

“LIVING THE CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE”

Colossians Series Outlines



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“Dear Colossians” (Colossians 1:1-2)

I. The city of Colosse – a small town by the river

II. The church at Colosse – threatened by false teaching

A. Three major themes in the false teaching:

- 1) dualism (creation; incarnation; asceticism)
- 2) legalism (circumcision; holy days; Jewish ceremonies)
- 3) mysticism (visions; worship of angels; secret wisdom)

B. Three major doctrinal errors:

- 1) weak Christology ó denial of Christ’s person
- 2) works-righteousness ó denial of Christ’s work
- 3) spiritual elitism ó denial of Christ’s body, the church

III. Paul’s letter to the Colossians – Christ is central

A. Major themes

1) the person and work of Christ:

- creator and sustainer of all things (1:15-17)
- head of the church (1:18-19)
- reconciler of all things (1:20-23)
- source of all wisdom and knowledge (2:2-3)
- fully human and fully divine (2:9)
- deliverer from sin and evil (2:13-15)
- fulfillment of the Jewish law (2:16-23)

2) the new life of the believer:

- new relationship with Christ (3:1)
- new desires (3:2-4)
- new practices (3:5-10)
- new relationships with other believers (3:11-17)
- new relationships at home (3:18-4:1)
- new mission in the world (4:2-6)

B. Paul’s introductory remarks (1:1-2)

1) Paul’s authority (an apostle by the will of God)

2) the church’s identity

- holy and faithful (believers)
- brothers and sisters (family)
- in Christ (Christ is central)

3) ðGrace and peace to you from God our Father.ö

“Thank God for the Gospel”
Colossians 1:3-8

I. Thank God for the work of the gospel in fellow believers (3-6a)

A. Thank God for other believers when you pray for them

B. Faith and love spring from the hope of the gospel

- Galatians 5:6; 1 John 3:14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

C. Note: The gospel comes first. It is the “word of truth.” We must compare all other teachings to the gospel.

II. Thank God for the work of the gospel around the world (6b)

A. The gospel is bearing fruit and growing all over the world

- see parable of the sower (Mark 4:8)

B. The gospel bears fruit when people hear and understand

God’s grace in all its truth

III. Thank God for those who shared the gospel with you (7-8)

A. Everyone learns the gospel from someone

B. Who will learn the gospel from you?

“Praying for Spiritual Growth”
Colossians 1:9-14

I. Pray for others to know God’s will (9)

- A. Never stop praying for each other.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17

- B. Pray that God will fill them with the knowledge of his will.
- Hosea 4:6; Ephesians 4:13-14

- C. Pray for spiritual wisdom and understanding.
- Proverbs 9:10

II. Pray that others may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way (10-12)

- A. Pray that they will bear fruit in every good work.
- cf. Colossians 1:6

- B. Pray that they will grow in the knowledge of God.
- Jeremiah 9:23-24

- C. Pray that God will give them strength and endurance.
- Philippians 4:13; Hebrews 12:1

- D. Pray that they will joyfully give thanks for their salvation.
- 1 John 1:5

III. Remember that we have been rescued by God (13-14)

- A. We have been rescued from darkness into light.
- John 3:19-21

- B. We have been brought into the kingdom of his Son.
- Mark 1:11; Luke 12:32

- C. In Jesus we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.
- Acts 26:17-18; 1 Peter 1:18-19

“The Supremacy of Christ”
Colossians 1:15-18

Who is Jesus in relation to God, creation and the church?

I. Jesus is the image of the invisible God (15a)

- Genesis 1:26-27; John 14:8-9; 1 Timothy 6:16; Hebrews 1:3

II. Jesus is the firstborn over all creation (15b-17)

- Psalm 89:27; Revelation 3:14 (ōfirstbornō = ruler/heir)

A. Jesus created all things (16a)

- Genesis 1:1; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2

B. Jesus inherits all things (16b)

- Romans 11:36; Hebrews 1:2

C. Jesus existed before all things (17a)

- John 1:1-2, 8:58

D. Jesus sustains all things (17b)

- Hebrews 1:3

III. Jesus is the head of the body, the church (18)

A. He is the beginning of the church

- Matthew 16:16-18

B. He is the firstborn from among the dead

- 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

“This Is the Gospel”
Colossians 1:19-23

I. The gospel begins with the incarnation (19)

A. Jesus became fully man (John 1:1,14)

B. Jesus did not cease to be fully God (Jeremiah 23:24; John 10:30)

II. The gospel has universal implications (20)

A. God will reconcile all things to himself through Jesus
- Romans 8:20-21; Philippians 2:10-11; Hebrews 9:23

B. Reconciliation comes through Jesus' blood shed on the cross
- Ephesians 1:7; 1 Timothy 2:5-6

III. The gospel has personal application (21-23)

A. God reconciled you when you put your faith in Jesus

1) You were alienated from God and an enemy of God
- John 3:19-20; Romans 8:7

2) God reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death
- Romans 5:10

3) God will present you holy and free from accusation
- 1 Corinthians 1:8-9; Ephesians 5:25-27; Philippians 1:6

B. You know your faith is genuine if you continue in your faith

1) Stand firm in the faith (cf. Matthew 7:24-27)

2) Hold on to your hope (Colossians 1:5)

C. The gospel is proclaimed to every creature under heaven

1) The gospel is meant to be heard and then shared

2) The gospel offer goes out to the whole world (Mark 16:15)

3) Are you a servant of the gospel?

“Working Hard for the Gospel”
Colossians 1:24 – 2:5

I. Presenting God’s word in its fullness (1:24-27)

- A. Willing to suffer for the body of Christ (24)
 - 2 Corinthians 11:23-28; Philippians 3:10; Hebrews 10:12-14

- B. Explaining God’s plan (25-26)
 - Acts 20:27; Ephesians 3:3

- C. Christ in you, the hope of glory (27)
 - Romans 8:10-11

II. Proclaiming Christ to each person (1:28-29)

- A. Admonishing and teaching with all wisdom (28a)

- B. No one left behind (28b)

- C. Relying on God’s power (29)
 - 2 Corinthians 4:7-9; Philippians 4:13

III. Protecting God’s people from false teachers (2:1-5)

- A. Promoting unity (1-2a)

- B. Keeping Christ at the center (2b-4)

- C. Staying spiritually connected (5)
 - cf. 1 Corinthians 5:3

“Living in Christ”
Colossians 2:6-10

ōJust as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.ö

I. Faith in Christ (6-7)

- A. Rooted and built up in him
- John 15:5

- B. Strengthened in the faith as you were taught
- Acts 20:32

- C. Overflowing with thankfulness
- Colossians 1:3, 12, 2:7, 3:15, 16, 17, 4:2

II. Freedom in Christ (8)

- A. Watch out for hollow and deceptive philosophy
- Acts 20:29; Colossians 1:13

- B. Do not look to human tradition or the basic principles of this world
- Mark 7:8; Galatians 4:3, 8-9

- C. True freedom is found in Christ alone
- Galatians 5:1

III. Fullness in Christ (9-10)

- A. All the fullness of God lives in Christ
- Colossians 1:19

- B. Christ is the head over every power and authority
- Matthew 28:16; Colossians 1:16, 18

- C. You have been given fullness in Christ
- John 1:16, 10:10; Ephesians 3:19; Colossians 1:9, 19, 24-25, 2:2, 9-10

“The Power of the Cross” (Colossians 2:11-15)

I. Freed from sin (11-13a)

- by receiving new life in Christ

A. Symbolized by circumcision (11)

- Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 2:28-29

B. Symbolized by baptism (12)

- Romans 6:4-7

C. Made alive with Christ (13a)

- 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-5

II. Freed from the law (13b-14)

- by the forgiveness of your sins

A. Cancelled your debt (14a)

- Psalm 32:1-2; Galatians 3:10

B. Took away the law as a condemning force (14b)

- Romans 6:14, 7:6, 8:1-2

III. Freed from Satan (15)

- by Christ's defeat of all the spiritual forces of evil

A. Disarmed the spiritual forces (15a)

- 1 Corinthians 2:8; Hebrews 2:14

B. Triumphed over them by the cross (15b)

- John 12:31

“Poor Substitutes” (Colossians 2:16-23)

I. Fighting legalism – Don’t let anyone judge you (16-17)

- A. Relying on religious rules for acceptance by God
 - Leviticus 23; Mark 7:14-15; Romans 14:5,17

- B. The problem: only shadows of the things that were to come
 - Hebrews 9:10, 10:1

- C. The solution: Focus on the reality which is found in Christ.
 - John 6:41; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 4:1-11

II. Fighting mysticism – Don’t let anyone disqualify you (18-19)

- A. Relying on religious experience for status within the church
 - 1 Timothy 2:5; Matthew 4:10; Revelation 19:10

- B. The problem: false humility (pride)
 - 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

- C. The solution: Stay connected with Christ.
 - John 15:4-5; Colossians 2:2, 3:14

III. Fighting asceticism – Don’t let anyone take away your freedom (20-23)

- A. Relying on religious acts of self-denial to grow in holiness
 - John 15:19; Galatians 4:9; 1 Timothy 4:1-5

- B. The problem: merely human commands and teachings
 - Isaiah 29:13; Colossians 2:3; 1 Timothy 6:17

- C. The solution: Remember that you already died with Christ.
 - Galatians 2:19; Colossians 2:20

“Raised with Christ” (Colossians 3:1-4)

I. Two commands for those who have been raised with Christ (1-2)

A. Set your hearts on things above (a new direction)

- Matthew 6:19-21, 33; Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 2:12

B. Set your minds on things above (a new focus)

- 2 Corinthians 5:15-16; Philippians 3:19-20, 4:8; 1 John 2:17

II. Three reasons why you should do these things (3-4)

A. You died with Christ (past)

- Galatians 2:20

B. Your life is now hidden with Christ in God (present)

- John 10:28-30, 17:20-21; Romans 8:39

C. When Christ appears, you will appear with him in glory (future)

- John 14:6,19; Philippians 1:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 John 3:2

“Off with the Old” (Colossians 3:5-11)

I. Get rid of the sinful things in your life

A. Put them to death (5)

- Romans 8:13

B. Remove them like clothing (8-9)

- Colossians 2:11 (õput offö), 2:15 (õdisarmedö)

II. Examples of sinful things we should get rid of

A. Sexual sins (5) ó sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed/idolatry (Exodus 20:17; Romans 1:24-25)

B. Interpersonal sins (8-9) ó anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language, lying (Matthew 12:36-37; Ephesians 4:29, 5:3-4)

III. Four reasons why we should get rid of these things

A. God's wrath is coming because of these things (6)

- Ephesians 5:5-7

B. These things belong to your old way of life (7)

- Romans 6:21-23

C. God is making you into someone new (9-10)

- Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18, 5:17; Ephesians 4:22-24

D. In Christ all the man-made barriers have been removed (11)

- 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-28 (racial, religious, cultural, social)

“On with the New” (Colossians 3:12-17)

I. Clothe yourselves with Christ-like qualities (12-14)

- A. Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience (12)
 - Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Ephesians 1:4-5; Galatians 5:22-23
- B. Bear with and forgive each other (13)
 - Matthew 18:21-22; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 2:13
- C. Over all these put on love (14)
 - John 13:34; 1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:22

II. Live as members of one body of Christ (15-16)

- A. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts (15)
 - Ephesians 4:3-4
- B. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly (16)
 - 1) as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom
 - Colossians 1:28
 - 2) as you sing songs with gratitude in your hearts to God
 - Ephesians 5:18-20

III. Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus (17)

- A. Whatever you do, whether in word or in deed (17a)
 - Colossians 2:6; 1 Corinthians 10:31
- B. Giving thanks to God the Father through Jesus (17b)
 - John 14:6; Colossians 1:3,12; 2:7; 3:15,16,17; 4:2

“Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 13:14)

“Christ-Centered Relationships” (Colossians 3:18-4:1)

General principle: order, authority and submission (Romans 13:1-2)

I. Christ-centered marriage relationships (3:18-19)

- A. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord
 - 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-24

- B. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them
 - 1 Corinthians 7:33-34; Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7

II. Christ-centered parenting relationships (3:20-21)

- A. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord
 - Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-2

- B. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged
 - Psalm 103:13-14; Ephesians 6:4

III. Christ-centered work relationships (3:22-4:1)

- A. Workers, obey your bosses (3:22-25)
 - Ephesians 6:5-8; 1 Timothy 6:1-2
 - 1) in all things and at all times even when they are not looking
 - 2) with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord
 - 3) work with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men
 - 4) know that there is no favoritism (the Lord will reward you for good work but he will judge those who do wrong)

- B. Bosses, take care of your workers (4:1)
 - Ephesians 6:9; 1 Timothy 5:18; James 5:4
 - 1) provide them with what is right and fair
 - 2) know that you also have a Master in heaven

Look at Christ for your example:

- 1) Husband/wives ó look at Christ and his relationship with the church
- 2) Children ó look at Jesus who obeyed his parents
- 3) Parents ó look at Christ and his compassion
- 4) Masters/slaves ó look at the Lord as the ultimate reward-giver and judge

“On Mission in the World” (Colossians 4:2-6)

I. Pray for opportunities to share the gospel (2-4)

- A. Devote yourselves to prayer (be persistent, watchful and thankful)
- Acts 1:14; Ephesians 6:18

- B. Pray that God will open doors for the message of Christ
- 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Timothy 2:9

- C. Pray for open mouths to proclaim the message clearly
- Acts 28:30-31; Ephesians 6:19

II. Live your life in light of the gospel (5)

- A. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders
- Ephesians 5:15; Colossians 1:9, 21; Titus 2:10

- B. Make the most of every opportunity
- Psalm 90:12; Ephesians 5:16

III. Guard your speech for the sake of the gospel (6)

- A. Let your conversation be always full of grace
- Psalm 141:3; Luke 4:22

- B. Let your words be seasoned with truth and love
- Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:8

- C. Be prepared to share the gospel with anyone at any time
- 1 Peter 3:15-16

“We’re All in This Together” (Colossians 4:7-18)

1. Faithful messengers (7-9)

- Tychicus > fellow worker; carried letter to Colossians
- Onesimus > runaway slave; subject of letter to Philemon

2. Jewish co-workers and comforters (10-11)

- Aristarchus > fellow prisoner; from Thessalonica
- Mark > restored to ministry; wrote the gospel of Mark
- Justus > fellow worker for the kingdom of God

3. Epaphras, the prayer warrior (12-13)

- founder of the church at Colosse (Colossians 1:7)
- always wrestling in prayer (Colossians 1:9, 28-29)
- worked hard for the churches (Colossians 2:1)

4. Good friends and traveling companions (14)

- Luke > Paul’s personal physician; wrote Luke and Acts
- Demas > eventual deserter (2 Timothy 4:10-12; 1 John 2:15)

5. Valued recipients (15-17)

- Nympha > church met at her house
- the church at Laodicea > letter exchange (perhaps Ephesians?)
- Archippus > told to complete his ministry (cf. 2 Timothy 4:5)

6. The apostle Paul (18)

- personal greeting in his own handwriting
- suffering for Christ and the gospel
- letter begins and ends with grace (Colossians 1:1-2)

***You can’t live the Christ-centered life on your own;
we’re all in this together!***