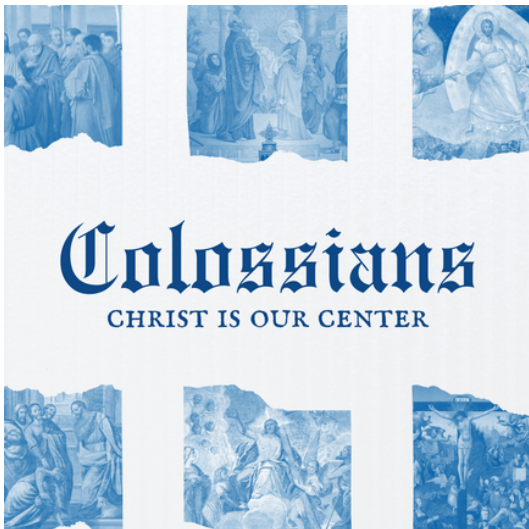


SERMON STUDY GUIDE

05.26.24 // Week 1 // “The Gospel is Advancing”



Our view of Jesus shapes every area of our lives. When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he wrote to a group of people new to Christ and the Christian life. At this stage, they needed to see how the wisdom they needed to grow and thrive was found in Christ. Their faith took root in Jesus and would need to continue being rooted and built up in Him. As we go through Colossians, we will grow in our view of Christ and the wisdom of the cross as the basis for a life that bears fruit!

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- Do you watch baseball during the spring? Who is your favorite team/player?
- What are you proud of about your growth as a Christ-follower? How has this growth impacted your life or the lives of those around you?

GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

Let's read Colossians 1:1-14

*1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Timothy our brother:
2 To the saints in Christ at Colossae, who are faithful brothers and sisters.
Grace to you and peace from God our Father. 3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints 5 because of the hope reserved for you in heaven. You have already heard about this hope in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. It is bearing fruit and growing all over the world, just as it has among you since the day you heard it and came to truly appreciate God's grace. 7 You learned this from Epaphras, our dearly loved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 and he has told us about your love in the Spirit. 9 For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, 10 so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. 13 He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. 14 In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Point 1 – When I'm filled with godly wisdom, the fruit is godly living.

Godly wisdom is different from regular, earthly wisdom. Godly wisdom is given by the Holy Spirit. Godly wisdom is given so that we can walk worthy of the Lord (vs. 10). Godly wisdom helps us do the things God wants us to do. Godly wisdom is doing life in God's way. When we have the wisdom that God gives and understand His will for our lives, the fruit of that is that we live in such a way that brings glory to God. Paul calls this living lives that are worthy of the Lord (vs.10a).

Paul could say in verse 9 that he was asking that they be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and understanding because scripture tells us that when we ask God for His wisdom, He will give it to us.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." James 1:5, NIV

God is generous in giving us all that He wants us to have. He wants us to walk in His wisdom so that our lives reflect His image to the world around us. People who don't know Him see Him through our lives.

- In verse 9, Paul tells his audience that he consistently prays a specific prayer for them (vs.9-14). What is one prayer that you pray consistently over your life? Over your family?
- In verses 3-8, Paul compliments the Colossians for their love, hope, and faith. He then prays that they will grow even more (verses 9-14). How often do you pray for people who are doing well in their relationship with God?

Paul desires that Christ-followers lead a life of worth, pleasing the Lord in everything. What does that look like? Good news: Paul tells us. Paul wrote in ancient Greek, and in Greek, he gives four participial phrases in vs. 10-14 that flesh out how God helps us live a life that is pleasing to him! Think about these as four “results” for the life that is committed to living with God and for God. We put these four participles in an acronym to make them memorable... so here you go! If we walk worthy of the Lord, we will **G.R.O.W.**

Grow in intimacy with God.

Colossians 1:10 (CSB) *...growing in the knowledge of God...*

Any time we spend more time with someone, our relationship becomes more intimate. We get to know someone better, and we get a sense of what they want from us and for us without them having to explicitly say what that is. The more we grow in the knowledge of God, the more we have a clearer understanding of what He wants us to do to bring glory to Him.

- How can you say you have grown closer to God this year? What has He revealed to you about Himself in that time?
- How do you grow in your knowledge of God? (Scripture, worship, prayer, meditating on Him)

Realize our impact in our world.

Colossians 1:10 (CSB) *...bearing fruit in every good work...*

Even those who don't know Christ can do good things in the world. But the good that they do doesn't bear the fruit of God. The things that they do don't last for eternity. God is actively working in our lives to bear fruit. He wants us to look more and more like Him.

- What is something positive that you may have done for others before you were saved that you now do after salvation? Can you see a difference in your heart, or in the staying power of those around you after you came to faith?
- What is one area of your life that you need God's help to grow more fruit? How often do you pray for this?

Operate in God's strength.

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

God does not send us to do His will without giving us what we need to accomplish His will. Just as He provided Moses with the strength he needed to lead God's people, God will give us the strength and power we need to accomplish all of the good works He prepared in advance for us to do. Paul also highlights the reason for God's strength: endurance and patience.

Endurance is the ability to bear a heavy load, and patience is the ability to remain calm even when provoked. We need God's strength to endure hardships in life as they come and to remain calm and self-controlled when others push us. What a tremendous prayer to pray and a gift to receive from God.

- What is something you felt God was calling you to do but you felt wholly unequipped to do? How did He give you the strength and power to accomplish His plan?
- Have you ever experienced the strength of God holding you up when life seemed too heavy to endure? When did you last share that story with someone who needed encouragement?

Worship with a Grateful Heart

Colossians 1:11-14 (CSB) *...joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. 13 He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.14 In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Paul ends this section with an encouragement to worship and give thanks to God for all the incredible things He has done in our lives. Reflecting on the amazing gift of salvation in our lives should bring us to a place of constant praise and thankfulness. G.K. Chesterton says, "When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude." To have a powerful godly faith and life, we must give thanks continually, not just for what God has already done, but for what He's currently doing and will continue to do in our lives.

- How often are you thanking God for what He will accomplish in and through you for those around you and His kingdom?
- What can you do to begin more of your prayers with thanksgiving, even when you are in anguish of spirit? How do you think this would help you view God more accurately?
- When you ask God for wisdom, do you really believe that He will give it to you? What would help you have even more belief in this area?
- What kind of eternal impact do you want your life to have? How can you begin praying for that today? Ask God to give you a clear vision of what He wants you to do for Him and for those around you.