

Colossians - Christ

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[0 : 00] Today I'd like to speak on Colossians. And I have to admit something. We were having an elders meeting a couple months ago.

Josh said he wanted to bring a couple verses out of Colossians. And I'm fumbling around. I can't find it. I can't find Colossians.

You know, like, and okay, so, you know, it was only a couple verses. Not a big deal. So I went home and I thought, I got to find Colossians. I got to understand Colossians. And then the more I read of it, this is a letter about Christ.

Today as a communion service, today we will be focusing on the teaching from Colossians on Christ. Now, Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians, to the city of Colossae.

And it is in modern day Turkey. So it's right, you know, you have Italy, Greece. I guess for you guys it would be Italy, Greece, and then Turkey.

[1 : 13] And then kind of down around Iran and then down to Israel at the bottom there. But it was on a trade route. It was a major trade route. And he wrote this also, well, he wrote it to Colossae.

But also to, he mentions Laodicea. And if you look up in Revelations chapter 2, or chapter, no, Revelations 3, Laodicea was the lukewarm church.

The church that he wanted to spit out because they were neither hot nor cold. They were the church that focused on physical wealth and not on spiritual wealth.

But that's to, it's within 10 miles. So Colossians. Paul wrote this to combat two major problems in the area.

One was the Gnostics. The Gnostics were kind of a group that came after the Christians.

[2 : 18] They tried to, yeah, Christ is good, but he's really not good enough. And you need more spiritualism. You need to do stuff.

And if we look at, you know, some of the ideas have carried on through purgatory and the Catholicism is kind of roughly an idea that follows this.

You don't get to go to heaven because of Christ's redemptive work. You get to go to purgatory and somebody will pay you money to the church to get you out of hell. Or not really hell, but out of purgatory, kind of that in-between state.

Nowhere in the Bible, not in the New Testament or the Old Testament, does it say anything about purgatory. So the other thing is creation is evil.

Everything material is evil. Only spiritual is good. And that creation is part of God. Not created by God, but part of God.

[3 : 24] And so, you know, Hinduism, New Age, anytime you hear Mother Earth, that's kind of this Gnostic teaching. The other group that he was talking to was the Jews.

About 200 families had been brought to Colossae in about 200 B.C. Like by the Babylonian Empire when they were doing their stuff against the Greeks.

They brought in about 2,000 families. So there's a big predominant Jewish element and then there's this New Age Gnostic teaching. So Paul, in his wisdom, wrote a letter.

So I will read. I will do a lot of reading. Colossians chapter 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Timothy, our brother, to the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father. We always give thanks to, we always thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray for you. Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints.

[4 : 36] The faith and love that springs from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven. And that you have already heard about in the word of truth and the gospel. That has come to you.

All over the world, this gospel is producing fruit and growing just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all truth. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who was a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf and who also told us of your love in the spirit.

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 through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Now this is an important part. Paul is praying for these people. He has never met the Colossians, but he's writing a letter to them. But he's praying that they will be filled with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

That's why he's writing this letter. He's writing a letter to explain who is Christ. To debunk the Gnostic and the Judaism that's there.

[6 : 00] So he's giving up knowledge. And then from there it says, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience and joyfully giving thanks to God, to the Father, who has qualified you to share in his inheritance.

So he's not just giving them knowledge. He's equipping them to live a life. So a lot of the book of Colossians is written, here's the knowledge of Christ.

Here's how you put the rubber to the road. Like you get out there and this is how you live. We won't go through the whole book because it is an extraordinary book.

Anyways, and then you realize, why do they need great endurance, patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father?

This is where the prosperity gospel falls flat. It doesn't say, you will have a life of ease. You will be buying a new Mercedes S65 for \$480,000 every two years.

[7 : 11] No, it never says that. It says you will need endurance. And you only need endurance when things are hard. You will need patience. You need patience when things are hard.

And joyful when things are hard. So this is the Christian life. When we think life is easy, that's not what God warns us about. So he's equipping them to have faith as they walk.

Now, for the theology. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of his son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin.

First point, Christ. Only Christ can we have the redemption of sin. There's nothing else you can do. You can't pay for it.

You can't go to purgatory. You can't crawl on your knees and ask forgiveness. It's only through faith in Christ. And then he gets into the hardcore part.

[8 : 14] Verses 15. He is the image of the invisible God. So, last week, Josh was talking about in John chapter 14, the image of the invisible God.

So this just reiterates who that is. John 14.10. John 14.10. It says, don't you believe that I am in the Father.

These are Christ's words. I am in the Father and that the Father is in me. The words I say to you, rather, are not just my thoughts. Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work.

So, Christ isn't just a good man. He is God. He is a visible, the image of God that we saw Christ. He physically came to earth. We saw him. Again, Hebrews. Go to Hebrews chapter 1, 1 to 4.

[9 : 31] Now, that's a big statement.

He made the universe. It's not, he created a couple of things. He created the universe. Not just a galaxy, but the universe. The sun is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

After he had provided purification for sins, that's his death, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven. So, that's a big mouth.

Like, that's a, you can do a PhD on that, on those four verses, trying to expand upon them. So, Christ is the image, not just, he's what we can see of God.

The firstborn over creation. Now, here, firstborn doesn't mean just like we think of like the first in the line.

[10 : 56] It means preeminence. I remember talking with Wendy about this. I think she was kind of trying to, like, what is firstborn? What, take it in context, like preeminent.

It's just, when you think of power, think of the president of the United States. He's the one who declares war.

It's not some general, it's not some buck sergeant or buck private that is going to go attack China. It's the president of the United States. It's the preeminent one who can declare war. He's the one that can send nuclear missiles. It's not just any old guy can push a button and start a war. So, in that respect, vision, firstborn, like the power the president of the United States has over how to declare war.

It's the generals that carry out the thing, but it's the president that has the power to do these. So, that's the same when we look at firstborn over all creation.

[12:03] Christ is the preeminent one. And creation, again, it declares Christ created, not evolved. For by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

Again, it's declaring we can see stuff. We can see, you know, like with the web telescope that they just put out in outer space there at Christmas, they can see, they figure to the end of the universe. And like it's however many billions of light, like 40-some billion light years away. And they can see, and it just keeps expanding. Like there's no limit to what's created.

On the other hand, never before have we been able to understand things you can't see. Like think of DNA. DNA. When, like if you were to try and explain to the smartest of the smart, even to Solomon, what DNA is, it's gibberish.

Now, they got pictures of it. They got pictures of the inner workings of the cell and how the DNA splits apart and makes little motors. And it doesn't, it's just unbelievably incredible.

[13:13] We can see that. But it's invisible. Like you cannot see that. You cannot see the workings of stuff. And yet, by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

Again, this is claiming Christ not only created things, he's in control. May 14th, 1948.

Does that ring a bell with anybody? Come on, somebody. May 14th, 1948. Israel became a nation. In, I guess in Isaiah, it says, never before has a nation become, or has a group become a nation in one day.

And that's what happened to Israel. Israel, the president, the Jews after World War II, after the Holocaust, if it hadn't been for the Holocaust, the Jews would have never come back to Israel. They were happy where they were. They were happy living in Germany. They were happy living in Poland. They were happy being in Russia. But after the persecution, they wanted to get back to Israel.

[14:27] They all flowed in, and all of a sudden, they declared that they were going to be a nation. And the president of the United States acknowledged it. Bang!

In one day, it is a nation. God has power to do these things. We look at world events now, and what turmoil, what's happening, everything is, well, if Christ is coming back, we need to have a one-world government.

You can't have a one-world government when everything is just going excellent. You need to have such turmoil, such problems, that will, that, you know, like, will the United States of America, the most powerful military in the world, bow down and let somebody else take control?

Only if things are in such shambles. So, God is in control. And then you think of powers and rulers and authorities. Satan.

He does his own thing, right? Or you think of Job. What did Job have to do? He wanted to, Satan, he wanted to pick on Job. He wanted to go and point him out.

[15:40] He had to go to God and ask permission. And God gave him parameters. You can take his health, you can do this, you can destroy that. Oh, no, you can destroy all this physical stuff, but keep him safe.

And then Satan had to go back and ask permission again. So, even Satan, even the demons cannot just do what they want. They must ask God.

They must talk to Christ's permission to do what they do. God does use this. God allows what we think are terrible things and they are.

God allows these to happen to focus our hearts on him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together.

Dark matter. Does anyone know what dark matter is? No? Okay. Yeah. The glue in the universe that they can't find.

[16:41] Not that they can't see. They can't find it. The universe only has about 10% of the mass it needs to hold. The galaxies should be spring apart. Because there's not enough mass there for

gravitationally to hold them together.

Unless Christ, by his word, holds the galaxies together. That's my take on it. He holds all things together. He is the head of the body, the church.

He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have supremacy. Firstborn among the dead. He wasn't the first to die.

Think of Lazarus. Lazarus died before Christ. What did Christ do? Christ rose him from the dead.

He brought him out of the grave. Remember the guy said, Don't go in there. He's been in there four days. It's going to stink. You can't believe. Called him out of there. Now, he rose him physically.

[17 : 40] If Christ had not been raised from the dead, all that would have happened is Lazarus would have been brought back to life. Christ is the firstborn, is the preeminent, because of his death, everyone from now on has the hope of going to heaven through faith in him.

The fullness dwells in him and through him to reconcile himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

So this is, you know, that it was his physical body shed on the cross. It's his blood that we're redeemed by. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your mind, and because of your evil behavior, but now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy and in his sight without blemish and free from accusation.

So it's Christ's, again, Christ's physical body. Like there are some that say he was a spirit. Or like Islam, they accept Christ.

He was a great prophet. But Christ actually wasn't on the cross. It was another guy that looked an awful lot like Christ, that got beat up, put on the cross, and Christ came back later and whatever.

[19 : 13] But this, the Bible teaches in no, you know, in no question, it was Christ who physically died on the cross.

Because of his blood that paid for the Old Testament, fulfilled all the requirements. The next is the biggest little word in the Bible.

If. If you continue in your faith. So once you're a Christian, it's, you know, you can't just mumble a few words at camp or by your bed when you're a kid and expect to get to heaven.

It's a life lived. It's faith. And as we go, we will sin. There is no question we will sin. The if is, if you reject Christ.

God doesn't force us to believe in him. He doesn't force us to remain in him. He gives us the opportunity. So we have, the big if is, if you do not reject.

[20 : 28] And there's people that have come to a saving knowledge and they physically, adamantly reject Christ. Then they're, they made their, they're not going to heaven because they have rejected what they know.

Established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, which is the church.

So he's just affirming why Christ, it's the church. You know, we're in the church age now and Christ has died for us. We don't have to do the Old Testament things.

I have become a servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness. So again, Paul is teaching.

[21 : 31] He's not just, not just. He's praying for the people that they would take the knowledge and make sure that they live a life of it. God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness.

The mystery that has been kept for a, hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 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.

So this morning we were listening to a sermon by John MacArthur and he was talking about the mystery. And the mystery, they have, the Jews have the Old Testament.

And this is why he's writing to this group. They have the Old Testament. They go through all the minor prophets, through the major prophets, and they see end time things that are going to happen. They realize that Jerusalem's going to be destroyed. They see a king coming back gloriously, riding on a, you know, on his white horse.

[22 : 40] And they see all these things. And yet, boy, that's, that, that didn't happen. What they, what the mystery is, Christ is the, came, fulfilled all the requirements of the Old Testament.

They missed the part where Christ needed to be sacrificed to fulfill all the Old Testament, the, the, the need for, for a blood sacrifice, for death on our behalf.

So these, the mystery is, why did Christ die? Like, if you remember, the palm branches, you know, Palm Sunday, the, the crowds were just enamored.

Here comes Christ. He's riding on a donkey. He's coming into Jerusalem. He's going to wipe out the Romans because they hated the Romans. They'd been occupied by Rome. They'd been occupied by Greece.

They were destroyed by Babylon. They wanted to be the Jewish nation. So here's this guy that can raise people from the dead. He can, he can feed 5,000 by just a few, you know, here's a few baskets of food feeding 5,000.

[23 : 50] He can, he can take a, a, a, a invalid, a paralytic and have him walk. He can heal the blind. Surely, he can do these things.

He can destroy the Roman emperor. And then all of a sudden, he's in a trial. And these same people that were for him, all of a sudden they're saying, yeah, but, but they're going to kill him. Like they can't, so he must not be the Messiah. So the mystery is who is Christ? Christ is God. He paid for our price. He had to go to the cross.

He had to die. So as, as these people are looking at why, well, this answers, Paul is answering the why. Why did Christ die for us?

Because we can't die for ourselves. We proclaim him admonished and teaching everything with all wisdom that we may present everything perfect in Christ.

[24 : 46] To this end, I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea.

So again, he's, he's praying for these people. He's trying to teach this church that is in, in 60, 70, 50 years becomes lukewarm, you know, and that's the worst.

God hates mediocrity. He, he, either hot or cold, but, you know, just kind of, we're going to church because, you know, but it doesn't affect our lives.

That really, that God hates that. If it doesn't, what we believe doesn't impact us, it's worthless. My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God. It doesn't talk about intelligence. It never says the smartest people will accept this.

[26 : 09] It's wise people. You can have an IQ of under 100 and be wise if you appreciate who God is and what he's done for us. You can have an IQ of 150 and be a fool by rejecting God.

So it never talks about intelligence. It talks about wisdom and knowledge. And knowledge is what he's giving us so that we can take this, understand who Christ is, gives us the reason for the hope we have.

I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. For though I am absent from you in the body, I am present with you in spirit. Not the spirit.

But he's just thinking about them. He's praying for them. He understands they're in a tough position and he sent us letters so that they can understand and not get blown around.

I am delighted to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is. So then, just as you receive Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in your faith as you were taught, overflowing with thankfulness.

[27 : 25] Again, living the life. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

So again, there's a lot of things that can take us away. Well, we can be happy. God doesn't tell us to be happy. He tells us to be joyful.

Different. For in Christ, all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form. Again, verse 15, the image of the invisible God who has been given fullness in Christ, who is the head of every power and authority.

Again, Christ is in control. In him, you were also circumcised in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with the circumcision done by the hands of men, but with circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.

Circumcision. Christ told Abraham to be circumcised. And it was a, it was one of the first things that Christ did.

[28 : 42] And, yeah, in Genesis 17, the sign of, sign of the covenant with God to be the God of you and your descendants.

So this was a sign given to Abraham. Since we have Christ, that is no longer a requirement.

Baptism also, you know, it's, it doesn't save us.

It is a sign. When people are baptized, it's a public declaration. I am dying to self and resurrected with Christ.

So it's, it doesn't save us. It just declares to the world. Like in a lot of places, Muslim countries, they, they don't really care if you declare yourself a Christian.

It's until you're baptized, then they take you for real. When you were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, Christ, God made you alive with Christ.

[29 : 47] He forgave us all our sins. No question. He forgave us all our sins. No one else can do this. Priests can't do this.

You can't go to Josh and get forgiven. It's only Christ that can forgive us. Having concealed the written code with its regulations that were against us and which stood opposed to us.

He took it, nailed it to the cross, and having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Question.

How many Old Testament sacrifices were there? Six? Six? I see you're holding six up.

Five? There were five sacrifices. There was a burnt offering, which is a person, you know, belonging to God.

[30 : 49] Grain offering, it's a sign of dependence on God's goodness. Fellowship offering, peace between God and man. Sin offering, forgiveness and purification.

A guilt offering, that sins were needed to be made right. These five types of offerings were done and there was specific ways, like the Old Testament is full of it.

They all are a picture of Christ. They were the, they were the representation of Christ. It was done by a priest.

It wasn't done by anyone, even the king couldn't do it. It was only by an ordained priest. And it was only done in the tabernacle. So these are very much, this is the way we have to do things and why we do this in a certain order.

So, God, Christ's coming, did away with all that. He fulfilled that. Now we can go directly to Christ. And that's why, in the temple, the curtain was ripped in two.

[31 : 51] We can go directly to Christ. We don't have to, we don't have to do sacrifices because Christ is a sacrifice. Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by whether you eat or drink or with regard to religious festival, new moon celebration, or a Sabbath day.

These are a shadow, again, a picture of the things that were to come. The reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and worship of angels disqualify you for the prize.

Again, there's people that think angeology. No, it's only Christ. Because, remember, Satan was an angel, is an angel.

He's not, was an angel, he still is an angel. So be careful what you chase. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, what his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

He has lost connection with the head from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Since you died to Christ, to the basic principle of this world, why, as though you still belong to it, do you submit to its rules?

[33 : 09] Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch. These are destined to perish with you because they are based on human commands and teaching. This is the humanistic way, well if I don't do this, I'm going to be good.

I'm going to make, if I don't go to the bar and drink, then I'll be good. If I'm a little better than I'm at worse, I'm good enough. No, unless you're perfect, you can't get to heaven.

There's none of us here are perfect. But this idea that if we, if we make up our own rules and that, it's like the Mennonites, old calling the Mennonites at La Crete.

all of a sudden they, they don't have in their church, they've got a beautiful church, they don't have electricity into the building, they don't have heat and they don't have water.

So, they have to have a wood stove to fire up, they bring in bulbs to run some flashlights for their service, but they consider that humanistic. Really, it's, it's neither good or bad.

[34 : 14] Things are neither good or bad. They just are. It's how you use them. And by not, by denying yourself, you're not gonna, I mean, in a way, it kind of looks very religious, but if you're not doing what Christ wants, if you don't have him in your heart, it's just a waste of time.

These all destined to perish with use because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations, indeed, have an appearance of wisdom, an appearance of wisdom, but they're self-imposed humility, and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgences.

Now, here's chapter three. We're not gonna read the whole chapter. Since then, you've been raised with Christ. Set your hearts on things above, which is where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things, for you died. We died, and then we rose again, and it's Christ that is alive in us.

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, so he's coming back, that's the hope we have, is Christ is coming back.

[35 : 35] You will appear with him in glory. Now, instead of don'ts and do's, put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry.

Because of these, the wrath of God is coming, so God is going to judge. It's promised. It's promised that we read through Revelation, there's going to be a lot of judgment.

There's going to be a lot of wailing and gnashing of teeth. There's going to be a lot of people dying. It's not going to be nice. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived, but now, you must rid yourself of all such things as these, anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

So instead of do's and don'ts, get rid of anger, rage, malice. This is how we're to live. You know, don't have a chip on your shoulder.

Don't go around swearing a blue streak. Do not lie to each other since you have taken off the old self with its practices and put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge, again the knowledge, in the image of its creator.

[37 : 06] There is no Jew or Greek, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free, but Christ is all and is in all.

So these are powerful words. When we go to heaven, there's not going to be, well this is the Jewish section and that's the, that's the Jews from Russia or Christians from Russia and these are the American group, but no, there is no distinction.

We're all, either you're a believer or you're not in heaven. There's no ifs, ands, or buts. Therefore, this is the final wrap-up, therefore, as God's chosen people, holy, which is set apart, and dearly loved, again, Christ loved us or else he wouldn't have died for us, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

That's totally different than, than impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, you know, idolatry. So, again, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

So this is where the rubber meets the road. This is how we're to live. It's not a, it's not a list of do's and don'ts. It's a lift, this is how we're to treat our fellow believers. Everybody.

[38 : 42] Bear with each other, forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive, as the Lord forgave you, and over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

So with that, I'd like to ask Rod and Rob to come forward. And before, before they come, I just want to make it clear. our church practices what's called an open communion.

We'll pass the plate in front of you, and if you are a believer, like if you really believe in your heart that Christ is your God and has forgiven you, then take it.

If you, you know, if you really haven't settled in your mind that you are a faithful follower in Christ, just let it go by. I guess, we will allow anyone to have, the closed communion is where you have to be a member of that congregation to have it.

But we practice an open, so you choose, it's on your heads because you don't take this, this is not just a simple taking a piece of bread.

[39 : 54] This is a very significant declaration to Christ that his body, that he is Christ, that he is God, that he died for us, that he is the creator of the universe, that he is the image of God.

So as you take this, think about it, and you're welcome to partake. And then the wine reminds us not just of his death, but his blood on the cross as it was poured out.

Basically, every drop was drained from his body. So, Rod and Rob, if you would come forward and Rob, if you would, or Rod, if you would say thanks for this.

I have the Father and the Father that I thank you for this day and know that you can put it your body and you can put it and just pray that you would have a few moments and you can sacrifice that you mean it to me.

That you canwere, I guess I should say we'll just hold on to the emblems until we'll all partake at the same time.

[42 : 18] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[44 : 49] We can't do this in remembrance of him if we don't understand who he is. We have to have a full knowledge and appreciation of what Christ is.

Thank you, Lord, for giving us these sins.