

Life Group Notes 4/16/2023  
Pastor Mark Warren on Colossians Week 1

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If you have observations or questions feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). -Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18) **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Mark has raised this week, 4/19. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** Do not be daunted by the number of pages. As an editorial decision, I include each of the passages mentioned in full to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes, rather than having you, the reader, look up each reference. If your Bible is open beside you, you can transfer and annotate from these pages with ease.

At the end of the message notes, I have added notes for the end of the chapter not covered, and from pages 6 to 8, I have made footnotes to help dig deeper into some of the principles Mark covers. *These notes are offered to enhance understanding and are not designed to complicate discussions in life group.* This week I covered ideas:

1. [On Colosse.](#)
  2. [On Paul's greetings.](#)
  3. [On Paul's prayers.](#)
  4. [On knowledge.](#)
  5. [On holding all things together.](#)
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Pastor opens by asking, "Are you more comfortable being active? Watching something? Doing something? Or are you more comfortable being alone and quiet? Without being driven to 'do' anything?" How does one get to know you best?

## **Colossians 1: Greetings from Paul and Timothy**

[\(Philippians 1:1–2; Philemon 1:1–3\)](#)

**1**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

**2**To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

1. Describe the greeting. See [footnote number two](#) if you're wondering why I asked?
2. What are Paul's credentials? How is he known among the Colossians?

## **Thanksgiving and Prayer**

[\(1 Corinthians 1:4–9; Philippians 1:3–11\)](#)

**3**We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4**because we have heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all the saints— **5**the faith and love proceeding from the hope stored up for you in heaven, of which you have already heard in the word of truth, the gospel **6**that has come to you.

All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood the grace of God. **7**You learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8**and who also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

1. What do you think when you first read this? Do you get out of breath? (If it's any consolation, the Greek, without word breaks or punctuation is worse!) Try this step-by-step guide:
2. Read it again, twice. What is Paul doing? How often does he pray? Does he know these people? Why is he praying for them if he doesn't know them? What does that tell you about Paul?
3. What did the Colossians do to trigger Paul to pray for them? What do the Colossians have in common with Christianity throughout Paul's travels?
4. What role does love (agape) play in identifying the effectiveness of the gospel among the Colossians? Review: How did Jesus say all men would know that we are His disciples? (John 13:35) Look at verse 5: Where does this love proceed from? How does hope produce love?
5. Who brought the Word of the Kingdom to the Colossians? What was the impact there? How did Paul hear the good news of the reception of the gospel in Colossae?

**9**For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10**so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have full endurance and patience, and joyfully **12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.

[13](#)He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, [14](#)in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1. Summarize Paul's prayer. List every single benefit to be derived from the prayer.
2. What does an answer to this prayer (these prayers!) look like? As God begins to answer this prayer in your own life, how does your life grow, develop and change?
3. The word for "knowledge" that Paul chooses here is [epignosis, see footnote 4](#) to understand to what degree our knowledge will extend as God answers this prayer.
4. Mark asks, "What does it take to actually be present in your relationships to where you're taking the time to listen to the one with whom you're speaking?" He says, "I can find that I'm not present in the conversation I'm having." Can you relate? "How do you listen to the person in the moment, so that the person feels valued and heard, making a deeper connection?"
5. When you are filled with knowledge in (by means of) all wisdom and spiritual understanding (Greek: gathering/bringing things together, as in "I gather you understand.") what is happening to your mind? (Romans 12:2 [2](#) [Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.](#) How does an answer to Paul's prayer here figure into renewing the mind?)
6. Mark says, "We have to come to a place where our heart is opened up. Where we are opened to a relationship with him." What are you seeing? How are you doing? Mark went back to last week's story, to the difficulty he had being honest with his mother. He had to open himself up to walking in light and being vulnerable, willing to receive correction with her. Explain why this works. Why is this desire and willingness an expression of love?
7. Pastor says, "This is a spiritual thing. This is not a natural thing." Explain. He says it's "knowing how to walk out this kingdom of God thing that He wants you to live. He has a plan and a purpose for you, and He wants you to know Him in this intimate deep way, because the kingdom of God is not waiting for heaven. It's a here and now walk." Why is supernatural wisdom and knowledge required?
8. If I'm supposed to walk in a deep spiritual relationship with God and others, why is life group so important to our walk? What happens in a life group to bring answers to Paul's prayer here?
9. Look at verse 10. What is the purpose of knowledge? When you're "filled with the knowledge of His will," what does that change in your walk? How are you doing? What does an answer to this prayer look like in your life?
10. The word "power" that you will be strengthened by in verse 11 is *dunamis*, from which dynamite is derived. It's translated as "miracle" throughout the

New Testament. And Paul says it's "dunamis power" according to His glorious *kratos*/might/strength, how does that kind of strength increase endurance and patience...even joyfully?

11. Take the time to pray this prayer for your life group, your family, the pastoral staff at the church, and for the people you work with. As God begins to answer this prayer, what will revival look like? Begin to see it happening. Allow the Holy Spirit time to work.
12. Look at verse 13. (He has rescued us from the authority/dominion/power (ἐξουσία—*exousias* Strongs 1849) of darkness. He has translated/transferred (μετέστησεν—*metestesen* Strongs 3179) us into the Son's Kingdom. In the Son we have redemption (from worthless to priceless) and forgiveness.) How real is this realization in your walk? If we already have "been brought into the kingdom of His beloved Son, in Whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins" where does that put us? Where does that put the Kingdom in our lives? Have you realized the truth of this statement yet? What can we look forward to, starting now...since Paul made it clear this HAS happened? To whom do we need to apologize?
13. Pastor Mark says, "The lack of connection pushes us to addiction." Why is an answer to this prayer in our life key to our freedom? Pastor Mark says, "It's all about being known..." How does that deepen the understanding of knowledge and knowing Him?
14. How does the intimate knowledge God offers relate to sanctify and reflect the image of two who have never known or been known, who come together to give themselves to each other? (Read the Song of Solomon if you never have.) Why did "saving yourself for marriage" come up in this context? Is that Pastor Mark? Or is that God's original and only intention? Mark says, "Fully transparent and fully vulnerable satisfies the deepest longings of our heart." Explain.
15. Would you allow the Lord to love you in a way that you become vulnerable with Him, where you are willing to say, "Lord, here is my life, here's my heart, here are my shortcomings, here's my sin. I give them all to you?" Mark prophesies that what's going to happen, if you do, over the next couple of weeks you are going to become very vulnerable, because you have not exposed that part of your life in a long time. You're going to want to take it back, shield it. You're going to say, 'I know how to manage that.' You will need to find others to encourage you, to find the freedom Christ alone has promised us all.

Mark ends by saying, "He longs to be with you. He thinks the world of you. (John 3:16). He wants to be with you to spend time with you. If you share your heart with Him, He shares His heart with you." What's your response?

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**Take the time to pray.**

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**The rest of the Story**

**The Supremacy of the Son**

[\(Hebrews 1:1–14\)](#)

[15](#)The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. [16](#)For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him.

[17](#)He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. [18](#)And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He may have preeminence. [19](#)For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, [20](#)and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through the blood of His cross.

[21](#)Once you were alienated from God and were hostile in your minds, engaging in evil deeds. [22](#)But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy, unblemished, and blameless in His presence— [23](#)if indeed you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope of the gospel you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

1. Take your time with verses 15-23 What is happening? Compare this passage to John 1. John says, "Without Him was not anything made that was made." What does Paul say here?
2. Does God have an image? Review, how did Jesus say the Father was known, in John 13-16? ("Anyone who has seen Me, has seen the Father." John 14:9)
3. "Firstborn" in Greek is *prototokos*. First in time. First to be brought forth. He is the first after which all follow, in all things preeminent. He calls Himself the "*Alpha*."
4. Only as we saw in the Gospel of John chapter 1 is Jesus presented as present in Creation and the cause and moving power thereof. Look here at verse 17. Compare this to Hebrews 1:3 [3](#)The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature, upholding all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. How powerful is the Word of God? (See footnote 6 below.)
5. Can you describe the reconciliation to which we've been invited? What was it like to be alienated? What is it like now?

**Paul's Suffering for the Church**

[\(2 Corinthians 11:16–33\)](#)

[24](#) Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, which is the church. [25](#) I became its servant by the commission God gave me to fully proclaim to you the word of God, [26](#) the mystery that was hidden for ages and generations but is now revealed to His saints. [27](#) To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

[28](#) We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. [29](#) To this end I also labor, striving with all His energy working powerfully within me.

1. How many sufferings of Paul can you name? He is in prison when he writes this letter. How many times can you count where he's been jailed?
2. How does Paul's suffering fill up "what is lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions?"
3. What is the mystery? How much of Christ is in you? How does that increase your hope?
4. Did Paul do a good job?

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**Scribe's notes:**

1. **On Colossae**—The city of Colossae, as you can see on the map is in what is today southwestern Turkey. You will notice in this map, the delineation of territories as they were named in the Empire in Paul's day. The area/province around Colosse/Laodicea was also known as "Phrygia" and "southern Anatolia," and were part of what was referred to as "Asia." You will notice that the seven churches to which Jesus wrote letters in the Revelation are all situated in an oval shaped area of "Asia." Colossae did not receive Jesus' attention, because it is only ten miles from Laodicea, the recipient of the last letter written to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3.





Most noteworthy in this letter is the fact that Paul is addressing the church in Colosse that he himself did not plant. The message of Jesus Christ, and His participation in all of creation, stands out here because Paul is highlighting what must have been the message that he gave to churches he was visiting for the first time. This is one of the "Prison Epistles," because, as we'll see in chapter four, Paul is writing from prison.

2. **On Paul's greetings**—Paul starts his letters with his credentials, and includes personal details to help identify the letter as authentic. In his greeting in this letter, he has very little to say, because he is unknown, but he includes his traveling companion, Timothy. You remember he was stoned in the province of Galatia, in the cities of Derby and Lystra, where also, on his second visit, he picked up Timothy before traveling through Asia to Troas for his first trip to Europe and Macedonia. Paul mentions Timothy in the greeting, because he is a name now well known by the people of Asia, largely thanks to the miracles poured out from Ephesus (Acts 19) upon the whole of Asia. Timothy's name and reputation were well-established, to where Timothy would become the bishop of Ephesus. It is indeed possible that this letter is being written from that church, where Paul had been imprisoned and thrown to "wild beasts" (1 Cor 15:32).
3. **On Paul's prayers**—In his epistles, Paul will pray for the recipients. If you want lessons in prayer, it is not time lost examining these prayers. Colossians is a powerful example of how Paul prays to get real and tangible, life-enhancing results. The prayers in two other epistles stand out for this. Philippians has a life changing prayer, as does Ephesians in chapter one and chapter three. Take the time in your own devotion, to pray these prayers over yourself and over those whom God has entrusted to your watch care.

4. **On knowledge**—The word Paul uses here is ἐπίγνωσις (*epignosis*) which is more than just knowledge (*gnosis*). The prefix intensifies the meaning. The Greek dictionary explains it like this: **1922** *epígnōsis* (from **1909** /*epí*, "on, fitting" which intensifies **1108** /*gnōsis*, "knowledge gained through first-hand relationship") – properly, "contact-knowledge" that is appropriate ("apt, fitting") to first-hand, experiential knowing. This is defined by the individual context. Knowledge can be so intimate that it becomes the euphemism for a husband knowing a wife. When you intensify that, you can begin to imagine what an answer to Paul's prayer might bring. (The numbers refer to references in the Strong's Greek/English dictionary, which has set the standard for vocabulary study. An online search for "strong's 1108" will actually yield the definition drawn from the dictionary.)
5. **On holding all things together**—Science has long acknowledged a force that holds molecules together: "The basic force that holds all the atoms together in a molecule is known as strong nuclear force.- Nuclear forces are the strongest attractive forces that make the molecule exist in nature."  
(<https://www.vedantu.com/question-answer/force-holds-atoms-together-class-11-chemistry-cbse-6063ede26a9fe969b77ec067>) They have no explanation for this force...but the Bible is very clear. He holds all things together by the Word of His Power.