

## The Book of Colossians -Part 1

A letter from then to now

6/6/21

I heard that last week Lori did an amazing job of producing slides and gave you some valuable insights on the importance of God's word, the Holy Bible. God's word is a huge part of what He has given us as our instruction book on how to get to know Him and become more like Him. And why do we need to become more like Him? Because, we are His plan A to be His examples to others, to bring His kingdom come, His will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And as I've said before, "How are we doing on that one?" We all could use some improvement, right? I have heard it said, "That it's not as much about us getting into the Bible as it is the Bible getting into us."

Coming to know the characters in the Bible as if they were our own family members. Being a part of the events as if they were happening to us. Letting the truths and the challenges come alive inside of us, letting them change us from the inside out.

So, He gave us this book, and we are going to spend the next 4 weeks looking at one of the letters that is written in this book.

While Jesus was here on earth, to his brothers and his neighbors anyway, he was an above average of a guy in His day. But the day He was baptized by John, His world and the world around Him was turned upside down. His teachings, the miracles, His love for those who weren't "religious" just created such a stir wherever He went. Then His death on the cross, rising from the dead and spending 40 days continuing to teach and reveal Himself to over 500 people was so much more than most people can wrap their minds around! Even we can struggle with it. So right before they watched Him being taken up into heaven, He co-missioned them and us, to go and preach the gospel truth to all nations, cast out demons, heal the sick and make disciples. That was a big job for his 12 disciples and a hundred or so of His followers.

Let's remember, back in Jesus's day, they didn't have easy access to information like we do now. They wrote letters, and then it could take days, weeks or months for that letter to get to where it was going. But by the documented accounts of Christ's life, and letters that were written to encourage and sometimes discipline a gathering of believers called the church, they and we have been given instructions on how to live this "new life" that we've been given in Christ and to be participants in his great co-mission.

The letter that we are going to look at and discuss was written by Paul to a fledgling church that had started in the city of Colosse. What we now call the book of Colossians.

[Let's take a listen to an introduction on this book.] (This intro found on Right Now Media, "Colossians-A letter from Then to Now" by Ashley MacNary)( *If you don't have a subscription to RightNowMedia send a request to [contact@thewellofchrist.org](mailto:contact@thewellofchrist.org)*)

As she said this was a group of new believers that had a lot of differing cultures and beliefs, not to mention they would have been facing a lot of persecution for even believing in "the Way".

This letter was written by Paul while he was in prison for preaching the gospel! But he's not wavering or wasting time. Even prison couldn't stop the gospel from being spread.

This letter is divided into two parts 1) What Christ has done 2) what Christians should do. Of course in our short time we have together here on Sunday mornings we will only be able to hit the highlites. Tho I challenge you to read thru this letter once each week as we are studying it together, asking God what He would have you learn and apply to your life. Because the more that we are in God's word, the more it will infiltrate our minds and become a part of our own language . I know in my own life, that there are times when God's word just flows from my lips in my every day conversations. And, I try at all times to let His Word and Holy Spirit leadings guide all my decisions. Memorizing key scriptures is a great way to stay on His path for your life.

AS we will see in a couple weeks, Paul wrote this letter to counter some of the “empty philosophies, and high-sounding nonsense, that comes from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ,” that was infiltrating this church. Not unlike today, we also have a lot of “infiltration” of wrong thinking going on in our churches that Paul's letter can also clarify for us.

In all of Paul's letters to the different churches, he would always provide his credentials as an apostle of Jesus Christ, who he was addressing his letter to and asking God to give them grace and peace.

READ 1:1-2

Notice he said “by the will of God”. He didn't want anyone to accuse him of taking this mission on for himself. You can read in Acts Chapter 8-9, Paul was one of the main persecutor of the new church, holding the coat of Steven while commanding him to be stoned to death. But.... God, well actually the risen Jesus, met him on the road to Damascus, with a bright light that knocked him off his donkey, which blinded him for 3 days and with a loud voice from heaven, proceeded to tell him that God had chosen him to take the gospel to the gentiles, to kings and to the people of Israel.

Your conversion to Christ may not be as dramatic as Paul's but do you know that if you have said yes to Jesus that God has also chosen you to spread the gospel? The disciples and Paul's calling is also our calling. And each one of us have been given an “assignment” or a destiny that God longs for us to fulfill. Seek Him with all your heart and walk in obedience to His word and then walk out those desires that He has put in your heart so that you will complete as Paul did your “co-mission” with Christ.

Next, we see that Paul addresses who this letter is written to. Remember we said earlier that this new fledgling church that he is writing to is not unlike our churches today. People gathered together from different walks of life, sometimes different nationalities, cultures with varying beliefs. Tho Paul had not yet been able to visit this church, he had heard that these differing beliefs were beginning to “add to” and distorting the pure message of Christ, who He is and

what He came to do. These false teachings were bringing in a “hyper spirituality,” leading the people in this church to start thinking that they were “better than” others.

Let's be real, that can happen to us too. We can become, in our thinking better than someone else because, well, you know, “I'm going to church now and I know more than you about the bible and spiritual things.” Or, “I'm changing my behaviors, why aren't you?” But Paul is helping them to see that we are all on the same playing field and we all need the Savior, every moment of every day! None of us have arrived and we never will till we leave this earth and go to heaven.

But despite all these differing backgrounds, Paul is addressing them as “God's holy people” or in several translations, the word saint, which means “being set apart” or “separated for God”. Paul is bringing all these differences together and telling them they are to be devoted and separating themselves to God, reflecting Him in everything they do.

I once heard it said, “that if you were put on trial for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?” Do you think, talk and act in one way around certain people and change when you are around a different group? Or are you consistent and honoring God no matter who you are around?

He goes on to write; “faithful brothers and sisters in Christ”. We need to realize that in this day that these people were so divided by differing classes and religions that Paul was uniting them all together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ! That because they were now united into Him, that they are now a family. Jew and gentile, Greek and barbarian, slave and master, coming together, learning and leaning on Christ.

In our country today, none of us have ever seen our nation so divided, between cultures and beliefs. We as the church, the body of Christ, have to be the ones who stand up and show our world that we are brothers and sisters, that we love and care for one another for the cause of Christ. God's love is so much more powerful than what anything the enemy can bring to divide, if we choose to.

Next, let's get a better understanding of why Paul would say in every one of his letters, “May God our Father give you grace and peace. Historians say that the Greeks would say “grace” and the Hebrews would say, “peace” or shalom. Paul is showing inclusivity here, blending the two cultures and bringing them together. I believe that there is even a deeper meaning here. Grace is the empowerment from heaven that gives us the ability to say yes to God and His ways and no to the world and our old ways. Peace is that inner joy that comes from a right relationship in Christ. Paul was beseeching the Father on their behalf that they would embrace all that Christ died to give them.

Paul goes on and is ready to start encouraging this church in Colosse, he's going to find every reason he can to praise them and lift them up.

Read 1:3

I believe Paul was not just giving lip service here. He was sincere that he really prayed for them, wholeheartedly. Much unlike we can have the tendency to do. Have you ever said to someone, "I'll pray for you and walk away and never give it another thought? We can learn from Paul here and learn to be sincere and truly care for one another and take the time to lift them up to our Father in heaven.

Read 1:4

"We have heard" Remember, Paul was in prison and had not been able to visit them so we will learn later that it is more than likely Epaphras that had brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to the city of Colosse. He had traveled to Paul to inform him on how the church was doing and as we will see get instruction on how to handle some of the struggles that he was facing as he may have been pastoring this body of new believers.

"of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all God's people" let's look at the AMP version of how this verse is described {insert} that is an amazing definition of faith. And of an unselfish love for all God's people. No fighting, no bickering just loving ALL of God's people. Oh Lord, may that be said of us here at "The Well"!

Read vs 5

Our hope reserved for us in heaven where we will be all together in the fullness of all who Christ is. And what is this Good News? That Jesus Christ came to save you from your sins and rescue you from all the bondage that keeps you from being all Christ has destined you to be!

Read Vs 6

Paul is helping this church to see that they are not alone in the new found faith, that this gospel is spreading everywhere! That God is doing this miraculous work across the world.

Paul uses the illustration of a tree bearing fruit, changing not just their lives but lives every where. See when we truly understand His wonderful grace (remember, grace is the empowerment from heaven) that everything we need is living on the inside of us thru the power of the Holy Spirit, we don't have to work and figure everything out to make this change happen. We just need to get into cooperation with the change that has already been made on the inside of us. Like a tree that just bears fruit because that is who it is, we too can bear the fruit of this life in Christ in all our ways.

Read vs.7-8

It looks like here that Paul is encouraging this church that Epaphras didn't come to Paul to just talk about the problems they may be having but commending Epaphras for his faithful service to the Lord and to them. Even mentioning how he told how much they are loving each other. And pointing out that love is thru the Holy Spirit working thru them.

I believe Paul is showing us an example of how we need to look for the good and cheer on the changes that is going on in those who we fellowship, study and do life with. To also honor and respect those who are doing the work of serving and instructing us.

Read vs 9

Paul is reiterating again the importance of praying for one another. And gives us a pattern to follow.

We, on the other hand, can have the tendency to gripe and complain about people instead of praying for them. Shoot we can gripe and complain about people we don't even know! Paul is teaching us here how important and powerful prayer is. And I'm not talking about our usual selfish prayers of, "Lord, you have got to change them because they are driving me crazy!" But following Paul's instruction and humbly asking God "to give them complete knowledge of his will.. along with spiritual wisdom and understanding." So Whether it's a family member, co-worker, friend, a fellow believer, or someone that we don't even know, what a change it could make in them and definitely in us if we spent more time in prayer and thanksgiving rather than complaining.

Put up Vs 10-12 {Draw tree illustration }

What is God's will? I believe that part of His will is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself." to continue to Be transformed into the image of His Son. Then go and change your world. And the roots of this new life in Christ is learning and receiving spiritual wisdom and understanding. How do you do that? By just like what we are demonstrating here right now. Reading, studying, applying God's word. Oh, how important His word is to our lives!

Patience – isn't a passive thing just waiting for things to end, but the active steering of our hearts without loosing hope. Like a traveler walking thru a storm, wind blowing on his face, trudging thru the snow, not giving up but pressing onward. It's allowing God to take over in His strength to reside in us and push thru anyway. When we allow Him to do this we find moments of beauty in our storms. We find peace and glimmers of hope despite our circumstances.

Notice here at the end of vs 12 He has enabled you, you couldn't earn it. To share in the inheritance. What is an inheritance? Its what someone leaves you when they die. You get for free what some one else worked and saved for. We get the inheritance of a redeemed life and eternity in heaven because of Christ's death on that cross. That belongs to his people who live in the light. Do you realize that most of the time when we are doing something wrong and we know it we hide, we will want to stay in the dark. That's what sin is, its darkness. Did you know that darkness is just the absence of light? Scriptures tell us that Jesus is the light and He gave us the privilege to be His light in this world.

Read vs 13-14

Then Paul concludes his thoughts by letting us know that by Christ's sacrifice and forgiving our sins, He rescued us from the kingdom of darkness that we were born and raised in and brought us into the Kingdom of light. Let's decide today to live as his lights in this sometimes very dark world.

Our lives once looked like this - but in Christ with learning and walking in obedience to Him we can look like this

I hope this month as we unpack this Letter to the Colossians that we will see that there is so much richness in this book! That every word, phrase and sentence carries depth and meaning that, if we let it, can transform us into the men and women of God that He intended. That these truths can change the hardest heart, break the strongest addiction and heal any brokenness. Make the choice to believe, receive and be changed in Jesus name.

## The Book of Colossians -Part 2

### A letter from then to now

6/13/21

A couple weeks ago Lori taught us about the importance of God's word and how we are to use it as our instruction book on how to live this Christian life we've been so graciously given. Last week I mentioned a phrase that I have heard before that says; " It's not just about getting into the Bible, it's about the Bible getting into us." It's taking this word and letting it vitally nourish your soul as it changes your thinking, changes your heart and cleanses your soul. It will nourish and grow your character as it reveals the bigger picture, God's story, that He has placed you in and wants you to be a vital part of ..... so I chose to take these 4 weeks and study a book in this Bible together. The book of Colossians. As we go thru this book, and we delve into each phrase and sometimes the meaning of just one word, I hope you will begin to see how God's word does change you as you surrender your will to His will to be done in you. To let this Word mold you and shape you into the man or woman of God that He intended.

As we learned last week, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, The champion of this new faith, was in prison for preaching the gospel. In that day there was quite a stir about this Jesus and the things He taught, the miracles He preformed, and then raising from the dead! And that stir continued because Jesus's "disciples" were carrying on His work of teaching these new principles and also performing miracles. This "Good News" was going out all over the world, and new groups of people were being taught about Christ and what He died for. Gatherings of people called "Churches" were growing and those who had actually walked with Jesus or those that had "believed in the Way" were teaching and leading these congregations.

There were many different cultures and varying beliefs. Some of which worshiped other gods, idols made out of wood or stone or gold, were all coming together in these churches and learning about this Jesus that came to save them from their sins. And when you come from differing cultures, there will be a mixture of God's truth and the old ways of thinking. And that is exactly what was happening in the new fledgling church in the town of Colosse.

We believe that a man named Epaphras had started and was leading this body of believers in Colosse and as Paul said, they were believing “empty philosophies, and high-sounding nonsense, that comes from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.” So Epaphras had traveled to visit Paul, to get instruction on how to deal with the problems they were having. Paul wrote a letter to this church in Colosse, we now call the Book of Colossians, to teach them and us.

Isn't that still going on today? Isn't that why we gather together like we are here today to be taught about the truth of God's word because we have learned other ways of thinking? Believing that other things that we have turned into little “gods” and our pet sins are greater than what Christ has done for us? We definitely can believe in things that have twisted up the truth about Christ in our hearts. Thus, the importance of us diving into God's word together.

I'll be glad to get you a copy of last week's message if you want to get caught up but to summarize the first 14 verses that we looked at is if you've invited Christ to be your Savior and forgive you of your sins then you have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the Kingdom of light in God's dear Son, Jesus Christ.

Let's take a listen to the intro of verses 15-29 by Ashley McNary (2 min)

### **Read vs 1:15**

Paul was coming against the misconceptions about Christ that had infiltrated the church. Historians tells us that Epaphras may have had some false teachers in his group that were believing that matter was evil and that God would not have come to earth as a true human being in a bodily form. Paul clarified that Christ **is** the *visible image of the invisible God*”, He is God himself. **Yet**, He died on the cross as a human being. That God was revealing Himself to show us how much He loves us and was wanting us to know that He did come and dwelt among us.

Paul continued to countered this false belief by proclaiming that Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh, wasn't but a mere man but “*existed before anything was created*, and is ruling “*supreme over all of creation*” including us! He goes on to explain this further in the next verse.

### **Read vs 1:16**

Again countering the false teaching of matter being evil, then they were also saying that God would not have created the earth but only ruled over the spiritual realm. Paul is reiterating that *“thru Him God created everything in the heavenly realm and on earth. Things we can see and things we can not see.”* Going on to include everything and make clear that even, *“thrones, kingdoms, rulers and authorities in the unseen world.”* That not just the devil and his demons, angels and all spiritual beings were created by Him, but everything in this natural world *“was created thru Him and for Him”*, and He reigns supreme over all of it.

### **Read Vs 1:17**

This is a verse I use to be amazed by our God. I learned in the past few years that there is this device called CERN a hadron collider.... (show pictures, read definition) Long and very technical and scientific details, spending billions of \$s, and millions of man hours to determine what it is that keeps everything held together. They discovered that sound waves hold all things together. All they would have had to do it to believe in this one little sentence, *“He holds all things together.”* God spoke! And He is still speaking, still creating! And if He ever stopped I believe everything would go poof!!! This verse shows us that He is not only our Creator but also our Sustainer. In Him, everything is held together, protected and prevented from disintegrating into chaos. Because Christ is the sustainer of all life, none of us are independent from Him. We are all His servants who must daily trust Him. Our God is so amazing!

### **Read vs 1:18**

Paul continues here to refute some more false narratives that was being spread, saying that Christ was not the unique Son of God, rather one of the many intermediaries between God and people. Paul explains here that nothing else should be undermining the finished work of Christ to govern and be first priority not only in this church he is talking to, but to every church. Remember, the church is not about a building, its us. Each individual is a temple of the Holy Spirit housing the King of kings and Lord of lords right on the inside of us. We ARE His church and He should reign supreme in us and we reflect Him in all we do.

This next phrase *“supreme over all who rise from the dead,”* was another false teaching that there was no resurrection from the dead. See some of the people may not have actually seen Jesus die and then raise from the dead. They have just heard stories about it. Paul is making sure they hear that Christ DID raise from the dead and His resurrection proves His lordship over this natural world. And that all who trust in Christ will also defeat death and rise again to live eternally with Him in heaven.

### **Read 1:19**



Wow! I believe this is a beautiful picture of the relationship that God the Father, Holy Spirit and Jesus the Son has, all coming together as one!

Do you remember at Jesus's baptism (**insert Matt 3:16-17**)

### **Read vs 1:20**

Paul is confirming here what Christ came to this earth to do. His death providing a way for all people to come to God. To clear away the sin that has separated us from our Creator. We can have peace with God and be reconciled to Him by accepting Christ, who died in our place. His shed blood was enough to take away any sin, any shortcoming, any mistake, and any rebellion. Capable to heal any sickness and any heartache.

I'm going to take a slight bunny trail here and share with you something that God revealed as I was putting this together. We just looked at Matt 3:16-17 and how God said how much He loved His Son and He brought Him great joy. Then let's look at **John 3:16-17 (Insert here)** How that love He has for His son is transferred onto us to bring us to Himself. Oh, the great love of our Father! So whenever the devil wants to tell you the God can't love you or you will never make it, you are too bad for God to save you! You remember what God said and tell the devil and your old way of thinking to go and get out get your head! God so loved that He gave us His Son and NOT to condemn us but to save us.

### **Read 1:21-22**

Doesn't that back up what I just said? You know what? We were born into this world separated from God. Adam and Eve gave us that little gift. But God...didn't leave us in that. Despite our inability to be good enough or even the willingness to try, "*Now He has reconciled you to Himself*" before you even needed it! Christ died over 2,000 yrs ago! And His death still can bring you life today!

It was God's idea, He wanted to bring you back to right relationship with Him. It says here, "*You were his enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions.*" You WERE! When you trust Christ you are no longer His enemy and He's given you Holy Spirit to help you change your evil thoughts and actions! This is the full meal deal, people! It goes on to say, "*HE has brought you into His own presence, and you ARE holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.*"

What?!? How can that be? I know the thoughts that go thru my head! I hear the things I say that I shouldn't say! I don't even know how to tame this ugly beast I feel like I have inside of me that gets so angry and frustrated! How can I believe that I am holy and blameless? Because it's not about you, it's about what Christ has already done. You died, and now He lives on the inside of you. (or He can if you are here and haven't invited Him in yet) It's HIS Righteousness that God sees, not yours. And the more you fully believe that and renew your mind with that truth, you will begin to see that your attitude changes, you don't say those things the way you used to. That anger fades away because you aren't looking at what others or yourself might be doing that aggravates you but what Christ has already done in you.

In this next verse Paul starts to transition from explaining who Christ is to what our responsibilities are in putting into practice our faith.

Go with me here. I sometimes use this kind of silly example to explain to folks about this awesome benefits package we've been given by Christ. Let's say I went to Best Buys and bought you a \$2,000 HD4 TV with all the bells and whistles, and told you all you had to do was go pick it up. How many of you would take me up on my offer? Would you say, "that's too good to be true! Why would you do that?" or would you go into the store and try to pay for it again? Or would you just totally ignore it and forget I even bought it for you? All these responses are what we can do with what Christ bought and paid for us. Sometimes, we will go to the store and pick it up, but we will put it in the back room and never use it. "It's just too special, I don't want to use it, I may break it." Or, you go pick it up but where you need to sit it has so much junk on the shelf you don't have room for it. Or, you can go pick it up and turn it on, but believe you know how to use it and never look at the instruction book and miss out on a lot of special features it has to offer. In this next verse, Paul is telling us to go pick it up, clean off the shelf, get out the book and use it for all its worth!

### **Read 1:23**

"You **MUST** continue to believe this truth as **stand firmly** in it." Why? Because if we don't, we won't live our lives in the fullness of all He died to give us. Too many Christians live broke, busted, disgusted and depressed because they don't stand firmly in the truth that this book teaches us. It's a moment by moment choice on who's voice you are going to believe; yours, others, satan's or God's. He's given you the freewill to choose. Whose voice will you choose?

Paul reiterates again that what He's teaching and preaching is not a self appointed mission but one that God co-missioned him to.

### **Read 1:24-25**

Isn't it ironic that Paul was one of the most vocal persecutors of the early church but God knocked him off his donkey with a bright light from heaven and converted him to one of the greatest followers of Jesus. Then he ends up getting persecuted by the very ones that he used to persecute with! Paul says, "*I am glad when I suffer for you in my body,*" What? Glad to suffer? Really Paul? He tells us in the letter to the Corinthian church that as he has been preaching this gospel, he has been hungry, naked, beaten and left for dead, thrown into prison and chained to guards, stoned and shipwrecked but goes on to say that those were "light and momentary troubles achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." Paul had come to a place in his heart with the Lord that it didn't matter what happened to him here on this earth, he was completing his mission to build up the "*Church, or the body of Christ*", that was given to him by his Savior. That the people that God had given him the privilege to teach this gospel to was worth all this pain, "*for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ.*"

I believe secondly, he could also be telling us that suffering is unavoidable in bringing the Good News of Christ to the world. Do you think maybe that is why our country and our world is in the mess that we are in here lately? I know here in America we are definitely into “pain avoidance”! We don't want to “suffer” for the cause of much of anything. Actually, so many people believe that if you are “suffering for Christ” you must be doing something wrong, “God must be punishing me”, that mindset is so wrong!

Did you know there are many benefits to suffering for Christ? **[see slide]**

Lord, help us here at The Well to have that kind of tenacity and willingness to suffer with You for Your cause to bring others to the Kingdom!

### **Read 1:26-27**

The Jews were God's chosen people. They were given the Law and the promised Messiah to be born from their bloodline. Prophets for centuries had spoken of this coming Savior, and Paul is announcing to anyone who may not know or are in doubt, that He has come! His name is Jesus Christ, the One Paul preaches about. But Paul is also letting people know that even tho you were not born a Jew, that this Savior is for you Gentiles too, (a gentile is anyone who is not a Jew), tho it was *“Kept secret for centuries and generations past”*. Remember, in the Old testament, Holy Spirit would come upon the prophets and tell them the message they were to say and leave them. Very few people had access to this message about the coming Messiah. But when Christ died on that cross and rose from the dead, He provided the way for us to have *“Christ living in you”*, thru the power of the Holy Spirit, a concept that many were finding very hard to believe but now have access to.

This new indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us is our *“assurance that we will share in His glory”*. What does it mean to share in His glory? I believe its two fold. We have been given the privilege to reflect the very essence of God, letting His character emanate from our very being thru our love and devotion to Him and to one another. 2) given the privilege to live in His presence and His glory forever with Him in heaven.

And lastly in this chapter **Read 1:28-29**

Last week I had told the story of Jesus and right before He ascended into heaven. He gave a co-mission to His disciples and to us “to go and preach the gospel truth to all nations, cast out demons, heal the sick and make disciples.” Paul was fulfilling that commission to this church in Colosse and encouraging us to continue in his example. If you have said yes to Jesus and trusted Him to be your Lord and Savior, then you are Christ's plan A to spread His gospel truth to the nations. And to your family members, friends, co-workers and all that you meet that will listen. What did Paul mean when he told us to *“warn them”*? The warning is that without Christ, people are doomed to eternal separation from Christ. There's no “do-overs”. When these spirits leave these bodies, the decision has already been made, heaven or hell. Heaven if Christ is your Savior and Lord, hell if He is not.

Paul continues with *“all the wisdom God has given us”*. Listen to me, we are not alone in our co-mission with Christ to spread His gospel truth! We have Holy Spirit living on the inside of us to help us, to give us the wisdom to know how to speak to that person, what to say that pierces their heart to want to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Paul continues with *“we want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship with Christ.”* Don't get tripped up by this word that has been translated “perfect”. In the original text it means, mature. Paul is telling us to not just point someone to Jesus, but to come along side of them and help them to grow in their walk with the Lord, much like what we are doing here today. Because the more “mature” we are in our relationship to Christ the more we reflect His glory and are a light that draws other people to Him.

And lastly, Paul says, *“that's why I work and struggle so hard”*. He worked hard, to the point of exhaustion! He didn't wait till it was convenient or the people he talked to wanted to hear what He had to say. No, he knew that they needed to hear the truth about Christ and he had been given the privilege to share it with them. But he also knew that he didn't do it in his own strength but in the *“power of Christ that works with in me”*. We need to follow the example of Paul and speak the name of Jesus. It may be inconvenient, they may not even want to hear it, but they need to hear about the love that God has for them and the price He paid to save them. Its too important not to. We have a lost and dying world all around us and they need us to be all Christ has destined us to be.

I pray as we continue this month to study this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Colosse and to us, that you will begin to see the importance of reading His word and “not just get into the Bible but let the Bible get into you”. And I hope you begin to see that tho it was written then that it is just as relevant now to change you into His likeness and make an impact on His kingdom.

Let us pray:

The Book of Colossians -Part 3

A letter from then to now

6/13/21

A couple weeks ago Lori taught us about the importance of God's word and how we are to use it as our instruction book on how to live this Christian life we've been so graciously given. Last week I mentioned a phrase that I have heard before that says; “ It's not just about getting into the Bible, it's about the Bible getting into us.” It's taking this word and letting it vitally nourish your soul as it changes your thinking, changes your heart and cleanses your soul. It will nourish and grow your character as it reveals the bigger picture, God's story, that He has placed you in and wants you to be a vital part of ..... so I chose to take these 4 weeks and study a book in this Bible together. The book of Colossians. As we go thru this book, and we delve into each phrase and sometimes the meaning of just one word, I hope you will begin to see how God's word does

change you as you surrender your will to His will to be done in you. To let this Word mold you and shape you into the man or woman of God that He intended.

As we learned last week, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, The champion of this new faith, was in prison for preaching the gospel. In that day there was quite a stir about this Jesus and the things He taught, the miracles He performed, and then raising from the dead! And that stir continued because Jesus's "disciples" were carrying on His work of teaching these new principles and also performing miracles. This "Good News" was going out all over the world, and new groups of people were being taught about Christ and what He died for. Gatherings of people called "Churches" were growing and those who had actually walked with Jesus or those that had "believed in the Way" were teaching and leading these congregations.

There were many different cultures and varying beliefs. Some of which worshiped other gods, idols made out of wood or stone or gold, were all coming together in these churches and learning about this Jesus that came to save them from their sins. And when you come from differing cultures, there will be a mixture of God's truth and the old ways of thinking. And that is exactly what was happening in the new fledgling church in the town of Colosse.

We believe that a man named Epaphras had started and was leading this body of believers in Colosse and as Paul said, they were believing "empty philosophies, and high-sounding nonsense, that comes from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ." So Epaphras had traveled to visit Paul, to get instruction on how to deal with the problems they were having. Paul wrote a letter to this church in Colosse, we now call the Book of Colossians, to teach them and us.

Isn't that still going on today? Isn't that why we gather together like we are here today to be taught about the truth of God's word because we have learned other ways of thinking? Believing that other things that we have turned into little "gods" and our pet sins are greater than what Christ has done for us? We definitely can believe in things that have twisted up the truth about Christ in our hearts. Thus, the importance of us diving into God's word together.

I'll be glad to get you a copy of last week's message if you want to get caught up but to summarize the first 14 verses that we looked at is if you've invited Christ to be your Savior and forgive you of your sins then you have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the Kingdom of light in God's dear Son, Jesus Christ.

Let's take a listen to the intro of verses 15-29 by Ashley McNary (2 min)

### **Read vs 1:15**

Paul was coming against the misconceptions about Christ that had infiltrated the church. Historians tells us that Epaphras may have had some false teachers in his group that were believing that matter was evil and that God would not have come to earth as a true human being in a bodily form. Paul clarified that Christ is the *visible image of the invisible God*", He is God

himself. **Yet**, He died on the cross as a human being. That God was revealing Himself to show us how much He loves us and was wanting us to know that He did come and dwelt among us.

Paul continued to counter this false belief by proclaiming that Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh, wasn't but a mere man but "*existed before anything was created*, and is ruling "*supreme over all of creation*" including us! He goes on to explain this further in the next verse.

### **Read vs 1:16**

Again countering the false teaching of matter being evil, then they were also saying that God would not have created the earth but only ruled over the spiritual realm. Paul is reiterating that "*thru Him God created everything in the heavenly realm and on earth. Things we can see and things we can not see.*" Going on to include everything and make clear that even, "*thrones, kingdoms, rulers and authorities in the unseen world.*" That not just the devil and his demons, angels and all spiritual beings were created by Him, but everything in this natural world "*was created thru Him and for Him*", and He reigns supreme over all of it.

### **Read Vs 1:17**

This is a verse I use to be amazed by our God. I learned in the past few years that there is this device called CERN a hadron collider.... (show pictures, read definition) Long and very technical and scientific details, spending billions of \$s, and millions of man hours to determine what it is that keeps everything held together. They discovered that sound waves hold all things together. All they would have had to do it to believe in this one little sentence, "*He holds all things together.*" God spoke! And He is still speaking, still creating! And if He ever stopped I believe everything would go poof!!! This verse shows us that He is not only our Creator but also our Sustainer. In Him, everything is held together, protected and prevented from disintegrating into chaos. Because Christ is the sustainer of all life, none of us are independent from Him. We are all His servants who must daily trust Him. Our God is so amazing!

### **Read vs 1:18**

Paul continues here to refute some more false narratives that was being spread, saying that Christ was not the unique Son of God, rather one of the many intermediaries between God and people. Paul explains here that nothing else should be undermining the finished work of Christ to govern and be first priority not only in this church he is talking to, but to every church. Remember, the church is not about a building, its us. Each individual is a temple of the Holy Spirit housing the King of kings and Lord of lords right on the inside of us. We ARE His church and He should reign supreme in us and we reflect Him in all we do.

This next phrase "*supreme over all who rise from the dead,*" was another false teaching that there was no resurrection from the dead. See some of the people may not have actually seen Jesus die and then raise from the dead. They have just heard stories about it. Paul is making sure they hear that Christ DID raise from the dead and His resurrection proves His lordship over this natural world. And that all who trust in Christ will also defeat death and rise again to live eternally with Him in heaven.

### Read 1:19

Wow! I believe this is a beautiful picture of the relationship that God the Father, Holy Spirit and Jesus the Son has, all coming together as one!

Do you remember at Jesus's baptism (**insert Matt 3:16-17**)

### Read vs 1:20

Paul is confirming here what Christ came to this earth to do. His death providing a way for all people to come to God. To clear away the sin that has separated us from our Creator. We can have peace with God and be reconciled to Him by accepting Christ, who died in our place. His shed blood was enough to take away any sin, any shortcoming, any mistake, and any rebellion. Capable to heal any sickness and any heartache.

I'm going to take a slight bunny trail here and share with you something that God revealed as I was putting this together. We just looked at Matt 3:16-17 and how God said how much He loved His Son and He brought Him great joy. Then let's look at **John 3:16-17 (Insert here)** How that love He has for His son is transferred onto us to bring us to Himself. Oh, the great love of our Father! So whenever the devil wants to tell you the God can't love you or you will never make it, you are too bad for God to save you! You remember what God said and tell the devil and your old way of thinking to go and get out get your head! God so loved that He gave us His Son and NOT to condemn us but to save us.

### Read 1:21-22

Doesn't that back up what I just said? You know what? We were born into this world separated from God. Adam and Eve gave us that little gift. But God...didn't leave us in that. Despite our inability to be good enough or even the willingness to try, "*Now He has reconciled you to Himself*" before you even needed it! Christ died over 2,000 yrs ago! And His death still can bring you life today!

It was God's idea, He wanted to bring you back to right relationship with Him. It says here, "*You were his enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions.*" You WERE! When you trust Christ you are no longer His enemy and He's given you Holy Spirit to help you change your evil thoughts and actions! This is the full meal deal, people! It goes on to say, "*HE has brought you into His own presence, and you ARE holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.*"

What?!? How can that be? I know the thoughts that go thru my head! I hear the things I say that I shouldn't say! I don't even know how to tame this ugly beast I feel like I have inside of me that gets so angry and frustrated! How can I believe that I am holy and blameless? Because it's not

about you, it's about what Christ has already done. You died, and now He lives on the inside of you. (or He can if you are here and haven't invited Him in yet) It's HIS Righteousness that God sees, not yours. And the more you fully believe that and renew your mind with that truth, you will begin to see that your attitude changes, you don't say those things the way you used to. That anger fades away because you aren't looking at what others or yourself might be doing that aggravates you but what Christ has already done in you.

In this next verse Paul starts to transition from explaining who Christ is to what our responsibilities are in putting into practice our faith.

Go with me here. I sometimes use this kind of silly example to explain to folks about this awesome benefits package we've been given by Christ. Let's say I went to Best Buys and bought you a \$2,000 HD4 TV with all the bells and whistles, and told you all you had to do was go pick it up. How many of you would take me up on my offer? Would you say, "that's too good to be true! Why would you do that?" or would you go into the store and try to pay for it again? Or would you just totally ignore it and forget I even bought it for you? All these responses are what we can do with what Christ bought and paid for us. Sometimes, we will go to the store and pick it up, but we will put it in the back room and never use it. "It's just too special, I don't want to use it, I may break it." Or, you go pick it up but where you need to sit it has so much junk on the shelf you don't have room for it. Or, you can go pick it up and turn it on, but believe you know how to use it and never look at the instruction book and miss out on a lot of special features it has to offer. In this next verse, Paul is telling us to go pick it up, clean off the shelf, get out the book and use it for all its worth!<sup>7</sup>

### **Read 1:23**

"You **MUST** continue to believe this truth as **stand firmly** in it." Why? Because if we don't, we won't live our lives in the fullness of all He died to give us. Too many Christians live broke, busted, disgusted and depressed because they don't stand firmly in the truth that this book teaches us. It's a moment by moment choice on who's voice you are going to believe; yours, others, satan's or God's. He's given you the freewill to choose. Whose voice will you choose?

Paul reiterates again that what He's teaching and preaching is not a self appointed mission but one that God co-missioned him to.

### **Read 1:24-25**

Isn't it ironic that Paul was one of the most vocal persecutors of the early church but God knocked him off his donkey with a bright light from heaven and converted him to one of the greatest followers of Jesus. Then he ends up getting persecuted by the very ones that he used to persecute with! Paul says, "*I am glad when I suffer for you in my body,*" What? Glad to suffer? Really Paul? He tells us in the letter to the Corinthian church that as he has been preaching this gospel, he has been hungry, naked, beaten and left for dead, thrown into prison and chained to guards, stoned and shipwrecked but goes on to say that those were "light and momentary troubles achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." Paul had come to a place



in his heart with the Lord that it didn't matter what happened to him here on this earth, he was completing his mission to build up the "*Church, or the body of Christ*", that was given to him by his Savior. That the people that God had given him the privilege to teach this gospel to was worth all this pain, "*for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ.*"

I believe secondly, he could also be telling us that suffering is unavoidable in bringing the Good News of Christ to the world. Do you think maybe that is why our country and our world is in the mess that we are in here lately? I know here in America we are definitely into "pain avoidance"! We don't want to "suffer" for the cause of much of anything. Actually, so many people believe that if you are "suffering for Christ" you must be doing something wrong, "God must be punishing me", that mindset is so wrong!

Did you know there are many benefits to suffering for Christ? **[see slide]**

Lord, help us here at The Well to have that kind of tenacity and willingness to suffer with You for Your cause to bring others to the Kingdom!

### **Read 1:26-27**

The Jews were God's chosen people. They were given the Law and the promised Messiah to be born from their bloodline. Prophets for centuries had spoken of this coming Savior, and Paul is announcing to anyone who may not know or are in doubt, that He has come! His name is Jesus Christ, the One Paul preaches about. But Paul is also letting people know that even tho you were not born a Jew, that this Savior is for you Gentiles too, (a gentile is anyone who is not a Jew), tho it was "*Kept secret for centuries and generations past*". Remember, in the Old testament, Holy Spirit would come upon the prophets and tell them the message they were to say and leave them. Very few people had access to this message about the coming Messiah. But when Christ died on that cross and rose from the dead, He provided the way for us to have "*Christ living in you*", thru the power of the Holy Spirit, a concept that many were finding very hard to believe but now have access to.

This new indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us is our "*assurance that we will share in His glory*". What does it mean to share in His glory? I believe its two fold. We have been given the privilege to reflect the very essence of God, letting His character emanate from our very being thru our love and devotion to Him and to one another. 2) given the privilege to live in His presence and His glory forever with Him in heaven.

And lastly in this chapter **Read 1:28-29**

Last week I had told the story of Jesus and right before He ascended into heaven. He gave a co-mission to His disciples and to us "to go and preach the gospel truth to all nations, cast out demons, heal the sick and make disciples." Paul was fulfilling that commission to this church in Colosse and encouraging us to continue in his example. If you have said yes to Jesus and trusted Him to be your Lord and Savior, then you are Christ's plan A to spread His gospel truth to the nations. And to your family members, friends, co-workers and all that you meet that will listen. What did Paul mean when he told us to "*warn them*"? The warning is that without Christ,

people are doomed to eternal separation from Christ. There's no “do-overs”. When these spirits leave these bodies, the decision has already been made, heaven or hell. Heaven if Christ is your Savior and Lord, hell if He is not.

Paul continues with *“all the wisdom God has given us”*. Listen to me, we are not alone in our co-mission with Christ to spread His gospel truth! We have Holy Spirit living on the inside of us to help us, to give us the wisdom to know how to speak to that person, what to say that pierces their heart to want to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Paul continues with *“we want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship with Christ.”* Don't get tripped up by this word that has been translated “perfect”. In the original text it means, mature. Paul is telling us to not just point someone to Jesus, but to come along side of them and help them to grow in their walk with the Lord, much like what we are doing here today. Because the more “mature” we are in our relationship to Christ the more we reflect His glory and are a light that draws other people to Him.

And lastly, Paul says, *“that's why I work and struggle so hard”*. He worked hard, to the point of exhaustion! He didn't wait till it was convenient or the people he talked to wanted to hear what He had to say. No, he knew that they needed to hear the truth about Christ and he had been given the privilege to share it with them. But he also knew that he didn't do it in his own strength but in the *“power of Christ that works with in me”*. We need to follow the example of Paul and speak the name of Jesus. It may be inconvenient, they may not even want to hear it, but they need to hear about the love that God has for them and the price He paid to save them. Its too important not to. We have a lost and dying world all around us and they need us to be all Christ has destined us to be.

I pray as we continue this month to study this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Colosse and to us, that you will begin to see the importance of reading His word and “not just get into the Bible but let the Bible get into you”. And I hope you begin to see that tho it was written then that it is just as relevant now to change you into His likeness and make an impact on His kingdom.

Let us pray:

The Book of Colossians

A letter from then to now

6/27/21

In previous weeks we had been looking at verse by verse, phrase by phrase and sometimes camping on just one word. Last week and this week we are jumping around in the chapter a bit.

Tho as every week I've been challenging you to take the time to read all four chapters weekly thru this month, asking Holy Spirit to teach you what it is He wants you to learn as you don't just "get into the bible but let the bible get into you."

In Paul's letter he had wrote to the Church in Colosse, he had been refuting what the false teachers of his day were bringing into the church. They were infiltrating a mixture of religions and diluting the pure message of who Christ is. That He is "*The visible image of the invisible God. The supreme creator of all things see or not seen, whether thrones or powers, rulers or authorities. And in Him all things are held together.*" Vividly expressing that He IS our Savior, Judge and King.

If we remember, we have previously talked about the fact that these fledgling churches had folks coming out of pagan worship, where they would go as far as sacrifice their children to these gods made out of wood or stone. Some were even having orgies and perverted sexual escapades in the temple courts, so Paul not only had to refute wrong teaching but also very corrupt behaviors.

But here in chapter 3, Paul moves into helping us understand the relationship we have with Christ. And how that relationship changes us.... or should I say, should change us. And if it hasn't, then maybe you should question whether you have really made Him the Lord of your life and if you are made new?

Because Christ didn't come to this earth and die on a cruel cross to save you from your sins and you stay in the mess that you've been living in. He came to transform you into the image of Himself. You should not just be a "convert" that says you are a Christian but if you were put on trial there wouldn't be enough evidence to convict you. No, He came to transform us into a new person, one who doesn't think or do the same as you did before. One that reflects the image of the One you say you follow.

This transformation happens immediately in our spirit when we say Yes to making Jesus Lord of our lives. But the more baggage from life that we carry in our soul, and the longer we fight the changes that Christ commands that we should change, the longer it may take for it to work its way into our attitudes and actions.

**Video Pt 1** -session 4 of Colossians A letter from then to now; RightnowMedia

Lets get into **Chapter 3** and read **vs. 3**

Let's demonstrate what happened when you said yes to Jesus. (Water transformation demo)  
Rom. 10:9-10 *"If you declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved."*

You have been made a new creation in Christ, one who has never been before. Old has gone the new has come. And no matter what we've done or has been done to us, As Paul tells us in **Romans 8:38-39**

**Read 3:5a** *"So put to death the [sinful, earthly things] lurking within you."* Lurking! That sounds creepy doesn't it? These sinful earthly things that have been woven into the very fibers of our soul! Deep down into memories, imaginations and have come out to become our character. So the choices that you have made and the choices that was made against you, how have they conformed you into someone you never wanted to be? Had these things created in you a person you hated and wanted to self destruct? Or at the least made you withdraw from people. I've heard it said by a few different folks they were "allergic to people." They had been hurt, rejected and abused and it was easier to just stay away from people and just maybe it would stop the pain.

But Paul said here, "put to death the sinful earthly things." These things we carry are not just casual "no big deal", "who cares" wounds that we need to continue to inflict upon ourselves and especially not unto others. We have to look at the seriousness of these sins. Christ paid a very high price to wash these away for you! He was beaten and His body ripped to shreds to pay for those sins that you did and others did to you, so that you could be made right before a holy righteous God. He had spikes driven thru His hands and His feet and hung on a wooden cross, to slowly suffocate from the weight of His body, every breath causing excruciating pain.... for you! Paul is telling us "let's get serious here!" You've got to put this sin to death, out of the appreciation for what Christ provided for you. Like Christ was put to death to pay for our sin, we are to put to death the sin that still wants to cling to us. We are to engage it, recognizing we have it, and kill it! To proactively take responsibility for our part, to charge ahead and do what it takes to get this sin out of our lives.

You may look at these hurts, habits and hang-ups you have in your life and think, "this is just the way I am, this is just who I've become." or "these things are just to big, I'll always be this way" Lies!!! If you have been made new in Christ you have everything you need living on the inside of you called Holy Spirit that longs to help you! You can do all things thru Christ who gives you strength, if you will choose to. But how? How do we go about making these changes? One decision at a time. One Choice at a time.

I've heard it said;

***"Where we water is what is going to grow" and "What you think on longest becomes strongest."***

**Read Vs.1-2**

“Think about the things of heaven and not the things of earth.” See, we need to recognize that these sins, the bad attitudes, the fears, the anger, the condemnation of others, lying, etc. is not going to be in heaven! So if we have been rescued from this kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son then we got to get serious about changing some things. Becoming more Christ like on this side of heaven is so important for being that example that others need to see. Keep your mind on what Christ has done for you and not on you and watch these things just fade away

So Paul directly addresses some of the things that were going on in this church at Colosse; as I had mentioned earlier there was a lot of ungodly behaviors those people had grown accustomed to, And truth be told, we still have a lot of ungodly behaviors going on quite rampantly around us today.

**3:5b** *“Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust and evil desires.”*

Let's take a closer look at each one of these

*Sexual immorality* – let's understand here that God created sex. It was His idea and its a beautiful bond between a man and a woman in the confines of marriage. But when you have any kind of sexual activity outside of those confines it causes lots of hurt and pain in people that God did not design. Paul said to the Corinthian church **“(1 Corth 6:18-20) Don't abuse this gift that God gave you.**

**sexual immorality – anything sexual that is outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. Jesus said, “anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matt 5:28)** Jesus sets this bar really high, and we can believe lies that there's no way I'll ever be able to do this, but with Holy Spirit, nothing is impossible. Stay away from these things out of the love and devotion to our wonderful, awesome and amazing Savior.

**Impurity- Product of our sin nature we carry around, influenced by who we were raised by, who we continue to hang out with and the lies of the enemy we get into agreement with.** I would call these things that, we would say “wasn't against the law” per se, but still not God honoring.. Gossiping, backbiting, lying, manipulating to get your way, passive aggressive, cheating, sarcasm, off color/dirty jokes, always being negative and not have anything good to say about anyone or anything. Etc, the list can go on. Paul is saying *“have nothing to do with these!”* Get them out of your lives!

**Lusts** – Ashely in the video defined lusts is **the outward pressures that the world puts on us that we choose to dwell on and not turn away from.** Choosing to focus on it and then also

choosing to not turn it away. I'm going to define these as those things that we didn't even know we needed until we saw them. (sidenote; you know the impulse buying we can do. Or the, "well everybody else is doing it, our has one so I do too" mentality. we DON't need these things, but lust tells us we need them and then we will become obsessed until we get it) I also believe that advertising, movies and entertainment and social media are the biggest perpetrators to feed these lusts. They will tell you that you must have the nicer blouse, bigger house and a better spouse in order to be fulfilled. Taking our eyes off of the Lord and the self-control that He's placed on the inside of us thru His fruit of the Spirit. Paul is warning us that you have been and will continue to be tempted by these things. Remember what Christ has done to set you free from from these sins, *"have nothing to do with them!"*

**Evil desires- are the desires that rise up on the inside of us and we go out and pursue.** I believe these can be things beyond the lusts just mentioned. Because of our own insecurities we can go in debt to purchase things "to keep up with the Jones's". Our resentments against someone who did us wrong and we are determined "they will pay". Or, by our own perceived unworthiness we can in turn fight to prove our worthiness by overworking or manipulating to reach the top over someone else. Again, Paul tells us to *"have nothing to do with these things!"*

### **Read 3:5c**

**Greedy person is an idolater** – I'm pretty sure we all here know what greedy is, but Let's define idolatry. We can think that idolatry is just what people in other countries do by bowing down to statues of a sitting fat man. And it is, but the idolatry that Paul is also addressing here is something I know in America we definitely struggle with. It's those things we give our affections to. "if only I Had this, or that, THEN my life would be complete!" We can idolize having the newest car, updated computer, latest cell phone, state of the art appliances, THEE house in the best neighborhood, and, while we are at it lets just get a different spouse that's better looking than the one we have. We can idolize actors or singers. If you know more about Elvis or Keith Urban than you do Jesus, then Paul would consider them an idol. Shoot, if we spend more time in front of the TV in our Lazy Boys than serving, or spending time with the Lord Jesus Christ, are we bowing down to an idol? Worshiping the things of this world?

Do you know as a result of these and any other sins that Paul is telling us to *"have nothing to do with"* can grow into?

**[Anger – rage - malicious behavior - slander - dirty language - lying.]** So that we can have or do these " things" that we just talked about because I won't be ok unless I do? These can absolutely envelope us and the light of Christ is not at all visible.

Let's read vs 6 in the amplified version **Read 3:6 AMP**

Going to let Ashley talk to us about this one (16:42-18:43 "his Son the one that He sent")

**Read 3:7 , 8, 9 [Take papers off as they are reading them ]**

God is so good because I ask Him to help me as I'm putting these lessons together and just as I was working on this part I get a notification from my bible app that is

**[Acts 3:19 AMP]** if we will just acknowledge that we have in any way given into any or these things, repent! Which means to recognize its wrong, don't justify these things and hang onto them, turn away and don't do them anymore out of love for your Savior! then what does He say here? ....completely erased!! People that is the good news!

Back to **Colossians Read 3:10 [show the bottle with nothing on it]**

Put on! Paul is instructing us to choose to deny the flesh and all these lusts and evil desires we just talked about and remember that you've been given a new nature thru the power of the Holy Spirit! You are 1/3, wall to wall divine nature! You are supposed to have died to these things, so do them no longer!

And "*be renewed as you learn about your Creator.*" How are you going to learn about your Creator if you are giving yourselves to all these lesser things? "*And become more like Him*" People if there is anything holding you back from being a reflection of Christ, have nothing to do with it! Instead...

**Read 3:12 [ Tenderhearted mercy – kindness – humility – gentleness – patience]**

God CHOSE YOU! YOU MUST CLOTHE YOURSELVES - this part is your responsibility! You have to choose to put these on, get into agreement with the new nature that is already living on the inside of you!

**Read 3:13 [make allowances - FORGIVENESS]**

This one is so important. When we hold onto offenses and don't forgive, it can be like a ball and chain that keeps us in bondage. It will affect not only your relationship with others but also your relationship with God. Christ set another bar really high when it comes to forgiveness. If the same Holy Spirit that lived in Him while He was here on this earth lives in us then we have no excuse for not forgiving others. Christ Came to this earth and loved and taught and healed all who were oppressed of the devil and what did they do to Him? Betrayed Him, denied Him, yelled crucify Him and what did He do? Beaten and His body ripped to Shreds, suffocating on that cross, cried, " Father forgive them for they know not what they do!" And if He is living inside of us then, it doesn't matter what they've done to us, Holy Spirit will give us what we need to forgive them too. And the ability to forgive ourselves as well.

**Read 3:14 [LOVE]**

Above all else clothe YOURSELVES! You have to put love on, choose it moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day, month by month, year by year. Just like you change clothes everyday, we have to choose to take off clothes that has gotten dirty, that needs washed and we put on the clean clothes. We have to choose to put on the things of Christ. By Holy Spirit, love is living in you! Now let it out!

**Read 3:15**

Here again we are given instruction to **“And let the peace that comes from Christ rule your hearts.”** If you've been transformed into a new creation in Christ, then you have the peace of Christ living in you, Paul is telling us to let it rule in our hearts. Despite our circumstances, don't get into fear, worry, doubt, offense, and outright rebel against the Lord! He just told us earlier to “get rid of” these things! Choose peace, Let IT rule!

**“For as members of one body you are called to live in peace.”** We who call ourselves Christians are united together by Christ's blood, given what we need to live in peace and work smoothly together for Christ's purposes just as our body works together to get a job done. There's an old song that says, “They will know we are Christians by our love by our love, they will know we are Christians by our love.” Can the world say that about us here at The Well? Oh Lord let it be so!

**“And always be thankful”** Can't say enough about this one, either! I challenge you to choose to be thankful instead of griping and complaining about every little thing and watch your whole countenance and demeanor and thinking and actions start to change for the better. And you'll be a better example of Christ to your world.

### **Read 3:16**

Teach and counsel one another, which is what we are doing here at The Well of Christ! And exactly why we are seeking a bigger place and want to teach people the word of God. Because when you change a mind, you change a heart which changes families which change our communities in turn can change our world! And here of late its been very obvious that we need to step up and do our part to change our world. And Paul reminds us once again to have thankfulness in our hearts. Its SO important!

### **Read 3:17**

So Paul is wrapping up this rebuke he had just written to this church in Colosse and also to us.

I remember the distinct moment when this verse hit me and I chose to let it become ingrained into my soul, that I would continually strive to live out that I am a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ! I want nothing in my life or my words or my actions to dishonor Him. This body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and I want my life to carry His very presence wherever I go and be a beacon of hope and light that others will be drawn to. I challenge each of you to consider this challenge for yourselves.

Then Paul wraps up this chapter with further instructions about how putting on Christ should look like in our day to day lives.

### **{Follow along in your bibles as I read 3:18-25}**

*“But if you do what is wrong you will be paid back for the wrongs you have done.”* I believe Paul is trying to tell us here that there will be consequences for our behaviors. Just because you are in Christ now does not mean if you choose to do wrong that He will keep you from those consequences. You sow wrong you will reap bad. You sow right you will reap good.



*“For God has no favorites”* Remember as we have learned the last few weeks that Paul was writing to a church that had varying cultures and beliefs and people groups that all coming together in one place learning about Christ side by side. Outside of this church they would have never crossed paths; intentionally because these different people groups did NOT associate with each other, because one group thought they were better than the other ones. Paul is setting them straight. We are all on the same playing field when it comes to the foot of the cross. We are all sinners that need saved by His grace. And God is not going to give allowances to one group or person over another.

Let's close out the book of Colossians as we read together vs. **2, 5 & 6 in chapter 4**

Let's just listen to this **song** and take this time to humble ourselves before God and surrender our sins and shortcomings to Him, committing to leaving here today looking more like Him.

And Paul ends this letter with *“May God's grace be with you.”*

Let us pray;

Father, once again as I was preparing this message a verse from the bible app popped up

**Hebrew 12:11** *“no discipline is enjoyable while it is happening – it's painful! But after wards there wil be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.”*