

Colossae A Growing People

Introduction

In the study of Paul's letter to the Colossians we will see the most incredible perspective of Jesus. We will see his beauty, value and see that he is more than enough.

We not only see Jesus but we also see how Jesus is reflected in us. Like anything that reflects a light source, (the moon, plastic or glass) there is no internal light source with that object but it reflects the real light source. Jesus is that real light source that our lives reflect.

None of us are as original as we think; we will often reflect only what is around us. We reflect who we spend our time with, whether that is positive or negative.

If we have to add to "our Jesus", he is too small. It's not Jesus and...all the *fullness* of God dwells in Jesus, everything was and is in the person of Jesus.

*"For God was pleased to have all his **fullness** dwell in him..." (Colossians 1:19)*

*"For in Christ all the **fullness** of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to **fullness**. He is the head over every power and authority." (Colossians 2:9-10)*

The false teaching of that time was that anything flesh was evil. When Jesus came to earth he was born in a body, yet in him all of the Deity (all of that fullness) was not only in him but is now in you!

*¹⁶ Out of his **fullness** we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1: 16-17)*

Text

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

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³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— ⁵ the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel ⁶ that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. ⁷ You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,

Four Characteristics of a Growing People and Community

1) Positive People:

When we hear this phrase in our culture today it has a much different meaning. These “positive people” are people whose lives are anchored in hope. People in prison usually receive encouraging correspondence from people on the outside. On the contrary here Paul was encouraging the churches from within the prison walls, because this is a hope beyond circumstances.

There are things in our lives that God allows or even engineers to show the sufficiency of Jesus.

God is at work in you

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— ⁵ the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel ⁶ that has come to you.”

This was a smaller city comparatively speaking but it was still a thriving city in Ancient Asia Minor. Paul never visited Colossae, (a very real place) but he had heard about their faith and love.

When people hear the phrase “you know what I heard about you” they often think it will be something negative. The reason Paul could say this is that their faith and love was rooted in hope. As humans our lives are rooted in something good or bad. Our new life in Christ is rooted and anchored in hope that others will see reflected in us, be ready to give a reason.

¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (I Peter 3:15)

God is at work in the world

At times as we look around us and listen to the news we can begin to believe that the world is going to “hell in a hand basket”. The reality is that God is at work in the world, the Gospel is spreading and it can't be stopped. We are in the middle of the greatest harvest of the history of

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2) Partnering People

Every one of us are involved, we are partnered with other believers in China, India, the Middle East, Austin Texas and many more places. Some may go, others will pray and intercede or may support through financial means for those who have gone.

"⁷You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ⁸ and who also told us of your love in the Spirit."

3) Praying People

"⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and 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 great endurance and patience,

Know God's Will

Strengthened in power

4) Praising People

"¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

(Colossians 1:1-14)

Discussion Questions

- 1) We begin to realize that the entire Bible, all of scripture is a revelation of Jesus. From the revelation of the Creator and the God who walks in

- 1) We begin to realize that the entire Bible, all of scripture is a revelation of Jesus. From the revelation of the Creator and the God who walks in the Garden with Adam and Eve in Genesis to the glorified conquering king in the Book of Revelation. Discuss what this means to you today that all the *fullness* of God dwells in Jesus. (1:19)
- 2) Looking back at our notes above at the characteristics of a growing people and community, what did Pastor Randy mean by “positive people”?
- 3) Again referring to our notes discuss how God is working in you and in the world. What are those things that cause us to believe that this is not the true?
- 4) Because we are part of his family, his church or body we get to partner with God’s work throughout the world. Share times how you do this in your own life and maybe times when you didn’t realize how your prayers, assistance or support has reached much further that you realized.
- 5) Looking at verses 9-11, Paul says; “*we have not stopped praying for you*” and that; “*We continually ask God to...*” Prayer is such a powerful influence in people’s lives. What were the things Paul was praying for and what do you pray for in other people’s lives?
- 6) Lastly look again at verses 12-14, what was Paul praising and giving thanks to God for in the reader’s lives? What does this teach us as we pray and work with people in our lives?