is going to address specific groups of people in the church and remind them how they should conduct themselves in Jesus' name.

What is the command to wives?

What reason does Paul give for this?

Fitting means it is proper or appropriate. Women often don't like to be told to submit to their husbands, but according to this verse, who says it is an appropriate or proper thing to submit to your husband?

What is the command to husbands in verse 19?

What is the command to children?

Why does Paul say children should obey their parents?

Kids often think they are too young to serve the Lord or make a difference. But if they want to serve the Lord and please him, Paul says the main way kids can do this is through obeying their parents.

What is the command to fathers?

Perhaps God addresses these issues because they are natural weaknesses. Women find it hard to submit, maybe it is easy for men to be harsh or provoking and children sometimes don't want to obey.

Summarize what Paul tells the bond servants.

What reasons does Paul say they should obey their masters?

I don't know if you noticed it or not, but for all these people, the reason they should obey is really rooted in the fact that they serving the Lord.

Go back to verse 17 and underline the words "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus."

In verse 18, underline, "as is fitting in the Lord."

In verse 20, underline "for this pleases the Lord."

In verse 22, underline "fearing the Lord."

In verse 23, underline "as for the Lord."

In verse 24, underline, "you are serving The Lord Christ."

Do you see the theme in verses 17-25? Serving the Lord! Sometimes our relationships get messed up down here. Wives are disrespectful, children are disobedient, husbands can be harsh and servants don't always have fair masters. It is hard to respond in a proper way when things don't go the way we want. But God says, your obedience in these areas should not depend on what your circumstances are or how others treat you.

Instead, my perspective should be, that I am serving the Lord. When the Lord is my focus, when I am doing things for him and in his name, then it becomes not so much if that person deserves that I obey or submit to them. Instead the focus changes that God deserves my obedience and he is the one I am really serving, not the person in front of me. Kind of changes your perspective doesn't it?

What is the theme of chapter 3?

Colossians 4

Day 11: Colossians 4:1-6

Read Colossians 4.

Mark the following words in this chapter:

thanksgiving

mystery

wisdom

Verse 1 continues the thoughts from the end of chapter 3. (I'm not sure why they didn't put this verse at the end of chapter 3!)

Now Paul addresses the masters. What is his command to them?

Why should they do this according to verse 1?

In verses 2-6, Paul gives some closing instructions. How are we to pray from verse 2 (three things Paul lists)?

To be steadfast means "to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty—to devote oneself to, to keep on, to persist in."²⁵

To be watchful means "to be in continuous readiness and alertness."²⁶

25 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (662). New York: United Bible Societies.

26 Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (332). New York: United Bible Societies.

Why do you think Paul tells us to steadfast and watchful in our prayers?

Six times so far in this book, Paul has told us to be thankful. See Col. 1:12; 2:7, 3:15,16,17; 4:2.

Why do you think he keeps repeating it?

Just from our study of this book so far, what are some things we have to be thankful for?

In encouraging the Colossians to pray, he also asks them to pray for him. What are Paul's prayer requests in verses 3-4?

This is a great thing to pray for ourselves or for others. Even though Paul was in prison, he prayed for open doors!

As we share the gospel it is also important for our actions to be pure as well. How should we relate to outsiders in verse 5?

Who do you think outsiders refers to?

Paul tells them to make the best use of the time they have. See Ephesians 5:15-16. It is interesting that in both places Paul mentions the need for wisdom. We do need wisdom to know how to spend our time. There are many good things we could do, but we need wisdom to know what is the best- things that will count for eternity!

What does Paul say their speech should be like?

We must have grace in our hearts before grace can flow from our lips, for "out of the heart, the mouth speaks."

Paul describes our speech as being seasoned with salt. What are some benefits of salt?

1. Salt creates thirst. In my speech, do I make people thirsty for the Lord Jesus?
2. Salt enhances flavor – Our speech should not be dull or disheartening, but profitable.
3. Salt is a preservative. My speech should be seasoned with salt towards unbelievers, because it can preserve them from eternal death. For believers, we can warn and save them from the consequences of sin.
4. Salt is a cleanser. Better are the wounds of a friend, than the kisses of an enemy. Sometimes the truth is hard to hear and it hurts, but in the end if we respond to it, it is profitable for us.

Perhaps grace itself is the salt in our speech. Any word said graciously, will be much easier to be heard and applied than a word said truthfully, but not in love or grace.

It is interesting to me to note here that if we have acted wisely and spoken with grace, the result of this is that we will know how to give an answer. Maybe it is more that we will be above reproach and the unbelievers won't have opportunity to say "Why did you..." in an accusatory way. Our life and speech will not have hindered the gospel and this gives an opportunity to answer everyone who comes our way.

Day 12: Colossians 4:7-18

Paul closes his letter with some personal remarks. Think about if we talked about people like this. I imagine if you were one of the people that Paul singled out in his letter, it would encourage your heart. Paul gives us a good example of how to encourage others.

Paul first commends a man named Tychicus in verses 7-8. Read Ephesians 6:21-22. It seems that Tychicus brought Paul's letters to both the cities of Ephesus and Colosse. Many times, people behind the scenes don't get a lot of credit, but aren't you thankful that Tychicus was faithful and delivered these two letters? Tychicus is not a name we really remember in Christianity, but God used him in a very important way. What a great example he is to us of the silent servants working behind the scenes for the Lord.

Write below what we know about Tychicus.

Why did Paul send him to Colosse?

Onesimus went with Tychicus to deliver Paul's letter. You can read the book of Philemon to catch up on his story. Onesimus was Philemon's slave who ran away. It seems during this time, he met Paul and Paul introduced him to Christ. Paul encouraged Onesimus to go back to his master, and encouraged Philemon to accept him as a brother in the Lord. Here we see him being a worker with Paul in the gospel. Tychicus and Onesimus were going to fill the church in on how Paul was doing and to be an encouragement to the church.

Aristarchus (v.10) is mentioned as being in prison with Paul. From Acts 27:2, we learn that he was a Macedonian from Thessalonica and Acts 19:29 tells us that he travelled with Paul on his missionary journeys. He stuck with Paul in the good and the bad times.

Mark is mentioned as being the cousin of Barnabas. Remember when Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement about taking John Mark with them? Mark had left

them on an earlier trip so Paul didn't want to take him again. But Barnabas, his cousin, wanted him to come along. They had such a sharp disagreement that they split up with Paul taking Silas and Barnabas taking Mark.

What seems to be Paul's attitude about Mark now from verses 10-11?

What does Paul say about Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11?

It is neat to see the relationship restored between Paul and Mark. Earlier, Paul had written Mark off as a quitter and he didn't have time for him. Through God working in both of their hearts, now Paul sees Mark as a comfort and useful or helpful to him in his ministry!

Aristarchus, Mark and Justus were called "men of the circumcision." What does that tell you about them?

We looked at Epaphras at the beginning of our study. From Colossians 1:7, we learned that he brought the gospel to Colosse. What else do we learn about him from verses 12-13?

What is Epaphras' desire for the Colossian church?

Luke, the beloved physician sent his greetings to the church. We know he travelled with Paul on his missionary journeys (Philemon 23) and was the only one with Paul at the end of his life when he was in prison (2 Timothy 4:11). Of course, he also wrote the gospel of Luke.

Demas sent his greetings to the church as well. What else do we learn about Demas from 2 Timothy 4:10?

Demas is a warning for all of us. He started out strong and was a co-worker along with Paul, but something caused him to turn away. Maybe the persecution got too intense, and Demas left Paul because he loved the present world. He didn't have his mind set on things above.

Laodecia was nearby Colosse. You can refer to the map at the beginning of our study. Apparently Paul had written a letter to the Laodecians as well. He encouraged both churches to read each other's letter.

In verse 17, we meet a man named Archippus. We don't know much about him except that perhaps he needed a little bit of encouragement to persevere.

What was Paul's encouragement to him?

The word fulfill means to complete. Paul comes along side, singles him out and basically says, "Tell Archippus not to quit!" Sometimes we need a cheerleader on the sidelines encouraging us on. I'm sure when Archippus read this, it did help him to keep going. Paul was in prison for his faith and was continuing on, so maybe his example was an encouragement to Archippus.

Paul ends the letter by telling them that he had written the letter himself. And as in many of his letters, Paul ends it by simply saying. "Grace be with you."

What do you think is the theme of chapter 4?

Day 13: Recap

We have come to the end of our study! I hope you have learned a lot and grown in your relationship with God.

Paul wrote to the Colossians to combat some of the wrong thinking circulating in those days. The Gnostics were teaching that you had to have a special, secret knowledge to be saved, and only a select few could attain it. Instead of combatting Gnosticism, Paul focuses our attention on Christ.

Look up the following verses again in Colossians where Paul mentions knowledge. Note what Paul says they should have knowledge about.

Colossians 1:9

Colossians 1:10

Colossians 2:2

Where does Paul say all knowledge can be found? (Col. 2:3)

Instead of seeking after some mystical knowledge, Paul encourages us to know Christ. Christ is the answer to every need. Christ gives us victory over sin and assures us of the hope of glory. That was something the Gnostics could never offer.

Soak in this quote by my friend, Cindy West: *“He is our Living Bread, our Living Water, our Shelter and Stronghold, He is our Light and our very Life. When you think of it, He is the answer to our every need. No wonder the Holy Spirit described Him in such basic terms. Those are all things we need every day: food, water, light, shelter. He made it very clear that Jesus is the One who satisfies our deepest and most basic longings. We are often looking to people or things to satisfy our hearts needs. Intimate fellowship with our Lord Jesus is what calms and cheers us. The things we set our hearts on in this life will often prove empty and meaningless – Jesus – never. We can never plumb the depths of His wisdom or goodness or love. It’s like standing beside the ocean with a cup – He is*

inexhaustible. We will never come away empty.” And we can never wear him out with our neediness!

Just like in Paul's day, people today will try to tell you that Jesus is not enough and the world will try to entice you with temporary thrills. But God's Word tells us that Jesus is a treasure. Nothing compares to Him! Open up the chest and start digging – the riches of knowing Christ are waiting for you!

What do you think is the theme of the whole book of Colossians?
