

Brentwood Bible Fellowship
Reading thru the New Testament
2017

Week 25

Paul's Letter to the Philippians and Colossians
Philippians 3 – Colossians 3

Key Verses:

*For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through
Him and for Him.*

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:16-17

NAS Version

June 19 – June 25

Monday - Philippians 3 Overcoming my pride through the knowledge of Christ

Tuesday - Philippians 4 Overcoming anxiety, Content by serving others

Wednesday - Colossians 1 Our position in Christ

Thursday - Colossians 2 Built up in Christ

Friday - Colossians 3 How we are to walk in Christ

Saturday - Review

Sunday – Review

Introduction to
The Letter to The Colossians

The Author: The Apostle Paul

The Date: A.D. 62-63

The Setting: The Prison Epistles (Same as Ephesians)

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon were all written about the same time. Paul was a prisoner in Rome yet, though a prisoner, he enjoyed a good measure of freedom. Though guarded by Roman soldiers, he lived in a private house and was free to entertain friends and correspond with various churches and individuals. Hence, the writing of the four Prison Epistles. Paul was not alone as I have mentioned, he had at least eight workers assisting him.

Colossae: Colossae Was located on the Lycus river about 120 miles east of Ephesus. It was near the cities of Laodicea and Hieropolis. Colossae was at its peak around the 5th century B.C., but due to competition with neighboring cities had declined in population from that time. Colossae, although primarily gentile also had a large Jewish population and influence.

Paul's History with Colossae: Paul had never actually visited Colossae. Epaphras, a citizen of Colossae had apparently met Paul in Ephesus and it was there that he committed his life to Jesus Christ. Paul had spent approximately three years in Ephesus during his third missionary journey training his disciples to carry on the ministry. Epaphras was most likely one of those students. After being discipled by Paul, he went back to the Lycus valley where most likely planted several churches, including the Church of the Colossians.

The purpose: The Book of Colossians was written to display the preeminence and sufficiency of Christ. The believer is complete in Christ and Christ alone. He needs nothing or no one else. The letter was written to dispel the teachings of one of the mystic or wisdom religions which was devaluing the person of Christ. It was most likely the beginnings of Gnosticism which became much more prevalent in the next few centuries. The Colossians believers were to remain grounded and steadfast in their faith. A proper view of Christ was the antidote to this new religious belief. The believers were to grow and bear fruit in their faith. Finally, in the last two chapters Paul shows how the believers are to live for Christ through a transformed life. These chapters give the practical application based on the believer's position in Christ.

The Theme: The Preeminence of Christ

Key verses: Colossians 2:9-10; Colossians 3:1-4

Questions and comments concerning the daily readings

Philippians 3 – Colossians 3

Week Twenty-Five

Philippians 3 Overcoming pride through the knowledge of Christ

1. Philippians 3:1-7

Verse 1 Notice Paul's emphasis on joy or the importance of rejoicing.

Verses 2-3 What is the warning Paul gives the Philippians? How might someone place their faith in the flesh today?

Verses 4-7 How does Paul view his past life versus his life since he put his faith in Christ? Explain how Paul's experience might set an example for you?

Verse 7 Paul renounced everything in his past for his faith in Christ.

2. Philippians 3:8-11

What things did Paul say he lost and he gained through his knowing Christ?

How did Paul view the things he had lost?

3. Philippians 3:12-16

What is the focus of Paul's life? At the writing of this letter, had he yet reached the pinnacle of success, as he now viewed success?

How would you describe the example which Paul sets for us in these verses?

4. Philippians 3:17-21

Paul encouraged his readers to imitate his life. He said to beware of those who were false believers. What typified those whose lives Paul warned his readers not to follow? Are people whose lives would typify those in verse 18-19 evident in our culture today? Are they evident within Christian churches today?

Verse 20 Always keep in mind that your citizenship is in Heaven. Doing so will help you to live a life more in keeping with the will of God.

Verse 21 We need to also be mindful of our future glory.

Philippians 4 Overcoming anxiety and finding contentment in serving others

1. Philippians 4:1-3 It is important to be united in our ministry. Sometimes, as with Euodia and Syntyche, it is important that we remind one another of this so that our differences do not negatively impact our ministry.

2. Philippians 4:4 Paul once again exhorts his readers to rejoice. In fact he repeats himself. Why do you think he did that?

3. Philippians 4:5 Let your forbearance, or consideration for others be known to all men. Why is this important in the church? Is it sometimes difficult? If so, why?

4. Philippians 4:6-7

What does Paul say we should do concerning our anxieties? What seems to cause you the most anxiety? What does the passage promise concerning our anxieties?

5. Philippians 4:8-9

What does Paul say we should do to experience the God of peace in our lives? Is this difficult? How does this relate to Romans 12:2, where it says not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind?

6. Philippians 4:10-13

Paul thanks the Philippians for their generous gift to him. Paul, however, says that he has learned to live with a little or a lot. He said that he can live, whatever his circumstances, as long as he is living in the Lord. What do you learn about living in any and every circumstance from these verses? What does this passage

tell you about Paul's faith in the Lord? What does it say about what our faith should be like?

7. Philippians 4:14-19

What example do we receive from the Philippian believers in terms of generosity and the use of our finances?

How does Paul say that God views their giving in verses 18-19? How does God respond to such giving? Can we expect a similar response if we give generously to the work of the Lord?

8. Philippians 4:21-23

Notice that Paul mentions the saints in Caesar's household in his closing statements. God's word is not limited by class, economics, education or any other human barrier. Even those in Caesar's household had heard and responded to the gospel. Even Presidents and Congress men and women can be touched by the gospel. Be sure to pray for those in political office as well as their families that they might hear and respond to the gospel.

Colossians 1 Our Position in Christ

1. Colossians 1:3-8

Paul had never been to Colossae, but his student, Epaphras had. Epaphras had most likely been saved during Paul's ministry in Ephesus and trained during Paul's three year stay there. Then Epaphras had travelled up the Lycus Valley, planting churches in the towns and cities located there. Paul says he had not ceased giving thanks for them since he heard of their faith in Jesus Christ. What kinds of things does Paul say he was thankful for? Note Paul's reference to their faith, love and hope. (Faith in Christ is past, the point of their salvation. Love for the saints is present. Hope laid up in heaven is future.)

What is the gospel accomplishing according to verse 6? Should this be true in all churches?

2. Colossians 1:9-12

This is Paul's great prayer on behalf of the Colossians believers, and I am sure it would be his prayer for the Brentwood believers as well. Walk through this passage and list verse by verse Paul's desire which he prays for the Colossians believers.

These principles of spiritual growth should be what we are all striving for in our personal lives.

3. Colossians 1:13-14

Note what God did for us in verse 13. Take a moment just to reflect on this great act on our behalf.

What is ours according to verse 14?

What did we do to deserve such a great expression of God's power and love on our behalf?

4. Colossians 1:15-23 The preeminence of Christ

Verse 15 How is Christ related to the Father?

Verses 15-17 How is Christ related to creation?

First- born speaks of position or preeminence, not birth.

Verses 18-19 How is Christ related to the church?

Verses 20-23 How is Christ evidenced as preeminent through His work?

What did Christ do for you and me as sinners?

5. Colossians 1:24-29 Though Paul had never been to Colosse, he now recounts his personal ministry on their behalf.

What was Paul's cause for rejoicing in verse 24?

What was Paul's responsibility in verses 25-26?

Explain the mystery Paul spoke of in verses 26-27?

Paul was a purpose driven minister. What was Paul's purpose in ministry as explained in verses 28-29?

Colossians 2 Built up in Christ X

1. Colossians 2:1-5

The individuals of church at Colossae was experiencing problems with false teachers trying to draw them away from their faith in Christ. It is known today as the Colossians heresy. Paul wrote to them to refute the message of the false

teachers. (See verse 4) Paul reminds them of their faith in Christ in verse 5. It is important that we remain unified in the truths of our faith.

2. Colossians 2:6-7

What is Paul's instruction for the Colossians in verse 6?

According to verse 7, why was it possible for the Colossians or for us, to Walk faithfully in Christ Jesus?

3. Colossians 2:8-10

What is Paul's warning for all believers in verse 8? Can you think of any of the things mentioned in verse 8 which may be present today? What is it that we should beware of?

In Christ is the fulness of God. Wow! What does that tell us about the person of Jesus? (Verse 9)

What does verse 10 explain about the authority of Christ?

4. Colossians 2:11-15

Verses 11-12 What was the meaning of Christ's burial on our behalf?

Verses 12-13 What is the meaning of His resurrection on our behalf?

Verses 14-15 What is the benefit of the cross on behalf of the believer?

5. Colossians 2:16-23 Warning concerning false religions. Paul shares four false religious practices of which we are to be aware and avoid.

1. Verse 8 - False philosophy or replacing the Bible with human logic. If a person tries to induce you to reject the teachings of the Bible because it is not logical or they try to interpret scripture by that which seems logical rather than the literal understanding of the Bible, avoid that teaching.

2. Verses 16-17 - Ceremonialism - Ceremonialism emphasizes works over grace. The ceremonies of the Old Testament were to foreshadow the coming of Jesus, not to stifle the gospel after He came. We are not saved by observing special days and ceremonies, but rather by belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Saved by God's grace and God's grace only. We are not saved by anything else that we can do or add.

3. Verses 18-19 - Mysticism – This person does not hold fast to Jesus, the head of the body; The one who gives life to the body. Instead his worship may focus on intermediaries or angels. This is a mystic type of faith or religion.
4. Verses 20-23 Self-denial or self-abasement. Asceticism. Self-denial is in essence a form of self-worship. It emphasizes strength of the will and the flesh. Self-denial, punishment of my own body.

All four of these religious practices which Paul warns against are evident in our nation today. Can you name some of them?

Colossians 3 - How are we to walk - Paul moves from the theological to the practical

1. Colossians 3:1-4

As Christians, according to verses 1-3, what is to be our focus in life? What is going to take place for us in the future according to verse 4 if verses 1-3 are true? Knowing this, how should it affect the way I live my life now? This means I must live with my future destiny as a known reality. That should definitely affect how I live now.

2. Colossians 3:5-9

Paul gives two lists of sins in this passage. The ones in verses 5-7 seem to be more sensual and sexual. These are certainly prevalent in the world today. Paul says it is because of these that the wrath of God will come.

The second list is found in verses 8-9. These appear to be more mental and verbal.

Which of these lists of sins would be more prevalent in the American church? Why?

What the scripture tells us is that we are accountable to remove both sets of sins from our lives. We are to lay them aside like an old dirty suit of clothes. Is this difficult to do? Why or why not?

3. Colossians 3:10-11

According to verse 10 we are to put on a new self. In whose image is that self to be like?

Verse 11 – In the body of Christ there is no difference in terms of race or economic status. Why not?

4. Colossians 3:12-17 Here is the list of graces which we are to put on in place of those which God said we are to remove. What a transformation this will make in our lives.

What does verse 12 tell us about our relationship with God? How does that make you feel about yourself? Does it add any value to your life?

List the spiritual qualities in verses 12-13 and explain in your own words what each of them means or give an example of how each is to be lived out in one's life.

How are we to forgive according to verse 13? Is that difficult?

Verse 14 Put on love. It is like love is the quality which holds all of the other qualities together.

What will be the result in the church if everyone applies these character qualities to their lives?

Verses 15 If the peace of Christ rules in our hearts, how will that impact our relationship with other believers? Don't forget to be thankful. To whom should we be thankful? Why?

Verse 16 Explain the meaning of this verse as it relates to how we relate to one another. What is the dominating influence in verse 16?

Verse 17 Memorize this verse. It will change your life. Why is it so important in terms of the Christian life?

5. Colossians 3:18-21 The Christian Family

Verse 18 What is the responsibility of the wife? Why according to this verse is it important? To fulfill her role in the marriage, who is it important for the wife to place her faith in?

Verse 19 What is the responsibility of the husband in the marriage relationship? Keep your answer in context? What does it mean to be embittered against someone? How can this happen? Whose responsibility is it to see that the husband does not become embittered?

Verse 20 Why are children to be obedient to their parents? What is to be the extent of their obedience? When does a child's responsibility to be obedient to their parent end?

Verse 21 Fathers/parents are not to exasperate their children. What does exasperate mean? How might a parent exasperate their child? What might be the result if they do? Is that a problem? Why?

6. Colossians 3:22 – 4:1

Verses 22-25

Slaves/employees. How are you to respond to your employer? What does it mean to merely please men? Who should we work to please when we are working for someone else? Who gives us the ultimate reward for our work on earth?

Explain verses 23-25 in your own words.

Can you truly say that when you go to work it is the Lord Jesus Christ whom you serve and not your employer and not your union?

Verse 4:1 Master/Employer. How are you to treat your employees? What does this mean in today's culture? Why is it important as a Christian employer that you treat your employees with fairness?

List some of the major problems between America's work force and America's employers. Be very careful how you answer this. I have found that it very easy to be prejudice based on whether you work for someone or whether you are responsible to hire and employ others.