

Colossians 1 – A people of Faith & Love

Welcome to Redemption Church. We are a mighty Church in Plano Tx. We believe Jesus is alive and well and that He can do anything.

Welcome to everyone in the room. And welcome to all our friends experiencing the Word of God over the various social medias of the internet. God bless you all.

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Colossians. Feel free to use your phone for a digital Bible or if you brought your analog version... you know an actual book with pages... use that.

Of course we will display scripture on our screens, but I want us to be in the habit and practice of using our hands to pull up the scripture for ourself.

We are starting a new sermon series today. It is going to be a study over the book of Colossians. After much debate we decided to go with the very creative name... Colossians.

Colossians Title

Today we are going to be looking at Colossians 1 verse 1-14. I have someone who is going to read these verses to us.

Please follow along with them.

Colossians 1:1 (NIV2011) Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

Colossians 1:2 (NIV2011) To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

Colossians 1:3 (NIV2011) We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,

Colossians 1:4 (NIV2011) because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people—

Colossians 1:5 (NIV2011) the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel

Colossians 1:6 (NIV2011) that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.

Colossians 1:7 (NIV2011) You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,

Colossians 1:8 (NIV2011) and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

Colossians 1:9 (NIV2011) For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,

Colossians 1:10 (NIV2011) so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

Colossians 1:11 (NIV2011) being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,

Colossians 1:12 (NIV2011) and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

Colossians 1:13 (NIV2011) For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

Thank you for the reading.

Outline

Let’s give a quick outline of this reading.

- GREETING

Verses 1 & 2 are a greeting. It tells us who is writing... Paul & Timothy. And who they are writing to... God’s Holy People in the city of Colossae.

We should recognize that this book is a letter. If you have been in church for very long you would use the fancy word “Epistle” which means letter. Letters have greetings... Dear so & so... In this case... Dear Church of Colossae.

Paul is the writer of this letter. He mentions Timothy as a way of showing that Timothy is present with him as he writes the letter.

- **THANKSGIVING**

Verses 3-8 are a thanksgiving. Paul is thankful for these people in Colossae.

- **PRAYER**

Verses 9-13 are prayers that Paul has been praying for this Church.

Faith & Love

Paul says he has heard 2 things about the Church in Colossae. He heard about their faith and their love.

Colossians 1:4 (NIV2011) because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people—

What a wonderful description of God’s church in Colossae. Redemption, do you think that is how we would be described? Do we have a faith in Jesus Christ and a love for all God’s people? Are we so filled with faith and love that it becomes noteworthy and the best way to describe us?

Paul writes a letter to a church he never visited...

The Apostle Paul made 3 missionary journeys over a span of around 12 years. Paul visited many cities and started churches. Paul preached the Gospel of Jesus and the power of the Spirit showed up every time the Gospel was preached. If you have a printed Bible, chances are good that there are maps of Paul’s missionary journey’s in the back of your Bible.

By my count, scripture tells us of 49 cities Paul traveled to. 49 cities and Colossae is not among them.

Paul went to Corinth and later wrote the 2 letters we call 1st & 2nd Corinthians.

Paul went to Philippi and later wrote the letter we call Philippians.

Paul went to Galatia and later wrote the letter we call Galatians.

Paul went to Thessalonica and later wrote the letter we call Thessalonians.

Paul went to Ephesus and later wrote the letter we call Ephesians.

We have no record of Paul going to Colossae. So why did He write a letter to a people he had never met?

Question: Paul demonstrates first-hand knowledge of the Colossian Church. Who gave Paul this knowledge?

If you were paying close attention to the reading today you may be able to come up with the answer.

Colossians 1:7 (NIV2011) You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,

Colossians 1:8 (NIV2011) and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

A man named Epaphras told Paul about this church.

Epaphras (lovely)

The name Epaphras means lovely. He is mentioned 3 times in the New Testament. We just read that Epaphras told Paul about a Church in Colossae. Although Paul had never been to this city, Paul felt the need to write them this letter.

Epaphras is from Colossae.

Colossians 4:12 (NIV2011) Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.

“Epaphras, who is one of you..” Epaphras is Colossian and is greatly responsible for the flourishing church in this city.

Colossians 4:13 (NIV2011) I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Colossae, Laodicea, & Hierapolis

Epaphras was doing Kingdom work in Colossae and the cities of Laodicea & Hierapolis. Because of Epaphras, Jesus was being preached in brand new cities.

These three cities were very close to each other. They are located in what is now Southwest Turkey.

Question: So how did Epaphras become a Christian? Who shared the gospel with Epaphras?

We don't know. It was not Paul directly. He usually calls someone he converted as a "son in the faith."

What we do know is that Epaphras received the Gospel somewhere, and then brought it back home to Colossae.

Bring the Gospel Home

Have you received the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Have you brought it home? Have you shared it with your family, friends, co-workers, fellow students, neighbors... your entire city?

Epaphras did.

It could be that Colossians started in Ephesians

Ephesus, Colossae, Laodicea, & Heirapolis are all connected by a highway.

Paul spent longer in the city of Ephesus than he did anywhere else on a missionary journey. Paul preached around 3 and half years in Ephesus.

Scholars agree that it is most likely that Epaphras received the message of Jesus Christ in the city of Ephesus, and then took that message back to Colossae. Epaphras then spread that message to the nearby towns of Laodicea & Heirapolis.

Something else you should know about Epaphras...

Philemon 1:23 (NIV2011) Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings.

It appears that Epaphras was in prison.

Paul wrote this letter while in prison himself. Paul was in a prison in Rome. His fellow prisoner was Epaphras.

While fellow prisoners, Epaphras tells Paul about the work in Colossae, Laodicea, & Heirapolis. And from prison, Paul writes this letter.

We know Paul never leaves this prison. We never hear again of Epaphras.

We have touched a lot of the background of the book of Colossians today. I pray that you will return next week as we continue to receive the Word of God from this letter.

I want to leave you with a final thought today as I close...

For the sake of Christ, willing

There would be no letter to Colossae except that someone was willing.

- Paul was willing to carry Christ to Ephesus, and preach their 3 ½ years.
- Someone was willing to tell Epharas about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Epaphras was willing to carry this Gospel home, to Colossae.
- Paul was willing to continue in preaching the gospel even at the risk of persecution. Because Paul continued, he was placed into a Roman prison.
- Epaphras was willing to continue in preaching the gospel even at the risk of persecution. Because Epaphras continued, he was placed into a Roman prison.
- Because Paul & Epaphras did not lose faith they spoke to one another about the Gospel.
- Even while in a prison he would would die in, Paul was willing to write a letter of encouragement to a city he had never visited.

For the sake of Christ, they were willing.

Look at Colossians 1:10 one more time

Colossians 1:10 (NIV2011) so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

musician

Are you willing?

Am I speaking to someone today that has received the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but you have never carried it home? Have you ever shared your testimony with others?

Are you willing? Come talk to God in this altar right now.

Am I speaking to someone today that you have never actually received the truth of Jesus Christ. Maybe you have been to Church before, but you have never had that moment where you have publicly declared your belief in Jesus.

Are you willing? Come meet me in the first 2 feet of this stage today. I want to pray with you.

Am I speaking to someone today, that your heart was convicted at that verse that spoke of living a life worthy of the Lord? When is said "Pleasing Him in every way," you know that you have some secret sins in your life.

Are you willing? Come repent.

You could stay in your current state today, or you could be willing to go further.

If there is anyone who wants someone to pray with them, please come to the 1st 2 feet of the stage and our pastoral team will come pray with you.