

CHRIST JESUS IS OUR ALL IN ALL (COLOSSIANS 1-4)

Last week we looked at the first four chapters of Ephesians, which is the first of what is called Paul's "prison epistles" (letters). Paul is known to have written 4 such letters while he was imprisoned in Rome. They are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians (of which we'll read today), and Philemon. While Ephesians is considered (arguably) to be one of Paul's least personal letters, it can also be said that it is one of his most edifying and encouraging letters as he speaks of all of us having a position and purpose in God's eternal kingdom **through Christ Jesus** (that is, all those who have believed on Christ Jesus and have received Him-**John 1:12-13**, by being "born-again" as Jesus had said we must all be). Paul uses the analogy that we are the body of Christ, and He is the Head, and we are "joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in LOVE." (**Ephesians 4:16**) Then in Paul's prayer, which we are praying again today, he said, "after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your **love for all the saints [1 John 4:7-8]**, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the **knowledge of Him**, the eyes of your **understanding** being enlightened; that you may know what is the **hope** of His calling [joint-heirs, reign with Him-JESUS!], what are the riches of the glory of **His inheritance in the saints**, and what is the exceeding greatness of His **power toward us** who believe, according to the working of His **mighty power** which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills **all in all**." (**Ephesians 1:15-23**) In the other prayer of Paul's, in Ephesians, he prays, "that He [God] would grant you [and to us], according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with might through His Spirit** in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being **rooted and grounded in love** [without love = nothing (**1 Cor. 13**)], may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height- **to know the love of Christ** which passes knowledge; that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God**. [Fruit of the Spirit!] Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, **to Him be glory** in the church by Christ Jesus **to all generations**, forever and ever. Amen." (**Ephesians 3:16-21**) Does that all sound impersonal to you? Me neither! That all really ties in then with what Jesus said was the Great Commandments of God: to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind and to love others as ourselves. (**Mark 12:30-31**)

To be "One in Christ"! Jesus also gave the apostles and then us, His Great Commission, saying "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make **disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and **lo, I am with you always**, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20) Combining the Great Commandments with the Great Commission gives us the phrase that we are "sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus", as God through Christ is using us, right now, as He is building His eternal kingdom, through Christ Jesus, for His glory, honor, and praise!

While the Apostle Paul is not known to have even visited the church at Colosse, he includes, also in Colossians, a couple of powerful prayers, as well as warnings to the church of heretical teachings, teachings contrary to the Truth of the Word of God. That was primarily the false teaching of gnosticism, "(from Greek gnosis, meaning knowledge). This false teaching assigned to Christ a place subordinate to the true Godhead, and undervalued the uniqueness and completeness of His redemptive work. It insisted that between a holy God and this earth a host of beings, angels, etc., formed a bridge, of which host Christ was a member. This system included the worship of angels (v. 18) and a false asceticism (vv. 20-22 [extreme self-denial]). For all these errors, the apostle had one remedy, a knowledge (epignosis, that is, full knowledge, 1:9-10;3:10) of the fullness of God in Jesus Christ. Paul is not afraid of wisdom, or knowledge, and refers to them frequently, but he does insist that the knowledge be according to divine revelation [according to the Truth of the Word]. His devastating answer to this false teaching is in 1:19 and 2:9, in which the Lord is revealed as the one in whom dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The word "fullness" (Greek pleroma) is the very word Gnosticism used for the entire host of intermediary beings between God and humanity. The incarnate Lord, crucified, risen, and ascended is the only Mediator between God and humanity (1 Tim. 2:5)."¹ Jesus isn't a part of the bridge between God and mankind, He IS the Bridge! As Jesus stated, " **"I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."** (John 14:6) Likewise, the Apostle Peter testified to that when he preached after Jesus had risen from the dead and after the day of Pentecost, that we can read about in Acts, he said, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

[Colossians 1:1-8 (Greeting)]

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse [koh-loh-say]: **Grace** to you and **peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [Sound familiar?-Ephesians] We give thanks to

¹ Scofield Study Bible, 2002, pg. 1636

the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of **your love for all the saints**; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God **in truth**; as you also learned from Epaphras [likely the original church planter], our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us **your love in the Spirit**. ["Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is **born of God** and **knows God**. He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4:7-11)]

[Colossians 1:9-18 (Preeminence of Christ)]

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be [1] **filled with the knowledge of His will** in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that [2] you may walk worthy of the Lord [**Romans 12:1-2**], [3] **fully pleasing Him**, [4] **being fruitful** in every good work and [5] increasing in the **knowledge of God**; [6] **strengthened with all might**, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; [7] giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the **saints in the light**. He has delivered us from the power of darkness [**1 Peter 2:9**] and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn **over all** creation. [protokos: the unequivocal Sovereign over all creation²]. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. [**John 1:1-4**, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the **light of men**."] And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." [Just as **Hebrews 1:2-4** says, God, "has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the

2 <https://biblehub.com/greek/4416.htm>

Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

[Colossians 1:19-23 (Reconciled in Christ)]

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— **IF indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel** which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

[Colossians 1:24-29 (Sacrificial Service for Christ)]

I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory. Him we preach, **warning every man** and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect **in Christ Jesus**. To this end I also labor, **striving according to His working which works in me mightily**.

[Striving=agonizomai, strive, struggle, fight, labor fervently; It is the word used by Paul in describing our walk of faith in Christ as the running of a race saying, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes [agonizomai] for the prize is temperate [self-control] in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown." (1

Corinthians 9:24-25) It is the same word used by Jesus in saying, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'" (Luke 13:24-27) Yet the Apostle Paul uses that word also, for the bearing of fruit for the glory of God and for His eternal kingdom! That is maturity in Christ and the love of God in Christ!

[Colossians 2:1-10 (Not Philosophy but Christ)]

For I want you to know what a great conflict I have **for you** and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being **knit together in love**, and attaining to all riches of the **full assurance of understanding**, to

the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so **walk in Him**, rooted and built up **in Him** and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according **TO CHRIST**. **For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**

[Colossians 2:11-23 (Not Legalism but Christ)]

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is **of Christ**. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not **holding fast to the Head** [cling to Him, for He is your life-**Deu. 30:20**], from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is **from God**. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. [James puts it this way, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." (**James 4:6b-8**) Meaning what Paul said, in **1 Corinthians 1:30**, that Christ is for us Wisdom from God, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and our Redemption."

[Colossians 3:1-11 (Not Carnality but Christ)]

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your

mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden **with Christ** in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry [agonizomai]. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on **the new man** who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but **Christ is all and in all**.

[Colossians 3:12-17 (Character of the New Man)]

Therefore, as the elect of God, **holy and beloved**, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. [example of Christ: **1 Peter 2:21-25**, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled ["to assail with scornful or abusive language"³], did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."] But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

[Colossians 3:18-25 (The Christian Home)] Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And **whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord** and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for **you serve the Lord Christ**. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

3 <https://www.wordnik.com/words/revile>

[Ephesians 4:1-6 (Christian Graces)]

Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

[Ephesians 4:7-15 (Final Greetings)]

Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here. Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great [ab]zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.

[Ephesians 4:16-18 (Closing Exhortations and Blessing)]

Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. **Grace be with you. Amen.**