

The Epistle To The Colossians



Sermon Outlines

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The Epistle To The Colossians

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Introduction To The Epistle

Colossians 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION

1. Some questions to consider...
 - a. Do the heavenly bodies have any influence over our lives?
 - 1) The millions of people who consult their horoscopes each day would say “Yes!”
 - 2) In the U.S., there are about 1750 newspapers, and 1220 of them carry astrological data
 - b. Is there any relationship between diet and spiritual living?
 - c. Does God speak to us immediately, in our minds, or only through His Word, the Bible?
 - d. Do the “eastern religions” have something to offer those who are Christians?
2. These questions sound very contemporary, don't they?
 - a. Yet they are the very issues Paul dealt with in his epistle to the Colossians
 - b. For this reason, we need this important letter today just as they needed it when Paul wrote it in 60 A. D.

[In **Co 1:1-2**, Paul addresses the brethren at Colosse. To help us appreciate more what we will study later, let's consider some background information on this epistle...]

I. THE CITY OF COLOSSE

A. LOCATION...

1. 100 miles E of Ephesus in Asia Minor (consult map)
2. Very close to Hierapolis and Laodicea - cf. **Co 4:13,16**

B. DISTINCTION...

1. Hierapolis was a place known for health, pleasure, relaxation
2. Laodicea was known for commercial trade and politics
3. Colosse, however, was simply a small town

C. PEOPLE...

1. It was a pagan city, with a strong intermingling of Jews
2. In 62 B.C., there were 11,000 Jewish “freedmen” in the tri-city area
3. This helps us to understand the nature of some of the problems that arose within the church (problems of both pagan and Jewish origin)

II. THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE

A. ESTABLISHMENT...

1. We are not sure when the church began, for the scriptures do not say
2. It is likely that Paul himself did not start it
 - a. He had not seen them in person - **Co 2:1**

- b. Rather, he had simply heard of their faith - **Co 1:4**
- 3. It is possible that it was started by Epaphras
 - a. From what Paul writes in **Co 1:4-8**
 - b. Who evidently also had some contact with those in Hierapolis and Laodicea - **Co 4:12-13**

B. MEMBERS...

- 1. **Epaphras**
 - a. Possibly the founder of the church (see above)
 - b. A native of Colosse - **Co 4:12**
 - c. Described as a servant of Christ (**Co 4:12**), fervent in praying for others (**Co 4:12**), and having great zeal for his brethren (**Co 4:13**)
 - d. A “fellow-prisoner” with Paul at this time - cf. **Phile 23**
- 2. **Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus**
 - a. By comparing Colossians and Philemon, we can conclude they were at Colosse
 - 1) Concerning Archippus - cf. **Co 4:17** with **Phile 1-2**
 - 2) Concerning Onesimus - cf. **Co 4:9** with **Phile 10-17**
 - 3) Epaphras - cf. **Co 4:12** with **Phile 23**
 - b. It is likely that the church met in their home - cf. **Phile 2**
 - c. Many think they may have been members of the same family
 - 1) Philemon, the father
 - 2) Apphia, the mother
 - 3) Archippus, the son
 - d. It is possible that Archippus served as the preacher at Colosse - cf. **Co 4:17**
- 3. **Onesimus**
 - a. He was Philemon’s slave who had run away, found by Paul in Rome, and was converted
 - b. He was being sent back to Philemon (cf. the epistle to Philemon), along with the letter to the Colossians - **Co 4:7-9**

III. THE CRISIS AT COLOSSE

A. THE REPORT...

- 1. Epaphras had brought news to Paul concerning the church at Colosse - **Co 1:3-8**
- 2. For the most part, it was very favorable - **Co 1:3-4,8; 2:5**
- 3. But from the content of the letter, Paul must have also been informed of a twofold “peril” affecting the church

B. THE PERIL...

- 1. There was the danger of their relapsing into paganism with its immorality (implied by comments such as **Co 3:5-11**)
- 2. There was the danger of accepting what some call the “**Colossian Heresy**”
 - a. Which denied the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ...
 - 1) For salvation
 - 2) For overcoming the indulgences of the flesh
 - b. This “**Colossian Heresy**” involved...

- 1) False Philosophy, which denied the all-sufficiency and preeminence of Jesus Christ - cf. **Co 2:8**
 - 2) Judaistic Ceremonialism, which attached special significance to the rite of circumcision, food regulations, and observance of special days - cf. **Co 2:16-17**
 - 3) Angel Worship, which detracted from the uniqueness of Christ - cf. **Co 2:18**
 - 4) Asceticism, which called for harsh treatment of the body to control its lusts - cf. **Co 2:20-23**
- c. The “Colossian Heresy”, then, was a syncretism, that is, a mixture of Jewish and pagan elements

IV. THE CORRESPONDENCE TO COLOSSE

A. THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE...

1. To warn the brethren at Colosse
 - a. Against relapse - **Co 1:21-23**
 - b. Against the “solution” being urged upon them by those who denied that Jesus was all they needed - **Co 2:8-10**
2. To direct their attention to Jesus Christ
 - a. The “Beloved Son” - **Co 1:13**
 - b. The “all-sufficient” and “preeminent” Savior - **Co 1:14-18**

B. THE THEME OF THE EPISTLE: “Jesus Christ: The preeminent and all-sufficient Savior” - Co 1:18

C. AN OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE...

1. **Doctrine: Christ’s Preeminence Declared** (Chapter One)
 - a. In the gospel message (1:1-12)
 - b. In redemption (1:13-14)
 - c. In creation (1:15-17)
 - d. In the church (1:18-23)
 - e. In Paul’s own ministry (1:24-29)
2. **Danger: Christ’s Preeminence Defended** (Chapter Two)
 - a. Beware of empty philosophies (2:1-10)
 - b. Beware of Judaistic ceremonialism (2:11-17)
 - c. Beware of man-made disciplines (2:18-23)
3. **Duty: Christ’s Preeminence Demonstrated** (Chapters Three and Four)
 - a. In personal purity (3:1-11)
 - b. In brotherly relations (3:12-17)
 - c. In the home (3:18-21)
 - d. In daily work (3:22-4:1)
 - e. In sharing the gospel (4:2-6)
 - f. In serving one another (4:7-18)

CONCLUSION

1. The value of this letter to the Colossians is that it increases our understanding and appreciation of

Jesus Christ

2. From this epistle, we learn that He truly is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” - **Jn 14:7**
3. Once we understand that He is indeed the “preeminent” and “all-sufficient” Savior and live our lives accordingly...
 - a. We will live victorious lives as Christians!
 - b. We will assure that we do not relapse, nor be carried away by false religions and philosophies of men

Future lessons in this series on Colossians will expand upon this theme, but for the time being, have you accepted and obeyed Jesus Christ as **your** all-sufficient savior?

Note: The basic outline for this introduction was adapted heavily from The Bible Exposition Commentary, Volume 2, by Warren W. Wiersbe, pages 102-105.

The Church At Colosse

Colossians 1:3-8

INTRODUCTION

1. After introducing himself and greeting the brethren in verses 1-2, Paul expresses thanksgiving to God concerning some things about the church at Colosse (**read 3-8**)
2. As we consider what Paul wrote, we learn some encouraging things about the church at Colosse which are worthy of our emulation as a congregation of Christians

[For example, notice that as a church...]

I. THEY WERE KNOWN FOR THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS (1:4)

A. WHAT A WONDERFUL REPUTATION TO HAVE...!

1. Some churches are known for:
 - a. Being “dead on the vine”
 - b. Being “lukewarm” (cf. the Laodiceans, **Re 3:15**)
2. But here is a church so strong in its faith in Jesus, that word had made its way to Paul
3. In this, they were like the church at Thessalonica - **1 Th 1:2-3, 6-10; 2 Th 1:3**

B. WHY DID THEY HAVE SUCH A REPUTATION...?

1. Because they really trusted in Jesus Christ (“trust” is a key element in the matter of faith)
2. Because their faith was a “**steadfast**” one - **Co 2:5**
 - a. They were not faithful one day, then unfaithful the next
 - b. Through “thick and thin”, they maintained their faith in Jesus and did His will!

C. WHAT KIND OF REPUTATION DO WE HAVE...?

1. Every church has one, whether it be good, mediocre, or bad
2. Wouldn't it be wonderful if others could say of us, “We have heard of your faith in Jesus Christ”?
3. If we remain steadfast in our faith, in time they will!

[Notice also that as a church...]

II. THEY WERE KNOWN FOR THEIR LOVE FOR ALL THE SAINTS (1:4)

A. THEIR GOOD REPUTATION INCLUDED LOVE AS WELL AS FAITH...!

1. Toward Jesus, they showed faith; toward their brethren, they demonstrated love!
2. Not only love for each other, but love for ALL the saints, including those in other places
3. Again, in this they were like the church at Thessalonica - **1 Th 4:9-10**

B. IF WE DESIRE A SIMILAR REPUTATION, WHAT CAN WE DO...?

1. We can be diligent in our love for one another, making efforts to become better acquainted and to serve one another
2. We can demonstrate our love for **all** the brethren, by taking advantage of meetings and singings to be together
3. We can ask the Lord to help us increase in this - cf. **1 Th 3:12**
4. We can urge each other to increase in this virtue - cf. **1 Th 4:9-10**

[A truly strong faith in Jesus and love for the brethren is such a rarity in many churches, that any church which excels in these virtues will soon be known for such! But as we continue in our examination of our text, we notice also that at the church at Colosse...]

III. THE GOSPEL WAS BRINGING FORTH FRUIT AMONG THEM (1:5-6)

A. THE GOSPEL, WHICH SPEAKS OF THE HOPE LAID UP IN HEAVEN, HAD PRODUCED FRUIT IN THEIR LIVES...

1. Not only in their lives, but throughout the whole world (**1:6**) - cf. **1:23**
2. We have seen the kind of fruit being born by the gospel:
 - a. Faith in Jesus
 - b. Love for the brethren
3. In bearing such fruit, they proved that they were truly disciples of Jesus! - **Jn 15:8**

B. WHAT WAS THE KEY TO BEARING SUCH FRUIT...?

1. Notice that they had been bearing fruit “since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth” (**1:6**)
2. By knowing (understanding, NAS) the grace of God, they were properly motivated to bear fruit
3. So it is today, those who truly understand the grace of God will more likely respond in grateful service to God!

C. WHAT IS “THE GRACE OF GOD” WHICH MOTIVATES ONE TO BEAR FRUIT...?

1. Simply put, it is the “unmerited favor” which God has shown us through Jesus Christ!
2. We can summarize this grace of God by defining several key terms:
 - a. **Condemnation** - Being guilty of sin, we stand condemned in the sight of God and in danger of everlasting death - **Ro 3:23; 6:23**
 - b. **Alienation** - Being guilty of sin, we also find ourselves separated from God - **Isa 59:1-2**
 - c. **Propitiation** - but in love and mercy, God sent Jesus to be our sacrifice for sins to appease God’s just and righteous anger - **1 Jn 4:9-10**
 - d. **Justification** - by responding in obedient faith, we can be justified (declared not guilty) by virtue of Jesus’ sacrifice in our stead - **Ro 3:21-26**
 - e. **Reconciliation** - Free from the guilt of sin, we can now be reconciled with God through Christ Jesus our Lord - **2 Co 5:17-20**
 - f. **Sanctification** - By virtue of Christ’s death, we may also be “set apart” in service to the glory of God - **Ro 6:17-18,20-22**
3. The more one understands these concepts and their implications, the more likely they will

also bear fruit!

CONCLUSION

1. Through Epaphras, the church at Colosse had heard of this wonderful grace of God - **1:7**
2. And through Epaphras, Paul had heard of their wonderful love which was the fruit of their responding to this grace - **1:8**
3. Indeed, the church at Colosse had admirable qualities, which we do well to emulate...
 - a. Not for any glory for ourselves, but rather that God and His Son might be glorified
 - b. For it is only by His grace that we would be able to imitate the church at Colosse
4. Brethren...
 - a. Do we have faith in Jesus?
 - b. Do we love the brethren?...Let's be sure to allow the grace of God to have its desired effect in our lives!

If you have never responded to the grace of God, why not now?

Paul's Prayer For The Colossians

Colossians 1:9-14

INTRODUCTION

1. In the epistles of Paul, we customarily find him telling his readers what he prayed for on their behalf
2. So it is in his epistle to the Colossians...
 - a. Though he had not met many of them personally, he had heard of their faith and love - **Co 1:3-8**
 - b. Which prompted him to pray unceasingly for them
3. For what did he pray? The answer is found in **Co 1:9-14**, and by closely studying this passage...
 - a. We can learn not only what Paul desired for the Colossians
 - b. But also what God would desire for ALL Christians, including us today!

[As we examine this prayer of Paul, let's do so with this in mind: **This is what God desires of us as well!** First, God desires that we be...]

I. FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL IN ALL WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING (9)

A. NOTICE SOME KEY WORDS...

1. **"Filled"**
 - a. Not just a small measure
 - b. But satiated, with a full measure-- It is not God's desire that we try to "just get by with as little as necessary"
2. **"The knowledge of His Will"**
 - a. This is what God desires us to be filled with
 - b. The Greek word for "knowledge" in this passage is **epignosis**
 - 1) Knowledge which is the result of practical and personal experience
 - 2) I.e., not just academic or intellectual knowledge
 - c. Thus, our knowledge of God's will is to be something we have come by through practice and application in our lives
3. **"In all wisdom and spiritual understanding"**
 - a. To possess a knowledge of God's will in all wisdom requires **prayer** - **Ja 1:5**
 - b. To possess a knowledge of God's will with spiritual understanding requires **reading the Word** - **Ep 3:3-5**-- Therefore, prayer and Bible study are essential elements for the Christian!

B. WHY IS BEING FILLED WITH SUCH KNOWLEDGE SO IMPORTANT...?

1. Because God's people have always been destroyed by a lack of knowledge - cf. **Hos 4:6**
2. It is essential to our renewal in becoming like Christ - **Co 3:8-10**

[Is this prayer being answered in OUR lives? Are we doing anything to assure that it is? Next, notice

from Paul's prayer that it is evidently God's desire that we...]

II. HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD, FULLY PLEASING HIM (10-14)

A. THIS IS THE OBJECTIVE OF BEING FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL...

1. To conduct ourselves in a manner **worthy** of the Lord - cf. **Ep 4:1**
 - a. The Lord we serve, and the calling we have received, is certainly a "worthy" one!
 - b. Our conduct should be one to honor Christ, not shame Him!
2. To conduct ourselves in a manner **fully pleasing Him**
 - a. There is conduct which displeases Christ - **Lk 6:46**
 - b. But conduct coming from one who is first **filled** with the knowledge of God's will is more like to **fully** please Him! (note the play on words)

B. CONDUCT WORTHY OF THE LORD, FULLY PLEASING HIM, IS ONE IN WHICH WE ARE...

1. **"Being fruitful in every good work" (10)**
 - a. Not just "one", but "every" good work - cf. **Ti 2:14; 3:1**
 - b. For this we have been "created in Christ Jesus" - **Ep 2:10**
 - c. Why? So that God may be glorified - **Mt 5:16**
 - d. What sort of good works - cf. **Mt 25:37-40; Ja 1:27**

-- **Are we being fruitful?**
2. **"Increasing in the knowledge of God" (10)**
 - a. We need to grow in the knowledge of God **Himself**, not just His will - cf. **Jer 9:23-24**
 - b. How can one truly know God?
 - 1) Through creation - **Ps 19:1; Ro 1:18-20**
 - 2) Through inspired revelation (e.g., the Psalms and the Prophets)
 - 3) But especially through Jesus - **Jn 14:7-9; Co 2:9**

-- Are we daily increasing in this knowledge of God?
3. **"Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power" (11)**
 - a. It is God's desire that we be strong in our living for Him - **2 Ti 1:7-8**
 - b. There is "glorious power" available to the Christian, of which Paul often wrote:
 - 1) He experienced it in his own life - **Ph 4:13**
 - 2) He wanted others to know about it - **Ep 1:15-20**
 - 3) He identified it with the working of the Spirit in the inner man - **Ep 3:16**
 - 4) He describes its greatness in **Ep 3:20**
 - c. What is the purpose of such power? Notice our text...
 - 1) "for all **patience** and **longsuffering** with **joy**" (is this not the "fruit" the Spirit is supposed to produce? - cf. **Ga 5:22-23**)
 - 2) I.e., so that even as we experience trials in this life, we may do so with joyful perseverance!

-- Are we experiencing this strength which God gives to those who do His will?
4. **"Giving thanks to the Father" (12-14)**
 - a. Christians should always have the "attitude of gratitude" - **1 Th 5:18**
 - b. In our text, Paul mentions several reasons to be thankful...
 - 1) God has **"qualified us** to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light"

- cf. **1 Pe 1:3-5**

2) God has “**delivered us** from the power of darkness” - cf. **Ep 2:1-5**

3) God has “**translated us** into the kingdom of the Son of His love”

a) In Whom we have “redemption through His blood”

b) In Whom we have “the forgiveness of sins” - cf. **Re 1:5-6**

-- Are we ever giving thanks to the Father for these wonderful blessings?

CONCLUSION

1. Such was the prayer of Paul for the Colossians; what can we learn from it?
 - a. What God desires of us as well!
 - b. What kind of conduct that is necessary to be fully pleasing to the Lord!

2. May this prayer of Paul be one...
 - a. That we ask for **ourselves**
 - b. That we ask for **our brethren**
 - c. Indeed, that we desire for **all!**

3. Have you been “qualified” to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints?
 - a. Has God “delivered” you from the power of darkness?
 - b. Has He “translated” you into the kingdom of His Son?-- Through an obedient faith (**He 5:9**) and baptism into Christ (**Jn 3:5; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38**) on your part, God is willing to do so to you today!

The Preeminent Christ

Colossians 1:13-20

INTRODUCTION

1. When Paul first met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he did not know at that time who Jesus really was (“**Who are you, lord?**” - **Ac 9:3-5**)
2. But when we come to Paul’s epistle to the Colossians, we learn that Paul had come to a much fuller understanding of exactly who Jesus was!
3. In this lesson, we shall look at **Co 1:13-20**, and notice Paul’s description of “**The Preeminent Christ**”
4. In so doing, I hope we will be impressed with the fact that Christ is certainly our **all-sufficient** and **preeminent Savior**, who is worthy of our love, adoration, and obedience

[Who is this Jesus called “Christ”? Our first point can be gleaned from a comment made in **verse 13**, where Paul was giving reasons why we ought to be giving thanks to the Father. That is, Jesus is...]

I. THE KING OVER HIS KINGDOM (13)

A. JESUS HIMSELF PROCLAIMED TO BE A KING...

1. He claimed to have a kingdom, and even came into this world to proclaim the truth that He is a king - **Jn 18:36-37**
2. After his resurrection, He claimed the extent of His rule: authority over all heaven and earth! - **Mt 28:18; cf. Ep 1:20-23**

B. HIS KINGSHIP AND KINGDOM PROCLAIMED IN REVELATION...

1. He is “the ruler over the kings of the earth” - **Re 1:5**
2. He has made His disciples “kings and priest” (or, “a kingdom of priests”) to His God and Father - **Re 1:6**
3. Those in Christ Jesus are in His kingdom - **Re 1:9**
4. Those who persevere to the end will rule with Him even as He now reigns! - **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**
5. He is truly “Lord of lords and King of kings!” - **Re 17:14; 19:16**

[“King of kings”...certainly an indication of “**The Preeminent Christ**”! But notice also that He is...]

II. THE SAVIOR FROM OUR SINS (14)

A. BY VIRTUE OF HIS BLOOD WE HAVE “REDEMPTION”...

1. The word “redemption” (Greek, **apolutrosis**) means “a releasing effected by payment of ransom”

2. I.e., we have been “released” from the bondage of sin through the payment of Jesus’ blood shed on the cross - cf. **Mt 20:28**

B. BY VIRTUE OF HIS BLOOD WE HAVE “FORGIVENESS”...

1. “Forgiveness” (Greek, **aphesis**) means “release from bondage or imprisonment”
2. In Christ, we have “forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission of the penalty”

[As pronounced by the Angel to Joseph, “**you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.**” (Mt 1:21) A “king” capable of providing “redemption” and “forgiveness” from sins; truly indications of preeminence! But there is more, for He is also...]

III. THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD (15)

A. THE WORD “IMAGE”...

1. Comes from the Greek **eikon** {i-kone’}
2. Meaning “an image, figure, likeness”

B. JESUS IS THE “IMAGE” OF GOD WHO IS INVISIBLE...!

1. No man has ever seen God, but Jesus has “declared” (made manifest) Him - **Jn 1:18**
2. As Jesus Himself said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” - **Jn 14:7-9**
3. As expressed by the writer to the Hebrews, Jesus is:
 - a. The brightness of God’s Glory
 - b. The express image of His Person - **He 1:3**
4. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians...
 - a. Jesus is the “image of God” - **2 Co 4:4**
 - b. In the “face of Jesus Christ” is “the knowledge of the glory of God” - **2 Co 4:6**
5. From these passages, we learn that Jesus accurately and fully expresses the being and perfection of God!
6. I.e., by looking at Jesus (as He is revealed in the Word of God), we can see and know the Father, who is invisible!

[The next description of “**The Preeminent Christ**” is one that confused many and caused some to draw erroneous conclusions. We observe that Jesus is also...]

IV. THE FIRSTBORN OVER ALL CREATION (15)

A. CONCERNING THE TERM “FIRSTBORN”...

1. It can mean “the first one born” (or created)
 - a. Some have therefore concluded from this passage that Jesus is a created being, the first of all God’s creations
 - b. For example, those led by the Watchtower Society (who call themselves “Jehovah’s Witnesses”)
2. But it is also used in the Scriptures as **a metaphor** to describe one occupies the rank and privilege of being firstborn (without actually being “firstborn”)
 - a. Used by God in this way to refer to the nation of Israel - **Exo 4:22**

- b. Used by God in this way to refer to David, who was the youngest of eight brothers
- **Psa 89:20,27**
3. Therefore, any interpretation of this term must be in harmony with what is taught about Christ elsewhere...
 - a. And Jesus is clearly proclaimed to be the creator of **all** things - **Jn 1:1-3; Co 1:16**
 - b. It could not be said He is the creator of **all** things if He Himself was a created being!
 - c. Which is why the JW's try to get around these passages by inserting the modifier "**other**" four times in their NWT translation of **Co 1:16-17!**

B. THE PURPOSE OF THE PHRASE "FIRSTBORN OVER ALL CREATION"...

1. To stress that Jesus is preeminent overall creation, He has all the rights of one **as if** He were a "firstborn"
2. Just as God...
 - a. Declared **Israel** to be His "**firstborn**" **over the nations of the earth** (though not the first nation to exist)
 - b. Declared **David** to be His "**firstborn**" **over the kings of the earth** (though not the first king either)...so God has declared **Jesus** to be the "**firstborn**" **over all creation** (though He Himself was not a created being!)

[As already touched upon above, we learn from Paul that Jesus is also...]

V. THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS (16-17a)

A. THIS AMAZING TRUTH CONCERNING JESUS IS ALSO CONFIRMED BY...

1. John in his gospel - **Jn 1:3**
2. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews - **He 1:3**

B. FROM THESE VERSES WE LEARN WHEN THE WORLD WAS CREATED...

1. Jesus was the **creative agent** by which everything came into being!
2. Everything was created **for** Him also!

C. AS THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS...

1. It only follows that He existed before anything that was created
2. Which seems to be the idea of **17a** ("He is before all things")

[In addition to being the Creator of all things, in **verse 17** we learn that Jesus is also...]

VI. THE SUSTAINER OF ALL THINGS (17b)

A. "IN HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST..."

1. That is, in Him all things are kept in their present state
2. Their existence, order, and arrangement are continued in the present form by **His** power!

B. WHAT IF JESUS CHOSE TO REMOVE HIS POWER...?

1. Every created thing would fall into disorder!

2. Or sink back into nothingness!

[Truly in regards to **creation**, Jesus is “**The Preeminent Christ!**” But His preeminence also extends to the realm of **redemption**, suggested earlier in **vs. 13-14**, and now developed further in **vs. 18-20...**]

VII. THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH (18a)

A. THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST...

1. The word “church” comes from **ekklesia** {ek-klay-see’-ah}, meaning a congregation or assembly made up of people who have been “called out”
2. Those called out by the gospel of Christ into His kingdom form a great assembly or congregation
3. The term “church” is used in two senses:
 - a. **Universal** - the body of saved believers throughout the world
 - b. **Local** - a congregation of saved believers in one locality
4. In the context of **Co 1:18**, Paul is speaking of the church “universal” (though what we are about to say in the next point would be true in a “local” church as well)

B. AS THE HEAD, JESUS IS OVER THE CHURCH...

1. As we have already seen, He has all authority in heaven and earth - **Mt 28:18**
2. How much more so, should He hold the rank of preeminence in His Church!
3. He is the One, therefore, who controls the destiny of those in His church! - cf. **Re 2, 3**

[Jesus is also...]

VIII. THE BEGINNING, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD (18b)

A. THE WORD “BEGINNING”...

1. Comes from the Greek, **arche** {ar-khay’}
2. Various shades of meaning include...
 - a. Beginning, origin
 - b. The person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader
 - c. That by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause
 - d. The first place, principality, rule, magistracy

B. REMEMBER THE USE OF THE WORD “FIRSTBORN”...

1. It does not necessarily mean the **first** one, but can refer to the **preeminent** one
2. Jesus was not the first person to rise from the dead (cf. Jairus’ daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus)
3. But He is the first to rise, never to die again, and is declared elsewhere to be the “first fruits” of the resurrection - cf. **1 Co 15:20,23**
4. The term “first fruits” suggests “the cream of the crop”, i.e., that which is preeminent

C. THUS, IN REGARDS TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD...

1. Jesus is both the “origin, active cause” (the beginning) and the “firstborn from the dead”
2. He is the “active cause” of the resurrection: “in Christ all shall be made alive” - **1 Co 15:22**

3. By His own resurrection, never to die again, He is the “firstborn from the dead”, the “first fruits”, i.e., the preeminent one!

[Two more points are made by Paul in regards to “**The Preeminent Christ**” in this passage. The first is that in Jesus dwells...]

IX. THE FULLNESS OF ALL THINGS (19)

A. JESUS IS CLEARLY THE “FULLNESS” OF DEITY...

1. We have seen that He is “the image of the invisible God” - **Co 1:15**
2. Paul later declares that in Jesus “dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” - **Co 2:9**

B. JESUS IS ALSO OUR “FULLNESS”...

1. In Him we have “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” - **Co 1:14**
2. In Him we have “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” - **Co 2:3**
3. Yes, we are “complete in Him” - **Co 2:10**

[Finally, we learn that Jesus is...]

X. THE RECONCILER OF ALL THINGS TO GOD (20)

A. THE FATHER’S DESIRE IS TO RECONCILE TO HIMSELF...

1. **“things on earth”**
 - a. Which includes sinful man - cf. **2 Co 5:18-20**
 - b. Both Jews and Gentiles - cf. **Ep 2:14-18**
2. **“things in heaven”**
 - a. Admittedly, a difficult phrase
 - b. It would be easy to fall into vain speculation as to what this means (e.g., what things in heaven need reconciliation to God?)
 - c. Whatever Paul may be alluding to, the point is clear: Jesus is to be the reconciler of **all** things to God!

B. GOD IS ABLE TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS BY JESUS TO HIMSELF...

1. “having made peace through the blood of His cross”
2. Through the death of His Son, it is now possible for sinful man to be reconciled to God!
- **Ro 5:10; Co 1:21-22**

CONCLUSION

1. Paul had certainly come a long way in his understanding of Jesus since that day he met Him on the road to Damascus!
 - a. From saying “Who are you, lord?”
 - b. To proclaiming Jesus to be:
 - 1) The king over His kingdom
 - 2) The savior from our sins
 - 3) The image of the invisible God

- 4) The firstborn over all creation
 - 5) The creator of all things
 - 6) The sustainer of all things
 - 7) The head of the body, the church
 - 8) The beginning, the firstborn from the dead
 - 9) The fullness of all things
 - 10) The reconciler of all things to God
2. I trust that our own understanding and appreciation of Jesus has increased as a result of studying this passage!
 3. Perhaps we can also appreciate why Jesus so much praise and adoration in heaven - cf. **Re 5: 11-12**
 4. What are **we** doing to show our appreciation to Jesus, our “**preeminent and all-sufficient Savior?**”
 5. Consider the words of Jesus in **Luke 6:46**...implying that the best way we can praise Him is by obeying Him

Have you? Are you?

The Conversion Of The Colossians

Colossians 1:21-23

INTRODUCTION

1. We noticed in the previous lesson Paul describing “**The Pre eminent Christ**” - Co 1:13-20
2. The last point made by Paul was that Jesus was “**The Reconciler Of All Things**” - Co 1:20
3. As a case in point, Paul reminds the Colossians they too had been “reconciled” to God through Jesus Christ - Co 1:21-23

[In this study we will examine “**The Conversion Of The Colossians**” as described in this passage, with a view towards understanding and appreciating our own reconciliation with God...]

I. THE CONVERSION OF THE COLOSSIANS (21-23)

A. BEFORE THEIR CONVERSION...

1. Paul said they were “alienated and enemies”
 - a. The word “**alienated**” comes from **apallotrioo** {ap-al-lot-ree-o’-o}, which means:
 - 1) to alienate, estrange
 - 2) to be shut out from one’s fellowship and intimacy
 - b. The word “**enemies**” is from **echthros** {ech-thros’}, and describes that which is:
 - 1) hated, odious, hateful
 - 2) hostile, hating, and opposing another;
 - 3) used of men as at enmity with God by their sin
2. Why were they this way?
 - a. Because in both **thought** and **deed** they were sinners!
 - b. As Paul writes: “...enemies in your mind by wicked works”

B. BUT NOW THEY ARE RECONCILED...!

1. How so? Two things are mentioned in the context...
 - a. In vs. 20, Paul mentions “the blood of His cross”
 - b. In vs. 21-22, Paul says they were reconciled “in the body of His flesh through death”
-- Both of these phrases emphasize that Jesus suffered **in the flesh**, something some people in those days denied - cf. 2 Jn 7; He 2:9,14
2. Through the offering of Jesus’ body and blood, they were now reconciled (brought back) to God; they are now presented to God as:
 - a. “**holy**” - sanctified, set apart for God’s use
 - b. “**blameless**” - without being guilty of anything worthy of blame
 - c. “**irreproachable**” - guilty of nothing that can be called into to account; unproveable, unaccused, blameless
3. Note that this wonderful condition is how **God** views us (“in His sight”)!

C. THEIR RECONCILIATION TO GOD AND EXALTED CONDITION CONTINUES “IF”...

1. They “continue in the faith”
2. They remain “grounded and steadfast”
3. They “are not moved away from the hope of the gospel”

[In “**The Conversion Of The Colossians,**” we have seen...

- 1) That they had been grave sinners, enemies and alienated from God
- 2) Yet, they had been reconciled to God
 - a) Through Jesus’ death on the cross
 - b) Such so they were now “holy, blameless, and irreproachable in His sight”
- 3) But their reconciliation appears conditional, dependent upon their continued faithfulness and steadfast hope!

Now let’s make some...]

II. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

A. THEIR CONDITION PRIOR TO RECONCILIATION NOT UNIQUE...

1. True, they had been wicked sinners, enemies, and alienated from God
2. But so were we all! - cf. **Ep 2:1-3; Ti 3:3**
3. Anyone who thinks otherwise is ignorant of:
 - a. The terribleness of sin
 - b. The awesome holiness and justice required of God’s character
4. To better understand how the opposition of sin and God’s holiness...
 - a. Consider what **one** sin will do: make us as guilty as though we have broken the entire law! - cf. **Ja 2:10**
 - b. Consider the price necessary to redeem us from sin - the death of God’s Beloved Son!
 - c. Contemplate the “words of anguish” uttered by Jesus as He bore our sins upon the cross (“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”) - **Mt 27:46**

B. OUR RECONCILIATION WITH GOD IS MADE POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH JESUS’ DEATH ON THE CROSS...

1. Good works cannot reconcile us back to God
 - a. Such as “churchgoing”, acts of mercy and kindness, etc.
 - b. If so, then Cornelius would have been saved by them
 - 1) For he certainly was a “good man” - cf. **Ac 10:1-2**
 - 2) But as recounted by Peter, the angel told Cornelius that he still needed to have Peter tell him what to do to be saved - cf. **Ac 11:13-14**
2. Though “good works” are essential as disciples of Jesus Christ (cf. **Ti 2:14; 3:1,8,14**), the bottom line is this:
 - a. We are “justified” (declared “not guilty”) by Christ’s blood - **Ro 5:9**
 - b. Only the “blood of His cross” can cleanse us from sin! - **Ep 1:7; 1 Jn 1:7**

3. The crucial question, then, is how can one benefit from the blood of Jesus?
 - a. At first, through a penitent faith when we are baptized into Christ - **Ac 2:38**
 - 1) For in baptism, we are united with Christ in His death - **Ro 6:3-8**
 - 2) And in baptism, we are “clothed with” (or “put on”) Christ - **Ga 3:27**
 - So united with Christ and clothed with Him, we enjoy all the spiritual blessings to be found by being in Him, including “redemption through His blood”! - **Ep 1:7**
 - b. Then, as needed, we have access to the blood of Jesus through repentance and prayer - **1 Jn 9; e.g., Ac 8:22**
4. Only in this way can we be “holy, blameless, and irreproachable” in God’s sight!

C. OUR RECONCILIATION IS CONDITIONAL...!

1. Notice again that Paul says “**if indeed you continue...**” - **Co 1:23**
 - a. Once saved (reconciled to God), we can still be lost!
 - b. What about “the security of the believer?”
 - 1) Though the Bible does teach the security of the **believer...**
 - 2) It also teaches the insecurity of the **unbeliever**
 - 3) And it teaches that a **believer**, if not diligent, can become an **unbeliever!** - cf. **He 3:12-15; 16-4:2,11**
2. And so, Paul emphasizes that we must “continue in the faith”, which involves:
 - a. Being “grounded and steadfast” (thus the need for follow-up)
 - b. “not moved away from the hope of the gospel,” which can occur through:
 - 1) Error or false doctrine - cf. **2 Pe 3:17**
 - 2) Temptations to sin - cf. **2 Pe 2:20-22**
 - 3) Trials and hardships in life - cf. **Re 2:10**

CONCLUSION

1. What have we learned from “**The Conversion Of The Colossians?**”
 - a. First, a reminder to those who are Christians...
 - 1) Of where they once were
 - 2) Of the blessings they now enjoy in Christ
 - 3) Of the need to remain faithful to the end
 - b. But also, a lesson to those not Christians...
 - 1) Pointing out where they are right now in their sins, as God views them
 - 2) Revealing where they can be, if they will respond so as to benefit from the blessings of Jesus’ death on the cross
 - 3) That being a Christian will require continued steadfastness and growth on their part
2. We close with an observation concerning Paul’s remark about the gospel, which even in his day “was preached to every creature under heaven” (**1:23**)...
 - a. In this lesson, I have shared the basics of the gospel to every person who receives this lesson
 - b. Have you obeyed the gospel? If not, why not now? Remember it was Jesus who said:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. - Mk 16:15-16

Paul As A Minister

Colossians 1:24-29

INTRODUCTION

1. At this point in his epistle, Paul provides some insight into how he viewed his work as a minister of the gospel of Christ - **Co 1:24-29**
2. This passage can be of value to both:
 - a. **Preachers of the gospel**, in giving them insight as to how they view themselves and the work they are to perform
 - b. **All Christians...**
 - 1) First, to give them a better understanding of the work of a minister and what to expect from them
 - 2) And second, since all Christians are to imitate the example of Paul (**1 Co 11:1**), to learn those attitudes we should have toward our brethren whether we serve as “full-time” (i.e., fully-supported) ministers or not

[With that in mind, we notice first of all that...]

I. PAUL TOOK GREAT JOY IN SUFFERING FOR HIS BRETHREN (24)

A. PAUL HAD SUFFERED GREATLY THROUGHOUT HIS MINISTRY...

1. As he outlined in his second epistle to the Corinthians - **2 Co 11:23-29**
2. In this, he was not much different the rest of the apostles - **1 Co 4:9-13**

B. YET, IF THIS SUFFERING WAS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST AND HIS BRETHREN, PAUL WAS GLAD...!

1. As he said, “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you” - **Co 1:24**
2. He expressed the same thoughts to the Philippians - **Ph 2:17-18**
3. Remember, at the very time he wrote both of these epistles he was suffering as a prisoner at Rome in service to Christ and to them!

C. WHY WAS PAUL SO JOYFULLY WILLING TO SUFFER...?

1. One reason is given in this passage: “to fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.”
 - a. This is not to suggest that there was anything lacking in the atoning value of Christ’s sacrifice! - cf. **Co 2:14; He 10:12,14**
 - b. The following quotation I have found helpful: “We should bear in mind that although Christ by means of the afflictions which he endured rendered *complete* satisfaction to God, so that Paul is able to glory in nothing but the cross (Ga 6:14), *the enemies of Christ were not satisfied!* They hated Jesus with insatiable hatred, and wanted to add to his afflictions. But since he is no longer physically present on earth, their arrows, which are meant especially for him, strike his followers. It is in that sense that all true

believers are in his stead supplying what, as the enemies see it, is lacking in the afflictions which Jesus endured. Christ's afflictions overflow toward us." (**Hendrickson, New Testament Commentary, Exposition of Colossians and Philemon, p. 87**)

- c. Passages offered in support of this interpretation are **Mt 10:25; Mk 13:13; Jn 15:18-21; Ac 9:4,5; 2 Co 1:5,10; Ga 6:17; Ph 3:10; Re 12:13**
2. Paul gives another reason elsewhere he suffered joyfully for his brethren: for the same reason parents joyfully suffer for their children! - **2 Co 12:14-15**
 - a. Children are the parents' "pride and joy", and the parents will gladly sacrifice for their children!
 - b. So Paul viewed his brethren - **1 Th 2:19-20; Ph 4:1**

D. DO WE IMITATE PAUL IN THIS REGARD...?

1. Not only are we willing to share in the afflictions of Christ, but are we willing to suffer gladly for our brethren?
2. Do we consider our brethren as a source of great joy and pride?
3. Are we willing to joyfully expend time, energy, even "blood, sweat and tears" in serving them? - cf. **1 Jn 3:16**
4. Can we truthfully say "yes" if we...
 - a. Won't make the effort to assemble with them every opportunity that is available?
 - b. Won't try to encourage them when they are weak in the faith, or admonish them when they stray from the faith?
 - c. Aren't willing to love them, to patiently endure them, to quickly forgive them, even when they offend and sin against us?

[Let the example of Paul be our model, for in reality he was simply following the example of Christ (cf. **2 Co 8:9**). Next, we notice that...]

II. PAUL CONSIDERED HIMSELF A SERVANT AND A STEWARD (25-27)

A. HIS VIEW OF HIMSELF WAS REALLY QUITE A HUMBLE ONE..

1. The word "minister" is **diakonos** {dee-ak'-on-os}, and means "one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master; a servant, attendant, minister"
2. This is exactly how Paul viewed himself and other preachers - **1 Co 3:5-7**
3. How different from views held today by some preachers and their brethren, who exalt preachers above their brethren!
4. In particular, Paul considered himself a servant...
 - a. Of the church - **Co 1:24-25**
 - b. Of Jesus Christ - **Ph 1:1**
 - c. Of the gospel - **Ep 3:6-7**

B. AS A SERVANT, HE CONSIDERED HIMSELF A "STEWARD"...

1. He had received a "stewardship" (KJV, dispensation) from God
 - a. The word used is **oikonomia** {oy-kon-om-ee'-ah}
 - b. It means "the management of a household or of household affairs; specifically, the management, oversight, administration, of other's property"
2. He had been entrusted with the gospel of Jesus Christ!

- a. Which is called in this passage a “mystery”, for it had been hidden for ages
 - b. But has now been revealed to His saints (**Co 1:26**), indeed to all nations (**Ro 16:25-26**)
 - c. What is this “mystery”? To paraphrase Paul: “It is Christ in you (the Gentiles), the hope of glory” - **Co 1:27**
3. Paul considered it his duty as a “steward” to faithfully share that gospel to the nations - cf. **Ep 3:8-9; 1 Co 4:2**

C. HOW ABOUT US...?

1. Do we consider ourselves “servants”? We should! - cf. **Mk 10:42-45**
2. Do we serve one another? We should! - **Ga 5:13**
3. Do we consider ourselves “stewards” of the gospel?
 - a. That we have been entrusted with the riches of the gospel?
 - b. That to be faithful we must share them with others?

[Whether or not **we** view ourselves this way, it is how **God** views us, and we will be judged by how we have served as stewards (cf. **Mt 25:14-30**). The third and final point we can glean from our text is that...]

III. PAUL HAD PRIMARILY ONE GOAL IN LIFE (28-29)

A. TO PRESENT EVERY MAN PERFECT IN CHRIST...!

1. He was not out just to preach, just to make converts
2. He wanted to make mature disciples, who had become complete in Christ

B. TO ACCOMPLISH HIS GOAL, HE USED EVERY APPROPRIATE MEANS...

1. **He preached Jesus Christ!**
 - a. He proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ
 - b. His life, His teachings, His death, His resurrection
 - Only by so presenting Christ to the man, can a preacher hope to present the man to Christ as complete and mature - cf. **2 Co 3:18**
2. **He warned when necessary!**
 - a. His preaching was both positive and negative!
 - b. Yes, there is a place for “negative preaching”
 - 1) Cf. The Ten Commandments; also, the “reproof” and “correction” mentioned in **2 Ti 3:16**
 - 2) Negative preaching serves as “restraining rails” on the strait and narrow path to life!
 - c. Of course, it must be properly balanced with positive preaching
 - 1) Otherwise, we will simply bounce around and get hung up on the “restraining rails”, never making progress in our journey
 - 2) Positive preaching will assure that we keep progressing on the right track!
3. **He “taught” as well as “preached”!**
 - a. He did not limit himself to the public forum
 - b. He taught with private instruction as well - **Ac 20:20**
 - c. To present every man “perfect in Christ Jesus”, there is often a need for personal instruction that one does not find in the public assemblies of the church
 - d. Of course, wisdom helps to determine when - **Co 1:28**

4. **He expended effort and emotion!**
 - a. He “labored” toward this one goal of his
 - b. He “agonized” in doing so (the Greek word is **agonizomai** {ag-o-nid’-zom-ahee}, to endeavor with strenuous zeal, strive)
5. **He depended upon God in his labors!**
 - a. He realized that without God he was nothing, and could do nothing worth lasting - **1 Co 15:10**
 - b. So he always looked to God for help in accomplishing his goal - **2 Th 3:1; Co 4:3-4**

CONCLUSION

1. In concluding this lesson, again I seek to make application by asking...
 - a. Are we imitators of Paul?
 - b. Are we concerned about whether or not our brethren and others are being presented “perfect in Christ”?
 - c. Are we willing to expend the effort and the emotion necessary to reach this end?
2. If we will...
 - a. View our ourselves as Paul viewed himself, as servants and stewards
 - b. Consider our suffering for our brethren a great privilege and source of joy
 - Then I am convinced that we gladly devote ourselves to the same goal Paul had!
3. Let’s think on these things, and consider what we can be doing to “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”!

For those who have not been obedient to the gospel of Christ, perfection in Christ begins with that first step of faith...

Spiritual Maturity In Christ

Colossians 2:1-8

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Co 1:28-29**, we saw that Paul's primary goal in his labors was to "*present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*" That is, that they be "spiritually mature in Christ."
2. This being the case, we are not surprised to find Paul now writing to the Colossians of:
 - a. His great concern for them - **Co 2:1-3**
 - b. The reason for this concern - **Co 2:4-5**
 - c. Some exhortations in light of his concern - **Co 2:6-8**

[From these eight verses, there are a couple of things we can glean concerning the subject of "**Spiritual Maturity In Christ**". [First, from **vs. 1-5** we can take note of several...]

I. INDICATIONS OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY (1-5)

A. A DEEP CONCERN FOR OUR BRETHREN IN CHRIST... (1)

1. Remember that **Paul** is an example of spiritual maturity and thus worthy of our emulation - **1 Co 11:1**
2. We see that he had a concern for his brethren (notice **2 Co 11:28-29** also), even for those he personally had not seen!
3. **Epaphras** likewise demonstrated this "mark" of maturity - **Co 4:12-13**
4. Do we have such concern for our brethren?

B. A HEART THAT IS ENCOURAGED... (2)

1. The KJV uses the word "**comforted**"
2. It is the Will of God that we serve Him with hearts full of comfort and encouragement
 - a. Such was the concern of Jesus - **Lk 21:34; Jn 14:1,27**
 - b. Such was the frequent prayer of Paul - **2 Th 2:16-17**
3. A "troubled, anxious heart" is not the mark of a mature Christian!
4. Consider the example of Paul in facing impending death - **2 Ti 4:6-8,17-18**

C. A HEART KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS... (2)

1. I.e., a love similar to that experienced by David and Jonathan - **1 Sam 18:1**
2. The brethren at Colosse were well on their way in this regard - **Co 1:4**
3. How about us? Are we developing hearts "knit together in love"?

D. A FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING... (2)

1. Similar to having hearts that are encouraged, we need to have a strong assurance concerning ourselves and our salvation!
2. Of course, this assurance comes as we increase our "understanding" concerning the basis of our salvation

3. Indeed, the Word of God was so written to increase that understanding, and provide the assurance of our salvation - **1 Jn 5:13; 3:19**; note also **Ro 15:4**
4. As one matures in Christ, this “assurance” will increase, and it is indeed a “rich” blessing we have in Christ!

E. A KNOWLEDGE OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD... (2)

1. I.e., an understanding of the gospel, which once was hidden, but has now been revealed - cf. **Ep 3:3-6; Ro 16:25-26**
2. Thus, a good knowledge of the gospel of Christ is essential to maturity in Christ
3. Are we increasing in this knowledge?

F. GOOD ORDER AND STEADFASTNESS OF FAITH... (5)

1. The word “order”...
 - a. From **taxis** {tax'-is}, a military term, suggestive of men marching in proper order and precision, as in a drilling exercise
 - b. This suggests that a mature Christian is one whose walk as a disciple is in proper line with what is expected
2. The word “steadfastness” is a word which goes right along with this idea of marching in a straight line
3. What is our “life of faith” like?
 - a. Are we progressing in order, steadfast in our progress?
 - b. Or are we wavering constantly?

[These are but a few indications of spiritual maturity. If they are found in our lives, it is a good sign that progress is being made! From vs. **6-8**, we can also learn of some...]

II. STEPS TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY (6-8)

A. RECEIVE CHRIST AS “LORD”... (6)

1. This the Colossians had done
2. Today, many seem to want Jesus just as a “**Savior**,” but not as “**Lord**”
3. That is, they profess to want Him as “their personal Savior,” but then do not obey Him in what He commands them
4. Yet God has made Him both! - cf. **Ac 2:36**
5. Until we enthrone Christ as Lord in our lives, we cannot hope to become “perfect” (complete, mature) in Christ
6. Again, Paul provides a good example - e.g., **Ga 2:20**

B. WALK IN CHRIST... (6-7)

1. Having received Christ as Lord, we must now “walk” (or live) in Him
2. **Verse 7** explains what it means to “walk in Christ”
 - a. “**rooted**” - Christ must be the foundation and source of nutrition in our lives (like a tree depends upon its roots)
 - b. “**built up in Him**” - allowing ourselves to become the kind of building He would have us to be
 - c. “**established in the faith**” - well taught and grounded in the teachings of Christ, and

living by them

- d. **“abounding in it with thanksgiving”** - ever overflowing with an attitude of gratitude

C. BEWARE... (8)

1. To grow spiritually, we must beware of dangers which would hinder our spiritual growth
2. Otherwise, in our zeal to grow we can easily be misled by false doctrines which promise an easy route to spiritual maturity, but do not deliver on that promise!
3. Thus the need for “negative preaching” as the occasion may call for it

CONCLUSION

1. Our next lesson will look at some of those false doctrines which promise much, but give nothing of true value
2. For the moment, let's close by asking two questions:
 - a. **Why should we even be concerned with growing in spiritual maturity in Christ?**
 - 1) Because in Him “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” - **Co 2:3**
 - 2) Because He has warned of what will occur if we do not mature and “bear fruit” - **Jn 15:1-2**
 - b. **How does one initially receive Christ as Lord?**
 - 1) By doing what He says, i.e., the Father's will - **Lk 6:46; Mt 7:21**
 - 2) This includes the command to repent and be baptized, for thereby one receives remission of sins as they also “put on Christ” (i.e., “receive Christ”) - **Ac 2:36-38; Ga 3:26-27**

Believer, Beware!

Colossians 2:8-23

INTRODUCTION

1. It was Paul's desire that his brethren be "perfect (complete) in Christ" - **Co 1:28; 2:1-3**
2. But there were influences at Colosse which endangered their salvation, against which Paul warns in **Co 2:8-23**
3. As we consider what those threats were, we see similar threats today as well!
4. In other words, subtle (and some not so subtle) influences which may promise us much, but can easily lead us away from Christ!

[For example, we notice from **vs. 8-10** that at Colosse there was the danger of...]

I. PHILOSOPHIES AND TRADITIONS OF MEN (8-10)

A. THE DANGER OF MAN-MADE PHILOSOPHY AND TRADITION...

1. They "**cheat**" you
 - a. They don't deliver what they may promise
 - b. They can even cheat you of your salvation!
 - 1) By rendering our worship and service to God as "vain"
 - 2) As Jesus warned in **Mt 15:9**
2. This they do through "**empty deceit**"
 - a. It is not evident (otherwise, none would accept it)
 - b. But like many of the workings of Satan, it is through "deception"

B. WE ARE FACED WITH SIMILAR INFLUENCES TODAY...

1. The "philosophies" of:
 - a. Atheism
 - b. Evolution
 - c. Humanism
2. The "traditions of men," found rampant in:
 - a. Protestant denominations
 - b. Catholicism (both "Roman" and "Orthodox")
 - c. Various cults
3. Though these "philosophies" and "traditions of men" may possess a lot of truth, it is the error in them that can lead one away from the pure and simple doctrine of Jesus Christ!

C. WE NEED TO KEEP IN MIND...

1. In "Jesus Christ" are found **all** the treasures of wisdom and knowledge - **Co 2:3**
2. In "Jesus Christ" is to be found the **fulness** of the Godhead bodily - **Co 2:9**

3. In “Jesus Christ” we are **complete** - **Co 2:10**
4. As Peter wrote in his second epistle: “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us **all** things that pertain to life and godliness , through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,” - **2 Pe 1:2-3**

[So “**Believer, Beware!**” when anyone suggests that we need the philosophies or traditions of men in addition or instead of Christ! In **vs. 11-17**, Paul deals with what was a real problem in the first century church...]

II. JUDAISTIC CEREMONIALISM (11-17)

A. THE PROBLEM IN THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH...

1. Many Jewish Christians felt it necessary for Gentile Christians to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses in **addition** to following Christ - cf. **Ac 15:1-5**
2. The early church had to constantly deal with this problem
 - a. Which they did at Jerusalem (where the problem originated) - **Ac 15:6-27**
 - b. Which Paul did in writing Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians
3. Here in **Co 2:11-17**, Paul deals with the problem by pointing out:
 - a. Through baptism into Christ, we experience the “true circumcision”, which is a cutting away of the sins of the flesh - **Co 2:11-13**
 - b. By His death on the cross, Jesus has taken the Old Law out of the way - **Co 2:14-15**; cf. **Ep 2:14-16**
 - c. Therefore, we are to let no one try to judge (condemn) us in matters of the Old Law - **Co 2:16-17**

B. TODAY, THERE ARE MANY WHO STILL TRY TO BIND THE OLD LAW UPON CHRISTIANS...

1. Various denominations with their Sabbaths and food regulations
2. Other religions with their separate priesthood and many other practices, based upon the Old Testament, and not the New!

C. AS THOSE IN CHRIST...

1. We have died to the Law and Jewish ceremonialism (this especially pertains to Jewish Christians) - **Ro 7:1-6**
2. We have been set free, and need to beware of becoming “entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” - **Ga 5:1**
3. If we seek justification by our observance of things found in the Old Law, we are fallen from grace! - **Ga 5:2-4**

[So “**Believer, Beware!**” when people try to impose things upon you which are based upon the Law of Moses. Remember, “you are complete in **Him**.” In **vs. 18-19**, we see there was still another danger at Colosse...]

III. THE WORSHIP OF ANGELS (18-19)

A. WHY WOULD PEOPLE WORSHIP ANGELS...?

1. Perhaps because they felt angels were needed as **“intercessors”**
2. Perhaps with **“a sense of humility”**, they felt they could not go to God (or even Jesus) directly

B. THE PROBLEM WITH ANGEL WORSHIP...

1. It is actually the result of a **“false humility”** and based upon one’s **“vain imagination”** - **Co 2:18** (cf. **He 4:14-16**, where we learn we can “come boldly to the throne of grace”)
2. It actually diverts one away from Christ, the rightful **“Head of the body”** - **Co 2:19**
 - a. For this reason, angels refused any semblance of worship - **Re 22:8-9**
 - b. And so did the apostle Peter - **Ac 10:25-26**

C. TODAY, SOME RELIGIONS HAVE DEVELOPED A COUNTERPART TO THE WORSHIP OF ANGELS...

1. E.g., Catholicism with its veneration of Mary and the “saints”
2. The reasoning is similar: “humility” (“We need them to intercede for us”)
3. Though an attempt is made to distinguish between “veneration” and “worship”, in practice the distinction is lost among the average person
4. And the result is still the same: “not holding fast to the Head,” venerating other beings rather than Christ!

[Finally, from **vs. 20-23** we can glean that there was the problem of...]

IV. ASCETICISM (20-23)

A. ASCETICISM HAS OFTEN BEEN OFFERED AS A KEY TO “SELF-CONTROL”...

1. Such as fasting and other forms of abstinence
2. Or self-flagellation (beating one’s self with whips)

B. BUT ASCETICISM IS OF NO REAL VALUE AGAINST THE “INDULGENCE OF THE FLESH”...

1. As Paul points out in **Co 2:23**
2. Indeed, transformation comes through “renewing the **mind**”, not afflicting the **body**
 - a. As Paul wrote in **Ro 12:1-2**
 - b. Yes, those who “set their minds on the things of the Spirit” are the ones “who live according to the Spirit” - **Ro 8:5**
 - 1) They are the ones who by the Spirit will be able to “put to death the deeds of the body” - **Ro 8:13**
 - 2) For the “fruit of the Spirit” includes self-control - **Ga 5:22-23**

C. TODAY, WE MUST BEWARE OF THE FALSE CLAIMS OF ASCETICISM...!

1. Fasting has a place in the lives of Christians - cf. **Ac 13:2-3; 14:23; 1 Co 7:5; 2 Co 11:27**
 - a. But not for the purpose of developing self-control!
 - b. Rather as a means of humbling oneself before God as we pray, that God might hear our prayer - cf. **Ezr 8:21; Mt 6:17-18**
2. Those religions that would teach various forms of “asceticism” as a means of developing

- spiritual maturity would have us believe that “the secret” is in such “neglect of the body”
3. But Christ is “the secret”, and by holding fast to Him we find the ability to “crucify the flesh with its passions and desires.” - **Ga 5:24**

CONCLUSION

1. As we live the Christian life, attempting to mature spiritually, beware of any doctrine or teaching of man that suggests we need more than Jesus Christ!
2. Remember, He is “**the**” way (not “**a**” way) - **Jn 14:6**
3. And we are **complete** in Him!

Are you **in** Him? - cf. **Ga 3:26-27...**

Basics For Living In Christ

Colossians 3:1-11

INTRODUCTION

1. In **chapters 1-2**, Paul has maintained that Christ is “all-sufficient” in matters of salvation and overcoming sin - cf. **Co 2:10**
2. Beginning now in **chapter 3**, Paul gives some basic and practical admonitions that pertain to living a life in Christ
3. When carried out, these “**Basics For Living In Christ**” will assure that we find in Christ everything we need for this life and the one to come

[The first admonition is found in **vs. 1-4...**]

I. SEEK THE HEAVENLY (1-4)

A. SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE... (1-2)

1. Why is this so important?
 - a. It is essential if we desire to be “transformed” - cf. **Ro 12:2**
 - b. It is necessary if we want to be able to “live according to the Spirit” - cf. **Ro 8:5-6**
2. How do we “seek those things which are above”?
 - a. By directing our minds’ attention to such things mentioned in **Ph 4:8**
 - b. More specifically, by setting our attention on the Word of God, where we find:
 - 1) Christ foreshadowed and foretold in the Old Testament
 - 2) Christ’s life and teachings in the Gospels
 - 3) Christ’s church in the Book of Acts
 - 4) Christ’s fuller teachings in the Epistles
 - 5) Christ’s encouragement and ultimate victory in the Book of Revelation

B. FURTHER REASONS TO SEEK THOSE THINGS ABOVE... (3-4)

1. **We “died” (3)**
 - a. This occurs when one is baptized into Christ, which is a burial into His death in which we are “crucified with Him” - cf. **Ro 6:3-6**
 - b. We “died” to sin , that we might be free from sin and now live with Christ - cf. **Ro 6:7-13**
2. **Thus, we were also “raised with Christ” (1)**
 - a. Which occurs when one comes forth from baptism - **Co 2:12** (“...in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him...”)
 - b. We were raised so that we might “walk in newness of life” - **Ro 6:4**
3. **Our life is “hidden with Christ in God” (3)**
 - a. As Paul wrote to the Galatians: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the

Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” - **Ga 2:20**

- b. We have denied self, crucified self, so it is now Christ Who is to live in us!
- 4. **When Christ appears in glory, so will we! (4)**
 - a. The first three reasons for us to “seek the heavenly” were based upon what has happened in the “past”
 - b. This motivation is predicated upon what is promised for the “future”!

[And what a wonderful promise that is! But to obtain that promise requires not only that we set our “minds” on things proper, but that we properly deal with our “bodies” as well. To put it another way, from **vs. 5-9** we learn that we must also...]

II. SLAY THE EARTHLY (5-9)

A. WE MUST “PUT TO DEATH” THE SENSUAL SINS... (5-7)

- 1. Those that appeal to the “**lust of the flesh**”
 - a. **Fornication**
 - 1) Grk., **porneia** {por-ni’-ah}
 - 2) A general term for any illicit sexual intercourse; includes adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality
 - b. **Uncleanness**
 - 1) Grk., **akatharsia** {ak-ath-ar-see’-ah}
 - 2) Uncleanness in a moral sense: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living
 - c. **Passion** (inordinate affection, KJV)
 - 1) Grk., **pathos** {path’-os}
 - 2) Used by the Greeks in either a good or bad sense; in the NT in a bad sense, it means depraved passion, vile passions
 - d. **Evil desire** (evil concupiscence, KJV)
 - 1) Grk., **epithumia** {ep-ee-thoo-mee’-ah}
 - 2) Desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden, lust
- 2. Also that which appeals to the “**lust of the eyes**”
 - a. **Covetousness**
 - 1) Grk., **pleonexia** {pleh-on-ex-ee’-ah}
 - 2) Greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice
 - b. Described by Paul to be equivalent to idolatry!
 - 1) For covetousness puts things in the place of God
 - 2) We are to set our minds on things above (where God is), but when we covet things we have our minds on things below, making such things our idols!
- 3. Motivation for putting these things to death
 - a. To avoid the coming wrath of God! - **Co 2:6-7**
 - b. It’s one thing to do these things when we “lived in them”, but in Christ we have “died to them”!

B. WE MUST ALSO “PUT OFF” THE SOCIAL SINS... (8-9)

- 1. Sins of the “**emotions**”
 - a. **Anger**
 - 1) Grk., **orge** {or-gay’}

- 2) Movement or agitation of the soul, impulse, desire, any violent emotion, but esp. anger
- b. **Wrath**
 - 1) Grk., **thumos** {thoo-mos'}
 - 2) Passion, angry, heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again
- c. **Malice**
 - 1) Grk., **kakia** {kak-ee'-ah}
 - 2) Malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure
2. Sins of the “**tongue**”
 - a. **Blasphemy**
 - 1) Grk., **blasphemia** {blas-fay-me'-ah}
 - 2) Slander, detraction, speech injurious, to another's good name; impious and reproachful speech injurious to divine majesty
 - b. **Filthy language** (filthy communication, KJV)
 - 1) Grk., **aischrologia** {ahee-skhol-og-ee'-ah}
 - 2) Foul speaking, low and obscene speech
 - c. **Lying**
 - 1) Grk., **pseudomai** {psyoo'-dom-ahee}
 - 2) To lie, to speak deliberate falsehoods; to deceive one by a lie, to lie to
3. The reason for putting off all these things: we must complete in **practice** what we started in **principle** - **Co 3:9b**
 - a. When we were baptized, we “put off” the old man with his deeds (in principle) - **Co 2: 11-12; 3:9**
 - b. In practice, it does not occur overnight, thus the need for such admonitions as: “But now you must also put off all these...” - **Co 3:8**

[Finally, and briefly, we notice in **vs. 10-11** an admonition by Paul which will be expanded upon in the next section (**12-17**). He encourages us to...]

III. STRENGTHEN THE CHRISTLY (10-11)

A. FOR WE HAVE PUT ON THE NEW MAN... (10)

1. In baptism into Christ, we “put on Christ” - **Ga 3:27**
2. Thus, in **principle** we also put on “the new man” who is renewed “according to the image of Him who created him”
3. What we have done in **principle** (**Co 3:10**), we will need to do in **practice** (cf. **Co 3:12**)

B. FOR THE GOAL IS “CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL”... (11)

1. To be renewed according to the image of Christ! - cf. **Ro 8:29**
2. To become like Christ, and in so doing, destroy the barriers that have long divided man!

CONCLUSION

1. This is what might be called “the whole duty of man” in New Testament terms: **to be renewed according to the image of Christ!**

2. To accomplish this goal, we must heed the admonitions of Paul and...
 - a. **Seek The Heavenly**
 - b. **Slay The Earthly**
 - c. **Strengthen The Christly**

3. We will examine more what is involved in “strengthening the Christly” in the next study - **Co 3:12-17**

4. For now, did you notice that everything in this chapter assumes that one has been “raised with Christ” (cf. **Co 3:1**, “**If then** you were raised with Christ...”)?
 - a. How are we raised with Christ?
 - b. Paul has already described how, in **Co 2:11-13**, where we learn that it is in baptism that God will raise one who has faith in the working of God!

Have you been baptized into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (**Ac 2:38**), and to be able to walk in newness of life (**Ro 6:3-5**)...?

The Christian's Apparel

Colossians 3:12-17

INTRODUCTION

1. In the first part of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, we have noticed several admonitions for living the full life in Jesus Christ...
 - a. “Seek The Heavenly” (3:1-4)
 - b. “Slay The Earthly” (3:5-9)
 - c. “Strengthen The Christly” (3:10-11)
2. Beginning in vs. 8-10, Paul uses the metaphor of “putting off” and “putting on” to describe what is necessary to grow as Christians
3. He continues this metaphor in verse 12, as he expands upon the things Christians are to “put on”
4. As we examine vs. 12-17, we shall do so from the perspective of what constitutes “**The Christian’s Apparel**”, that is, those things we must “put on” to be properly adorned as disciples of Jesus Christ

[Observe from vs. 12-14, then, how we must adorn ourselves with...]

I. THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST (12-14)

A. EIGHT VIRTUES ARE LISTED THAT WE ARE TO “PUT ON”...

1. Two describe **how we are to treat others** .
 - a. **Tender mercies** (bowels of mercies, KJV)
 - 1) Grk., **splagchnon** {splangk’-non} **oiktirmos** {oyk-tir-mos’ }
 - 2) The first word literally means “bowels...for the bowels were regarded by the Hebrews as the seat of the tenderer affections, esp. kindness, benevolence, compassion”
 - 3) The second word describes “compassion, pity, mercy”
 - 4) Thus we are to have “bowels in which compassion resides”, or as we might say today, a heart of compassion
 - b. **Kindness**
 - 1) Grk., **chrestotes** {khray-stot’-ace }
 - 2) Benignity, kindness
2. Two depict **the state of mind we are to possess**.
 - a. **Humility** (humbleness of mind, KJV)
 - 1) Grk., **tapeinophrosune** {tap-i-nof-ros-oo’-nay }
 - 2) The having a humble opinion of one’s self; a deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness; modesty, humility, lowliness of mind
 - b. **Meekness**
 - 1) Grk., **praotes** {prah-ot’-ace }

- 2) Gentleness, mildness, meekness
3. Three virtues relate to **how we should act when mistreated**
 - a. **Longsuffering**
 - 1) Grk., **makrothumia** {mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah}
 - 2) Patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs
 - b. **Bearing with one another**
 - 1) The word "bearing" (forbearing, KJV) is **anechomai** {an-ekh'-om-ahee}
 - 2) To sustain, to bear, to endure
 - c. **Forgiving one another**
 - 1) The word "forgiving" is **charizomai** {khar-id'-zom-ahee}
 - 2) Meaning "to do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favor to, gratify; to grant forgiveness, to pardon"
 - 3) Forgiving others is demanded, because we have been forgiven by Christ!
4. The final virtue mentioned is **love**...
 - a. The Grk. word is **agape** {ag-ah'-pay}, meaning good will, benevolence
 - b. It is described by Paul as "the bond of perfection"
 - 1) I.e., "the perfect tie that binds" the other virtues together (like a belt binds pieces of clothing)
 - 2) Without love, none of the other virtues can last; with it, the others can be easily maintained

B. TOGETHER, THESE VIRTUES DISPLAY "THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST"...

1. Are they not the qualities of Jesus that endear us to Him?
2. If we adorn these virtues, then, we will be adorning ourselves with the "character of Christ"!
3. Is this not the very idea of **Co 3:10**?

[Wouldn't it be wonderful, if we could be more successful in "putting on" the character of Christ?

- ♦ Think of the churches that could have been spared divisions and contentions!
- ♦ Think of the families that could have been saved, if more Christians had so adorned themselves!

Remember, it begins with "seeking the heavenly" (**3:1-4**) and "slaying the earthly" (**3:5-9**). At this point, I am stretching Paul's metaphor of "putting on" further than he did, but to "the character of Christ" we must also adorn ourselves with...]

II. THE PEACE OF GOD (15)

A. THIS "PEACE OF GOD" MUST RULE IN OUR HEARTS...

1. Why? Because we were called to be at peace in one body (the church)!
 - a. Jesus died on the cross to make peace! - **Ep 2:14-18**
 - b. If we disrupt the peace of the body (church), we disrupt the work of Christ on the cross!
 - c. Thus, we must be diligent to "keep the unity of The Spirit in the bond peace" - **Ep 4:3**
2. Generally, where there is contention and strife, it is among members of the body who are not letting the peace of God rule in **their** hearts

3. Peace in the body (the church) begins with peace ruling in our hearts!

B. LETTING THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN OUR HEARTS...

1. It must start with our setting our minds on things above
 - a. Remember, this passage assumes that we carry out the admonition in **Co 3:1-2**
 - b. Only a mind that is “spiritual” can enjoy peace from God - cf. **Ro 8:5-6**
2. It is experienced as we engage in thankful prayer
 - a. Paul tells us to be thankful in **Co 3:15**
 - b. But he makes the connection between thankful prayer and the peace of God more clearly in **Ph 4:6-7**
3. And it comes as we follow the teachings and example of the apostles, like Paul - cf. **Ph 4:9**

[Again, how wonderful it would be for churches and families if all professing Christians would adorn themselves with such qualities as “the character of Christ” and “the peace of God”! But there is more we need to add to our “wardrobe”...]

III. THE WORD OF CHRIST (16)

A. WE ARE TO LET THE WORD OF CHRIST “DWELL” IN US...

1. That is, the Word is to live, to abide, to have free course in our lives
2. This is possible only through a serious effort to learn it (via self-study, Bible classes, sermons, etc.)
3. But learning is only the **first** step!
 - a. For the Word to truly “dwell” in us, we must **obey** it!
 - b. Sadly, many who study never make the application, and remain “hearers only” - cf. **Ja 1:22-25**

B. NOTICE ALSO THAT THE WORD IS TO DWELL IN US “RICHLY”...

1. This happens when we add to our “study” of the Word of God the element of “song”
 - a. This truth we glean as we notice **how** Paul says we are to let the Word dwell in us richly...
 - b. I.e., by “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns...”
2. Does this not make sense? For if the Word is to dwell in us “richly”...
 - a. It must not only involve the **mind** through study
 - b. It must also involve the **heart** (emotions) through song!

C. THIS EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF “PROPER SINGING”...

1. It is the means through which the Word of Christ dwells in us “richly”
2. For this to happen, of course, we must sing properly
 - a. We must understand what we are singing (otherwise, we are not taught and admonished)
 - b. Our heart (emotions) must be involved, otherwise we are not singing “with grace in our hearts”
 - c. Fortunately, this does not require formal training, for the emphasis is not on how it sounds to the ear, but how it touches the heart!
 - d. Thus, **all** can and should sing (in the heart at least, if unable to do so with the mouth)

3. For those who have not learned the “joy of singing”, they are depriving themselves of the means God intended for the Word to dwell in us “richly”!

[Through singing, then, we can add to “**The Christian’s Apparel**” the “Word of Christ”. Finally, the “**The Christian’s Apparel**” must also include...]

IV. THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST (17)

A. THIS REALLY COMPLETES “THE CHRISTIAN’S APPAREL”...

1. For if we say or do **all** “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (that is, by His authority)
2. Then it is evident that we have really “put on” the LORD Jesus Christ in our lives!

B. SADLY, MANY FAIL TO ADORN THEMSELVES WITH A RESPECT FOR CHRIST’S AUTHORITY...!

1. What they do, they do by their own authority, “in the name of personal preference”
 - a. They worship in whatever way pleases them, rather than seek out in the Word of God what pleases the Lord
 - b. They make the church “in their own image”, adding the traditions of men to the commands of God!
2. But in view of what the Lord taught, we should remember...
 - a. There is a such a thing as “vain worship”! - **Mt 15:7-9**
 - b. Many religious people will still be lost, because they did not submit to the “will of the Father” - **Mt 7:21-23**
 - 1) Instead, they practiced “lawlessness”
 - 2) Grk., **anomia** {an-om-ee’-ah}, the condition of without law, because ignorant of it, or because of violating it
3. Therefore, “...whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the **Lord** Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” - **Co 3:17**

CONCLUSION

1. We have suggested that four things make up “**The Christian’s Apparel**”...
 - a. The Character of Christ
 - b. The Peace of God
 - c. The Word of Christ
 - d. The Authority of Christ
2. Certainly the world (and many churches) would be a much better place if all who profess Jesus to be Lord so adorned themselves
3. But what other motives might there be to do so? Four are given in this passage...
 - a. We are “God’s elect” (His chosen ones) - **Co 3:12**
 - b. We are “holy” (set apart for a sacred purpose) - **Co 3:12**
 - c. We are “beloved by God” - **Co 3:12**
 - d. We have been “forgiven by Christ” - **Co 3:13**

Are these not reasons sufficient to putting on “**The Christian’s Apparel**”?

Guidelines For The Family And Business

Colossians 3:18-4:1

INTRODUCTION

1. The theme throughout the Book of Colossians is that Jesus Christ is our “**All-Sufficient And Preeminent Savior**” - cf. **Co 1:16-18; Co 2:3,9-10**
2. As a demonstration of Jesus as our “all-sufficient” Savior, we now find His apostle Paul giving guidelines by which we can successfully conduct our family and business matters! - **Co 3:18-4:1**
3. This passage illustrates that the “preeminence” of Christ reaches even to the **secular concerns** of our lives

[Beginning with **verse 18**, let’s examine some of these guidelines Christ has given us...]

I. WIVES, SUBMIT TO YOUR HUSBANDS (18)

A. DEFINING THE WORD “SUBMIT”...

1. The Greek word is **hupotasso** {hoop-ot-as’-so}
2. It means to...
 - a. arrange under, to subordinate
 - b. subject, put in subjection
 - c. subject one’s self, obey
 - d. submit to one’s control
 - e. yield to one’s admonition or advice
 - f. obey, be subject
3. Thus, wives are to be in submission to their husbands, “as to the Lord” (**Ep 5:22**)

B. THIS IS SAID TO BE “FITTING IN THE LORD”...

1. The word “fitting”...
 - a. Grk., **aneko** {an-ay’-ko}
 - b. To pertain to what is due, duty, as was fitting
2. To be willing to submit to another is certainly in keeping with Jesus’ own teaching and example - **Mt 20:25-28**
3. It is also in keeping with what is expected of **all** Christians...
 - a. We are to submit to one another - **Ep 5:21**
 - b. We are to submit those who rule over us in the faith - **He 13:17**
 - c. We are to submit to the ordinances of government - **1 Pe 2:13-15**
 - d. Christian servants were to submit to their masters - **1 Pe 2:18**
 - e. Younger Christians are to submit to the elders, and to one another as well, even as we submit to God - **1 Pe 5:5-7**

C. IF WIVES DO NOT SUBMIT TO THEIR HUSBANDS...

1. They may never win their unbelieving husbands to Christ - cf. **1 Pe 3:1-2**
2. God will not be gracious to them - cf. **1 Pe 5:5**
3. There is even a possibility that it may have a strong bearing on the sexual orientation of the children!
 - a. A study by Dr. Irving Bieber was made of the family background of 106 male homosexuals (cf. "What Everyone Should Know About Homosexuality", LaHaye, p. 71-72)
 - b. Dr. Bieber found that:
 - 1) 81 mothers were dominating
 - 2) 62 of the mothers were overprotective
 - 3) 66 mothers made the homosexual their favorite child
 - 4) 82 of the fathers spent very little time with their sons
 - 5) 79 fathers maintained a detached attitude toward them
 - c. The more "modern" man learns through tested research, the more we begin to realize that Jesus and His Word were right all along!
 - 1) Whatever the subject, Christ certainly knows best
 - 2) And He should...remember, He's the Creator of all things!

[And now, for an often much needed word to the husbands...]

II. HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES (19)

A. PAUL EXPANDS UPON THIS THEME IN HIS LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS...

1. Our role model is Christ, and His love for the Church - **Ep 5:25-27**
 - a. Husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the Church
 - b. I.e., with a sacrificial love
2. Another example is the kind of love we have for our own bodies - **Ep 5:28-29**
 - a. Just as one "nourishes" and "cherishes" his own body, so he should his wife
 - 1) The word "nourish" comes from **ektrepho** {ek-tref'-o}, and means...
 - a) to nourish up to maturity, to nourish
 - b) to nurture, bring up
 - 2) The word "cherish" is from **thalpo** {thal'-po}, meaning...
 - a) to warm, keep warm
 - b) to cherish with tender love, to foster with tender care
 - b. Again, this is how Christ loves the Church!

B. THIS LOVE INCLUDES BEING FREE FROM "BITTERNESS"...

1. "and do not be bitter toward them" - **Co 3:19**
 - a. The Greek word for "bitter" is **pikraino** {pik-rah'-ee-no}
 - b. It means...
 - 1) to produce a bitter taste in the stomach
 - 2) to embitter; exasperate
 - 3) render angry, indignant
 - 4) to be embittered, irritated
 - 5) to visit with bitterness, to grieve (deal bitterly with)
2. Peter gives us some insight as to why it is important not to be "bitter toward them" - cf.

1 Pe 3:7

- a. They are the more delicate partner in the relationship (“a weaker vessel”)
 - 1) Capable of providing the motherly tenderness and sensitivity crucial in the early development of children
 - 2) Bitterness will make the wife (mother) coarse and resentful, contributing to the environment of a “dysfunctional” family
- b. They are “heirs together of the grace of life”
 - 1) In Christ, they are not just wives, they are “sisters in Christ”
 - 2) Therefore, worthy of love and honor, not bitterness!
- c. How we treat them determines the efficacy of our prayers (“that your prayers may not be hindered”)!

[When husbands love their wives as Christ loves the Church, and are not bitter toward them, it is much easier for wives to be submissive to their husbands. Since husbands are to be the “leader” in the family, then let them show leadership by fulfilling their responsibility! I dare say that the wives will then gladly follow, and the family (with our society) will benefit. Speaking of the family, what about the children?]

III. CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS (20)**A. THE VALUE OF SUCH OBEDIENCE...**

1. It is well-pleasing to the Lord (it is certainly what He did - **Lk 2:51-52**)
2. It contains an important promise - cf. **Ep 6:1-3**

B. THE SERIOUSNESS OF REBELLIOUSNESS...

1. Consider how God viewed lack of obedience in the Old Testament...
 - a. On par with witchcraft and idolatry! - **1 Sam 15:22-23**
 - b. The punishment in some cases for rebellious children was death! - **Deu 21:18-21**
2. Therefore, rebelliousness is not to be taken lightly by parents...
 - a. It is not “just a stage they go through” (for some never leave it)
 - b. It is a serious problem that should concern us
 - c. It is a problem that requires much prayer for the wisdom to bring the child out of it!

[What can help the children to escape the sin of rebellion is if their fathers take to heart what is said to them...]

IV. FATHERS, DON'T PROVOKE YOUR CHILDREN (21)**A. FATHERS HAVE AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY...**

1. They are to be understanding and compassionate, yet firm
 - a. Joshua was strong in his resolve for his family to serve the Lord - **Josh 24:14-15**
 - b. Eli, however, was condemned because of his failure to restrain his sons - **1 Sam 3:11-14**
2. They thus have the responsibility to provide spiritual training for their children - **Ep 6:4**
 - a. They do it by **their example** - the following quotes are taken from “**The Father - God’s Representative In The Family**”, printed in Pulpit Helps
 - 1) “A child tends to look upon the Heavenly Father as he does his earthly father. If his

earthly father is kind, loving, just, forgiving and good, a child will perceive of God as the same. If, on the other hand, his earthly father is cruel, unloving, unkind, the child will perceive the heavenly Father in the same manner.”

- 2) “Generally speaking, the concept which all people have of God is the concept each has of his father. Such is extremely difficult to erase. It is vitally important for a man to live the kind of life, and be the kind of person who is demonstrating to his sons and daughters what God is really like - for the father is God’s representative here on earth. This provides an inestimable privilege, and also a solemn responsibility.”
- b. They do it by **their instruction** (whether it be formal or informal, cf. **Deu 6:6-7**)

B. HOW CAN FATHERS BE GUILTY OF PROVOKING THEIR CHILDREN...?

1. By being unfair in their discipline
 - a. Punishing without fair warning
 - b. Showing favoritism in the exercise of discipline
2. By being hypocritical in our teaching and example
 - a. “Do as I say, not as I do” has no place in the vocabulary of Christian fathers
 - b. Not only does hypocrisy provoke children to wrath, it often is the underlying reason why children leave the faith!

[As a father who is still involved in raising children, I know all this does not come easy. But with the help of God we can apply these admonitions of the apostle of our Lord. The remaining admonitions would have fallen under guidelines for the **family** in the First Century (A.D.), since most Christians would have either been slaves in another family or had some slaves in their own family. Today, however, I believe that we can still apply these verses to our **business** relationships...]

V. SERVANTS (EMPLOYEES), OBEY YOUR MASTERS (EMPLOYERS) (22-25)

A. THE MANNER OF OBEDIENCE IS CLEARLY DEFINED... (22-23)

1. “**in ALL things**” (except that which would violate God’s Will, of course - **Ac 5:29**)
2. Not with “**eye-service**”
 - a. Grk., **ophthalmodouleia** {of-thal-mod-oo-li’-ah}
 - b. Service performed [only] under the master’s eyes
 - 1) For the master’s eye usually stimulates to greater diligence
 - 2) His absence, on the other hand, renders a sluggish response
3. Not as “**men-pleasers**”
 - a. Grk., **anthropareskos** {anth-ro-par’-es-kos}
 - b. Studying to please man, courting the favor of men
4. But in “**sincerity of heart**”
 - a. “sincerity” (singleness, KJV) comes from **haplotes** {hap-lot’-ace}
 - b. As used here, it means:
 - 1) Singleness, simplicity, sincerity, mental honesty
 - 2) The virtue of one who is free from pretense and hypocrisy
 - 3) Not self seeking, openness of heart manifesting itself by generosity
5. And “**fearing God**”
 - a. The word “fear” is from **phobeo** {fob-eh’-o}
 - b. In reference to God, it means “to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or

reverential obedience”

- c. It is God whom we should be concerned is watching, not man!
6. We are to do our work **“heartily, as to the Lord and not to men”**
 - a. “heartily” is from **psuche** {psoo-khay’}
 - b. Which here likely refers to “the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions (our heart, soul etc.)”
 - c. I.e., We are to “put our heart into our work”
 - d. Just as we would if was the Lord we were working for, for in reality, that is actually who we are serving!

B. THE LORD WILL JUDGE OUR SERVICE... (24-25)

1. It is the Lord Jesus Christ we serve, who has the ability to provide our inheritance
2. But the one who does wrong in his service to his master (employer) will be repaid wrong!
3. No partiality will be shown in rendering judgment for wrongdoing!
 - a. Being a slave is no excuse for slack service
 - b. Nor is being a Christian!
4. Even if our masters (employers) are abusive, we are to do what is right! - **1 Pe 2:18-25**

[And now, to those on the other end...]

VI. MASTERS (EMPLOYERS, SUPERVISORS), BE JUST AND FAIR (4:1)

A. YOU DO NOT HAVE A RIGHT TO ABUSE THOSE UNDER YOU...

1. You are to be **“just”**
 - a. Grk., **dikaio** {dik’-ah-yos}
 - b. As used here, it involves “rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them”
2. You are to be **“fair”** (equal, KJV)
 - a. Grk., **isotes** {ee-sot’-ace}
 - b. It means to show “equity, fairness, what is equitable”
3. In Ep **6:9**, we see that masters are to...
 - a. “do the same thing to them (slaves)” (i.e., with good will doing service, as to the Lord)
 - b. “giving up threatening”
4. In other words, apply the “Golden Rule” - **Mt 7:12**

B. YOU ALSO HAVE A MASTER...!

1. As a motive to be just and fair, a reminder that even masters have a Master in heaven
2. Again in **Ep 6:9**, the point is made that there is no partiality with your Master
 - a. Being a master (employer) does not give you any special privileges in His sight
 - b. Nor being a Christian, if you are unfair and unjust to those under you!
3. So if you want your Master to be just and fair with you, then let Him be your **role model** for how you deal with those under your responsibility!

CONCLUSION

1. In **Co 2:3** it is said of Christ: “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
 - a. The wisdom and knowledge that comes from Christ reaches to the relevant needs that we face today, no matter how secular or mundane
 - b. Clearly the passage we have examined illustrates this fact!
2. And so with Christ as our Lord, we are truly **complete**: “And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” - **CO 2:10**
3. Imagine how **complete** our families, our workplaces, would be if all followed the “**Guidelines For The Family And Business**” as revealed by the apostle Paul...
 - a. Families living together in love and harmony!
 - b. Workplaces filled with considerate, productive people!
4. We may not be able to change society totally
 - a. But at least we can start with ourselves
 - b. And provide a demonstration of the wisdom of Christ in our own lives

Are you doing what you can to “prove (demonstrate) what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”? - cf. **Ro 12:2**

Essentials For Living The Christ-Like Life

Colossians 4:2-6

INTRODUCTION

1. In the last two chapters in his epistle to the Colossians, the apostle Paul exhorts them to live the kind of life that demonstrates their faith in Jesus Christ as the **“All-Sufficient And Preeminent Savior”**
 - a. In **Co 3:1-11**, Paul describes the **“basics”** of Christian living
 - b. In **Co 3:12-17**, Paul describes the **“apparel”** Christians are to wear
 - c. And in **Co 3:18-4:1**, Paul discusses the **“guidelines”** to govern Christian families
2. Prior to making his closing comments, he now gives three exhortations to his brethren in Christ that I am calling in this lesson, **“Essentials To Living The Christ-Like Life”**

[Beginning in **Co 4:2-4**, then, the Colossians as well as all Christians are exhorted to...]

I. CONTINUE IN PRAYER (2-4)

A. PRAYER THAT IS “FAITHFUL”...

1. As Paul writes, **“continue earnestly in prayer”**
 - a. Just as he wrote to the Romans - **Ro 12:12**
 - b. And also to the Thessalonians - **1 Th 5:17**
2. That people faithfully continue in prayer was a concern of our Lord as well
 - a. He taught a parable the men always ought to pray - **Lk 18:1**
 - b. He was concerned that when He returned, He might not find faith on the earth! - **Lk 18:8**
3. We have several wonderful examples to serve as role models...
 - a. **David**, a man after God’s own heart - **Ps 55:16-17**
 - b. **Daniel**, a man greatly beloved by God - **Dan 6:10**
 - c. **Anna**, an elderly widow blessed to see the Christ-child - **Lk 2:36-38**
 - d. Of course, **Paul** himself- **Co 1:9**
 - e. And also **Epaphras**, himself a member of the church at Colosse - **Co 4:12**
4. So many people pray only when there is a crisis - may that not be true of us!

B. PRAYER THAT IS “WATCHFUL”...

1. Or as Paul put it in our text, **“be vigilant in it”**
2. On several occasions, Jesus warned His disciples to be watchful in prayer - **Mt 13:32-33; Mt 26:41**
3. So His apostles warn us...
 - a. Paul, in **Ep 6:18**
 - b. Peter, in **1 Pet 4:7**
4. Through “watchful” praying, we will not be caught unprepared by:
 - a. **Satan**, and the temptation to sin
 - b. **Death**, and the judgment to follow

- c. **Christ**, and the glories for those who are ready when He comes again

C. PRAYER THAT IS “THANKFUL”...

1. “**with thanksgiving**”, Paul says
2. Throughout his epistle to the Colossians, there has been an emphasis on being thankful - **Co 1:3,12; 2:7; 3:15,17; 4:2**
3. As someone said, “**We should thank God just as diligently in our prayers as we make requests of Him.**” - cf. also **Ph 4:6**
4. Let’s be sure to “**abound with thanksgiving**”!
 - a. Especially in light of **Ro 1:21**
 - b. Where we see that ingratitude was one reason why God’s wrath was being revealed from heaven!

D. PRAYER THAT IS “PURPOSEFUL”...

1. As Paul requested of his brethren in Colosse, “praying also for us...”
2. Prayers are often too general in their requests, lacking specific purpose
3. But as here in our text, Paul often asked for specific prayers in his behalf - e.g., **Ro 15:30-32**
4. From our text in Colossians and elsewhere, what specific requests can we make for those who preach and teach God’s Word?
 - a. **Opportunity** (“an open door”) - **Co 4:3**; cf. **2 Th 3:1**
 - b. **Wisdom** (“as I ought to speak”) - **Co 4:4**
 - c. **Boldness** - **Ep 6:19-20**

[As we endeavor to live a Christ-like life, make the right kind of prayer a crucial element! Prayer that is:

- ♦ **Faithful**
- ♦ **Watchful**
- ♦ **Thankful**
- ♦ **Purposeful**

The exhortation in **verse 5** of our text is also crucial to living a Christ-like life, especially when among those who are not Christians...]

II. WALK IN WISDOM (5)

A. CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE CONCERNED WITH HOW THEY “WALK”...

1. In other words, how they conduct themselves
2. We are to walk in wisdom especially “**toward those who are outside**”
 - a. By proper conduct, we can influence them for good - e.g., **1 Pe 3:1-2**
 - b. The world is constantly making judgments concerning us by our conduct, and according to Jesus, this is their privilege - cf. **Jn 13:35; 17:20-21**

B. ANOTHER REASON SUCH WISDOM IS IMPERATIVE IS “TIME”...

1. To be exact, the lack of time! - cf. **Ep 5:15-17**
 - a. The time we have in this life is short
 - b. We cannot afford to waste much of it through foolishness
 - c. And there are some people who need Christ whose time left on this earth is even shorter than ours!
2. So we need to “redeem” the time; i.e., make the most of the time we have

[Finally, as we consider these “**Essentials To Living The Christ-Like Life**” found in our text, let’s remember that it was said of Jesus that people “**...marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.**” (**Lk 4:22**) As His disciples, so we should...]

III. SPEAK WITH GRACE (6)

A. THE POWER OF THE TONGUE IS VIVIDLY ILLUSTRATED IN JAMES 3...

1. It effects the entire body - **Ja 3:2**
2. It can have great destructive power - **Ja 3:6**
3. It is inconsistent for us to use it for both good and evil - **Ja 3:9-12**

B. THEREFORE WE NEED TO LEARN TO SPEAK “WITH GRACE”...

1. As Paul also commanded in **Ep 5:29**
 - a. No corrupt communication is to proceed out of our mouths
 - b. Only that which edifies, imparting “grace to the hearers”
2. Our speech is to be “**seasoned with salt**”
 - a. Not to be confused with the “salty language” of some sailors!
 - b. But rather speech properly flavored so that it well received by others
3. We especially need to watch our language around those who are NOT Christians
 - a. “that you may know how to answer each one” - **Co 4:6**
 - b. “a servant of the Lord must not quarrel...” - **2 Ti 2:23-26**
4. Are we as careful with our own speech, as we want others to be with their lives?
 - a. Do we, who claim to be the disciples of Jesus Christ...
 - b. ...speak the words of truth that come by Him in the same gracious manner He did?

CONCLUSION

1. These three simple exhortations, if truly heeded, can have a powerful impact on our lives:
 - a. Our **prayer life** will likely be very different!
 - b. Our **walk** (conduct) will be noted for its wisdom
 - c. Our **speech** will be a source of encouragement to others
2. This is the essence of following Jesus Christ! To allow Him to so live in us that by God’s grace we experience a transformation that affects every aspect of our lives!

Speaking of the **grace** of God, have you taken advantage of what **time** it is...? (**2 Co 6:1-2**)

God's "Second String"

Colossians 4:7-18

INTRODUCTION

1. We have stressed throughout this study of Colossians that we are **"complete in Christ"** - **Co 2:9**
2. To be **"complete in Christ"**, or **"perfect in Christ"** (**Co 1:28**), is certainly to be the goal of every Christian...
 - a. Does this mean that those who are in Christ are to be exactly alike in every way?
 - b. Should we expect every mature Christian to be duplicates of one another in ability and service?
3. No, it does not, and that becomes especially clear as we consider Paul's closing comments concerning several individuals who were instrumental to the success of Paul's ministry
4. Reading Paul's comments about these individuals reminds me of the key to any successful sports team: the strength of the **"second string"** that supports the key players
5. So as we come to this last section of the Book of Colossians, I hope we do not consider these closing comments of Paul as something to quickly gloss over
 - a. There are important lessons we can glean from these verses
 - b. We are reminded of the need and the value of **"God's Second String"**

[First, we are introduced to...]

I. THE MEN WHO WERE MESSENGERS (7-9)

A. TYCHICUS... (7-8)

1. Described as "a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord"
 - a. We read of him in **Ac 20:7**, as one of those who accompanied Paul
 - b. Again in **Ep 6:21-22**, where he performed the same duties as outlined in **Co 4:7-8**
 - c. And also in **Ti 3:12** and **2 Ti 4:12**, where he continues to serve Paul as a messenger
2. He might have been one of the brethren referred to in **2 Co 8:23**, who were called "messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ"

B. ONESIMUS... (9)

1. Also "a faithful and beloved brother"
2. Who was from Colosse (cf., "who is one of you")
3. We learn from the Epistle to **Philemon** that Onesimus was a runaway slave who was converted by Paul and sent back to Philemon
4. He, too, was serving as a messenger for Paul

[Because of men like these, the influence of the apostles was able to spread much farther than if they were by themselves. And that also means the influence of the gospel spread much farther! Next, we

read of...]

II. THE MEN WHO WERE COMFORTERS (10-11)

A. ARISTARCHUS... (10A)

1. A “fellow prisoner”
2. He also had been a fellow traveler of Paul - **Ac 20:4**
 - a. Who nearly lost his life to the riot in Ephesus - **Ac 19:29**
 - b. Who sailed with Paul to Rome - **Ac 27:2**
3. And was now in Rome with Paul, sending greetings

B. MARK... (10B)

1. The writer of the second Gospel, he was the cousin (nephew) of Barnabas
 - a. The church in Jerusalem met in his mother’s house - **Ac 12:12**
 - b. Started out with Paul and Barnabas on their first journey, but then turned back - **Ac 13:1-13**
 - c. He later became a bone of contention between Paul and Barnabas - **Ac 15:36-41**
 - d. But eventually proved “profitable” to Paul for service - **2 Ti 4:11**
- 2.. Even now, he is included with those who Paul said “proved to be a comfort to me”

C. JESUS, CALLED JUSTUS... (11)

1. Little is known of this man, except that he was a Jew (“of the circumcision”) and a “fellow worker for the kingdom”
2. He, too, was a comfort to Paul

[No man can produce what they are capable of producing, unless they receive the right kind of encouragement. Just as Barnabas (the “son of encouragement” - **Ac 4:36**) had been the one to encourage a young man who made a mistake (i.e., John Mark) and made him profitable, so now that young man with two others were comforting the apostle Paul in his trials. With such comfort, Paul was able to continue his work while awaiting trial before Caesar. Now let’s notice...]

III. THE MAN WHO PRAYED (12-13)

A. EPAPHRAS, WHO STARTED THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE... (12a)

1. He was from Colosse (“one of you”) - **Co 1:7-8**
2. He cared deeply for them and those in Laodicea and Hierapolis
3. He too was a “fellow prisoner” (**Phile 23**); what could he do for those so far away?

B. EPAPHRAS, A MAN OF PRAYER... (12b-13)

1. He could at least pray for his brethren!
2. And pray he did...
 - a. He prayed “**constantly**” (“always”)
 - b. He prayed “**fervently**” (“laboring fervently”)
 - c. He prayed “**personally**” (“for you”)
 - d. He prayed “**with a goal in mind**” (“that you may stand perfect and complete...”)

[Just as one does not have to be on the court to contribute to a team's success, one does not have to be present to be a blessing to others! So Paul himself realized, and often solicited the prayers of others on his behalf (e.g., **2 Th 3:1-2**). On a bittersweet note, we now consider...]

IV. TWO MEN OF CONTRAST (14)

A. LUKE, THE “BELOVED PHYSICIAN”...

1. A fellow traveler with Paul on a number of his journeys - **Ac 16:10; 20:5; 27:1** (note the personal pronoun “we”)
2. He was used by the Holy Spirit to write over half of the New Testament!
 - a. He penned both the Gospel of **Luke** and the Book of **Acts**
 - b. In total volume, they constitute the majority of the New Testament
3. He was faithful to Paul to the end - **2 Ti 4:11**

B. DEMAS, WHO LATER FORSOOK PAUL...

1. At the time Colossians and Philemon was written, Demas was a “fellow laborer”
2. But not long after, it was said of him, “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world” - **2 Ti 4:10**

CONCLUSION

1. Demas serves as a sober reminder of the need to remain steadfast to the end - cf. also **Re 2:10**
2. But the others in this passage remind us that the spread of the gospel during the first century was not accomplished through the efforts of great men like Paul and the twelve apostles alone
3. It was greatly assisted by humble men and women willing to serve as “**God’s Second String**”...
 - a. Who served as messengers, comforters, prayer warriors, and servants to those in positions of greater influence than themselves (**7-14**)
 - b. Who opened their hearts and their homes to the service of the church, as did Nymphas (**15**)
4. If the gospel is to spread today, there is also a need for “**God’s Second String**”...!
 - a. Are we willing to do whatever we can in the service to the Lord, whether it be great or small?
 - b. Then let Paul closing remarks to a man named **Archippus** serve as an admonition to us as well:

“Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.” - Co 4:17

5. Whatever our calling, whatever our ability, let us be faithful to the Lord!

As Paul closed his epistle to the Colossians in his own personal handwriting (**18**), so we close this series of sermon outlines: “**Grace be with you. Amen**”

If we truly let Jesus be our “**All-Sufficient And Pre eminent Savior**”, then God’s grace will certainly be with us!