

COLOSSIANS

3-27-17

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[the family has read this book in devotions]

CHAPTER ONE

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

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

May God our Father give you grace and peace.

3 You are always in our prayers, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, 5 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.

6 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.

7 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. 8 He has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you.

9 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. 10 Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce all kinds of godly fruit. All the while, you will grow spiritually, in alignment with God, as you learn to know Him better and better.

11 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, 12 always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. 13 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, 14 who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,

16 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth.

He made the things we can see

and the things we can't see —

including thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him.

17 He existed before anything else,
and he holds all creation together.

18 Christ is also the head of the church,
which is his body.

He was supreme in the beginning and
—leading the resurrection parade
—he is supreme in the end.

From beginning to end he's there,
towering far above everything and everyone.

19 For God — in all his fullness — was pleased to live in Christ, 20 so that, by means of Christ's blood on the cross, God could make peace with everything in heaven and on earth. And that is what God did: Through Jesus, God reconciled the entire universe to himself — everything in Heaven, and everything on earth — people and all other created beings, animals and atoms.

21 This includes you who used to be at odds with God, staying as far away from Him as you could. You used to hate God in your hearts because you knew He was opposed to the sinful lifestyle you preferred.

Yet, now, God, indwelling Christ's body, has reconciled you to himself 22 through Christ's death on the cross, and has brought you into his own presence, where you are holy and blameless as you stand before him— without a single fault. 23 But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you had when you first received this Good News.

This Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to

proclaim it. 24 I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for, in this way, I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church. 25 God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you. 26 This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God's people. 27 For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: God has given you Christ's life. Christ lives in you, so you can be assured of sharing in his glory.

28 So, we continue to tell people about Christ — warning them and teaching them with all the ability and wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ - in their koinonia with Christ. 29 This is why I work and struggle so hard; relying upon Christ's mighty power that energizes me.

COLOSSIANS 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. 2 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 secret plan - which is Christ himself. 3 In him lie hidden *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments. 5 For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are

living as you should - allowing Christ to live his life through you, and that your faith in Christ is strong.

6 And now, in the same way that you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord - [*by faith*], you must continue to follow him - [*by faith*]. 7 Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Keep your **faith** strong, as you have been taught to do — constantly thanking God for what He has done, can do, is doing, and is going to do.

8 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. 9 For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.

10 So, now, being in Christ, you aren't lacking anything - (no matter what others may teach or say). You have everything you need in Him. Christ is over every ruler and authority.

11 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.

12 This was illustrated by your baptism. Your baptism pictured the fact that you were in Christ when He died and was buried, and that, therefore, your old sinful nature was crucified and buried when He was crucified and buried. And when you were raised up out of the water, you were picturing the fact that, now, in Christ, you have been raised up to experience His resurrection life, because you trust the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

13 Before you were saved, you were spiritually dead in your sins, and your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ - and forgave all your sins. 14 He canceled the record of the charges against us, which condemned us, and removed it completely, nailing it to his cross and paying for it, himself. 15 In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

16 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. 17 For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. 18 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, 19 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.

20 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 religious rules of the world, such as, 21 "Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!"? 22 Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. 23 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 3

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the eternal realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. 2 Let your main focus be on the Kingdom of God, not on this temporal earthly life. 3 For you are dead [when it comes to running your own life and toward the things of this world], and Christ's life has become your life, in God. 4 And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

5 So put to death the sinful, worldly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and sinful desires. Don't be materialistic, for a materialistic person is an idolater, worshiping all the gifts of this world more than the Giver. 6 It is because of these kinds of things that the anger of God will someday fall upon this world. 7 You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. 8 But now it is time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 9 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off the filthy clothes of your old sinful nature and all its sinful deeds. 10 Now, put on the beautiful clothes of your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become better aligned with him. 11 In this new life, it doesn't matter whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in every one of us believers.

12 Being God's chosen people - those he has made holy and whom he loves unconditionally ["We can do nothing to make God love us any more than He does, and we can do nothing to make Him love us any less than He does".],

you are to treat others the same way: with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and fore-give anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord fore-gave you, so you must fore-give others. 14 And over all these virtues, as though they were beautiful garments, put on the cloak of love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 As a group, let the peace that comes from Christ be the umpire over all your decisions. For as members of one body you are called to live together in peace. And, don't forget: always be thankful.

16 Let the Good News about Christ and His grace, 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. 17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

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

19 Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

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

21 Fathers, do not be aggravatingly demanding of your children, or they will become discouraged about trying to please you.

22 Employees, obey your earthly managers 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. 23 Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 24 Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Employer you are really serving is Christ. 25 But if you do what is wrong, He will only give you whatever you deserve. For God has no favorites.

COLOSSIANS 4

Employers, be just and fair to your employees. Remember that you also have an Employer—in heaven.

2 Stay in faith toward God, talking to Him often, with an expectant attitude, joyfully thanking Him for what He *can* and *will* do. 3 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. 4 Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly and courageously as I should.

5 Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity to show them Christ and give them the gospel. 6 Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

7 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. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to find out how you are doing and to encourage you. 9 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.

10 Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's nephew. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. 11 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 been!

12 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. 13 I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

14 Luke, the beloved doctor, sends his greetings, and so does Demas. 15 Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house.

16 After you have read this letter, pass it on to the home church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them.

17 And say to Archippus, "Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you."

18 HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING—
PAUL.

Remember my chains.

May God's grace be with you, i.e..

may God bless you;

may you continue in the grace of God;

may you continue to allow Christ to live His life
through you.