

A Walk Through Colossians

Introduction

Paul is in house arrest in Rome, and Epaphras brings him news and a gift. The believers in Philippi, ever supportive and caring for Paul, have sent funds so he can pay for his lodging and expenses. But there's news of conflict and false teaching in Colosse, Laodicea and even Philippi.

Paul then pulls his thoughts together and writes three letters via Timothy, and sends them through Tychicus to Colosse, Philemon, and Ephesus.

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Chapter 1

'This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy.

We are writing to God's holy people in the city of Colosse, who are faithful brothers and sisters in Christ.

May God our Father give you grace and peace. '

Colossians 1:1-2

Well I have news for you! The very first words are a blessing and prayer covering for you. May God give you grace and peace.

God specifically chose me (Paul) according to His plan to be a messenger proclaiming His good news. He is the one who establishes me, and on His authority I am writing to you. Along with me is Timothy, our brother.

And I have a message, a declaration for our brothers and sisters in Colosse. I am writing to the faithful ones who God has set apart for Himself. He has made you separate and holy. This message is for you.

The message has two parts, grace and peace. God's grace gives you the ability to thrive, even amidst the conflicts and challenges surrounding you. He keeps you close to Himself, and fills you with His Spirit, in wisdom and power. He keeps your lifeboat afloat.

And His peace guards you no matter the circumstance. No matter the messages or criticisms surrounding you, no matter the threats or evil, He gives you His peace. And so Paul prays for a protective cloud of grace and peace over these faithful believers.

God gives you and I the very same. He pours His grace to meet every circumstance and stay close to Him. And He pours His peace so that we are assured. He is the Lord we are His people. Press forward, and rest in grace and peace.

'We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News. '

Colossians 1:3-5

Confident assurance of our hope in heaven gives us the freedom and power to love others. The believers in Colosse were known for their love of others. This love had grown from their faith in Jesus,

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ever since they first believed.

There is no conflict between heavenly minded and earthly good. In fact the more we are trusting in our future in heaven, the more love we pour out right here and now. These believers' love was blessing the believers, "All of God's people."

Does our love overflow like this? Let's set our sights on heaven, and then pour out rivers of love on others!

'This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

You learned about the Good News from Epaphras, our beloved co-worker. He is Christ's faithful servant, and he is helping us on your behalf. He has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you.

So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better. '

Colossians 1:6-10

The good news of God's grace is changing lives, all over the world. His grace has changed you too! So we pray for you, that you would continue and grow in His grace, wisdom and understanding. Then we will live to honor Jesus and please Him. This is how we do it!

'We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. '

Colossians 1:11-14

Paul prays for these believer to be strengthened with power and endurance. We've been rescued from the kingdom of darkness, transferred into the Kingdom of the Son, and given an inheritance. We are now set free. Let's live it out!

'Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and

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on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. '

Colossians 1:15-17

Jesus is the Forever God, ever with the Father and Spirit. And to us He is the visual presentation of God, the one we can see. He was born a man, though He was before all creation and everything was made through Him - and for Him. This world, this universe, it's all for Him. He made it all, both the seen, and everything in the unseen world as well. And He holds it all together.

He can hold us together too! Rest and trust in Him.

'Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. '

Colossians 1:18-20

Jesus is our leader. He is the focal point and the absolute director of His people, the church. He is the first in everything.

God was pleased to fully live in Christ, and to reconcile everything. Do we have angst or conflict? Christ reconciles. Do we have uncertainty? We are completely right with the Lord, reconciled. It's done.

The blood of Jesus poured peace over every trouble. He is the way of reconciliation. So come to Jesus and live in Him. Listen to Him, read His Word, and follow!

'This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it. '

Colossians 1:21-23

What the Lord has done is reconciled us. We were far away, lost, and with no hope, but God sent Jesus and pulled us back. He made our death into life, and washed us pure and clean. We are reconciled with Him. We are blameless, and holy, separate for Him. He wants to know us and He wants to use us.

Now we must continue in belief, grow in His truth, and stand firmly. Don't be pulled away, and don't

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wander. Instead, stay near Him, and seek His work and Kingdom. Stay in faith and trust Him. This is why we preach!

'But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it. '

Colossians 1:23

Don't stop believing. Hold on to the faith! Don't slip. Don't become lax, or let your trust dwindle. You heard the good news, and you trusted. God showed up and gave you assurance. The whole world is hearing and believing. But as for you, be diligent to meet with the Lord, and stay trusting as you live forward!

'I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church. God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you. This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God's people.

For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.

So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.'

Colossians 1:24-29

Paul was given the mantle to bring Christ to the gentiles. He has fully embraced the call, and works diligently. Even if he must sacrifice or suffer, he is willing. He shares in suffering like Jesus, so others may believe. The message is too important.

The riches and glory of Christ are for the gentiles. And so Paul gives up everything else, in order that he may bring the message. He warns everyone to draw near and obey Christ. We want each one to be perfect in their relationship with Christ.

So you also, draw near, and don't stop proclaiming! These people are too valuable and Christ is too precious - don't stop!

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Chapter 2

'I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never met me personally. I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments. For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong. '

Colossians 2:1-5

Even away, Paul agonizes and pleads to the Lord for the believers in Laodicea and Colosse. His one desire is that they stay in Christ, relishing His work and love for them, and grow in love toward each other. Outside are deceivers with clever theologies and arguments, but they lead to works, and away from Christ who completely meets our needs. In Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. So we go to Christ alone!

And it's working! The Colossian people are living in Christ and trusting in Him! Their faith is strong. We should be the same as they!

'And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. '

Colossians 2:6-7

Now is the time to let those roots grow deep. Keep trusting, following and depending on the Lord. Your life will be built and established as you let those roots go deep. Keep resting in what the Lord says. Read His word, and dwell on that. Put into practice what He says.

Your faith will grow strong, and you will be met with His faithfulness. Out of this garden will come His blessing, and you will overflow with thanks and praise. Grow deep!

'Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. '

Colossians 2:8-10

We don't think our way into a relationship with God, nor into right standing. The philosophies and arguments of man are vain and empty.

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Jesus already did everything we need to be clean, right and holy with Him. We cannot add anything to this. And we disavow anyone who tries to change the great gift of God into something we do.

We are in Christ, and His entire fullness is in us. His love, knowledge, wisdom and power are ours. So draw near and stay with Him. And skip all the other outward acts. Instead, with a pure heart, love God, and care for those in need. Share the news of Jesus. All this is enough!

'When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. '

Colossians 2:11-13

It is finished, Jesus has done it. Christ conquered death, rose again, and has now completely changed you! Sin has been defeated, and your nature has been changed. You are a child of God. With Him in death, burial and resurrection, your baptism showed the world whose you now are. Everything changed when you trusted Him as your savior. You have been made alive, and the work is complete! God has completely and absolutely forgiven all of your sins. It's done. You are brand new. Redemption is complete!

Don't trade that away, but instead, live for Him! No more rules, no more striving for righteousness. Start with Thanksgiving and praise, and then follow His lead! Every day!

'He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality.

Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it. '

Colossians 2:14-19

All the sin is gone. All the heinous activities and embarrassing words, they are gone. No longer can anyone accuse you, Christ has wiped the slate clean. Every condemnation is gone. We are free.

Don't follow the silly rules, but instead follow Christ. We are His body, and He is leading. Go where He leads, speak what He tells, listen to what He says. Our life is new, and the old rules are gone.

Be free! Share with others! Christ is the one holding us and everything together. So we are His, and

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only His!

'You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, "Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!"? Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.'

Colossians 2:20-23

We have died with Christ. And we were raised to a new life when He rose from the dead. The world's powers no longer control us. Instead, we are filled with Holy Spirit. We listen to Him, read the Word, and obey what He says. The old rules do not apply, they can't bring life. But Jesus gives us new life. So live for Him!

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Chapter 3

'Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. '

Colossians 3:1-4

My life is no longer stuck in this world. My concerns aren't focused on the day to day, though the Lord knows we need these things. My world is laid into His world, hidden in Him. He is at work, in this world, and He has conscripted my world into His. So daily I work and live and move here, but He is the orchestra conductor. He is directing. He organizes and pulls together, and I get to share in it. He is revealing and I have a place too. Christ really is my life.

Start here!

'So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.

You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. '

Colossians 3:5-9

It's time to walk away from the old life. Leave the sin behind. Don't cultivate it. Sin is not a garden. Cut off the parts that hinder our love for God and keep us from loving others. Clean house!

'Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. '

Colossians 3:10-14

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Put that new shirt on! Clothe yourself with the new nature. Be renewed. This is a work of Holy Spirit, and a personal work too. We must set aside the sin, place ourselves entirely into Christ, and then be renewed by Him. We must get to know Him, seek to grow in Him, and then deliberately place into action His character.

Add these: tender-hearted mercy. Kindness. Humble-ness. Gentle-ness. Patience. Allowance. Forgiveness. Wrap all this in love. This is what is in the center of knowing Jesus. He makes us more like Him.

'Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. '

Colossians 3:14-17

Once we've cleaned out the old, even with Holy Spirit's help, then comes the new. Put on love clothing! Love binds us all together as one family. We love and live in harmony. And Christ's peace will flood us with assurance. Thanksgiving overflows us. And we bring the message of Christ to all, with our lives filled with Him. Teach each other Counsel each other. Use God's wisdom. Sing songs and hymns, with thankful hearts. Do every thing as as Christ's messenger. This is our new life!

'Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord.

Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord. '

Colossians 3:18-22

Find your lane and live this way! For me, "Husband" I am to love my wife and never treat her harshly. Never. Never ever. This is my lane!

And also, "Fathers" is my lane too. Do not aggravate your children, Circumspect, taking time to reflect. Am I doing this? I must not. My children must not get discouraged - this one is on me!

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'Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord. Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites.'

Colossians 3:22-25

Paul speaks to the slave, but he's really speaking to anyone who is under someone else's command. Are you a worker? Are you a volunteer? Does someone else give the directions? If so, our task is to follow, to obey, to serve. And truly we are serving Christ in this. We aren't serving people. He brings rewards and an inheritance as well. He is the Master, and a good one at that! Don't flail or rebel, but serve Him. And His reward is coming!

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Chapter 4

'Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven. Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. '

Colossians 4:1-4

A follow on reminder to masters, employers, slave-owner and those in control, be just! Be fair! In your team are people made exactly like God Himself, so treat them right!

Now about praying, be devoted to prayer. Pray when convenient, but continue even when inconvenient. Be alert, think of what's going on, and bring each concern to the Lord. Keep your heart thankful! And if it's not thankful, take time, consider who you are and who God is, and cultivate the thanksgiving.

Pray for your leaders, and all those who work to bring the good news of Jesus. Pray for opportunities and clarity, that many will hear and return to the Father! Pray especially for those who must suffer because of the message of Jesus!

'Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. '

Colossians 4:5-6

We control our speech, so be wise. Live wisely. Fill our words with grace, understanding, forbearance and kindness. Make every conversation attractive, and win people over to Jesus. Every word, every answer, every response can invite others to love Him even as we do. Take every opportunity!

'Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work. I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here. '

Colossians 4:7-9

When Paul cannot go, he sends another faithful leader. No matter the circumstance, we find ways to encourage the brothers and sisters. We send news. We dispatch good pastors and teachers. And we continue to pray for our family of faith to be well founded and growing! This is how we do it!

'Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. Jesus (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are working with me here for the Kingdom of God. And what a comfort they have

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been!

Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis. '

Colossians 4:10-13

What a team! Paul is in chains and cannot come, but he sends good men and women to encourage the believers. They also have much to offer, in teaching and correction, in love and example. In fact, fellow servants from Colosse are with Paul too, including Epaphras. This family of believers includes you. So welcome the others. This is how we do the family of God! We welcome, we listen, we come alongside, as they do also. And these leaders are praying for you!

'Luke, the beloved doctor, sends his greetings, and so does Demas. Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them. And say to Archippus, "Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you." Here is my greeting in my own handwriting—Paul . Remember my chains. May God's grace be with you.'

Colossians 4:14-18

Luke sends greetings, as does Demas. Greet also Nympha and the church at her home. Pass the greetings and teaching on to Laodicea as well. And then he signs off. Remember Paul as well.

We are a family, and must care for one another. This last chapter is crucial. We are more than teaching and doctrine. We are love letters from the Lord. written on each other. Love one another!