

# THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

Supplement 14

Exposition of Colossians

An Edited series of 7 messages by Clifford Nolt

Blue Mountain Mennonite Fellowship

December 2014

No other book of the New Testament sets forth more fully or defends the universal Lordship of Christ more thoroughly. Paul never visited Colosse but responded to the call by Epaphras in dealing with false teaching which threatened the Colossian church.

False teachers at Colosse were disputing the Deity absolute Lordship and sufficiency of Christ and in response Paul declares Christ's Lordship and confirming the supreme rule of Christ as the exact revelation and representation of the Father.

[www.anabaptistmennonites.net](http://www.anabaptistmennonites.net)

For A Conservative Anabaptist Perspective

## Exposition of Colossians #1 – Introduction Page 78

Greetings of love to each one assembled, it is a precious privilege to greet each other in the name of Jesus the one that has made salvation possible and we can experience it and in a right way to enjoy it. We trust you can be encouraged in your life and Christian walk.

Open your Bibles to Colossians.

I'd like to begin a series of messages on the book of Colossians and I'm simply going to call it an exposition of Paul's epistle to the Colossians.

The first sermon this morning is going to be somewhat of an introduction to the book and a general overview and maybe we will get started into some of the first 12 verses there, we'd like to gain a new appreciation for the book of Colossians, a new appreciation and a new understanding.

One of the values that I see in an expository message is taking the scriptures and going through a portion and exposing what is there.

There is a value to an expository study of a certain portion of the Bible as we are going to do here in the book of Colossians, it gives us what I would call a panoramic view, the big picture, maybe a bird's eye view where we stand back and look at the whole portion instead of just pulling out a verse, which we tend to do many times, we just pull out a verse here and there and don't really get a sense of why it was written or the context in which it was written and one of the benefits of an exposition is that it gives us the bigger picture, the surrounding scenario.

It says here in Colossians at the top of the first chapter, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians.

I don't know if you know what an epistle is, the dictionary says: A letter especially a long formal or instructive letter. And that is what it is. In chapter 4 verse 16 he says: “And when this letter (epistle) has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read that the letter from Laodicea.” [Colossians 4:16](#).

One thing we notice there that apparently Paul had written to the Laodiceans as well, that letter never got into the scriptures and we don't understand why that was, but it was obvious that he had also written a letter to them and they were to exchange these letters.

There are other places in the Bible where the same Greek word is translated into letter, such as [2 Corinthians 7:8](#) Paul wrote and said “I made you sorry with a letter” he made them sorry with an epistle, it is the same word.

[2 Thessalonians 2:2](#) he talks about “a letter from us” something about not being troubled by a letter from us. That was an epistle.

Now whenever we do a sermon or any Bible study it ought to be for what reason? The reason is for us to learn, for our experience. The main purpose is that I can learn a lesson for my life today, in my Christian walk. If we simply approach the scriptures to swell our understanding, to just get more knowledge, to make better arguments with our brethren, or whoever, we have missed the point. Bible study is intended for us to grow in our Christian life and to learn how to live as a child of God and what God would have us do and, that is the purpose for a series of messages like this.

This morning I will probably spend most of the time with five questions I have here. I would like to begin with Where, then Who, When and Why and How. If you want to do Bible study ask yourself those five questions about the portion of Scripture that you are studying.

Where did it take place? Who is it about, why, when and how?

We begin this morning with where. Where did this take place? The setting is in Colosse, we have that in verse 2 this letter is written to “the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.” [Colossians 1:2](#).

So what was Colosse? It is a city and I might just show you a map, if you can see it from where you are sitting, I photocopied this out of a book just to give you an understanding of where Colosse is. Jerusalem is down here and then up here in Asia we have Colosse and just 11 miles north of that is Laodicea, so Colosse and Laodicea were only 11 miles apart and as you consider that verse that I read it seemed like they must have worked pretty close together, they probably had some interchange and they probably had some working affiliation.

I think just six miles from Laodicea was Hierapolis, now with their means of travel that means those churches were pretty close but remember they didn't have cars the way we have, just north of that was Philadelphia, we have a number of churches pretty much in a row.

Then I guess we would call it west of there was Ephesus, there was another church there with about 100 miles between Ephesus and Colosse.

This letter was written by Brother Paul from way over here in Rome. You think about the miles that letter went and it wasn't by US Postal Service or FedEx or something like that where it got in a jet, that was hand-carried from Rome to Colosse.

So that gives you a little bit of an understanding of the setting where this took place. There is this book that I was using to get a frame of reference, to say something about the city of Colosse in which the church here found itself. Five centuries before Christ Colosse was hailed as the great city of Phrygia, by Paul's time it was just a small town. The main reason for the change was the rise of the neighbouring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis when the trade route between Ephesus and the Euphrates Valley was diverted away from Colosse. When Paul wrote to the Colossians there was a Christian congregation in each of these three cities.

The inhabitants of Colosse were mainly Greeks and Phrygians along with an unusually large Jewish population, the area was famous for its soft wool.

Do you remember what the Bible says about the Greeks and the Jews? The Bible has something to say about the Greeks and the Jews in first Corinthians chapter 1, keeping in mind that this is what the city of Colosse was largely made up of, in Paul said this [1 Corinthians 1:22-24](#) "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,<sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

So I guess we could say that he had some pretty hard soil. The Jews they wanted signs and the Greeks they sought after wisdom and the gospel of Christ was foolishness. I guess we could say they were both sort of a hard to reach kind of a people.

Now we're looking at the city where this took place and something else that comes into focus here is Philemon, you remember Philemon, Paul wrote a letter to Philemon, he was an active brother in the church at Colosse, in fact the church at Colosse met in his house according to Philemon 1:2, there it talks about "the church in thy house."

The letter to the Colossians and the letter to Philemon were delivered at the same time by the hand of Onesimus as Paul sent him back to Philemon and according to Colossians chapter 4 verse 17 it seems likely that Archippus

was the minister, [Colossians 4:17](#): “And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord,” and if you look at Philemon the letter there is not only addressed to Philemon but also Archippus in [Philemon 1:2](#): “And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house.”

And so it seems like the church there at Colosse gathered there at Philemon's house and possibly Archippus was the minister.

So much for the setting and the question where.

The next question we want to consider is who?

First of all who wrote this epistle? Well that is pretty clear. In fact in Bible times when they did write they didn't end the letter with: “Sincerely Paul,” they began the letter with who was writing and that is typical of Paul in his letters, he says here: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother.” And so the letter was being written by Paul, at least it was being dictated by Paul, he includes Timothy in with that, but Paul an apostle.

What is an apostle? He says an apostle of Christ, of Jesus. An apostle the dictionary says is a delegate, an ambassador, a commissioner, Paul was chosen by Christ to share his message. Did you notice the statement by the will of God? Paul often called himself the apostle by the will of God.

I think that is something outstanding, something for us to think about, it expresses to us a clear sense of his calling. Paul had a clear sense of that, this was not his mission it was not his agenda, he had a clear understanding that God had called him to this work. He was not self-appointed; he had not put himself there.

When when God sent Ananias to Paul, Ananias said, I have heard many things about him, but God replied to Ananias and said: He is a chosen vessel to Me [Acts 9:10-16](#). He was a chosen vessel and Paul somehow grasped that fact that God has chosen him for this work, by the will of God.

Now what is so important about that?

Well I think that this understanding was foundational to Paul's confidence, courage, perseverance and his effectiveness, if he wouldn't have had that it is very unlikely that he would have had the impetus to go through all the things that he went through. And I think it is the same for us today in the church are as Christians when we have a clear sense of our call, that we

have a commission of God, that helps us not to be intimidated, it helps us to not crouch in a corner from rebukes or opposition we may experience.

My mind went back to that message left on our answering machine after we had sent out those tracts for use in the community, “The Truth about Halloween” we got a message, a lady had left the message she was offended with that tract about The Truth about Halloween, she said she doesn't try and pour things down our throat and why should we try and push things down her throat? Something like that. You know we could become intimidated by that but then we remember that the church commissioned us to do this work, what good is a church in the community if it is not sharing the truth? And so we need the sense that Paul had, by the will of God, we do this by the will of God, it is not our own agenda and that we are just trying to convince people something that you know we like to get across to them, it is not like many telemarketing calls that we receive which are trying to sell their own product, we are presenting truth to people, God's truth, He has commissioned us to do that.

I see another thing in that when we have a clear sense of our call, like Paul did, it will help us not to be negligent in the work and that could not only be in evangelistic work but any work that God has given us, has responsibilities, whether it is a mother taking care of the home and any children or whether it is us as fathers being a father in the home or whether it is a minister or schoolteacher or whatever, God has called us to this work and we have this responsibility and we need to do it, we do that with the understanding that we are doing this by the will of God.

Now that is speaking about the writer where this letter came from, it came from Paul the apostle and it was sent to whom?

Well it was sent to the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse, the church in thy house he had told Philemon.

I notice here that he unapologetically calls them saints, to the saints and faithful brethren. Maybe we don't think of the church, the redeemed people of God in this manner, Saints. What do you think of the saint? Some special apostle or somebody that climbs the ladder of Christian experience? He calls the faithful brethren in Christ he calls them saints.

And when we think of a saint we think of somebody that is holy and dedicated to God, isn't that what the church should be and what the church is?

The saints and faithful brethren? There are other titles for them in the Bible, disciples, believers, Christians.

Another thing we notice here in relation to the church at Colosse is that it was a result of the spread of the gospel. If you will turn with me to Acts chapter 19 we notice this, how did the gospel reach the Colossians, how did they ever get in touch with the gospel?

In [Acts 19:9-10](#) <sup>(ESV)</sup> says: “But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup> This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

Ephesus and these other cities, Colosse and Hierapolis and Laodicea were all a part of Asia. And so these two years that Paul was preaching here it says here that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the Word of God. In [Acts 19:26](#) we have a similar thought when these silversmiths had this uproar they said: “And you see and hear, that not only in Ephesus, but almost all of Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.”

I wonder if that didn't have something to do with how the Colossians had received the gospel.

And something that we notice here in verse six of Colossians 1 is this term, the end of verse five talks about the truth of the gospel and in verse six “which is come unto you as it is in all the world.” [Colossians 1:5-6](#). The gospel had come unto the city of Colosse, they didn't go out after it, the gospel came to them and I think that is something else for us to learn here, it suggests to us that someone was actively sharing and going out with the Word of God.

You know some folks have the idea and maybe we can get that idea ourselves: Well if they want it they can come to us and then we will share it. But that is not necessarily the scriptural approach, the scriptural approach is that that they went out with it, the gospel came unto you, suggesting that somebody was carrying it out, it is suggesting that somebody was actively involved. And I think the lesson to us today is that we need to take the gospel out to others and something that we can learn here is that the gospel is fruitful in verse six: and bring forth fruit. Sometimes we underestimate

the power of the gospel, remember these were Jews and Greeks, they were the ones who are looking for a sign and were seeking after wisdom and thought that things of Christ were foolishness, that is the kind of soil the gospel was working in and yet there was a church established there.

Sometimes maybe we underestimate the power of the gospel and we cannot always determine the condition of the soil and it seems like in the Apostles' time they took it out, they didn't say: well this is hard soil it is probably fruitless, and that kind of thing.

And so who wrote it? Well Paul wrote it, he was the apostle of Christ and who received the letter? The church at Colosse, that is the saints, the faithful brethren those that responded to the gospel message that had come to them.

We move on to the third question when?

We get a glimpse of the answer to this question in [Colossians 1:24](#): "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you;" so there we have a little bit of an idea what period of time in Paul's life this was written it was when he was suffering for you

And in [Colossians 4:18](#) it is real clear: "The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds."

And so Paul was in prison at the time that he wrote this letter, that is when it was done. [Philemon 1:23](#) would suggest that Epaphras was in bonds with him at the same time: "There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus;"

At another place in [Colossians 4:12](#) it calls Epaphras who is one of you. It seems like this man was a part of the church at Colosse and somehow he ended up in prison in Rome with Paul, that's why it seems like they were in prison together in Rome.

And when we think about the time period in which this was written the situation in which it was written we think about the fulfilment of the truth in [Romans 8:28](#) if you remember what that is, And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Very good, all things work together for good for those that love the Lord to those called according to his purpose. We see that in this when we think about what came forth from the prison in which Paul was, whether it was in prison in his own house or however that was. But we notice that Scripture in [Romans 8:28](#) was fulfilled by Paul's bonds and I'm sure he didn't

always understand, at least not in the beginning, his bonds seemed like something very undesirable to him, but it was the source from which much of the doctrinal and encouraging letters were written that are a record for us today yet.

And I think there is something for us to think about in relation to that. We need to remember that when life doesn't make any sense to us that God has a purpose and God is working that out to the building of his kingdom, just because it doesn't make sense to us doesn't mean that God is not in it.

Another thing we learn here is that Paul uses this time wisely. I'm sure Paul was human like the rest of us, you know how we tend to get, put yourself in his position and maybe we could start pitying ourselves a little and we can start thinking about how terrible our life is, we think about our brethren and sisters out there that are free and don't have to be imprisoned like I am and think: Why don't they come and visit me, I wish they'd come and visit me more, you know I could use some encouragement.

And we could squander the time away, to lose the time pitying ourselves, Paul used his time wisely instead of pitying himself, he got busy, he thought of others, he thought of the churches, he thought about these people he had heard about, it seems like Paul had never even met the brethren at Colosse, in [Colossians 2:1](#) it suggests that it says; "For as many as have not seen my face in the flesh" it seems that he did not have direct contact with them, and yet he was burdened for them, reaching out to them, he thought of others and wrote them a letter.

So that is the time period and that would answer the question when this took place. It seems to me that I read somewhere that this was somewhere around 60 A.D.

The fourth question: Why? Why was this written?

I think [Colossians 1:10](#), shines a little light on that question: That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. and I would say that [Colossians 1:28](#) answers this question and would consider that this verse is the key verse of the book of Colossians: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

I think that is the why of this letter, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, that is what he wanted. It was his consuming desire, it

was the thing that gave him zeal, it was the motivation, he wanted to see these people grow and go on with God, that these people would grow in their Christian experience, might take the territory that God had given them for the Christian life. He says he preached, he warned, he taught every man in all wisdom. That is what he wanted, he encouraged them, he encouraged them, you will notice that as we read as we do more of the portion by portion study how Paul encouraged them to go on and how he taught them, he taught them sound doctrine so that they would have an understanding of sound doctrine.

He warned them about false doctrine and he gave many teachings here on practical Christian living in chapters 3 and 4, but we will look at that little bit later in the breakdown of the book.

And now the last question: How did he go about this, how did he approach this burden, how did he express this burden, how did he go about this to present every man perfect in Christ? That was the why, that was his mission, but how did he go about it? What was the method he used?

Well if you read through the book of Colossians you will find a very positive approach, a very positive message. It is very different to the book of Corinthians, very different, the style and the approach is very different to his letters to the Corinthians, maybe he was dealing with different people, probably so. But we notice his personal care and burden for them in the number of expressions that he made.

First of all in [Colossians 1:3](#), We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

In [Colossians 1:9](#) For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, we do not cease to pray for you. You see the positive method that he used here, continual prayer, Paul was assuring them of his continual prayer for them. And I think there is a sense in that in which our burden or our love for our brethren is tested by how we pray for one another, isn't that true? We can get concerned and express concern; we can get so concerned about one another we can start talking about each other to each other but is that really the test of our burden? Isn't the test of the genuineness of our care and concern expressed by how we talk to God about our brother or sister? I think so.

That is what he was doing, he had a love of these people, a desire and a burden that brought him to his knees in prayer, fervent prayer. He must have spent much time in earnest prayer for this church in Colosse and obviously he believed that God could do something in and for them. He could reach out to them this way, he couldn't go preach to them, he couldn't straighten them out, he was in Rome many miles away and so he prays and he believed that prayer would make a difference or obviously he would not have prayed.

A very positive approach.

In Colossians [1:24](#) we get another glimpse into this: Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake which is the Church.

It seems hear that Paul was in suffering, Paul was in prison, and Paul was not a free man at this point, why not? Well he says it was because he was preaching the gospel, because it was of that that he was in chains, it was for the Church, for the gospel's sake, in other words their faith in the Lord Jesus, their salvation was at Paul's expense, he realised that, but he said I am not pitying myself because I'm suffering all this and you know you Colossians you're not to think about what this is costing me here in prison. No, he says, I am rejoicing that I could because their faith was worth it all.

That certainly expresses a positive approach.

His calling was to spread the gospel and he was in it tirelessly and it was his care, his concern, that put him there but he just kept on.

And in [Colossians 2:1](#) he finally just tells them how he felt, he says: For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea.

What does this conflict mean? The Greek word it is the same, the same Greek word "*agon*" it is the same root as agonise and it is the same root at least very close the same root that is used to the word agony when Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane it says he was in great agony, well this is the same thing, it is a very similar word that is translated conflict here.

You know Paul could have told them I am in agony for you, well his heart was.

In another place he told the Galatians that, he said I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, [Galatians 4:19](#).

Paul had a fatherly heart for these people and that comes through in his letter, that is why this letter was written, that is how we approach this letter and finally in [Colossians 4:8](#) his care is expressed in this: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

Paul finally had such a care for them that though he couldn't go himself he sent somebody else so that they could do two things, firstly that they could come back and tell him how the Colossians were faring, how they were doing their state, and also secondly that this person could encourage them, comfort their hearts.

We see the care that flowed through this letter, his love. You know it is very similar I guess we can identify with that when our children are away from home and we couldn't have contact with them any other way, why I guess we would finally sent somebody to see how they are doing and that's the kind of care that Paul had.

It seems to me that is still the first ingredient in being effective with people, whether it is parents with their children or a minister with his congregation or even brother to brother and sister to sister, and even in all our evangelistic efforts, we know how it is it is much better received, much more effective, if people can sense that we are doing it from care and love. And when we get riled up and do like Moses did and speak unadvisedly with our lips it is a sign that we are thinking about ourselves not the other person. Isn't that the way it works, when we get riled up and impatient isn't that a sign that we are thinking about ourselves and our care for the other person has lapsed?

Another thing we notice here in how he approached this is he did it in a positive way and that is in the commendation that he gave. [Colossians 1:3-8](#) we have his commendation and we notice that in first four verses he commended them and he says I have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love which you have toward all the Saints. He was commending them for their faith in Jesus Christ and for the love that they had for the saints, he was bringing back to their attention and commending them to that.

Verse six he says: Which has come unto you and bringeth forth fruit, talking about the gospel which came to them, and it bringeth forth fruit as it does also in you since the day you heard of it.

He was recognising that they were allowing the message of truth to change their lives, bearing fruit in their lives; he was commending them for that. And also in verse eight he was commending them for their love in the spirit.

And in [Colossians 2:5](#) he says: Though I be absent in the flesh yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order and steadfastness of your faith in Christ. Commending them for their orderliness and steadfastness, they were not a church that was tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine that came along, [Ephesians 4:14](#).

What is so good about commendation? Commendation spells approval and acceptance, that is essential to good relationships. Can you have a good relationship a relaxed relationship without approval and acceptance? Well you can say you can love that person that doesn't approve or accepts you, yes, but if you are going to have a close relationship then there needs to be approval and acceptance and commendation is one way to develop that and build that.

And as I look at that it seems to me that Paul started with commendation, he begins his letter that way and that laid a solid foundation for any criticism, any instruction that might come later. You know criticism and instruction can very easily fall on dead soil unless there is first a relationship established of mutual acceptance and a sense of approval, otherwise if that is not there criticism and instruction can very easily be read as censure. And there is a big difference between sincere commendation and appreciation and flattery, I think we ought to understand that difference, the world flatters, they can speak very well of you in your face and then do something else behind your back, that is flattery. But commendation is when we not only speak well to somebody's face but they will speak well behind your back.

Commendation is important in husband-and-wife relationships, in parent child relationships and in brother to brother relationships, we lay a good foundation of appreciation of approval and acceptance through proper commendation there is a foundation there to build.

Now moving on then and still under this question of how did Paul go about his work? In its positive aspect he taught the truth. And I would like to underline truth. He clearly taught truth, he reaffirmed their faith in first

of all the pre-eminence of Christ in [Colossians 1:15-19](#)., he was very positive he clearly taught truth to them, the pre-eminence of Christ and the redemption through Christ's blood, [Colossians 1:13-23](#), we seek truth.

The ceremonial law being abolished through Christ in [Colossians 2:9-15](#), he is giving truth to them and it seems that we to learn something from that as well.

He gives and then in ([Colossians chapters 3 and 4](#) he teaches them how to live from a very positive direction of how to live, a very practical direction how to live, how to get along with people, how husbands ought to do and how wives ought to do and children ought to do and servants ought to do and masters ought to do, and the things that we ought to put off ought to put on and do things we put on. He is giving them truth.

Yes, he does give some warning about wrong doctrine but he did not go into a long discourse on wrong doctrine. I think there is something for us to learn in that.

Jesus said know the truth and that is what Paul was doing, he gave them the truth and that is the best protection against anything wrong, it is. We can dabble with all kinds of wrong doctrine. I know of a brother some years ago that was doing a study, I don't know what it was any more if it was Jehovah's Witness or the Mormons or what it was, but he was doing a study on it I'm not so sure what the intent was and he got lost to that cult whatever was, he lost out with the Lord through it.

Well why do we need to study the cults and study all the counterfeits out there?

It seems to me that Paul built as he wrote this letter he didn't go into a big discourse you know what shouts of this, this and this and study at what these people believe but you know he gave them the Truth and then they were able to determine counterfeit whatever that counterfeit was. Study the real truth that is the point.

Another thing that we notice here in his positive approach that he lifted before them holy aspirations.

In ([Colossians 1:9-12](#) he lifted before them holy aspirations, he was anticipating something of them. I just like the tone of that we pray for you that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding that ye might walk worthy of the Lord in all polic-

ing and be fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all the might of his glory and power unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks to the Father which has made us qualified to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Can you feel this? Paul is saying this is what I desire of you, this is what I like to see in you brethren, you know I want to see you growing in your Christian experience. He was lifting something in front of them not as an “I am up here and you all get up here,” not that way, but sort of getting underneath and encouraging them upward and challenging them upward.

It seems to me that is something for us in our church life that we ought to be expecting something of each other.

What happens to church if the older people, whether it is the parents or the ministers, expect their youth to be sort of carnal and you know casual and not really have a whole lot of spiritual interest. What happens? Well that's how they will be, there is no challenge. You know if that is what the church expects the young people to be that is probably what they are going to be.

Paul didn't have that kind of approach, he was expecting something from of them and I think we need to be doing that, the church ought to hold forth sound goals and ideals and challenges that draws us upward into the character of Christ.

Maybe we should close with that.

The last question is: What?

What did he write? And that is what we want to explore in the next message is.

What can we learn from this, and I will give you this as part of a breakdown of this book, the whole book of Colossians may be broken it down in about four categories.

[Chapter 1 verses 1 through 12](#) are an introduction and are largely inspirational, it is his introduction and it is largely inspirational.

[Chapter 1 verses 13 through 29](#) we have true doctrine and we want to explore that in the next message. True doctrine, the doctrine of redemption and suchlike.

Then you move into [chapter 2](#) and you have the third portion of the breakdown and that is false doctrine, you will find that in there, warnings against false doctrine.

[Colossians 3 through chapter 4 verse 6](#) is practical Christian living. That is the fourth breakdown, Practical Christian living.

And then lastly in [Colossians 4:7 through 18](#) is Christian Fellowship ties.

At the end of this chapter he is basically done with his teaching, his exhortation, it is on practical living and then what I guess you would call Christian Fellowship and the ties that bound them together.

## **Exposition of Colossians #2 – Lessons We Can Learn**

May the Lord add His blessing and may He continue to guide our thoughts in the ways of truth.

I would like to continue our exposition in the book of Colossians. The previous message was somewhat of an introduction we could say. Do any of you remember what the purpose was of Paul's writing to the Colossians, the one verse that we chose as our key verse that expresses the motive of this letter to the Colossians? *Answer from audience was:* Verse 10 which says: That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; [Colossians 1:10](#).

I think I had mentioned that but it wasn't quite the one I had chosen as a key verse but it is real similar, anyone remember what verse I chose as the key verse of this whole book? Yes, [Colossians 1:28](#): Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

The last part of that verse is especially what is in focus. I guess that is true also of all Scripture and it certainly is true of the message written to the Colossians. Paul had this desire that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus and that was the intent of what was written here.

As I mentioned in my first message the first 12 verses we would call the introduction somewhat to this letter, I would call this a very personal part of the letter, it gives his heart's throb, his desire for them and we could call this Paul's introduction and he personally addressed it to them and then in verses 13 and on we get into the doctrinal part.

So this morning we would like to spend a little bit of time here with the first 12 verses thinking of them as the introduction, we can approach this teaching from the standpoint of what lessons can we learn, isn't that what teaching and preaching is all about, what lessons can we learn, and so I guess that is the subtitle here: What Lessons Can We Learn?

The first point I have here maybe ties in a little bit with our adult Sunday School, and that is what we are and what we do as a way of getting around and influencing others.

The songwriter has said that: "Somebody follows you, somebody sees the things you do." And that must have been true of the Colossians because you notice the words that Paul uses here in chapter 1 verse four he says: "Since we heard". So he was getting some hearsay too, since we heard of your faith, this time it was good news, Paul had heard of their faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have toward all the saints, [Colossians 1:4](#), we heard.

Verse eight: Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. [Colossians 1:8](#). Somebody was talking about the Colossians in a good way.

Verse nine: For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, [Colossians 1:9](#). You see what we are and what we do has a way of getting around and influencing others. Paul expressed his deep joy and thanksgiving for what he heard about the Colossians.

It must have been a tremendous encouragement to him being in prison that here was a church having that kind of the testimony and was an inspiration to him. No man lives unto himself and no man dieth to himself. [Romans 14:7](#).

We have an influence on each other and that I guess I give this morning as a challenge to us.

What are faithful people saying about me, what are faithful people saying about us as a congregation? Now we know that there are always those people that get a little bit of hearsay and they like to talk and they might say things about me or us that isn't true, that can be, but you know finally truth is coming out and you know over a period of time, and we are thinking especially of faithful people, this was the testimony of the faithful person here that Paul had received this testimony from, Epaphras, in verse seven, our dear fellow servant who is for you a faithful minister of Christ. This was the man whom declared your love in the Spirit unto us. Paul had the

confidence in Epaphras bringing a sound evaluation, he didn't just receive it up from the grapevine I guess we could say, this was a first-hand testimony.

And so the challenge is what are faithful people saying about me, about us as a congregation, what are people hearing about us from faithful people? And so that is a challenge for us, not only from that standpoint but that we live to please the Lord and not only for what other people think but we need to remember that we have an influence on other congregations and that is something for us to think about also.

It matters, in other words, what we do, it inspires, encourages or hinders others in their walk with the Lord.

All right what can we learn from this lesson, from this portion of Scripture here?

Number two. I think we sort of ended on this note 2 weeks ago as being the challenge to Christian growth and protection. I mentioned that the other time and that is something that stayed with me, in a congregation of believers we ought to be encouraging each other and stimulating each other to Christian growth.

And I don't know if I gave you this story before or not that years ago in our and evangelists work in Lancaster I gave a tract to a man who was walking up the sidewalk and he took it and kept on walking, after some time he came back through again and he showed me this tract and said: I have read this, I know all of this, I know it's true, he said but I can't live it.

And we got into a little bit of a chat and I said: Are you going to church?

He said: Yes, I'm going to church.

Well do the people there live holy lives, are they the right kind of influence on you?

No they don't live holy lives he said.

What can you expect you see, if we are not living the kind of lives and have the kind of church Fellowship that is encouraging one another to higher ground we can sort of settle in to a mediocre ho-hum kind of church life that lets everybody be a sort of ho-hum Christian and what do you have?

Paul here in these verses, let's just read them and get the heart-throb here, in [Colossians 1:9-12](#). For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do

not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup>That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup>Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; <sup>12</sup>Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Do you notice the words there, filled, all wisdom, all pleasing, every good work, increasing, all might. Not just half, not just mediocre but growing, it is a call, I see Paul encouraging the Christians, challenging and encouraging them to go on with God, to grow in the Christian life. And I think there is a danger for us as people of God and maybe sometimes we see this in not only in young people, I'm thinking maybe of young people that come under conviction, they sense the call of the Lord on their life, they repent of their sins, they receive the Lord as their Saviour and they go through instructions and after some time they are baptised and sort of the feeling: Well now, that's done. Sigh of relief.

And you know it can happen. If that is the way look at it “well now that's done, I've been through that, I'm a member of the church now, that's done”. You know will what happens when that kind of attitude is taken, we're glad when that's done, but happy that we are now part of the church, I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't be but the thought is that we can very easily relax at that point and if we relax we're going to start drifting back again. And I think we have seen that people start drifting back again and after while they take on their old life again, the carnal ways start coming back on and the habits that they had dropped start becoming a part of their life again.

Paul is encouraging us to go on with God and not to let that (backsliding) happen. That can happen to us at any period in our lives, it is not just young people, sometimes we see that in middle-aged people, sometimes we see it in grandparents who sort of relax. Well the grandchildren are raised now in everybody's left home I guess it doesn't matter so much how I live anymore and so drift off into a mediocre life.

The Christian life is a call for whether we are 20 or 30 or whether we are 80, the Christian life is a call to go forward with God and Paul then gives

then some qualities that they ought to aspire too, that he wanted the Colossians to aspire to, and I guess they are for us as well today, this morning.

The first one that we notice here is: That they might be filled with the knowledge of His will.

It is one of the things that is important in growing, he wanted them to be filled with the knowledge of God's will.

Why? Well that is very important, it is very important that we have a knowledge of the will of God because there are many influences and many voices all around us claiming our attention, clamouring for our belief and our embracing the things that we see and the things we hear and the things we read, we can't get away from them all, we try and protect ourselves, but you can't get away from all the voices out there.

And if we did not have an understanding and knowledge of the will of God we become prey to whatever is out there, very easily misled. Jesus told the Sadducees I believe it was: Ye do err not knowing the scriptures. [Mathew 22:29](#). That was the problem, they erred, they were in error because they didn't know the scriptures, well what was the problem? They surely had the privilege to know the scriptures.

If we do not know the will of God, if we are not filled with the knowledge of the will of God, we might well be believing and think that we are right when we are dead wrong. Jesus talked about those kind of people, they were sure that are going to get to heaven because of what they were doing and they were turned away at heaven's door, Jesus said I don't know you. [Matthew 7:20-23](#). What a disappointment that would be to come to the judgement thinking that you are right and be turned away because we failed to apply ourselves and to mind or know the will of God.

Now we realise that the Christian life is a growing experience but when we have the opportunity to know but we simply leave the Bible on the shelf collecting dust and we don't apply it and we don't dig into it when we have opportunity and we come short then certainly it is our problem.

We need to know, we need to have the knowledge of the will of God to make wise decisions in life.

You say well how can I know the will of God? It says that we might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom. How can I know the will of God?

Well there are some six basic principles that we need to have in place that if we do that then we can know the will of God.

And I don't know if they are quite in this order but this would be the order that I would put them in;

First of all we need to have a surrendered will. We are not going to know the will of God if we don't have a surrendered will, if we don't approach God with a surrendered will and we have our own preconceived ideas why we probably are not going to know the will of God.

And so number one is a surrendered will.

Number two is Bible study. That is why God gave us the scriptures, That is why they are written down for us so that we might know his will. Right here is his will in the New Testament especially for us today.

Number three prayer. We come to prayer, we come to prayer and we ask God to show us his will. What does it that say? He that asketh receiveth, Knock and it shall be opened unto you, Seek and ye shall find. That is a promise we can claim in prayer. [Luke 11:9-10](#).

Fourth: the counsel of mature spiritual brethren and sisters. I'm saying the counsel of mature spiritual brethren and sisters. I am not saying that young people can't or you can't go to your own age bracket, but there is a place where we need to seek counsel of those that show maturity and stability in their own Christian lives.

And then fifthly: providential circumstances of God. If we wait on him God opens and closes doors to lead us into truth, shows us his will, He is at work in our lives if we are committed to him, He is working in our lives He wants to show us his will.

And lastly sixth, the impressions the Holy Spirit puts in our conscience.

Those are some basic points in knowing the will of God and knowledge of his will and when that happens we are not easily tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Knowledge of his will means that we develop sound biblical convictions, we know what we believe and why we believe it, and I realise it is a growing experience, I'm not saying that somebody

will not come to us some time and say: What do you believe about this? Well I'm not quite sure let me study it out.

There's no shame in that, maybe there is something that we haven't understood and we have an obligation to study it out, maybe seek the counsel of others, but we ought to know what we believe and why, why we believe what we do, this is what the Bible teaches.

Another quality that we ought to be aspiring to is to have spiritual understanding. And you say: Well what is the difference between knowledge of his will and spiritual understanding?

I am thinking that may be that the spiritual understanding would be knowing how to apply the principles of Scripture to everyday life, spiritual understanding.

We can have a real knowledge of the Bible and what the Bible teaches and yet not have the spiritual understanding to make it work in our lives and that is something that the Holy Spirit, spiritual understanding is something that comes by the working of the Holy Spirit in our life, as we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit him working in our life and teaching us in showing us how this works.

It is like one brother mentioned in a message some years ago he was saying he came across this phrase: In everything give thanks. He said: Well Lord what does that mean, in everything give thanks. And then he was talking about how he was putting the head back on an engine one day and the thing just didn't want to go right and after a while he sort of just got up there and held it with his fingers and all of a sudden it came down and smashed his fingers and you know it really hurt.

And he said that verse came to his mind right there in everything gives thanks, this is what it means.

You see the spirit works in our life to teach us and to show us how this thing works out these truths work in daily life.

Spiritual understanding is knowing how to apply the scriptures. The choices we make in the counsel we give to others we need spiritual understanding to make it work. You know when we face choices in practical living whether business or home or purchases or whatever, we need spiritual understanding, we need to know how to take the principles and make them

work and then when others come and seek our counsel, or maybe as parents we counsel our children, it takes spiritual understanding. And that is what Paul was telling the Colossians that they might be filled with spiritual understanding.

It calls for a spiritual mind, we cannot be carnally minded and feed on carnal things and then expect to be spiritually minded. We need a heart and mind that is yielded to the Holy Spirit and it is certainly a call to prayer for God's wisdom. Can we have spiritual understanding without prayer? You know how many times are we facing decisions in life and we really don't know how to go and spiritual understanding is given by us asking, I think that is the sense, where it is a call to prayer to seek the face of God.

Now moving to another quality and that is: That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. [Colossians 1:10](#).

That speaks to us of practical Christian living, practical Christian living a walk that is worthy of the Lord, that pleases God, that is fruitful, in other words a life that glorifies God, a holy life, a life that has Christian graces, that is characterised by Christian graces.

It says here in all pleasing unto the Lord in all pleasing. We live in a day where people are trying to make out as if there are no absolutes, there is no right, there is no real wrong, it is just sort of whatever you know whatever you make out to be right or wrong and you know it is just like it is however the situation fits best is what you do.

But this very term here "walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" it is not talking about pleasing men or pleasing self it is talking about pleasing God which simply tells us that there are absolutes. There are things that please God and there are things that don't please God, there are some things that displease Him, some works are good and some works are bad in God's sight, and it is saying that He is calling us to a life that is pleasing to God.

A walk that is worthy, a walk that is worthy.

We ought to be seeking our whole walk of life to live a godly life, one that when people see us that is worthy of our testimony. It is so disappointing when people claim to be Christian and maybe even have a pretty good testimony that their walk is so far short. I didn't get the man's testimony but

he was the treasurer of a church that I made a delivery to this week and I drove in there and he was outside smoking a cigarette on the parking lot and then when I got there he threw that aside and came over and he turned out to be the church's treasurer.

You know that is disappointing. Here this man had a position in the church and I guess that at least we would feel that he was in living a life that was worthy of his testimony.

Fruitful. What is fruitful?

To fruitful we could think of as being copious, abundant, we come to your grapevine or your apple tree and it is loaded down with nice bunches of grapes or nice big apples and you say: That is a fruitful tree, that is a fruitful vine. It's doing its job and he says that is how he wants the Colossians to be, he was challenging them to be fruitful in what? In every good work. All of life fruitful.

When people observe our life can they can see that we have been with Jesus.

When we read these kind of verses it is certainly more than a call to just a Sunday religion, you know where my business life is one thing, I act pretty well like the world I do business like the world and then I come, when Saturday comes around in the evening I put that aside and I get out my Sunday school lesson and study that and Sunday morning I put on my separated clothes and come to church.

Sunday Christian. No, this is not a call to that kind of life. This is a call for us to be Christians in everyday life. The kind of life that people can see that Jesus makes a difference as it tells us in Corinthians that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things passed away all things have become new. [2 Corinthians 5:17](#).

That is what call of the Bible is here.

Now another quality he has here is: Strengthened with all might. In verse 11, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. [Colossians 1:11](#).

I guess we would simply call that spiritual stamina, spiritual stamina, strengthened with all might, a healthy strong Christian that is able to say no to the devil and impulses, no to the temptations that come his way, no to the wrong attitudes that would possess his heart, that can say no to wrong

thoughts that want to entertain his mind, that can say no to desires that are wrong, he has the power to control where he is eyes go, he has the power to control his tongue and his responses when people mistreat him.

Strengthened with spiritual might. Strengthened with all might is not the kind of might that comes from weight lifting and exercising in eating but is the power of God at work in the person's life that is manifested in the way he lives. And don't we need that? His glorious power, not self, not self-determination, I'm going to do better, I will try to do better. No, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power. We need that, we need that.

It is the realisation that if I am going to try this by my own determination I already know in advance I will fail but it is the reaching out and the dependence on His glorious power.

Why does he put that word glorious in? I like that, it is a glorious power, it is a God honouring power, it is that kind of power that brings glory to God not to self, and we need it, we needed if we are going to be patient and long-suffering and joyful especially through perplexing and difficult experiences. That's what he says, unto all patience, this is what we need to be patient and long-suffering and joyful through the ups and downs of life.

Another quality he has here is giving thanks to God in verse 12. [Colossians 1:12](#).

Giving thanks to God, that is the cultivating of a sense of gratitude to God through his great mercy and goodness to us, God is good, God is good. Maybe we should write that motto in our hearts and in our minds. I know that many times we have mottos around in our houses that, I guess I couldn't say right now what all the mottos say in our living room not quite sure but we see them every day but we don't think much about it, but I have an inspirational calendar in my office and the days that I sit over there eating lunch and sort of sit back and relax and day after day that verse on that calendar is before my eyes, and after a while it sort of you know it lodges in your mind and the one that was on for December was the one in [Deuteronomy 32:4](#): "He is the rock, his work is perfect for all his ways and judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

I find that a lofty theme to think about and when we get that concept in our hearts and minds that God is good, his work is perfect, a God of truth without iniquity, just and right is He. Well that stirs in us a sense of worship and thanksgiving, you find a lot of dreary people around today, you

know complaining about this that and the other thing and the weather and you know they just don't look very happy, very joyful, well I think Paul is exhorting us and encouraging asked to be a thankful, joyful, cheerful people.

Now I missed one here, I want to back up a little bit where it says in the end of verse 10: increasing in the knowledge of God; [Colossians 1:10](#).

I was first of all thinking maybe that means the knowledge of God's will, but no it says in the knowledge of God, increasing in the knowledge of God. What do you make of that? Is there a difference between knowing God and knowing his will? I think there is.

Increasing in the knowledge of God speaks to us of a personal experience with him, a growing friendship. And my mind went to a young man or could be older ones for that matter, we often think of courting couples as young, a young brother and a young sister they know something about one another and so they start a friendship based on that, something attracts and they start it, but they are not satisfied with that they want to get to know one another. And I think that is what this means increasing in the knowledge of God. An increased understanding of one another.

It is going from knowing something about to feeling with him, understanding him, moving with him, understanding and sharing his heartthrob, isn't this all part of a growing relationship among people? Isn't that what the Christian life is with God our heavenly Father?

It is an increased knowledge of him in my life, it is understanding more of his great love, of his care, it offers guidance and his purpose for my life. Paul in [Philippians 3:10](#) said: That I may know him. What was he talking about? I think he was talking about what he was calling the Colossians to, Paul had a desire, he had got a taste of God that gave him a desire that he wanted to know him more, that I may know him.

And you know when a person develops that kind of a relationship with God the Christian life becomes meaningful because now it is not just an empty bunch of rules, dos and don'ts, you know God is displeased if I don't do this and God is pleased if I do that and so I sort of mechanically go through the motions, that is not the Christian life. The Christian life is to know God and to have a heartthrob that throbs with him and that moves with him. That I may know him Paul said.

And so verses 9 through 12 are a call to come up higher with God, to be more conformed to his image.

Jesus rebuked the Laodiceans for what? Well for becoming lukewarm in their love, they became lukewarm and he said, he exhorted them to repent [Revelations 3:14-19](#).

Well we move away from the thought of the introduction and the personal part and we want look into the first part of doctrine which is sound doctrine, later on we want to look at unsound doctrine, but we might call this true doctrine.

In [Colossians 1:13-27](#) we have true doctrine and in these verses we have the person and work of Jesus Christ exposed and I found this an inspirational study, the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Why is it so important for us to have an understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ?

Well it is the very foundation of the Christian faith and I guess I am challenged with that, in some other place it calls him the chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, [Ephesians 2:20](#), and you take him out and you have nothing left but a crumbling structure and I think it is very easy for us to become side-tracked from Jesus Christ the cornerstone and end up with dead formalism.

You know what was wrong with the Pharisees? They had quite a structure, they had quite a program going, they were deep, they were focusing on a lot of things, they were focusing on a lot of details, but they didn't have Jesus Christ.

And we can focus on a lot of details and we can have a lot of things right, and am not saying that we ought to forget those things, but unless we keep the foundation, keep the cornerstone in place; we will have a crumbling structure as well.

When we lose Jesus and his great work we hold another empty religion and that is what we will be. I was challenged with that. Am I Jesus centred enough? We ought to be a Jesus people. Paul was a Jesus Christ man, as he wrote in the various letters he just freely talked about Jesus Christ and I was challenged with that, you know finally it is Jesus Christ that makes all the difference as we'll notice, everything depended on Jesus Christ, everything rests on him and that is what Paul said moreover there in [Philippians](#)

3:8-9: He said all the things that he used to think were so important he says he counted but dung that him a what? May win Christ, that I may win Christ.

And in [Galatians 2:20](#) he says I'm crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul's whole experience rested on that cornerstone, that chief cornerstone, it seems to me that he never lost sight of that, Jesus Christ was his everything and everything, all his technical theological discussions, I guess you would say, some of those things in Romans and some of the things in Galatians that almost seem like mind-boggling theological discussions what were they for? They were to bring back the reader's mind to the foundations of faith in Jesus Christ, that's what they were for.

That is why he goes into this part of true doctrine and we want to notice here in verse 15 through 19 we have the person of Christ, we want to then look at his work.

The person of Christ in verse 15,  
[Colossians 1:15-19](#)

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: <sup>16</sup>For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the pre-eminence. <sup>19</sup>For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fullness dwell.

Well that's just a couple of short verses, those couple of short verses could make sermons I think, there is a lot packed in there the person of Jesus Christ.

We noticed the words and phrases that described him; the image of God, He is the image of the invisible God. Something was mentioned earlier here I believe in a devotional about seeing the invisible, it talked about a paradox. Well God is invisible but we can understand him and we can see

him in the person of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God.

Sometimes you see a young man and you can tell right where he belongs, right to his parents were because he looks so much like his father. That happened to me recently, I hadn't met his father for quite a number of years and here this young man I met him and I first thought, I remembered his father when he was young and I could just see right where the belonged and he was the image of his father.

And here was Jesus Christ the image of the invisible God.

[Hebrews 1:3](#) talks about him as being the express image. Now generally a son is not the express image there is usually some differences, usually he bears the marks somewhat of his mother's side as well but not so with Jesus He was born of God. It says "Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person."

You see, Jesus Christ was the express image, the exact copy of God, He was the very likeness of God, thinking about the person of Jesus Christ.

I was impressed as I did a little study in the book of John had John revealed that closer union of the Father and the Son. Just look at a few of these verses in the gospel of John chapter 1 and I want you to notice how Jesus Christ, his person, who he is.

[John 1:1-2:](#)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>The same was in the beginning with God.

Jesus was with God, Jesus was God before the very creation.

[John 1:14](#)

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

These are mysterious terms almost to us I mean it is something we can hardly comprehend that God was made flesh and he dwelt among us and people beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Well people repeatedly marvelled and marvelled and marvelled, we have never seen things like this, because He was supernatural.

[John 1:18](#)

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

Pondering a little bit about that I'm not sure we can understand that the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father but one thing we get out of this is the close union of Father and Son.

[John 14:8-11](#), The setting here is that Jesus had told them, the disciples, that He would go away and that He would prepare a place them and the disciples were a little bit disturbed about this and Philip in verse eight said unto him: Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. <sup>9</sup>Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? (Don't you understand yet today who I am?) he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? <sup>10</sup>Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. <sup>11</sup>Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

I find those inspiring scriptures; He was the perfect representation of God on earth. We are looking at the person of Jesus Christ, He perfectly represented his father.

Back to [Colossians](#), [now](#) there are some more words here that we want to notice, the image of the invisible God is the first term. The second term here is the firstborn of every creature. Another term that is used in the Bible is the first begotten, He pre-existed creation.

In verse 16 it says: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. [Colossians 1:16](#).

Jesus had part in the creation, the designing and putting into existence everything that we know including the civil authorities, the structure, the civil authority structure that was all part of his creation, He made for himself, it says for him. For his own joy.

We make things for ourselves sometimes, sometimes we make things for others, sometimes we make things for ourselves, He created all things for himself.

Verse 17 is a summary of verse 15 and 16: And He is before all things, and by him all things consist. [Colossians 1:17](#), just that simple.

Verse 18 we notice that He is the head of the body, the Church, He is the leader, He is the controller, He is the authority.

If the Church fails to obey him He will disown it. Isn't that a biblical concept? He told the Laodiceans I will spew thee out of my mouth. In other words is going to be Lord of the Church and in control of the Church and head of the Church which is his position or He is not going to have a Church.

He is the first born from the dead. And you say well there are others that were resurrected, Elijah resurrected a child, and Elisha may be another one and even Lazarus was raised from the dead. How can it be said that He was the first born from the dead?

All those people again died but Jesus Christ He did not die, He was the first to resurrect never to die again. The Bible says in Romans six that death had no more dominion over him, no power over him at all. That is the difference. He was the first born from the dead never to die again.

Moreover He had the pre-eminence in all things. The end of verse 18 that he might have the pre-eminence, be above all others. [Colossians 1:18](#). Jesus is pre-eminent; He is sovereign above all others.

Remember the winds and waves obeyed him, the devils obeyed him, everything obeyed him except one thing He did not do and that was to force man to obey him, but they will sooner or later.

In [Colossians 1:19](#) he simply says: For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. God's fullness I believe is what he is talking about.

In [Colossians 2:9](#), For in him dwelleth all the goodness of the godhead bodily. In Jesus Christ dwells all the fullness of God and our fullness as well

In [Colossians 2:10](#). And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

He is our fullness, He is our completion.

What does all this tell us about Jesus Christ? What do these few verses here tell us about Jesus Christ?

It tells us that He was not merely a good prophet like some would say but He was and is God.

The fullness of the godhead bodily. And we don't understand that how that could be in the form of a human body. But He was not merely a good prophet. Who He is makes him a worthy of his position and his work and that we will get into at another time.

The next time we continue this we would like to look at His work and his redemptive work as it is given here in Colossians 1.

May we exalt the name of the Lord Jesus and give him his rightful place in our life.

### **Exposition of Colossians #3 – The Glorious Theme of Redemption.**

Greetings in Jesus name the one that has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

We are living in a unique time I suppose in one sense in the history of the world and we could look back on so much and see how God has worked among his people, we can look back and see many things revealed that have been a mystery to people in the past, we will notice some of that in the message this morning.

There has probably never been a generation that has had the privileges that we do to go right, we have the Word of God complete and whole, we have many examples of history for us to learn from, if we will learn. But we ought to have a great sense of appreciation for God's faithfulness to us, we have so much going for us.

I would like to continue our exposition in the book of Colossians and we will be looking at The Glorious Theme of Redemption, the things that are most surely believed among us, maybe we take salvation so much for granted, we have heard this story over and over and we say: Well we know all of that.

But there is a reason that Paul wrote to the Colossians and reminded them of where they were and what Christ did for them and I think it is good for us to be reminded of that, if the church in Colosse needed that we certainly do today yet as well.

Again remember our key verse. What was the purpose of Paul writing to the Colossians? He preached, he taught, he warned that so we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. [Colossians 1:28](#)

That is the whole intent of this book, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, as we move through the message we will certainly realise that it is the only way to be perfect and that is if we find ourselves in Christ Jesus.

He is the central theme of this book as I see it, of this letter, Jesus Christ, without him there is no salvation with him there is salvation.

Remember the first 12 verses were an introduction and inspirational, we looked at that last time, verses 13 through 27 he is dealing with true doctrine and if we will notice that he starts with true doctrine before giving a warning in chapter 2, we won't get into that this morning we may later on as the Lord leads, but in his care for the Colossians he is exposing his warnings about false doctrines but he starts with true doctrine and it seems to me that is where we need to start always, a solid platform in true doctrine. What does the Bible teach? Then we have a solid platform to expose false doctrine.

We notice that part of this true doctrine in verses 15 through 19 was the person and work of Christ. Today we want to look at the glorious theme of redemption, what Jesus Christ has accomplished for us, we want to read verses 13 and 14 and then down to 20 through 23.

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: <sup>14</sup>In whom, talking about Jesus, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:” [Colossians 1:13-14](#).

Verse 20: “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. <sup>21</sup>And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled <sup>22</sup>In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: <sup>23</sup>If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;” [Colossians 1:20-23](#).

I really didn't intend to bring much of chapter 2 in but we should read also [Colossians 2:12-13](#). “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

We have in these few verses a glorious theme, Redemption in Christ Jesus.

[Colossians 1:26](#) he calls it a mystery, the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.

Now thinking about that, we're talking about the place and the tremendous opportunity that we have living in the New Testament. We have something unveiled to us in a way that people in the past did not have, it was a mystery, it was hid from ages and from generations, it was kept somewhat of a secret, yes it was foreshadowed in a lot of types and shadows in the Old Testament, it was prophesied of and yet it seems as we look at some scriptures that the prophets did not even understand fully what they were prophesying of.

Just for an example we have this in [1 Peter 1](#) and this ought to help us in our sense of appreciation for what we have and the time period which we are living, “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. <sup>10</sup>Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: <sup>11</sup>Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. <sup>12</sup>Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.” [1 Peter 1:9-12](#).

The prophets were searching, enquiring, they were searching diligently trying to understand, trying to grasp what this was and the only testimony that they could get, if we understand this verse, is that the things that they were prophesying were not for them, it was a some people out there in the future. And yes they became recipients of salvation through their faith be-

fore Christ even came, but it was a mystery, it was not revealed, it was hid from ages and from generations.

We have this in [Ephesians 3:2-6](#): <sup>(ESV)</sup> “...assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup> how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. <sup>4</sup> When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup> which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

A side thought in relation to that is that you know at times we can get so set on understanding prophecy, to know what it means, but God had not revealed it to the prophets even who were prophesying back then, they didn’t fully understand, they wanted to understand, they searched but they only understood what God let them understand.

The prophecy was fulfilled later on and we can look back and it is fulfilled, a lot of those, but does God always reveal the technical meanings of all the things he prophesies? Not always, He didn’t then.

Well the time came when it was manifest and we have that in [Colossians 1:27](#) “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

I like that statement, ponder that a while; Christ in you, the hope of glory. I might make mention of that later on again.

The Gospel message has been beautifully unveiled to us in the New Testament and especially explained in these verses. It was a message that the Apostles preached, and that is one thing I think we ought to think about as we minister to people, and I think of that many times as, for example about the Jehovah’s Witnesses, they come knocking at your door, they have a message but it is not the message of Jesus Christ.

One of their points is that they are evangelistic. Well that is good to be evangelistic but where is the message about Jesus Christ?

The apostles preached the Gospel, that is what they did, they preached a man, not a religion, and it seems to me that is what we need to hold close

in our hearts. We need to introduce people to a man, the man Christ Jesus and what He came to bring. We can talk about a lot of things to people, we can talk about a lot of religion, a lot of ideas, but it seems to me that as I study this we need to have Christ Jesus in us, the hope of glory, and we need to introduce him, people need to become attached and acquainted with Jesus Christ.

Well we notice at other times his pre-eminence and suchlike, but as we think about the Gospel, the glorious theme of redemption, we have the first part of that and that is simply man's great need of a Saviour and Paul brings that out here, man's need of a Saviour. There is something in the nature of proud mankind that rejects the first part here, his need of a Saviour; there is something in proud mortal man that does not want to own up to that, we can say that of ourselves I don't need God you know. But that is where we start, there is no salvation without understanding our need, that was the Pharisees problem. Jesus said they can't be healed but needed first to acknowledge they were sick, He didn't come to call the righteous, He didn't come to call the whole but sinners to repentance and He came to heal those that were sick. [Mark 2:17](#).

One of the hardest parts I suppose in leading people to salvation is for them to understand their need, their lost condition.

Notice some phrases and words here that reveal to us what we are in the sight of God and what our true standing is with God outside of the Saviour. [Colossians 1:13](#) we have the phrase: Who has delivered us from the powers of darkness.

Well what does that suggest? That suggests that we were captives without him, and if He does not deliver us we are captives we are still captives of Satan, he is the power of darkness, and we are unable to rescue ourselves, and I think you know that those of us who have experienced deliverance we remember the hold that Satan has had on us, and whom of us did not somewhere along the line find ourselves in Romans 7, and maybe sometimes we still do when we do not exercise faith in the provision that Jesus came to bring. [Romans 7:14-25](#) <sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup> For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. <sup>16</sup> If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. <sup>17</sup> Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that in me

(that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. <sup>19</sup> For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. <sup>21</sup> I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: <sup>23</sup> But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup> I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

And goes on to say in [Galatians 5:24](#) I have crucified my flesh with its affections and lusts.

Delivered from the power of darkness.

These verses here in Romans seven described the fruitless struggle of one trying to free himself from the law of sin. Why don't people just say no?

We have that slogan around: Just say no. Why you could say that makes it sound real simple, Oh why sure, why don't we just say no, why don't folks just say no?

Well you realise when you want to say no it is not as easy as you thought. That's why people don't just say no because we are slaves of sin, that is the point here. We cannot save ourselves from the power of darkness.

What else is our standing outside of Christ? Man's great need of a Saviour.

Another word we have in [Colossians 1:21](#) "And you that the sometime were alienated. What is that, alienated, alien what is he?" And Strong's dictionary says, withdrawn, detached, separated from God, a breach between us.

I don't know if you've ever been in a foreign country, you can't speak the language, you really feel like a misfit, you get off the plane step in among all these strangers that are yabbering away, you can't understand their language, everybody looks at you they can tell that you don't belong here, you are an alien, you don't belong here, you're a misfit, you somehow really feel that. What do they call them in some places? Gringos.

That's how we were to God, misfits, estranged, we couldn't go up to him, we were alienated.

Moreover I have another word here: Enemies. That even strengthens it some more yet, enemies. What is an enemy? Well there is hostility when there is enemies, there is animosity. We were under God's displeasure, we were working against God we didn't fit into his program and God was working against us in a sense, there was enmity, hostility, why? He says in [Colossians 1:21](#) By wicked works.

That's why, God is holy, God is just, God is good, God is pure and man is wicked. You say I'm not wicked. Yes, God says we are wicked. And so we find ourselves under his displeasure according to [Romans 3:23](#).

I met a man some years ago in Lancaster and gave him a tract and he said: I never did anything wrong, he doesn't need a tract, he doesn't need anything, he's never done anything wrong, he started enumerating the good things that he did. He was an old man didn't think he did anything wrong. But we have [Romans 3:23](#): For all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Now who can say that is not me, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That includes us all.

One thing I thought about a couple of times when studying for this lesson, either this Gospel message is what it is and everything is true or it is not valid at all, and we will notice some more of that as we think about people who say there's all kinds of religions and they all lead to God. This is not one of them, either this is the only way or it is not a way at all, you have to pick between one or the other. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

[Ephesians 2:3](#): Among whom we also all have our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath even as others.

Now some of us, most of us here this morning had godly training and the vices of the flesh were kept under by that training, thank God, Our parents disciplined us and that discipline kept the old man, that old nature under and we should be thankful that is true.

Where would you and I have gone if we would not have had that? Just think about that where you and I would be today where would we have gone, what we would have done as children if we would not have had that. Think about that.

That tells us the nature that is within us, if we would not have had godly training and godly discipline where would our nature have taken us? Why you can see where a child's nature takes it if it doesn't have that, but that shows us what kind of a nature we have, we were by nature the children of wrath even as others. Well maybe we didn't get into as much trouble some but it is there none the less, even though we didn't have the freedom to express it the way maybe some others did, we were all by nature children of wrath even as others.

And that is true, whether we have been born a Jew or whether we have been born in a Mennonite home or a Catholic or a Moslem or any other religion, or whatever you can put in there, it is one thing that all folks have in common and that is that we are all by nature the children of wrath, we all have that in common no matter what our upbringing was, it may be hard to believe that sometimes for some people, but you know that the Moslem and the Jew and the Mennonite and the Catholic, everybody has one common background, a very similar background. Let's just get down to grass-roots this is where we all are, we all had our beginning there – children of wrath.

We have all committed enough evil and thought enough evil to separate us from a holy God and it always has separated from God and the question that came to me as I was thinking about this: How much sin does it take to separate us from God?

How much sin did it take on Adam's part to separate him from God, for him to lose his position with God and to lose paradise, how much sin did it take?

Well you know that. He disobeyed. He deliberately disobeyed one time and he sensed that a big change had taken place in his relationship with God, he knew it, it didn't take long to sense that something dramatic had happened in his relationship with God.

Now the Bible does not give a good picture of men in his natural state, we noticed that in Ephesians 2, maybe we should look at a few more statements in [Ephesians two](#).

In [verse three](#) we already noticed that by nature that children of wrath.

In [verse five](#): Dead in sins, that's us.

[Verse 12](#): Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise no hope without God.

[Verse 17](#): Afar off.

And in [verse 19](#): Strangers and foreigners.

The idea that man is basically good and just needs a good education and a good place to live is not biblical, it is not scriptural. That is the idea that people have today that if you just educate people enough and give them a good place to live they will solve their own problems. I think our so called Western civilisation, North America for example, I don't know where you have a better proof that that doesn't work.

North America where people are educated and where people have money. I think North America probably houses some of the most miserable people that live on the earth and probably some of those miserable people live in \$300,000 plus houses and they might have a Mercedes in the garage and a Porsche besides and have the boat out in the driveway, but what is going on inside?

Bickering, fighting, they can't get along and they are divorcing, fighting and crime and divorce and abortion and all kind of perversion is proof enough that good education and a nice place to live does not fix man's problems. I don't think we even know half of what is going on in these houses, these \$300,000 houses. By you just go on over to the suburbs of ..... and all these new houses going up, developments of \$200,000 or \$300,000 houses and what goes on inside the walls of those places? Are people happy? Is it working?

Man is not basically good, man has a bent towards wrong. Man needs a Saviour. These folks need to be introduced to a Saviour.

I remember my own growing sense of estrangement and guilt before God, you know as we grow up and we lose our childhood we lose those days and you almost wish you could go back to childhood and innocence again, well thank God we can, we have a remedy.

Why did Paul remind the Colossians of all of this? Why does he remind them of all these horrible things? Was it to make them feel bad? Of course not. He wanted to give them a deep sense of appreciation for Christ and to remind them again that there was no other way to get to God. This is their

only hope, there is no other hope, there is no other plea, salvation full, salvation free can come alone through Thee, as the song writer wrote. That's why Paul was reminding them.

And we have the second part here, it is Christ's wonderful provision of salvation. And we notice some words and phrases describing what Christ has done for us.

[Colossians 1:13](#) again: He has delivered us, deliverance.

What is that to a slave, what did it mean to a slave who is in bondage, who was whipped and beaten, made to work hard and hardly was fed enough, what did it mean to him to be delivered?

Why they used to say: Give me liberty or death. That's what some of them said and they ran away, they took the chance of dying, they would have rather been dead than serve the master – deliverance.

What does it mean to us to be delivered from the power of darkness, Satan's power, to be set free? Who shall deliver me, I thank God through Jesus Christ might Lord.

We could do a study on the man in the tombs whom Jesus met and how no man could tame him and how he was out there, he did not abide in a house the Bible tells us, he was out among the tombs and he was out cutting himself and crying and men bound him up with chains, he burst the chains and it says no man could tame him, he was in bondage like we never saw anybody. And Jesus comes and delivers him and it says later on in there he sat in his right mind and he was clothed, he was in his right mind and he was calm, he was delivered and he wanted to follow Jesus and Jesus said: No, you go back to your home, you have a message for them, tell them what great things the Lord hath done for you. [Mark 5:1-19](#).

Well that's us, not in the same way of course not but what does it mean to be delivered from the power of darkness? Well it is wonderful, it means that I can quit smoking, I can control my temper, I can love those who mistreat me, Jesus set me free from the enslaving chains of self and sin, it was habits that would bind me.

This is true doctrine. We are looking at true doctrine words and phrases that express what Christ has provided for us.

In [verse 13](#) we also have: Translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. A transfer, to change from one place, condition or position to another, we

have been transferred from Satan's kingdom to God's family. What a blessing, translated into the kingdom of His dear Son from that slave driver into this Man who loves us and meets our needs and we want to serve him because we love him in return, we are translated.

[Ephesians 2:19](#) calls it the household of God. Well we like to be with a household we want to belong, this is my family, I belong here, we want to go home, we want to be with our family, we can relax there. Maybe the church is the same way, that is what he is talking about here, the household of God, it is a place where we find belonging, where we find warmth and having abundantly, the Shepherd gives that true joy and he says there how He knows his sheep by name and He leads them and no man is able to pluck them out of my hand Jesus says, no man is able to do that, no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. That's what it means to be translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Security, rest, fulfilment, fellowship, joy, life abundant, because Jesus translated us He made it possible.

[Verse 14](#) we have the word redemption and that means to be bought back, recovered, very similar thought.

Forgiveness of sins in verse 14, forgiveness of sins that means He holds them against us no more. We confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Jesus told the woman discovered in sin: Neither do I condemn you, Go and sin no more. It is not held against you anymore. [John 8:11](#). Just quit your sinning.

Forgiveness of sins, do we understand what that means, to be forgiven? What if God did not forgive our sins? Where would we be today? What kind of relationship would we have with God if He would not forgive?

We know how it is when sometimes people don't forgive us, they don't release us, God forgive us, his wrath, his anger and his displeasure and injustice is replaced with acceptance and delight, and what does that do to us? Why it removes our guilt, our heart is light, our conscience is free.

We know what that is like, you know when as children we lived under guilt when we did wrong and we live under that condemnation and we are afraid that our parents will find out and it makes us miserable until we go and confess it, I did this, and the parent might punish or might just say: Well you can forget it, we are thankful that you confessed it now you can forget it.

And you know the freedom, the lightness of heart that give, the heaviness is all gone, that's forgiveness, that's the forgiveness of God.

And that is why the songwriter said: My sin, Oh the bliss of that glorious thought, my sin not in part but in whole is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord O my soul.

In [verse 20](#): He made peace through the blood of his cross, He made peace, the wall of hostility is gone, the air is clear and there is that close mutual relaxed relationship. You know how it is when there is peace and harmony between husband and wife, between parents and their children, between brethren and sisters, when there is peace there is harmony, there is closeness, there is rest.

Reconciled, to make friendly again.

To present you holy, unblameable and unproveable in his sight. What will that mean at judgement day to come before him and be in God's sight, we know that we have made mistakes, we know that we have our shortcomings, and yet in spite of all of that to be able to come before the presence of God and in his sight be holy and unblameable and unproveable. What will that mean to you on Judgement Day? It will mean everything, everything.

What does it mean on our deathbed? Everything, it is the only thing that's going to matter.

It must be terrible to leave this life without Jesus as our Saviour.

The Bible says the rich unconverted man in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment [Luke 16:23](#), that's terrible. He didn't come before God, in the sight of God, holy and unblameable and unproveable.

Well how is it all made possible? With good works, trying to balance the scales, being baptised, doing a little better, turning a new leaf? Of course not.

[Verse 14](#) says: Through his blood, through his blood.

[Verse 20](#): Through the blood of his cross, that is the answer, what can wash away my sin, the songwriter has said nothing but the blood of Jesus.

[Verse 22](#) talks about his death in the body of his flesh through death, Jesus died that I might to live.

He saved others, himself He cannot save, that is true, if He would have saved himself he could not have saved others, it was one or the other.

And so we have before us here a simple Gospel message of salvation that came to us through Christ's work on the cross, that is received according to the scriptures through faith and repentance.

The thing that stood out to me is that it is a universal Gospel, it is the only true religion. People don't like that, people think we are pretty narrow, and like I said earlier it is either that or it is no way at all because the Bible leaves it as the only way, it is either all a lie or it is all true, it is the only way of salvation.

Jesus said I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me [John 14:6](#), there is none other that can provide it.

[Acts 4:12](#) Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

This is the message for all people for all time.

Our faith in Jesus Christ is the only sound basis for assurance, for hope, for joy, for confidence and rest in eternal glory. Christ in you the hope of glory. There is no other religion with such a message: Christ in you. Where do you find such a Gospel where you have the leader, the invincible leader as a part of your very being, living inside you, directing your life and guiding you and giving you strength and courage and wisdom, Christ in you, it is the hope of glory. There is no other message like it.

Well we may rest safely in Christ's work and be assured it is well with our soul, that's what God wants. These are truths for us to believe and when we believe them and we receive them by faith then we can have the rest in our heart that it is well with our souls, we may rest.

And I believe that Paul reminds the Colossians and us this morning of these wonderful truths lest we get side-tracked and put our confidence in something else.

Now I think we ought look at this little word here in [verse 23](#), this little word "if" if.

**If** ye continue in the faith. What does that mean? That means upon condition. "If" means upon condition. The blessings of verse 22 and verse 13 and 14 are dependent upon condition "if" If what? If ye, that is something for us to do. If ye continue in the faith.

I don't know what kind of illustration we could give that would sort of let you know or bare this truth in a practical way, maybe it is not the best one, but I thought of it this way: Father could say to his son, now if you work for me and you stick with me until I die then you may have the business. It might be a very prosperous business, it might be the business is worth a lot of money, the son could never pay for it, he could never afford it, he could never come up with enough of money to buy the business, but the father says it's all yours if you just stick with me.

Isn't that a little bit the way it is, if the son decides that this is taking too long, the father just doesn't die and you know I'm getting weary of this and he skips out he will never get it. That is part of the agreement; you have stick to with me.

There is a sense in which that is true with God, if you continue in the faith, you will never buy it, it's going to be a gift, you just stick with God, you have to stick with Him, you have to keep believing. Don't get unsettled in your faith he says, don't put your faith in something else, stick with it.

The same ingredients that it took to get saved is what it takes to stay saved. I know there are a lot of people that would disagree with that but this word "if ye" comes up so many times in the Bible.

And if you're taking notes we have:

[John 8:31](#)

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

[Romans 11:22](#) he talks about goodness and severity but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness:

[Galatians 6:9](#), we read that this morning, we shall read in due season if we faint not.

And [Hebrews 3:6](#) it talks about the house of God, whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing unto the end.

And these "ifs" are not meant to unsettle us in our Christian life or to destroy our assurance but they are to produce watchfulness and to avoid complacency. Jesus talked a lot about the danger of becoming like that wicked and slothful servant, the way that is worded there in Matthew 24, it seems like he had a right start but he said my lord delays his coming, and what did he start doing.? He started eating and drinking and becoming drunk and smiting his fellow servants and Jesus said his master is going to

come on the day when he is not ready and will appoint him his portion with the hypocrites, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. That is in [Matthew 24:48- 51](#).

We need to stick with it. That is the message.

The scriptures as I see it offered no security or hope to one who is a backslider and becomes lukewarm and cold toward God and starts living carelessly, in fact scriptures almost bear out the thought that it is worse than if you would have never started.

Well I would like to close here with verse 28 here again where Paul said Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: [Colossians 1:28](#)

Paul preached, Paul warned and Paul taught so that this wouldn't happen, so that the Colossians (*and all followers of Christ*) would not become lukewarm and backsliders and get their focus on something else but that they would be such that he could present them perfect in Christ Jesus.

### **Exposition of Colossians #4 – Warning Against Deception.**

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the one that has already been the central theme in the devotions and Sunday school discussion. As we share together from near and far it is encouraging, Paul sensed that need also as he related to the churches, he sensed his need of the brethren.

We notice that in his letter to the church at Rome he desired to meet the Romans so that he could impart to them a spiritual gift but not only that he could impart to them something but so that he could receive something from them and that they together could be comforted by the mutual faith. [Romans 1:7-13](#).

And so it is good for us sometimes to fellowship with believers from other localities and we cherish the visitors among us this morning.

The previous message had to do with effectively promoting the Gospel and I think we should have our focus on just that, promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So many times you know we can get so caught up with people's questions as to what's the difference between you and the Amish or this group here or there? You know that it is sort of a culture. That is all they can see and God help us that we draw people's minds to the Gospel, that this is not just a culture.

And that is one thing that we noticed in Paul's letters to the churches he was not presenting a culture, he was presenting the man in Christ Jesus who came with a message that was life changing and life delivering, and that is what we are planning to preach on this morning and to that end I would like to continue the study here in Colossians.

This is the fourth message in our exposition of the book of Colossians, we will be focusing on chapter 2 and you will sense that it will have a little bit of a flavour of the last message when we talked about Christ being the resurrection and the life.

This portion is not really talking about that as such and yet as I was studying realise it was the same theme somewhat, Christ is the central man, the central figure, that God-man, and it seems like Paul never got tired of preaching Christ, if you read the letter to the Romans, those to the Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians you will see that there is a strong similarity and that is that Paul was endeavouring to strengthen the believers in their faith and focus on the Lord Jesus Christ, it is his great concern that something would happen that would draw their minds, their hearts and their central focus off the Lord Jesus, and that is something that comes through time and time again as you study Paul's letters.

Paul had experienced all the deadness of culture, he had it, he had gone through that, he was a Jew if ever there was a Jew in the strictest sense of the word and he found it a meaningless empty thing until he met the Lord Jesus that did something on the inside of him. And you know it is easy for us to get our focus on something or someone other than Christ Jesus and the salvation that He came to bring and all that that salvation entailed.

Just refreshing our minds a little bit on the things that were already covered in the book of Colossians. Let's look at our key verse again here in [Colossians 1:28](#) the reason I call this the key verse is because I believe we find in

this verse Paul's burden, Paul's motive for this whole letter to the Colossians, it Jesus Christ it is right here in verse 28: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

That's what he wanted, he didn't want them perfect in some kind of culture or some kind of some external form, although that's a part of it and we'll notice that maybe in the next message, but he wanted them to be perfect in Christ Jesus, and that is the only place perfection lies.

We have looked at the first 12 verses chapter 1 as an introduction and inspiration, his encouragement, the inspiration that he was encouraging them in to be strengthened with all might and to live a life that is pleasing unto the Lord and being fruitful. And then we had two messages on true doctrine, the first one was on the person and work of Christ and the last one was on the glorious theme of redemption, today in chapter 2 we have that warning against being misled by false doctrine.

Now I think we we will just read these 23 verses in chapter 2 and I want you to notice and keep in mind that Paul is very concerned the Colossians do not get their focus on something or someone else other than Jesus Christ and what He came to bring to mankind.

### Colossians 2:1-23

"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; <sup>2</sup>That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; <sup>3</sup>In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup>And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. <sup>5</sup>For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. <sup>6</sup>As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him: <sup>7</sup>Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. <sup>8</sup>Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. <sup>10</sup>And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: <sup>11</sup>In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made

without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: <sup>12</sup>Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; <sup>14</sup>Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; <sup>15</sup>And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. <sup>16</sup>Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: <sup>17</sup>Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ. <sup>18</sup>Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, <sup>19</sup>And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

<sup>20</sup>Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, <sup>21</sup>(Touch not; taste not; handle not; <sup>22</sup>Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? <sup>23</sup>Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”

There is some terminology in there that might be a little hard to understand but I think we get the drift and we will notice some more of this as we move through the message this morning.

The warning here is against being misled in getting our focus, the Colossians focus off Jesus Christ, and we notice some warning words through this chapter.

In [verse 4](#) it says: Lest any man should beguile you, mislead you, deceive you.

In [verse 8](#): Beware. We know what that means, if you drive into somebody's place and they have sign up "Beware of the dog" it means that we are a little careful how we get out of the car because you know we might have an unfriendly animal coming around the corner, we are careful, that is what he is saying, beware lest any man spoil you. The word spoil there has the idea of a person letting him taking away his goods, that is a term that is

used in the Bible, carried away spoil, well that's what it means it is to strip a person and in this sense it leaves him spiritually bankrupt.

Beware, be careful that you don't allow yourself to become spiritually bankrupt.

[Verse 16](#): he says: Let no man therefore judge you.

In [verse 18](#): Let no man beguile you of your reward.

Beware lest you have taken advantage of and left spiritually bankrupt.

In [verse 1](#) we have Paul's deeper burden expressed for the church, similar to what we noticed in Romans, he says I have great conflict. In other words I think there was a sense where they occupied his mind and he was concerned, deeply concerned and burdened, that they would not lose out, apparently he was hearing some things, he had heard some good things about them, their order and their steadfast faith in Christ but apparently he also had knowledge of some other things, maybe he was just that well aware of the tactics of the Judaisers that he was preparing them for that.

Now [verse 2](#) I think suggests two things that may have been threatening the church in Colosse, just the fact that he is giving them encouragement this way suggests maybe that there were two things here that they were being threatened in. Maybe one was that they were being threatened by becoming confused and unsettled in their faith, he encourages them here to full assurance of understanding, maybe they were starting to doubt, maybe starting to question whether Jesus really after all could meet their spiritual needs. And he was encouraging them in that, to full assurance of understanding and acknowledging the mystery of God and Christ.

Another thing that is somewhat veiled in here is the suggestion here that it was producing a discouraging and a divisive effect on the church. If you remember I think in our first message that we had the city of Colosse was made up a lot of Greeks and Jews, a mixture of Greeks and Jews, and I really doubt that the Greeks had a lot of trouble with the Judaisers maybe but it was not a part of their background, their frame of reference, and therefore it was not as strong an inclination to them to go that direction but it certainly problem was with the Jews they were brought up in it. And you know if these converted Jews got unsettled in their faith you can about imagine how that could affect them but the Greeks didn't have any room for it, it can work to an unsettled atmosphere in a brotherhood.

Maybe we are reading more into here than what we should but there is an encouragement to knit together so that they don't become separated, that they are knitted together in this love and their mutual assurance and acknowledging of the mystery of Christ.

As I read through chapter two here I get it is the same feeling Paul expressed to the Galatians, he actually said one place: I am afraid for you, [Galatians 4:11](#), he had written that to the Galatians he said I'm afraid for you, there was something at work there that was drawing their focus off the Lord Jesus Christ as the only hope of salvation and that was to the Galatians, and I see the same thing may be somewhat threatening the church here in Colosse also.

Deception has always been a problem with humanity ever since Satan appeared on the scene in the Garden of Eden, deception, people have been led astray and deceived ever since then. Well you probably know people yourself. The danger of being deceived and being misled is very real and I think that is what Paul understood and that is why he has this chapter 2 here in his letter to the Colossians. He was concerned for them.

[2 Corinthians 11:3](#) says: "But I fear" in the first part of that verse, earlier on in verse two of this same chapter he was talking about his jealousy, his godly jealousy for the Corinthians: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Don't you see the same thing here? Paul was concerned that the Corinthians that their minds would be side-tracked from the simplicity of Christ, their simple faith in Jesus Christ.

Well the serpent beguiled Eve and he is still busy today. Satan is the master deceiver and he is busy, and the thing that he strikes hard at in the light of the Christian is his system of belief, if you wanted to call it a system of belief I'm not sure, I guess we should call it his faith, the Christian's faith.

Last Sunday we were looking at the importance of faith in Jesus Christ and the importance of believing him in [John chapter 3](#), "he that believeth in the Son has life and he that believeth not the Son has not life." [John 3:36](#)

And so what is Satan focusing on is that he wants our belief to get side-tracked, our focus side-tracked, how we view things, how we perceive

things, how we look at Christ and how we look at our life and you know Satan wants to upset our conscience from that which is true and right, he is out to upset a system of belief and to start questioning the truth and to be planting seeds of something other than truth. And we probably all know people who thought that they were so right, so convinced that they were right, when anybody looking on could see that they were dead wrong and usually when a person gets to that place you cannot tell them anything anymore. That is a dangerous place to be. That's deception when a person is convinced that he is right when he is dead wrong.

Now I think we ought to be alert to Satan's instruments. Satan can plant a lot of ideas right into our own minds, he can do that, he whispers a lot of ideas into our own minds but he also has his agents, and I want you to notice that what he uses largely to propagate his false ideas and concepts – I think the prime instrument of Satan is men.

Notice this in [Colossians 2 verse 4](#): And this I say lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

[Verse 8](#): Beware lest any man in spoil you through philosophy, vain deceit.

[Verse 16](#): Let no man therefore judged you in meat or in drink.

[Verse 18](#): Let no man beguile you.

[Matthew 4: 24](#) Jesus said: Take heed that no man deceive you and then He speak later on about false prophets coming.

[2 Timothy 3:13](#) says that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

You see Satan uses men to, just like God wants to use men to save men and women to spread his news the Truth, so Satan uses evil men to propagate his agenda.

What does that tell us? We need to beware of men. The Bible tells us that, Jesus told us that: Beware of men, beware of men. You just can't believe everything that you hear and that you read, sometimes it sounds very convincing but you can't do that, we need to beware of men. And you know Satan knows where we are vulnerable and I think that is why we may not have the problem, maybe we are not so affected with the problem precisely of going back to Old Testament ritualism as the early church was, I think there is some increase in that over the years lately, but maybe we are not

faced so much we that. But they were very vulnerable in that area and that is why Satan attacked in that area because they were vulnerable, the church was probably made up of a good percentage of converted Jews, some of them had been very staunch in keeping of the old law, their Sabbaths, ceremonies and rituals, the things that were for back then that were fulfilled in Christ, and so that is the very area that Satan attacked.

And it is the same way with us, we have our areas where we are vulnerable it is in those areas that he likes to work on to draw us away from Christ.

My mind went to something may be more modern, maybe something we can relate a little closely with, if you have a staunch Catholic since he grew up, to them there are some things that are very sacred, they talk about the Saints and the Virgin Mary and the rosary and, I'm not that familiar with it, but things that they held very sacred and especially somebody that was very staunch in that, I believe that that could be a snare, a temptation, something that is sort of hard to let go off and relinquish, but it needs to be if it is not according to the truth in Christ.

And what was at work here was that these men, the Judaisers, were at work trying to draw people back into the darkness of the letter.

In [verse 8](#) it says the tradition of men, and I think that is reflecting the Jewish ceremonies, the rituals and the laws and it was a continual problem in the church. If you go back, you're probably familiar with this account in Acts 15, you know we have our difficulties in church life harmonising and becoming unified and it seems like there is always things to work on, well that is not new, but here in [Acts 15:5](#): Certain men that came down from Judaea taught the brethren and said: Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses you cannot be saved. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

Pretty strong discouragement to a Jew to being a follower of Christ.

You see this is what was at work. It was a very dangerous doctrine because it got the focus off the only way that people could be saved and that was through Jesus Christ. And so we had these men, probably very sincere some of them, seeking to draw people back into the deadness of the letter.

In chapter 2 of Colossians verses 11 through 13 it suggests that the very same issues were posing a threat to the Colossians just like back in Acts,

you know except ye do this you cannot be saved, in verse 11 through 13. In Acts 15 precisely it was the path of circumcision and here in Colossians 2 Paul explains what true New Testament circumcision is, it almost suggests that the same thing was happening in the Colossians church as what was happening back in Acts. He says in [Colossians 2:11-13](#), In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh. It is a circumcision of Christ not men. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, it is the operation that God in the inner man the heart, who hath raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

You see he is telling them what the Old Testament circumcision was foreshadowing, he was helping them to understand that circumcision without hands had to do with the heart, it was the operation that God did on man's hearts not on the body.

[Colossians 2 verses 14 through 17](#) we have Christ there taking away and fulfilling the old law with its ordinances and rituals, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, it was contrary to us. That is sort of outstanding to me. You know why blot out all these good laws they had? Well he says it was contrary to you, it never really did anything for the sin problem, it never changed man's heart, all the external circumcision they could do never did anything for man's heart, he says it was against a man, yes, in a sense it was right, God told them to do it but it was only intended to make them realise their sinful condition and the holiness of God and that they needed a Saviour.

Well he says it was contrary to them and it was against them, he says it was against you, verse 14: That was against us, which was contrary to us. It never really did the job.

[Verse 16](#) suggests that the Judaisers were working on people's conscience to try to unsettle and confuse and I think that's why it says here: Let no man therefore judge you. In other words don't let somebody condemn you, don't let somebody stir up your conscience about these things, don't let that happen. Yes there are going to be people that say if you don't do this you

can't be saved, he says don't get unsettled about that, don't go on a guilt trip because some people think you need to keep the Old Testament patterns.

Why not? He explains why not in verse 17 he says they were only a shadow of things to come but the body is of Christ, the Old Testament was only a shadow that was fulfilled in Christ, it was never intended to be permanent, instead they are to determine to have full hearts and minds for Christ. Maybe that is why it is so important, the Gospel as being in the mind of God from day one and man fell, the old law was only a parenthesis and never an end in itself.

Well they had a religion that looked good on the outside.

In [verse 23](#) it says: Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; sure there was some restraint that this brought on themselves and it looked good you know this external it might have looked good but it never changed at the heart according to verse 18 it says they were puffed up by the mind, they were proud, the Jews were a proud people because they thought they had some kind of special standing with God because of what they were doing and it actually puffed them up, that's what happens when we think we can get to God by doing things.

They were vainly puffed up, they were doing some right things but they had lost Christ.

[Verse 19](#) they were not holding the Head, noticed that capital "H" on Head there, they were not holding the Head, they had lost Christ in their whole thinking and when we lose Christ in what we are doing we have lost everything, you have lost the life.

They had lost their focus off Jesus Christ as their only hope of salvation and his sanctifying work of grace in their lives and felt that mixing Old Testament laws and rituals made them more righteous, they perhaps thought well okay now I have Jesus Christ and now I'll put the Old Testament to it and have more holiness. That's maybe how man would think but that's not how God means it.

Yesterday we were at a wedding and I can say what stood out to me is the brother in the devotions emphasised the fact that to make marriage work you need to have Jesus Christ in your heart. The minister got up and in his preaching emphasises that for marriage to work these people are going to need to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That is the kind of

focus we need. We can have a lot of do's and don'ts, how to do this and the other thing that can make our marriages work, but it is really not going to work unless we have Jesus Christ in our hearts dwelling there, abiding there and working out his grace, his sanctifying work of grace in our lives.

How many people in the Mennonite church are living by a strict code externally and can't get along with their spouse or their children and are just downright carnal? Well it's because it can all be right on the outside but if you don't have Christ on the inside you have nothing, and I'm not saying that to downplay the fact that when we have Christ it is going to produce some things, I am saying that without Christ it's very difficult for harmonious Christian living, that's what they were doing here their focus was off Christ and it is the burden of Paul's message here.

I want to notice how Christ centred Paul was in these phrases, maybe you had caught it as we were reading through this chapter of Colossians.

**Verse 2:** Your hearts comforted, together in love, full assurance of understanding, acknowledgement of the mystery of God the Father and Christ.

**Verse 4:** Your steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

**Verse 6:** As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, ye have received Christ Jesus, walk ye in him, walk in Christ Jesus.

**Verse 8:** Beware of those who would spoil it through these various things and not after Christ, something else other than Christ, beware of them.

**Verse 10:** You are complete in him, your completion lies in Christ nothing else.

**Verse 11:** the last part there, the circumcision of Christ, Christ's work in the heart of men in dealing with his attitudes and affections.

**Verse 17:** The body is of Christ.

**Verse 20:** Ye be dead with Christ to the old law and to the law of sin and death and the world.

**Colossians 3:1:** Reason with Christ.

**Verse 3:** Your life is hid with Christ.

**Verse 4:** Christ who is our life.

Do you get the picture? Do you get the heartthrob of the Apostle? Christ is, everything, our life, our everything. Christ is everything and without Christ we have nothing.

An encouragement as I understand it here of the Apostle is that we let Jesus Christ be the centre of our life, the centre of our focus, the encouragement here is that we keep our focus, our faith and our trust in Jesus Christ. Any other thing, any religion, any teaching that takes the focus off Jesus for righteousness, for peace, for joy, for fulfilment in life, for success, or for following him in love and obedience is to be avoided. Christ must be the central focus. Always!

Now I would like to consider some things here that I believe are dangerous to us, that can get our focus off Christ.

Perverted Gospel.

Paul says in [Galatians 1:6-8](#). I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel: <sup>7</sup>Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Was that only for back then? Of course not.

We have a lot of Gospel versions today and I think it comes in sort of three categories.

Firstly we have the downright false, people are saying things and printing things that are downright false, they are downright contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Then secondly we have partial Gospel. What they are saying is not wrong but they are leaving so many things unsaid, only using part of a verse perhaps, it is not what they say but what they don't say, the partial Gospel.

And then thirdly you have an imbalanced Gospel, which is maybe closer the partial, but you know we might have the whole Gospel but we might become imbalanced in just focusing on one part. You know if we study and always talk about this or that prophecy we are an imbalanced. It might all be true what we are saying but we can become imbalanced.

I think one of the greatest threats to us today as the children of God is a watered down casual Christianity, there is a lot of watered down casual

Christianity today and this threat comes in a number of forms, you could probably add to this list, but the three main ones that I thought about it are:

Number one: Reading material. There is a lot of printing being done by a lot of different people and it is one of the snares when Communist countries open up, you know we feel wonderful we can finally send Bibles in and Christian literature and that's good, but you know with an open door there are a lot of other floodgates opened up to send things in and they are bombarded with a lot of things that they were never bombarded with before and we have that right here in the United States all the time, the freedom of the press.

And some things that came to my mind, I don't know how familiar you are with "Guide Posts" but I believe that's reading material that probably fits into here as a watered down Gospel. We could think of the cult which is downright false, we need to be on guard against study helps, most of that is written by the Protestants and all kinds of other Protestant literature.

I guess we might say it this way: Anything that is produced by the worldly, the downright worldly and the liberal minded, we ought to have a healthy caution about because we can reasonably well determine that it is not going to be a truly Christ centred message.

They might talk about Christ but where is the work of Christ in the heart, the circumcision of the heart that puts off the works of the flesh, it is often missing.

Secondly there are some influences that would bring to us the perverted Gospel that would attract our minds away from the simplicity of Christ,

The second item I have here is singing tapes and songbooks.

It seems to me that as I observe and listen that we are facing a definite shift to the casual and sentimental and the emotional appeal rather than the glory of the Lord Jesus enthroned above.

Listen to your tapes, new ones, and maybe listen to some old tapes or some older songs and just notice the shift, it is subtle, I see it as a subtle shift, very casual.

You say: Well what is wrong with this here, this doesn't sound quite right but it is not really saying the wrong thing and yet it is a sentimental appeal, an emotional appeal, it is a man centred appeal, the feelings of man rather than that which draws your heart and mind to the glory of the Lamb.

Read the book of Revelation there, the song in glory as they praised and worshipped the Lamb.

Somehow it seems to me that our music ought to fit into that frame of reference. This kind of thing is a subtle influence on attitudes about Christ and who He is.

The third one here of the perverted Gospel would be men with personal charisma.

In [verse 4 Colossians 2](#), beguile you, beware lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

Well there are still people around that have enticing words, they are very influential, they are persuasive in their manner.

[Romans 16:18](#): And by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

It might be the Jehovah's Witness that knocks at your door, it might be a business contact that you have a man or a woman that is very influential, it might be a relative that got side-tracked along the way. It could be sermon tapes, I think we need to be very careful what we are influencing ourselves with. It could be unstable brethren from within, of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things [Acts 20:30](#).

And so those are some areas we need to watch, anything that would pervert the Gospel.

Secondly, love of the world, we're talking about things that get our focus off Christ, love of the world, it talks here in verse eight about the rudiments of the world, rudiments of the world, Colossians 1:8, love of the world and the things of the world.

[John 2:15 -17 Love](#) not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

In other words we cannot love the world and have our affections on the world and still have it on Christ at the same time, I think there is something, it is a subtle thing how the world has an influence on us and get us attracted. We are thinking about such things as pleasure, luxury, business, money, entertainment, sports, finery and all kinds of sensuality, all these things have a right place, they have their legitimate place, but they can so easily get hold of our heart and we loose our focus on Christ and seek ful-

fulfilment in these things rather than in our relationship with Christ, when we find fulfilment in the world and the things of the world we have lost our focus on Christ. He is the one that is the fulfilment.

I wrote it down like this; If we are not willing to give up some of the world that is hindering ourselves or our families or our church, if we are not willing to give up something that the world has than that is hindering us spiritually and we have lost our focus on Christ.

Thirdly: Philosophy.

That is another thing that can very easily side-track us, philosophy in [Colossians 1:8](#). Human reasoning, the reasoning of men. We have a lot of philosophy today, we have the philosophy of evolution and we have a lot of new philosophy about children and how we go about training children, why I guess they would hardly even call it training any more, you know the child should be left with its self-expression, you don't hamper the child self-expression that is philosophy.

We have a new philosophy about marriage and the family, there are a lot of new ideas about that.

We have the philosophy of no absolutes that there is nothing right or wrong.

Atheism, whatever can't be seen or explained is not real. That is philosophy.

The Bible talks about those ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, [2 Timothy 3:7](#). These things float around and they affect us.

Fourthly: Tradition of men.

[Colossians 2:8](#), Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

We can suppose that could be the traditions of the world, it could be Santa Claus, it could be the Christmas tree, people are now trying to spiritualize Santa Claus and fit him into Christianity and say he is a type of God because he can do this and that thing like God, and the tree is to represent something else, and you can take on all kinds of paganism and you Christianise it. It is the traditions of the world, tradition of men.

It could be the traditions of the church. We have already mentioned Catholicism, they have a lot of traditions that are against Christ, and when we let our traditions which are good get our focus off Christ become an end in themselves we are seeking salvation and entrance into heaven through them, the same thing is happening.

Well we could add fifthly: The “be healthy craze”

There's a lot of emphasis on being healthy and we want to take care of our bodies and you know there is a proper balance, we think it is right that we desire to feel good but the world today, many professing Christians have got their focus off Christ and onto their body. That's dangerous, and we become obsessed with physical fitness and physical health and feeling good and being well at the expense of Christ and we lose Christ, and I think we have seen people do that they almost lose Christ in that.

Hezekiah, It happened to him. He didn't want to die; God said you are going to die. And Hezekiah said: I don't want to die! He turned his face to the wall, he refused to accept the fact that he was going to die and he got obsessed with it. God gave him 15 more years and it was to his spiritual undoing, [2 Kings 20:1-6](#). So we need to see the lesson of Hezekiah and understand it properly.

The last one I have here is: World events.

Well it's another thing we can get absorbed with. I have a neighbour that is just absorbed with world events and his mind is all full of it and he apparently listens a lot to the news, his focus is definitely not on Christ, it is on world events and what is happening to the world and how terrible things are.

I just talked with a man from the community recently and he says he follows the news but he says I don't follow the news much and keep my heart at the right place, well he also admitted that it's pretty hard. You know we can get caught up with these things and then it becomes that which we talk about, you know we fill our mind with these things that's what we talk about and we can very well lose our focus on Christ.

Now a personal protection system.

I have two main points here in protecting ourselves lest we become beguiled.

In ([Colossians](#)) [verse 7](#) [chapter 2](#) he says: Rooted and built up in him and established in the faith.

How do we do that? That is our protection, being established in the faith and being rooted in Christ. That comes through a personal Bible study, it comes through Bible meditation, it comes by drawing to God in prayer and meditation, and I don't think there is anything like it in rooting ourselves and establishing ourselves in the faith.

And we meet people who have different ideas and we say, well, this doesn't sound right what he is saying, maybe he comes with up with an idea that you haven't quite thought about, well what do we do with that? Do we just gobble it up or do we sort of try and dismiss it or are we like the noble Bereans and take our Bibles and go home and say: What does the Bible say about this? [Acts 17:10-11](#). Those are opportunities to establish ourselves in the faith.

Observing the course of history is another way to become rooted in established in the faith.

Let the temptations and disappointments of life draw you closer to Christ till He is a living reality in your life. It seems to me that till we know that Christ is a real, He is my Saviour, is my friend, He is the one that gives me the grace to live victoriously, He is the one that helps me rise above the disappointments, He is real, then you won't soon lose him.

Secondly: Exercise your Christian life.

In [Colossians 2:7](#) abounding therein. Abounding speaks of exercising your Christian life, to read good literature, get involved in Christian service, reach out and be evangelistic, we ought to be, I challenge myself with this, that I'm probably not on the offence as much as I should be. And we can just talk about protecting ourselves it is like holding a shield in front of us so no fiery darts can reach us, and here we stand cowering in a corner with a shield on, but that's not the Gospel, Paul did not stand in a corner with the shield on, he was out there with the sword and there is a sense in which I think we may be not enough like that, talking about myself also. On the offensive the dictionary says it is the person or army that is attacking you, it is the person or army that is going forward and attacking not only defending. Abounding therein, active with the Gospel of Christ, ready with testimony.

Paul when he was brought before Felix he didn't just defend himself, he reasoned with Felix, righteousness, temperance, judgement and comment until Felix was trembling. He was wielding the sword of truth. And we have there the concept as he says not being partakers with them but rather reprove them. [Acts 24:24](#)

Well okay we defend ourselves we don't become partakers that's good, but he says don't stop there reprove them, get on the offence.

Be enthused about your Christian life. Enthusiasm about our Christian life and what Christ is doing in my life and it is going to make it hard for us to depart from him. Some of these other things just don't appeal to us any more when Christ becomes real to us.

I said there were two points but there is a third.

The last one I have here is a positive love bond with the Church of Christ.

[Verse two](#): That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love. I think there is something that is very essential and that is to have a good solid relationship with the brotherhood, cultivate that loving bond with the brotherhood. Value the direction and the correction and warnings and the counsel of those who love you, we are loved in the church, I believe that you brethren and sisters love me, that you have a care about my Christian life, I believe that.

The Psalmist said: Let the righteous smite me it shall be kindness, let him reprove me it shall be an excellent oil, it shall not break my head. [Psalm 141:5](#). What a blessing that can be in or life.

You see that is the attitude we should have, my brethren love me and I love them, I have a love bond with the church, and when they correct me and they give me some direction I'm not ready to pack my suitcase and go somewhere else, but I shut the door on something that God has given me for my spiritual protection, when we close our ears and walk out on a caring Christian brotherhood we are headed for deception, we are headed for trouble.

If we are casual and nonchalant about the Christian life and uninterested in the Bible and prayer and involvement in the church and only ready for entertainment and listening only for the gratification of the flesh we are prey to become beguiled.

I'll close with our theme verses again speaking of Jesus:  
Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: [Colossians 1:28](#).

I hope this message could be to that end.

### **Exposition of Colossians #5 – Redemption in Christ Jesus.**

We greet each one in Jesus name, the one that we have been discussing, our Lord Jesus Christ not only crucified but the resurrected Lord and Saviour, the One that made it very clear that He was coming again, not as He came the first time, He is coming with power and great glory with all the holy angels with him and those that are ready shall sit with him on the throne of his glory.

Are we ready for that day?

May the Lord be exalted this morning in our lives and in the week to come.

This morning's message is somewhat a continuation of the cross and the victory of the cross, I really didn't think about it that way when I was studying but there is a definite continuity of thought, this message is a continuation of our exposition of the book of Colossians.

Can anyone remind us of the key verse of the book of Colossians?

I know it has been a while since the last message but who will remind us of what the key verse is? Yes, Book of Colossians, [Colossians 1:28...](#)

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

It seems to me that is the central verse, the central theme of the whole book, this is the goal of this epistle that every man might be presented perfect in Christ Jesus.

As you may remember we broke this into the first 12 verses of chapter 1 as somewhat the introduction to the book, it was more of a personal plea of exhortation, personal comfort and instruction. Then verses 13 through chapter 2 dealt with doctrine. We have in verse 13 the person and work of Jesus Christ providing salvation, we could call it true doctrine, verse 13 through to the end of chapter 1 was dealing with true doctrine.

Chapter 2 was still doctrine but it was a warning against false doctrine. After having soundly established the basis of salvation, I guess we could call it theology, a solid doctrinal base of what salvation is and how salvation is found and what salvation is not.

He goes on into chapter 3 and then becomes very practical and that is what we are focusing on this morning; Redemption in Christ Jesus.

[Colossians 3 verse 1 through chapter 4 verse 6](#) is dealing with practical Christian living. I guess we could call it the outworking of Jesus in our life. Jesus changes lives. Do you believe that?

When we fully understand and experience salvation we are going to experience something, not just believe something.

[2 Corinthians 5:17](#) says: If any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature, he is a new creation, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

[Ephesians 2:10](#) says we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

This is a sorely neglected doctrine in the so-called Christianity of today, that if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature.

Christianity is more than a theology just to believe in your head. It is a vital relationship with a living Saviour who lives in us and works through us as it says here in [Colossians 3](#): If ye then be risen with Christ.

What's he talking about? Why he is referring back to Colossians chapter 2? It is something that happened if we are truly Christians;

[Colossians 2:12-13](#). Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

The true Christian if he has truly experienced salvation has died to self and sin with Christ and his carnal nature and experienced a spiritual resurrection.

And we have a number of terms that describe that, Jesus spoke it out to Nicodemus He called it "being born again" Nicodemus didn't understand it, he was still looking at everything through the law and self-effort.

Jesus said you must be born again.

[Ephesians chapter 2:1](#) calls it being quickened those who were dead in sins.

[Ephesians 2:5](#) says: Even when we were dead in sins he hath quickened us together with Christ. (by grace are ye saved)

[Acts 3:19](#) The disciples called it converted, “repent and be converted that your sins might be blotted out.”

Well what's conversion? It is a dramatic change.

[1 Peter 1:4](#) calls it becoming a partaker of the divine nature.

[Romans 12:2](#) calls it being transformed by the renewing of your mind.

A person who truly comes to Christ finds something happening inside of himself that lifts him up and out of his past life.

It says here in [Colossians 3](#), the first word is "if" If this has happened, if you are risen with Christ, don't stop there, he says that is taking care of the old account, it has been settled long ago the songwriter says, and that is wonderful, but don't stop there, don't bank on something that happened 10 years ago in your life, or however long ago. Yes it was essential but don't stop there if that has happened go on, don't get the idea "that it is done" and slip back into your old ways, that is very likely to happen if we look at our salvation experience as something that happened back there, and you ask a person if he is saved and he says: Yes, 10 years ago.

Wait a minute what about today? What about today? We are here today.

What shall we do if ye then be risen with Christ? You seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, set your affection on things above not on things of the earth. What do those two words "seek" and "affection" suggest?

I think it is doing what John said Jesus would do, He would lay the axe to the root of the tree, [Luke 3:9](#), and what is the root of the tree in our life? It is the heart, it is our affection he says set your affection on things above, what is our affection? Can you see my affection? No you can't but what it produces, yes we can see what affection produces, we can see that in our own lives, in our hearts, a little bit like what our brother was talking about, we know what is in that little heart and other people can soon see it too because it produces fruit.

But we are talking about laying the axe to the root of the tree and when it speaks about seeking and setting our affection it is talking about our hearts and our interests that which should be close to the Christian's heart. What should be close to the Christian's heart? What should be the Christian's primary interest and his primary pursuits? It answers it by the way that question, things above, things above. Isn't that a challenge?

What is things above? How would you describe things above? What is he talking about?

Well isn't it the heavenly, isn't it the spiritual, isn't it the advancement of Christ's kingdom, the soul of men and women, isn't it Christian service, doesn't it involve pleasing God? And certainly it involves a home in heaven and letting nothing hinder us from getting there.

The Bible talks about weights and since they can beset us, hinder us, yes it can hinder our affection, the things that we are seeking. That is what Paul is calling us to, if we have experienced that resurrection with Christ then here is the goal to set our affection on things that really matter. [Hebrews 12:1](#).

Jesus talked about laying up treasures in heaven where moth and rust don't corrupt, thieves don't break through and steal. [Matthew 6:19-20](#).

Well Paul also specifically says what it is not. Set your affection on things above not on things on the earth. So we know it is not things of the earth it is something else.

Well how would you describe things on the earth then that we could set our affection on?

Well that could be a lot of things, it can be a lot of things, it could be your job, it could be your business, could be making money, could be the money you have already made, it could be gadgets, all kinds of electronic devices that tickle people's interests and gathers peoples affection.

I understand there was a brother years ago that got himself a computer and he found himself wanting to go home from work to play with his computer. It was a sort of startling realisation when it dawned on him that he wasn't even going home to be with his family, he was going home to try out whatever on his computer. You see it had stolen his affection.

I don't know if he got rid of it or if he changed his affection I don't know how that turned out, but we can set our affection on our car, on our pickup, on our new house or anything, lots of things, lots of legitimate things.

The potential to us as human beings is that we become obsessed with things below and I can identify with that and I'm sure you can also, we become obsessed with things on the earth and that is why he gives us this warning, it is very real to us, it can consume that time and the energy that we ought to be putting into heavenly things.

But where is our affection? We need to understand our own hearts and I believe God is faithful in helping us to understand our own hearts and where our affection is.

It revealed itself when the invitation came to come to this feast that this man had made and in the Bible, [\(Luke 14:16-24\)](#) what did one man say? I bought oxen, I have to go try them.

Where was his affection? Obvious.

What did another man say? I bought a piece of ground, I want to go see it.

Where was his affection? Obvious.

What about the man that had married a wife and therefore could not come? I would say they are all legitimate things, nothing wrong in themselves, but they had become obsessed, they had set their affection on things below and it stopped them coming to the thing that really mattered.

Looking at this Scripture something is wrong in our lives I believe when we become all enthused over earthly things and have little interests and enthusiasms for things like evangelism, church activities, personal Bible study and suchlike.

How is it today in our experience, what has been taking our predominant interest?

Now he moves on in [verse 3](#) and he says: For ye are dead. Do you believe that? I guess you know thinking about ye are dead and later on it talks about dying and putting off, well we'll think about that little bit more, but ye are dead is a state, a state that we possess in Christ, Christ died, and the scriptures would tell us that we have died with Him provisionally, it is a state for us to believe, we need to believe that we are dead with Christ.

What does that mean to be dead? Well it means that we are unresponsive to the things that we ought not to be doing, the allurements of the world, the allurements of the flesh and of the devil, that is a beautiful truth: Ye are dead, we had to die to it, Christ provided that for us, for us to be dead to that.

Now he says in [verse 4](#) there is a goal or something that we need to keep in focus, and he is talking about the return of Christ in the middle of all this, he talks about Christ, *who is* our life, the one in our inner life, if we are going to have life and victory it is going to be in Christ. You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. These are beautiful truths here: When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

That needs to be our focus, Christ is coming again and we have the privilege of appearing with him in glory, that must be the focus lest we miss it and we lose our crown.

Now in [verse five](#) we have the second word "therefore" because of this, because of these truths, because we have risen with Christ, because we are dead, because we can appear with him in glory. What about that? Because of this we Mortify. Now we have a choice, now we have something to do, provision has been made now we have something to do - mortify your members.

What does this mortify mean? Subdue or deaden. Paul said it this way expressing this in his own life he said: I keep under my body and bring it into subjection [1 Corinthians 9:27](#), I think that is what he was talking about as he was putting it into practice, what he is teaching here is that we need to mortify our members. I'm not just sure how we would describe "our members" you know it could be our body, our physical members, our hands, our tongue, maybe it is dealing with the desires of our members, maybe it is dealing more with the desires of our members that we need to mortify, we need to deaden, we need to bring them under like Paul did.

In [verse 9](#) we have the exhortation to put off the old man. Put off, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.

Pondering this terminology it is saying that ye have put him off but then later on he says and ye have put on the new man, that is talking past tense but then he goes on and says put off and put on like it is something that still needs to be done. Now have we done it or is it something that still needs to be done? Why I think it is both, when we come to Christ there is a sense that when we come to Christ and we become Christians we are saved, there is a sense in where at conversion there is a work accomplished in our life, if we come to Christ we have put off the old man, it is some-

thing that has been done and we put on the new man, we have put off the old man and we have received the divine nature.

But you know that in reality we still need to work it out daily in our lives, that needs to happen, and that's my we need to do it, we need to keep on putting off the old man and we need to keep putting on the new man in actual daily living.

Who is the old man? Well for me it is the carnal Clifford, it is the Adamic nature that every one of us have, it is the response of the flesh. The old man is self-centred.

Jesus said: He that is born of the flesh is flesh [John 3:6](#), well we all had that birth, we all had that birth. Self-centred, self-gratifying, self-indulgent, that element in us. And according to verse 7 that is what controls our life: Into which also ye walked some time when you lived in them.

While I'm sure that's how it is in our natural state that is why we need a new birth that's how we live, and even like the brother said even if we haven't been like some other people we have lived in the flesh. We have all had our walk that way, [Ephesians 2](#) tells us, that's what controlled our lives in our pre-conversion days.

Now it goes on to enumerate the flesh and the works of the flesh. And we might say well what is the purpose of enumerating these horrible things?

But there is a reason that that Paul exhorted the Colossians and actually enumerated, he didn't you say put off the works of the flesh and put on the new and stop there, he actually started becoming specific as to what these things are and I think it is good for us sometimes to look at these things, what the old man consists of.

There is a reason he did that, these are real problems that we face today and you know because the world around us lives in these things and many professing Christians live in these things and we have the potential to become calloused and not realise how terrible these things are and where they belong and how God looks at them.

And so I believe it is right for us to think about these things and look in our own lives as we think of a list like this and say: Is this me?

Well I hope this morning no one here fits into the first one, [Colossians 3:5](#), I think we are all free of that, at least in our physical body, even as we can

commit adultery in our heart that it is probably possible to commit fornication in our heart too.

But the first in identifying the old man and his deeds were fornication, physical relationships outside of marriage. Now remember that this is the list that must be put off, he is calling us to put off these things.

The second one is uncleanness, that is pretty broad it covers all forms of impurity, all forms of it in your conduct, it can be with our own body, it can be without this, it can be with animals, it can be in our speech, we'll see that a bit more later on, and you see this un-cleanness, people's hearts are unclean, you deal with the world and you can tell by their talk that their heart and conscience are defiled, it comes out of their lips. Uncleanness is something to put off.

Inordinate affection. Inordinate affection, the word inordinate means lacking restraint or moderation. I think that can apply to affection for animals. I think our society today has become inordinate in their affection for their cat and their dog and their horse and what have you. I think that God did not plan for us to have that kind of an affection for a creature, God planned for us to have that kind of affection for our children, the Bible calls that natural affection, people have lost that and then turn to inordinate affections. They love their cat and their dog and they do not have time for their children, that is not God's plan.

Inordinate affection lacking restraint or moderation.

What about eating, can we have an inordinate affection for food? I believe we can.

This word evil concupiscence in the next party is closely attached to inordinate affection because it is dealing to, it is also a preoccupation with physical appetites, it is the same idea, lusts, shameful desires, looking at and thinking things in our minds and desiring things in our hearts and living things in our mind that stir the desires of the body that are wrong stealing the desire to practice pure living.

You see affection again is talking about our heart, it is not deeds necessarily, yes it will spring into deeds but this is talking about something in our hearts, evil concupiscence is something in our hearts and minds and affection and covetousness is the same way.

Covetousness is not deeds, yet again it springs into deeds but it is something in the heart that our brother was talking about, covetousness is part of the old man. What's that? Why it is being greedy, it is an inordinate desire for more, bigger, nicer, better, lack of contentment with what I have, others have that I want it too! I just have to have it, my heart is set on having it! The Bible says it is idolatry, we have made it our God when we are covetous and we get our hearts set on something we have made it our God, that is why it is called idolatry.

Well moving into [verse 8](#). We have here anger, wrath, malice, which are all very similar definitions there, dealing with unholy emotions, again these are heart issues, they are the old man. Unholy emotions and attitudes, a broad range we are talking about here. This can range from the person who lets the pieces fly when things don't go right, he lets the words fly and the pieces fly and you can tell just the way he feels, you know people become violent sometimes and be like the person who snaps, well years ago they had ploughs when it hit a rock they didn't have automatic reset, the plough unhooked instead of breaking the plough if they pulled too hard, this man had a field of stones and his plough was always unhooked and one time he failed to look back soon enough and the plough was back there, he got mad, turned his tractor around and drove over his plough. Well what good did that do?

That's the flesh, that's the old man.

I think this is what Cain faced when he slew Abel. I wonder if not a couple of seconds or maybe five minutes after he slew his brother he had tremendous grief, I don't think he'd repented in the right way, but don't you think he wished that he wouldn't have done it, he probably did it in the heat of his emotion, anger.

Well then you have the other side of anger, malice. You think more of that deep-seated animosity that maybe the big heart covers up makes it look good, put a smile on your face, but deep down inside that in the heart there is something boiling, a deep-seated animosity, to despise or desire to see the other person suffer. Anger, wrath and malice. Part of the old man.

Blasphemy. Came across a word looked this word up in a dictionary and it says vilification, now that was a new word for me, so I looked that up and

it said: Abusive or slanderous language. Abusive or slanderous language, I always thought that blasphemy had to do with defying God, you know the atheist who shakes his fist at God, but you know as I looked at this definition it comes a little closer home to us maybe sometimes. It is not only talking about God, yes it is talking about reviling God, but it can be reviling God or people. To revile or defame, to use abusive or slanderous language, it can be about ordinary people.

Well the next one is filthy communication out of your mouth. Filthy communications is something to put off, words, stories, suggestive talk that defiles the minds of others and you hear this. An old man yesterday in a business I went to, after I'd left there wished I would have said a little more than what I did to him he was an elderly man that has grey hair, must be in his sixties, maybe 70 I don't know, think about the fact that he is soon going to face God and an old man's mind like that is still in the gutter? Well the fact is he has never put off the old man, all of these years and he is never put off the old man.

Filthy communication.

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; [Colossians 3:9](#).

Don't lie, lying can become a habit that we almost do without thinking about it. Speaking untruths, can others believe us that what we say that's the way it is, can our children believe us?

Put off all these in [verse 8](#) – put them off.

What does that mean? Get rid of them, deal hard with them. Oh we like to pamper the flesh don't go too hard on the flesh you know. But the Bible does not deal gently with the flesh it says: Mortify it, put it off, part with the old life, it is not of God and we need to remember that it is not just the convenient things to get rid of, we need to get rid of all of them because if we don't it goes on to say: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: [Colossians 3:6](#).

God hates the old man with his deeds, get rid of him.

I think that part of most relationship problems is the un-crucified old man. We are not getting along with our spouse, we are not getting along with

our children or brethren and sisters in the church, our neighbour or the man that we work with.

What's wrong? Maybe the old man has not been crucified. He spoils marriages and brotherhood relationships. Well where we have allowed the old man to rule repentance still works, repentance still works, and repentance is not only trying to do better, I'd didn't find the word "try" in here, the Bible doesn't say try and put off the old man it says do it. He is already provisionally crucified.

Well we know it is an ongoing work, we know it's an ongoing work. But God is here to help us to reckon ourselves dead unto sin.

Now he doesn't just focus on getting rid of bad he tells us what to do in its place.

I think that is an example for us as parents. It is pretty if easy for us to say: Don't do this, you did this wrong you shouldn't have done that you know.

But do we ever get around to telling them what they should have done? The Bible does, it tells is what we should do.

What is the new man? He says put it on. Well the new man is the Spirit of Christ, it is the divine nature, it is yielding ourselves to the Holy Spirit and let the Holy Spirit control our life and transform us from the inside out.

[Colossians 3 verses 12 through 17](#) I would call them the Christian graces that we ought to exercise and cultivate. The more we put on, the more we let the new man rule our life, the more we get rid of the old man and the more we put on the new man the more God honouring our lives become and the more healthy our relationships become.

What difference would these following ingredients make in our relationships if we put them on?

What does that say here which ingredients? Again we have a very beautiful list.

Mercies in [verse 12](#), bowels of mercies [*compassionate hearts*]. Mercy, oh we appreciate God's mercy, where would you and I be if it wasn't for mercy, where would you will I be people wouldn't have mercy on us? Mercy is withholding what we feel the other person deserves, well he did it and he deserves to pay for it, but God had mercy and is calling us had mercy too. Mercy is not critical or fault finding.

Kindness, kindness is consideration of other's feelings, kindness is gentle, kindness is not rough and coarse and rude, kindness is a thoughtful deed, it is the little things many times that make relationships, just that kind it is considerate of the other person is feelings, that gentle tone, kindness is refraining from that cutting remark that is about ready to come out of our lips.

Humbleness of mind, meekness, some more thoughts here, not arrogant, not cocky, not self assertive. The new man realises and is quick to admit his own mistakes and is ready to say I am sorry, I'm sorry, even if he feels the other did six things worse than he did, I'm sorry for my part in it. Humbleness of mind and meekness listens to and accepts the counsel of others, it is not touchy, it is not self-protective.

Long-suffering is the part of a new man, the work of the spirit. Don't we need it? Don't we find ourselves failing in long-suffering? Long-suffering means not easily irritated, patient with the blunders of others, they have them and we have them and we need the long suffering of others sometimes. It is not being quick as we say to fly off the handle and lash out at others - long-suffering. Maybe it means bearing patiently our own afflictions as well.

**Verse 13.** Forbearing has a lot of the same thought, forbearing and forgiving. Sometimes other people don't behave the way we thought they should, sometimes other people don't behave the way we know they should have done, then what is? That's where forbearance comes in and forgiveness. Stop being angry, stop being peeved, stop feeling resentful towards them and he goes on and says if any man have a quarrel against any, or if you have had any disagreement, there's a little bit of tension here, forgive, how?

As Christ, is God Christ's sake has forgiven you. How did Christ forgive? The Bible says their sins and iniquities will I remember no more, [Hebrews 10:17](#).

How would you feel if God kept dangling your sins in front of you and remind you of them that sometimes you know how you get the feeling that God is still peeved at your sins? But no, God says their sins and iniquities will I remember no more when we are sorry for them. He says that's how we should forgive.

We say: Well he did something really nasty. Forgive. But he didn't ask for forgiveness. Forgive anyway, it is a new man. Jesus forgave, those crucifiers didn't ask for forgiveness, He forgave them anyway.

**Verse 14.** The next word is charity. [*love*] Above all these put on charity, put it on. Charity is love in action, it is fullness, it is affection, charity is self-giving it seeketh not her own the Bible says in [1 Corinthians 13:5](#).

Charity is other person centred, charity says how can I please the other person?

Think about what marriages would be if the husband and wife think in this way, is other person centred. I think it is the reason many marriages fail because people approached marriage with “what can I get out of this, what pleases me” No wonder you have trouble.

You've heard me say this:

That marriage is an empty basket in which both parties put into and you keep putting into and there is plenty there to get out of.

But if you have two people that come to marriage and they both think of what they can get out of it, you have an empty basket that you've got to put into.

Love puts into, charity keeps giving.

Now I suppose that is something for courting couples to think about their friend, is their friend just trying to get something or are they putting something into it, you get the feeling that there is charity here, because if they are selfish and what they are trying to get out of it is problem the kind of person you will have to live with.

And think about yourself, are you putting into or are you just trying to get out what makes me feel good, the thing that pleases me.

Well it says here that it is a bond of perfectness, charity is exercised, this new man all the while is producing that in separable bond, the bond of perfectness. You take a good quality glue and glue two boards together if you have a good joint you glue them and plant them together and let that glue dry real good and you take that forward and put it under test, where is it going to break? Not on the joint but beside it. That's what charity does to relationships. It is the glue that holds people together in a satisfying and harmonious union.

Verse 15 through 17 talks about radiating the joy of the Lord, that peace of God. Thankful living, singing, giving thanks, put on a cheerful attitude that restful confident spirit. It is the opposite of being gloomy and moody and morbid and complaining and pitying ourselves, you know the attitude of "poor me" all I think of is myself and my problems. That's the old man, put him off put on the new man. Let the peace of God rule your heart as he says. Don't say well I just don't feel good today, things didn't go well for me. We all know that feeling and we wear our feelings on our sleeves they say where everybody can see it, that's a natural tendency.

The challenge here this morning is that we don't go by our feelings, we don't let negative emotions run our life, let the peace of God rule, well that is something inside of us, the peace of God is something inside of us, let it rule, let the peace of God control, let it apply in your heart and chase away the gloomy forebodings. Let God's promises feed your mind.

I think this matter of the peace of God ruling our hearts is so many times a problem when people are not relating well with other people, they find it hard to be at peace with their fellow men when often they are not at peace with themselves and maybe they are not at peace with God.

That we start with being at peace with God and then we have peace with ourselves, but you know when we are not at peace with ourselves, that peace inside ourselves, well then we have trouble having peace with our fellowmen.

But let the peace of God rule in your hearts, let that chase away the gloomy forebodings, let God's promises feed our hearts and minds and then it won't be so hard to have peace with others.

Be thankful, be ye thankful at the end of verse 15, "Count your blessings not your problems" is a sign on a church house on the way that we come past to church here, Count your blessings not your problems.

That's good counsel, that's biblical.

Cultivate a cheerful spirit; think about God's goodness, has God been good to you? Well certainly He has, certainly He has, think about that, be thankful.

Verse 16. Let the word of Christ's dwell in you richly. Have you skipped your personal devotions lately? How long since you really got into the

word and let it feed you? Let the word of Christ dwell in you. Well it won't dwell in you if you don't take time to feed yourself with it, meditate on it, let it feed your heart and mind and control your life.

Singing. Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

There is probably nothing more relaxing and beautiful to be around than to be around somebody that has a song in their heart and a song on their lips and they are singing. There is something attractive about that, singing is spiritually building and encouraging in worshipful songs, it does something for our souls and it does something for those around us, it produces a tremendously attractive atmosphere.

Sometimes they talk about that 10 foot radius around us, you know that atmosphere that you create, we create that by our attitudes and it either keeps people outside that 10 foot radius or it will draw people in, we all want to draw people into that for the glory of God. For these things, the new man is attractive, it is that which brings glory to the Lord.

Well in conclusion I want you to think again about the active words that we noticed here: Seek, set affection on, mortified, put on and put off or put off and put on.

These are action words, they are direct commands that we choose to obey or disregard, one or the other, they are not just going to happen, they are commands us to respond to and we must make them happen and we must choose, and that is one of the things that God has put into our hands, it is to choose what will master our lives, whether we will put off the old man or whether we are going to let the old man rule our life or whether we are going to put him off.

God has provided the power and the grace to do that for us to put off the old man and put on the new man. We choose.

And Jesus said: By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. [John 13:36](#)

Not just by what comes out of our heart but by the love that we have, by how well we put off the old man and how we put on the new man.

Well may the Lord add his blessings and let's kneel for prayer.

## Exposition of Colossians #6 – Perfecting Home Relationships.

Greetings of love in Jesus name.

I suppose one of the best things we can do is to encourage each other to walk with God day by day, to be an encouragement to each other. It is when we lose contact with God that we are vulnerable to let Satan begin his work in our lives and so let's encourage each other in our daily walk with God and if we stay current with God and His Word then Satan has a lot less chance of working in our lives.

You may open your Bibles to [Colossians 3](#) for the sixth message on Colossians.

We are in the practical section of Colossians and that is what is going to be today. I'm not going to be looking at a lot of other scriptures we are just looking at a few very specific commands that Paul gives for home relationships.

And remember our key verse in [Colossians 1:28](#) Paul preached and warned and taught and he says that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. I guess this morning we would call this message Perfecting Home Relationships.

Perfecting every man, every husband, every wife, every child, every son, daughter and every father and every mother perfect, perfecting home relationships.

All the divorce in society, all the unhappy marriages even in the church today, I'm not saying right here in our company necessarily, but among church people, among conservative churches, hidden I think in many churches are husbands and wives who are not happy together, children and parents who are not relating wholesome together. Yes, they don't show it, not readily, they come to church and they sit here, they seem and they act happy but behind the scenes they are not happy.

There is something that tells us that there is an area that the devil hits hard, anyone of us here that are married know that and that is I think why Paul gives these practical exhortation is just to remind us, and we need reminders continually, it seems that the right way to me it is so easy to forget.

In [Colossians 3:18-21](#) Paul lays out the responsibility of each family member. Let's read them.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. <sup>19</sup>Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them. <sup>20</sup>Children, obey *your* parents in the Lord, no in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.  
Period.

You say well that's a short sermon. At first glance it is that as you think about the vastness of the call of each one of these verses, each holds within itself a sermon all its own. It seems to me that these four verses here hold the secret of beautiful harmonious satisfying God honouring relationships.

Now I would like to have you think back on when I preached from the first 17 verses of Colossians 3, (*page 64 on*) I would like to suggest that what is said and laid out in these first 17 verses are essential if we are going to be faithful in these four verses in each of our responsibilities here, verses 18 through 21,

There is no way that we as husbands and wives and children and parents are going to fulfil this call without dying to self, without putting off the old man and putting on the new man, it just won't happen. You can make a resolution here this morning that you are going to do that but unless you put off the old man and put on the new man and rise with Christ you are not going to get it done, and we know that.

This call, this responsibility, this exercise of each one of us in our homes is done only through a living vital relationship with Jesus Christ, we must walk with God if we are going to exercise this, without him in our lives we are going to be failures and we are going to be miserable failures.

Well as we look at these verses we see God's plan and desire for home relationships to be enjoyed not endured. You say well how was your home relationships? Oh we get along. Well I guess that is better than not getting along but that's certainly not when God wants it to be, God has designed marriage and home life for mutual enjoyment, enjoyment in the right way you know, not the pleasures of the world.

God has designed relationships in the home to enrich one another's lives, to draw the best out of each other, it is with the spiritual emotional and moral support, that is what home relationships ought to do. And there are few things more essential to the human heart than harmony at home.

The songwriter has alluded to that when he said: There is beauty all around when there is love at home.

Children can take a lot of stresses and pressures, even some rebuff, from those outside if things are right at home. And isn't it that way for us as husbands and wives, we can take a pretty hard knock in business if things are right at home. We can take a pretty hard knock in church life if things are right at home.

Well what is right anywhere if things are not right at home?

As I looked at these verses and the call to submit, to love, to obey, to provoke not, I saw something here that I think you would agree with me is the main ingredients and that is mutual respect. Mutual respect, don't you see that in each of these responsibilities? Mutual respect.

What does it mean, what am I talking about? The dictionary says to feel or to show honour and respect and esteem for.

Bringing some other verses into focus here, the Bible in [Ephesians 5:33](#) would call wives to reverence their husbands. That's respect.

In [1 Peter 3:7](#) it calls husbands to give honour unto their wives. That's respect.

In [Ephesians 6:2](#) it calls children to honour their father and their mother. That's respect

And I guess you know we could call parents to honour, to respect their children as well.

We are talking about the kind of respect that holds others in regard. The dictionary says to hold others in regard, to consider and to treat others with deference, to show consideration for them.

Now I would like to suggest that respect is more than external deeds and expressions, that respect is something that is an attitude, it is how we feel about those around us that manifests itself to them in words and actions.

When respect is lost nothing else will mean much anymore, if we lose respect for one another in our homes what are we going to do right? You can do a lot of nice things but if it is not done in respect it falls on dead soil.

And as I observe families and people interacting and I've listened to them talking about one another, listen to them talk to each other I get the feeling that there is little respect any more.

I was waiting on my truck at the garage it had a little job to be done and I was in the waiting room, another man in there, he drove in with his big RV, he had bought a brand-new a recreational vehicle, was quite a spread with a master bedroom in it and I don't know what he must have paid for the thing but he was a man probably in his sixties, probably had some health left yet and he was going to enjoy life. But in the course of conversation I soon detected that things weren't going so well between him and his wife. So what does an RV do?

You know what people talk about shows there was little respect for one another and what good does his multi-thousands, I don't know what they pay for an RV like that, hundred thousand dollars or something like that or more, but what good does it do to travel all over the countryside if you don't have respect?

I think that is one of the first symptoms that we ought to be aware of in our relationships. Disrespect is the beginning of trouble. Just mark it down. Disrespect, if we sense that little, that first beginning of disrespect and there is that tone of disrespect, there is those words of disrespect, the guards, the flags, the red flags ought to immediately crop up because we are headed for deeper trouble.

Well there are some considerations I would like to move onto but when I talk on this subject I usually start with husbands because I believe that they bear first responsibility, just like leaders in the church bear the first responsibility when there is trouble to eliminate it.

But scripture puts the wives first for some reason and so we start there.

Wives submit yourselves unto your own husband's as it is fit in the Lord.  
[Colossians 3:17](#).

I'm not quite sure what it means there "as is fitting in the Lord" but I guess I would say that it does mean that a wife is not to be subject not to submit to a husband if he asks some ungodly thing of her. In other words a wife's submission as it would say in other places, as unto the Lord, [Ephesians 5:22](#), as unto the Lord, as is fitting in the Lord.

In other words a woman's submission to her husband ought to be as if she is submitting unto the Lord, she ought to view her submission that way, that it is her submission to the Lord and if her husband asks her to do something that is not in submission to the Lord then she doesn't do it. Now moving on to the simplicity of this command: submit yourselves unto your own husband's.

Well what does submit mean? The dictionary says to yield to the control of another, to defer to another's judgement and decision.

Now we know that sometimes that is often contrary to human nature, and I suppose wives find it that way sometimes too, and yet I think there is a sense in where there is a right relationship, the husband is doing his part the wife in general finds joy in her submission and that is God's call.

Wives can do much to help or hinder their husband, remember your calling, remember why God made you, do you know? It says to be an help, to be a help. That's why God created Eve, to be a help. Well I suppose Eve was a help for a while but you know in the end she became a hindrance rather than a help, and that is sad when wives become a hindrance rather than a help. [Genesis 2:18-24](#), [Genesis 3:1-6](#).

And I suppose that these are two extremes. And we could look at wives being either a Jezebel or an Abigail or maybe something in between.

You know Jezebel she encouraged Ahab to do wrong, she was a continual drain even if he wanted to go right she was continually a drain on him, encouraging him to do wrong. [1 Kings 21:1-16](#)

Then I think of somebody like Abigail, even though her husband didn't respond well to her I don't think it was Abigail's fault, I see in Abigail the qualities as she approached David there the humility that she had, her character the way she related, it was not one of retaliation on her husband, she recognised that her husband was definitely not what he should have been, he is a son of Belial she said, and yet I don't think it was in disrespect. I think I see in Abigail a woman that did everything she could to help her husband to go right. [1 Samuel 25](#).

Well let it be a challenge for women, wives to be an Abigail.

Now we would like to get practical here. What is submission and how does it work?

Well submission is not only an action but it is an attitude.

And [1 Peter 3:4](#) calls it an ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit. That is an attitude. We might call it the submissive spirit, a meek and a quiet spirit is an attitude that manifests itself in action and word.

It [Ephesians 5:33](#): Let the wives see that they reverence their husband. That is an attitude again of respect.

I think the scriptures are calling wives to a voluntary, free-flowing willing submission and that comes from a heart of respect. Not like our children they obey us, they can obey us but if they are dragging their feet, slamming doors and with a pout on their face what kind of joy do we get out of that what kind of submission? Well if they are not happy we are not happy either.

Godly wives submit cheerfully, with a cheerful attitude.

And we are back to this matter of attitude as one writer put this in a booklet I read and I would like to put a booklet like this in each one of your mailboxes here in the near future it was really good to me and I think it would be good for all of us, but wives need to check their attitudes.

Do I have an attitude of submission or do I find myself chafing inside about this that or the other thing? Well if a wife finds herself chafing inside most likely you are subconsciously also going to try and manipulate, that is another thing this writer brought out that a wife tends to manipulate her husband often unawares. You know that in sort of shrewd and subtle ways trying to manipulate him and get what she wants by subtle ways.

And so how do I know I am not manipulating? Well if I'm cheerful and submitting. But you know if I'm chafing inside about something then it is likely that somewhere I am also going to be manipulating. So guard your attitude.

Remember wives you are your husband's help not his rival, not his rival, you don't need to push him down to get on top, you are his supporter.

Now the submissive wife, number 1: Does not pit her children against their father even if she disagrees with him she will not take sides with the child against the father or at least she will not sow seeds of disrespect for father. She remembers that a house divided against itself cannot stand and she wants her house to stand, [Luke 11:17](#), so she will not show disrespect for father.

The submissive wife, number 2: She does not cut him down or make derogatory statements about him in a disrespectful way to him in his presence or to others in the absence of him.

The submissive wife, number 3: Seeks his opinion on things, even in the things she could decide for herself. You know simple things that she could well decide for herself. "What do you think about?" this could be a common expression of a submissive wife, what do you think about this? Seeks his opinion.

The submissive wife, number 4: Considers his wishes and views in the choices that she makes. She goes shopping, somebody asks her to counsel, she thinks what would my husband say? Even you know in given some counsel. I think this and I think that and I'd do this and I do it that way, no, my husband would say it this way or my husband would do it that way, that is being in the submissive role. She considers his wishes and views of the choices that she makes.

That doesn't mean that she doesn't have some ideas of her own and gives those but she at least takes them into consideration.

The submissive wife, number 5: Does not nag or become sullen and peevish when he does things that she does not appreciate or maybe disapproves of. And he will sometimes. No husband is perfect, no husband is going to be right all the time, sometimes he might do some things that are very disappointing that the submissive wife is not nag or become sullen or peevish. Now I will say, hasten on to say that she may be very honest, she may honestly communicate her heart, I think it is only justice that she does that, it is a thing that is going to make a wholesome marriage that she does so. A withdrawn wife who keeps everything inside and doesn't open up and share that is certainly going to hinder the marriage is well. And so yes she does honestly communicate and share how she feels but she does not assume responsibility to change him. It is sort of a fine line, maybe it is a hard call but when wives seek to go about to change their husband when they assume the responsibility to change their husband they are headed for trouble.

I have seen this, I've seen this. I could think of a case from years ago where there was trouble and it soon became obvious that the wife had found some things very disagreeable about her husband as they moved on

in their married life and she went about to change him and it seemed like she did not give him the acceptance and love until he changed. That marriage fell into the ground, it foundered on the rocks.

I'm thinking of Abigail. Abigail had a hard place to fill, put yourself in Abigail's place with a churlish husband, a person could not speak to him, he was hard to get along with, he was disagreeable, you could talk with him, you couldn't reason with him. She had a hard place to fill and yet as I read between the lines in the way she approached David in the things she said she did not take it upon itself and try and change him, she gave that to God. God is going to give all your enemies into your hands, how did she say that to David? And you know that God did, God avenged David, he killed Nabal himself. [1 Samuel 25](#).

I think that Abigail had learned to commit her ungodly husband to God, she probably prayed much about him and for him and she kept her, yes she was a continual woman probably it was at times hard to know how to relate. She did this thing behind-the-scenes, she got this food together and went and gave it, it was probably hard for her to know whether she should do that without his consent and she probably prayed much for wisdom and discernment and how to go about things.

The submissive wife, number 6: Encourages her husband to lead out in his role of leadership and in doing so she respects his decisions, she is not critical what he does, it is one of the quickest ways to stifle leadership is when a wife becomes critical when a husband does lead out, makes attempts, and sometimes maybe he may not do it the way you wish he would or that this is the best way that he should, but remember you are his supporter, you are his supporter.

If she is naturally aggressive, and sometimes wives are the aggressive ones in the relationship and it is interesting how opposites attract each other, you have more of a backward husband, a man that is a little bit more regressive and timid he is likely going to end up with a wife that is aggressive. Now what? Well it has its own potential problems and when that is the case why then the wife needs to learn to wait while she is ready to barge ahead, she needs to learn to wait, just wait, just naturally every fibre of her being says barge ahead, do it, and she might start doing it herself and leading out herself, that is a natural inclination. But when that is the case just wait, he'll come around.

One of the worst things a wife can do is to just barge ahead and start doing it, he will never blossom, he will never get around to doing it if you jump ahead of him, she needs to learn to wait on him and commending when he does lead out and sure enough if I take my place he will finally get there. If there is deliberate unfaithfulness and he doesn't lead out in family worship well maybe she does need to do some of those things, in many cases you know where other things are right if she finds her place why it encourages him in and if she respects him in he will come around.

The submissive wife, number 7: Accepts her husband. Well that's sort of back to this fact of not trying to change him. Acceptance, that's the husband's greatest need of his wife by the way is your acceptance, acceptance. And acceptance means you know that a wife avoids comparing her husband with other men. Well we hear so-and-so's husband he doesn't act that way, you know he does, that's not good, that's not good, avoid comparing your husband with other husbands.

I suppose the list could go on. So much for that, let's look at the next part.

The second thing that Paul addresses here in home relationships in [Colossians 3:19](#), Husbands love your wives and be not a bitter against them. We have a do and we have a don't. Why give this don't? Be not bitter, why add that?

Because wives are not perfect just like husbands are not perfect. Sometimes wives don't measure up to husband's expectations, sometimes they do some things that are very disappointing possibly to her husband's expectations. Sometimes they do things that men don't appreciate and what is he suggesting here? A very great potential for husbands to become sullen and withdrawn and peevish and bitter and distant and cold until she shapes up. No, no, be not bitter against them.

Husbands love your wives. Well that is just four words, four words but it is the work of a lifetime. And it is something that we need to remember is husbands is that just as acceptance is one of the greatest needs of the husband so love is one of the greatest needs of a wife. A wife needs the love of her husband, that is why she married us by the way, she would have never married us if she didn't have confidence that we would love her. Her heart is full if she is assured of her husband's love and if the husband's love is lacking nothing else will make up for it.

What does it mean to love our wives? [Ephesians 5:25](#) says as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.

[Ephesians 5:28](#) says as his own body, let husbands love their wives as their own body.

In [verse 33](#) the same chapter it says as he himself.

Now we love ourselves pretty good we men do. Well how does that express itself, how does a husband love his wife? Does he walk around in public holding a hand all over the place, does he love his wife by giving her a big gift every so often? Love is much more than that, may I say that love is much deeper than that.

I'm not greatly impressed about a young married man walking around all over the place holding his new wife's hand, it impresses me a lot more when the couple is grey-haired, I had a couple like that in the store this week, a wife came in there with two canes she could hardly walk and finally she sat down on one of the chairs and you know when it was time to get up he gave her his hand, that's love, that's love. That made a lot more impression on me, that told me something, that couple had endured, had gone through the ups and downs of life and it was definitely something there. Now I don't know maybe one of their partners had passed away and they were newlyweds I don't know but we will leave that as it is.

How shall we as husbands love our wives?

Well number 1: A husband loves his wife by giving himself for her. What's that?

Now I'm going to say this, we men tend to be selfish, just pretty selfish, and I say that for myself, and that is part of the old man that needs to be put off but women have a way to just give and give and give and give and we just sort of after all expect them to give and give and we just you know take that for granted. God forbid.

Love seeks not its own. The Bible says that, Love seeks not its own. [1 Corinthians 13:5-6](#). We love our wives by seeking her pleasure, her happiness, her well-being, if we are both tired at the end of the day, the mail hasn't been fetched whom is going to go after it? Do we make her go? You know a lot of situations like that. She seeketh not her own.

It is very hard for a wife to respect a selfish husband, very hard for a wife to respect a selfish husband, and somehow a wife can very quickly smell

selfishness, very quickly, even if we are covering it up pretty good or hiding it behind something else we are not hiding it very well.

It means giving up our own desires and our own interests for her in those areas where we can rightfully do that. The Bible talks about how he must please his wife. A married person seeks how he may please his wife, and that's right and often that is through an unexpected courtesy, that kind word, a kind deed, a smile lighting up for her, and that's vice versa by the way. A gentle touch yes often more than the big things.

Another way number 2: For a husband to express his love for her is taking time, taking time.

Quality time is a big thing with the wife. It is to notice her when you come in the door, what do we do when we come in the door? Right away go on about our business? You know we come home from work at the end of the day, what do we do, notice her or not? What about taking the time to listen to her? Does she feel like you have no time to listen, she is talking and it is going in one ear and out the other and never even heard what she said? We're talking about taking time for her, this is love, listen with our hearts and entering into her joys and what she is saying and not only what she is saying but what she is feeling what's inside.

Taking care of her aggravations means taking time for her. You know those things that she lives with day after day that tap that doesn't work and whatever it is. Well we don't live with it and so it is just easy to just forget it but love takes care of her aggravations.

Husbands and wives should bear one another's burdens. Elkanah took time for his wife, he noticed her, why are you sad, he noticed tears, he noticed that she wasn't eating right, you know things weren't right and he took time. **1 Samuel 1:8** Taking time means being supportive and understanding, through the low times especially, and sometimes wives have low times, emotional low times. Well what do we do? Say to them "It's time to get over it." That's not love.

We need to guard against being too busy. That's a real potential for husbands to be too busy and she gets the feeling that she is neglected and unprotected and vulnerable.

Number 3: Consideration. Being considerate, showing regards for another's feelings, that's what that means.

You know that if we as husbands know what annoys our wives let's not do it. Some relationships dwell on those sort of nagging you know just get back at each other, that's not marriage, that's not love. If you know it annoys don't do it, don't say it.

Before you speak or act think how will this make her feel, how will it make my wife feel?

And I might have said this before. You know there was this man who is dumping his grievances about his wife to his minister and when he got done the minister said: Friend, if I would need to speak that way of my wife I would at least want to be holding her hand.

Consider her wishes, we are talking about consideration on the part of love, consider her wishes, her viewpoints, take her into your confidence and seek and value her opinions, she is not a child, she is an adult, she is there to help and there is much advice and much counsel, much, Yet she is not in the leading role but she can be and is there and we ought to value our godly wives opinions. Sometimes they see things that we never thought about.

And if you need to disagree with them explain why. Remember love worketh no ill [Romans 13:10](#) and includes your wife. Love does not belittle her, Love does not make derogatory remarks to others about her.

Again the story of a group of men standing around and discussing wives and you know how they will make jokes about their wives say all the bad things about their wives and this one man is just sort of standing there and not saying anything and they finally look at him and say:

“Don't you have anything bad to say about your wife?”

“No, there's nothing I have to say about my wife and if I would you folks would be the last ones to find out.”

You know that is the kind of commitment we ought to have, consideration. If she needs correction give it in love and in gentleness and yes sometimes it needs to be firm, but firmness doesn't need to be void of love and gentleness.

Number 4: Love is forbearing and forgiving.

And when we talk about forbearance and forgiveness we need to assure her of our forgiveness. Jesus does that, He assures us that He has forgiven us; we need to be that way. There are times that grievances need to be honestly

shared and again we don't just stuff everything inside we need to honestly open the lid, spill out the worms, and be honest about how we felt about what happened, that can be done, it can be done in kindness, it can be discussed but let it be with forgiveness.

I believe there are many, many wives around today who are starved for a husband's love and the very thing that they married for is lacking and a wife like that finds it very hard to blossom. A wife that is starved for her husband's love finds it very hard to blossom.

I say husbands let our love be unquestioningly singular, unquestioningly singular, and anybody that knows us and our wives there should be no question that our devotion is singular there is no other woman around that is worth giving any attention to. I shouldn't say any attention but we respect other people's wives, I think you understand that, but you know when you see some men around talking with this woman and that woman, well no that is not a singular love.

Love seeks to understand her. Maybe she doesn't even understand herself but love will seek to understand her, Love is not cold and unfeeling and coarse. You make her queen of your life and she will make you king with a shrine, that's a statement we have heard before.

Alright let's move on.

Thirdly addressing children.

Children obey your parents in all things for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. [Colossians 3:20](#). You want to please God children? It is the only commandment you have - obey your parents. What does that suggest? It suggests that father and mother are to be in authority. God has designed that father and mother set guidelines and restrictions and the directions for you for the good of the family. What would the home be like without it?

I wish you could come over to my store some time when the neighbour boys come in and you will soon see what homes are without parents who are doing this. And children are to accept this fact and to be cheerful and respectful in their submission and to seek to the best of their ability to please their parents and to do what they are told. Here it says in all things. Now that certainly doesn't mean if your parents tell you to tell a lie that that is what you should do, but I pray you don't have parents like that.

All things means at least even in the things that you don't understand. And you say: Well that makes no sense to me, I don't think other children have to do that, my parents they are just.

Children obey your parents in all things, that pleases God.

Your parents have a reason for what they do, sometimes they find it hard to put into words the reason for what they are doing or what they are suggesting or what they are asking of you.

One thing that we as parents need to remember that as children get older we ought to be explaining things, we ought to at least try to give our reason, we want to be discussing things we don't want our children to just grow up obeying, obeying, obeying, we want them to get our vision, we want them to understand why we do what we do, we want them to get their hearts with it and if they are to get their heart with it then they need to understand why we are asking this of them, and that calls for discussion.

Well for how long should children obey their parents? For life?

Well respect and honour goes for life, it says honour thy father and mother and that goes on for life, but as far as the obedience I think I would say it this way that at least as long as you are at home under your parents roof you need to fall under the direction of the family regulations.

The reason I say it this way is because when a couple get married they cannot obey both sets of parents in some things. Parents need to let go at some point and let their children who are married establish their own home with these regulations and often these parents hang onto their son or these parents hang on to their daughter, after a while you have a couple who doesn't know how to relate together, and so we say there is a sense in which parents need to let go because maybe the couple does some things a little different than what they were necessarily asked to by the parents, but let the honour and respect continue.

Another thing children need to guard against is ganging up against their parents.

I have seen this already, you know after a while you have a number of teenagers in the home and the children, maybe here it is three or four teenagers ganging up against two to push what they want, well those things don't happen if things are the way that they should be, they generally don't

happen when things have been right from growing up years but I've seen it already.

Another thing I've seen children try to do is to pit their parents against one another especially if they know that father and mother can't quite see eye to eye on this thing they can get a hold of this thing and try to pit them against each other.

This command children is one that asks you not to do that. Understand the simple truth that parental authority is for your good, it is for your protection, you need it, don't try to destroy it to undermine it, you need it for your good.

Fourthly: [verse 21](#), Fathers provoke not your children to anger lest they be discouraged, and yes we could put mothers in there, I believe the reason it has fathers in this is because father is the leading role in the home, provoke not your children to anger.

Well when some parents read this verse they become fearful to draw lines, they become fearful to discipline, they become fearful lest the children become angry and so they are apprehensive. I would like to say this that where children feel that, parents need not to fear this, if children feel loved, respected, accepted and considered, if those four ingredients in our home relationships, love for children, respect for children, acceptance of our children and consideration of our children's feelings we have little to worry about in the matter of them becoming angry.

Now I would like to give some things that I believe makes it hard for children that could be discouraging to them and that could cause them a problem that could provoke them to anger.

Selfish parents I think could do that. Parents, father or mother, who is not willing to do the dirty work and the children feel that they are used, now it is right for the children to serve in the home, but as we always give children the dirty work and we want to do the easy thing and life revolves around me and my children are my servants, and you know the same with mother, we are producing an aggravation for our children. Selfish parents, parents who are not willing to give themselves for the children.

It is like the parents who had a son and they were always putting him out to the babysitter so that they could go and have their trip and do their things

without him being along and then when they got back they would have some big souvenir from wherever they had been, it was all wrapped up nice in a box and that's what they gave him. And finally one day when the parents got back and gave him the gift the boy took the box and threw it on the floor.

You know what was happening? He felt bought. Selfish parents.

Another is anger, impatience, which usually results in shouting and other expressions of disgust. That is severely testing our children's obedience and respect.

Belittling and rubbing in their faults, tomorrow and the next day and the next day, we're talking against them instead of practising forgiveness.

Comparing our children with other children. Well you know so-and-so's child he doesn't act that way or she doesn't act that way and comparing you know. That is another no-no for parents. God didn't give us someone else, if God would have wanted us to have someone else's children He would have given us so-and-so's child, let's work with what God gives us, let's respect of the product that God gives us and work with it.

Mockery is another one that fits into this, especially in the presence of others. Overcorrection, without praise and commendation, parents tend to be guilty of that. Not this way, you did this wrong! We see the faults and what they didn't do right and we forget you know all the good that they did do. Didn't see all the things that they did right and we focus on this little thing that they didn't do right. It's discouraging for us to when all we hear is correction and no commendation.

Inconsistency in parents. Inconsistency in discipline.

One day we are easy-going and we let things slide and the next day we are harsh and reactionary in discipline. Discipline in anger, say one thing and do another. Yes you know tomorrow we will go and do so-and-so as a family and then the time comes and we're busy and get something else going. You know what I'm saying, it is not keeping our promises and commitments, things that can vary we know, but it is certainly hard on children, now I know sometimes things come up and the family can understand that when it is not selfishness or neglect or unfeeling on the part of the parents part. Again remember respect and love and those things.

Disciplining a child for something that we do ourselves is generally counter-productive. Lack of interest and involvement in children's lives, where children feel neglected when daddy is too busy, mamma is too busy in their own pursuits and you know my interests mean little to them. That is discouraging to children.

Lack of clear direction and leadership. And I guess that does come to us as fathers, and I find myself in that sometimes, we get tired of making decisions, we get tired of saying yes or no in this or that and we can become vague, the children wonder can we do this, shall we do this? and well you know we just brush it off. That can be very frustrating to the family especially a family that wants to obey. Let's give clear direction and leadership, our children will appreciate that.

Irritable and grouchy parents provoke children to wrath, irritable and grouchy like Nabal, unapproachable, uncorrectable, the spirit that sort of keeps everybody you know five feet away from me, or further.

Children generally respond well to firm discipline and direction if they can sense again those four ingredients, love, acceptance, understanding and respect and appreciation, maybe we'll add that fifth one there. When parents make mistakes it goes a long way to admit mistakes, I think that was shared here in Sunday School, we need to be humble enough to admit mistakes when we know it has been a grief to the children.

I appreciate the relationship I sensed between Abraham and Isaac when they were taking that walk up to the Mount Moriah, you sensed his respect when he says: My father. And Abraham said: My son. [Genesis 22:7](#). It was a good relationship of respect.

### **Exposition of Colossians #7 – Master Servant Relationship. Closing Exhortation.**

It is a pleasure to be with the people of God this Lord's Day again. I greet you in the name of Jesus the crucified, resurrected and ascended Saviour. The Christian faith is certainly outstanding and different than all other religions and we are so thankful to be recipients of that grace.

What are you looking forward to, what makes you do what you do, what is your purpose in life? Well if it isn't the resurrection what is it?

Paul said that if we don't believe that there's going to be a resurrection we may as well live it up, why walk in jeopardy every hour. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus what advantage is it me if the dead rise not? What have I suffered and laboured for if the dead do not arise, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die, and that's the end. [1 Corinthians 15:32](#).

A resurrection is what caused Paul to be what he was and he used to encourage the Thessalonians' faithfulness based on the resurrection. He says the Lord himself shall send from heaven with a shout and the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then which we are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air And so shall we ever be with the Lord. And then he says so therefore comfort one another with these words. [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#).

Maybe we don't do that enough, comfort one another with the fact that as we go through the difficulties of life, difficult and hard things in life to keep reminding each other that it is worth it, there is a day coming you know when all these things the Bible calls former things are going to be history, looking for the resurrection and let's be reminded of it this morning.

For a message you may open your Bibles to [Colossians chapter 3](#).

We would like to have this as the final, the concluding message of the series in the book of Colossians, exposition in the book of Colossians and I guess, I'm not sure when the first message was, December or January so maybe through all those months we have lost the continuity of thought but can anybody cite the key verse? Anybody find and recite the key verse of the book of Colossians?

Yes brother.

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:” [Colossians 1:28](#).

Thank you.

Yes, that is what I would consider the key verse of the whole book of Colossians. Paul preached and he warned every man, he taught them not

men's wisdom but in the wisdom of the Lord for the express purpose that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. And that perfection is something that happens initially in an initial experience as we come to the Lord, there is a sense that we are perfect in Christ, but we also understand that perfection is an ongoing work in our life, a growing experience. I think that is what all this exhortation was, it was to help them understand that in Christ they are perfect, but perfection in our experience is ongoing and that is why he gave these last couple of sermons that we're looking at as practical in our standing in Christ Jesus and how that works out in our daily lives. A very practical side of it.

As we noticed it is a matter of putting off the old man and then putting on the new man and be risen with Christ, that is an experience that we have and how that works out in our experience is in forbearance one toward another, in love and charity, having peace in our hearts and how that affects home relationships, husbands and wives and children with their parents and this morning we are going to notice a little bit more of that perfecting as we finish up chapter 3.

The first verse of chapter 4 deals with the servant/master relationships and I guess making it practical for us today, we are not living in a time of slavery where people own each other, at least not here in North America, and I guess as we think of it more in relation to making this practical for us, we might call this perfecting, we think about presenting every man perfect in Christ.

The last sermon we looked at perfecting home relationships and I guess we could call this perfecting employee/employer relationships and I would include with this a son working with his father, thinking about how this applies to us, you know not many of us are employed by others, most of us are self-employed but maybe this has even a broader spectrum then what we think of sometimes.

We could think of this father/son working together, how the son relates to his father as his employer and the father/employer relates to his son. We could also think of the school board/teacher interaction, we could think of the mother/daughter in the home, there are a number of areas where I think these principles apply wherever there is someone in authority giving direction for somebody under that, somebody that is working under them.

As we think of perfecting our relationships this the phrase stood out to me in our key verse where it says "in Christ." Well there is just no perfecting first of all outside of Christ, it starts there, there is no perfection in the sight of God outside of Christ and ongoing perfecting of course is as we walk with Christ. Christ in you the hope of glory, [Colossians 1:27](#), Christ's work in us.

It is as we yield to Christ that He can work that in us and perfect our working relationships with each other.

Maybe we could read chapter 3 first 22 through chapter 4 verse one.

[Colossians 3:22-25](#)

Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: <sup>23</sup>And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; <sup>24</sup>Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup>But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

[Colossians 4:1](#)

Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

I was just repeatedly amazed at the practical direction of the Bible, just direction for down here where we live and how to make things work. And the fact that we so many times have problems relating in these areas is a fact of not taking the scriptures and making them work in our experience. Well this is in a sense I guess we could say so basic, so simple it hardly takes any expounding and yet it seems we need that.

Well the direction first of all is to the servant, those that are under authority we might say, to the employees, obey your master. That's not hard to understand is it? What does obey mean? We teach our children real young what obeying means or at least we want to, it is our goal, obey means that you do what he tells you to do, do it how he tells you to do it. Do it even if he doesn't tell you how to do it, if you know what he wants you to do do it even if you are not told. We expect that of our children don't we? That's what we would consider obedience, sometimes you don't even have to tell them every detail because they know what every detail is.

Well that fits for employees too, if you know how he wants it done do it that way.

Obedience, the word obey here carries with it the idea of submission,, subjection, it is an attitude, you read these verses you are not only getting a sense of just going through the motions but you are getting a sense of an attitude of subjection, we know, we understand that obedience works the best in any place and this is included in our working relationships, it works the best with respect and a desire to please. If that is missing your obedience is only sort of halfway and I say that is an important ingredient for employees that they obey out of respect and a desire to please.

1 Peter 2:18 is something that says it similarly: Servants, *be* subject, you see we have that idea there of not just obedience but the idea of subjection, subjection has to do with our attitude of the heart, servants be subject to *your* masters with all fear; that is an interesting statement and then he goes on to say: not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

It is not hard to respond right and to be obedient when you have a congenial boss and he treats you right and he is nice and kind and understanding and you know the qualities that makes it easy for us, but it says not only to that kind but to the froward, he is unreasonable, he is hard to please, well I tried my best but he still finds fault with it. He says be subject to him as well.

Now one thing we have I suppose that this is probably written to servants that might have been slaves and they didn't have a choice to who they worked for. In most societies today if things get too hard and difficult I suppose we have the privilege of finding another employer or finding other work, but I think this is something good for us to think about to not easily skip out you know if things are a little unfavourable. The direction here is that we find our place and to do our part to be in subjection even unto the contrary and the un-favourable.

I read somewhere about a girl, it didn't say whether it was someone in the church or not, this girl started working for a certain company and her boss she found very cantankerous and hard to please and it just seemed like he was sort of you know surly, and instead of skipping out on him she decided she was going to give him a compliment everyday. So every day when she

met him she gave him a compliment on maybe his tie or, she just gave him a compliment everyday, and the story goes on to say that she won the heart of her employer and later on they were married.

Well that was probably outside the church but finally as we work under people there is a lot we can do to bring out the good in them and that certainly goes broader than in the workforce.

But it says here obey in all things. Well what does that mean obey in all things?

Why I think it certainly means that even if you think your way is better, sometimes it is that way, maybe even children think sometimes as they work under their parents they think that their way is better and maybe it is, maybe it is, but it says obey in all things. Obey in all things would include some jobs that are not very pleasant, that would be in all things.

Now what about areas if you have an employer that asks things of you that would be contrary to the scriptures that would violate your conscience what then?

I think we need to take this in its context. If you read the next verses it talks about doing things in the fear of God, obeying in fear of God, and what else does it say, heartily as unto the Lord in [verse 23](#).

Well you can hardly do something that is wrong heartily as unto the Lord and you can hardly do something that is wrong in the fear of God and so we believe that we understand that this all things is in the context of course of things that are not wrong, it is obeying him in all things, the un-pleasant things, the things you would rather not do, if you have a better idea do it, but it is not asking us, never, to violate God's higher law.

You wouldn't want to work on the Lord's Day. If you're working for a construction company and the owner gets a little under pressure, things are getting a little behind, there is a due date to meet and so he asks his crew to work on Sundays. We say no can't do that and neither would you become a partner in dishonesty.

My mind went back to the story, you probably read Uncle Tom's Cabin, and this Uncle Tom was saved years ago and his boss wanted him to whip, I think it was a woman that hadn't met her I guess a certain criteria to meet in picking cotton and she couldn't meet it, hard as she tried she couldn't

meet it, so Uncle Tom was to give her a whipping. And he refused, he said I can't do that. And the master said: Well I own you body, soul and spirit. And he said: Massa, I am yours body, my body is all yours. He understood that, but he said: My soul belongs to God and this is one thing I cannot do. And consequently he got whipped, I guess we could say within an inch of his life, but here was a man who was very respectful and very obedient to his master until his master asked something that he could not do before God. And there are many practical illustrations like that.

Now there is another phrase here in [verse 22](#): Not with eye service, Not with eye service.

That literally means one that does not need watching, not one that needs watching, not one that needs to be watched all the time, he just works when the boss is around or who just does good work when the boss is around.

We as God's people are those who do not need the boss looking over our shoulder all the time, the thought here is that we are trustworthy dependable. Why? Well he says because we fear God, at the end of the verse there, fearing God, in singleness of heart fearing God. Our goal isn't only to please the boss and to just win his favour but we fear God, we realise that what we do what we are doing that God is watching what we are doing. You know that just puts a whole new dimension to the way a Christian works, a whole new dimension then what the unbeliever does.

The unbeliever works for his pay cheque many times and he really doesn't care beyond that, he works for his pay. I sensed that in the business world many years ago, we did business and you know you walk in there and the atmosphere was you could just tell a very bad attitude, people were there for their pay cheque, and there was another company that was probably just as ungodly and worldly, the people who worked you could tell that there was a different motive, now they weren't working for the Lord I don't think, but there was a program there in place that you could tell that the employees worked for the company and they had their heart in it and they were aiming to please, and it seemed like the company was at the heart of their employees, they worked for the good of the company not just for their pay cheque.

Well the child of God is serving the Lord, whatsoever you do, Do it heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men. We are not living to just please men.

We have a higher motive and that is of pleasing God and that puts meaning into service and I think this is a fact that affects all of our life, whatever area where we are under subjection, whether it is a wife with her husband, or whatever category you find yourself in, we can see ourselves not just being men pleasers, I think if we just do things to please men and that is all we can see life gets hard, but when we please men in an effort to please God that we see that our submission to men is part of our pleasing God, our submission to God takes the drudgery out of it, that's how it is in our work.

We ought to seek to make a contribution to the program of the business that we are working for and that we are not just there for a pay cheque, we have the whole good in mind.

Now moving on to Masters.

Masters give unto your servants. Oh I thought servants are to get from. The mentality of a lot of people is that your employees are to get from but here it is Masters give. And now this is something for us as fathers as we employ our sons and it is something for mothers as they work with their daughters and it is something for the school board to consider with their teachers. You know wherever we are we have people under us, working for us. Masters give unto your servants, your subjects, that which is just and equal. Fair and considerate.

Now I think first of all I guess especially as we think of those, most of us don't pay our girls, don't pay our sons until they are at a certain age, and I think that is right the Bible talks about requiring parents, but when it is understood that there is work for pay we are at the employer level, we need to be fair with the wage and pay what they are worth. Pay according to their earnings, if we have of business and the employee that is under us is bringing us a good income why then certainly they have the right to be compensated for that and that is why I suppose some businesses pay more than others, it is because the income off the employees is higher than others and while I think it is right that an employer receives a benefit from that he is not just paying the employee what he gets from him, he has the headache, he has everything else that goes along with being the employer, but the Bible has something to say about this in James chapter 5, now I know that these subjects we don't often address but here it is written in the book of

Colossians and he has a little bit more in the book of James, chapter 5 verses 1 through 4 to.

[James 5:1-4](#). Go to now, *ye* rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon *you*. <sup>2</sup>Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup>Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. <sup>4</sup>Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

The thought here is that these men were rich at the expense of somebody else's poverty, they apparently had people working for them and they reaped the benefits from it and didn't pay them fairly and so they had the poor, it was kept back by fraud and they weren't fair, that is the thought that comes through here, they got their riches at the expense of their employees.

And we have the thought here of Masters give unto your servants as that which is just and equal. Not just dirty work, the other side that we were talking about earlier, we don't choose to give the employees the dirty work and that we would consider their suggestions, sometimes employees have good suggestions that we can learn from.

And another part here would be respect and expressing appreciation for a job well done. That makes for good working relationships.

We have an example there in the book of Ruth; we have a couple of beautiful Bible examples of this in relation to employee/employer relationship, in [Ruth 2:4](#) with Boaz and his servants, and you are probably familiar with this account. Boaz comes out here and the reapers are in the field and cleaning his fields:

“And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, these menial servants you know, maybe they were his slaves but notice the attitude that he had he said unto the reapers: The LORD *be* with you. And their response, The LORD bless thee.”

I think that shows us something that there was a good attitude of respect. Boaz had respect to his servants and they in return respected him.

In [Genesis chapter 39](#) we have the account of Joseph working for Potiphar and we see something similar here, it says [Genesis 39 verse 2](#), that Joseph was a prosperous man, he was a prosperous man and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

In other words Joseph sought to increase his master's goods, Joseph wasn't receiving anything, he was a purchased slave and I doubt that he got any percentage or anything from what he did and yet he was diligent. He could have said: Well what is the use; I'm not getting anything out of this anyway.

But he did his things in the fear of God and he was a prosperous man and he says he serves him, verse 4, Joseph served him, he proved himself trustworthy and something happened in return. In turn Potiphar recognised and rewarded his faithfulness. In [verse 4](#) it says that Joseph found grace in his sight, Joseph found grace in his sight, Joseph found favour, appreciation, respect and consequently he was made overseer he was given a promotion, that's how it works if we are faithful in the little things and you will get promoted.

Going back to Colossians it says knowing also that you have a master in heaven. [Colossians 4:1](#). Just as the employee works under him in the fear of God so the master needs to remember that he has a master in heaven and that we are at the master's mercy. Employers have a master too and we need to live under that recognition.

The Bible tells us in [James 2:13](#), that God shall have judgment without mercy, on those that have shown no mercy. What does that tell us? Isn't that suggesting that God's mercy towards us is in a sense in proportion to the mercy we have on those under us? If we don't have mercy with those under us we are unmerciful and only thinking about ourselves how can we expect God to have mercy on us? That is a strong Scripture that if you really think about it, that He will have judgement without mercy on him that hath showed no mercy.

The man that took his brother by the throat and made him pay everything that is in that parable of Jesus there I think would be an illustration of that [Matthew 18:24-35](#).

Now there is a clause here in [verse 25](#) that I think is good for us to think about: But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. [Colossians 3:25](#). That last phrase there sort of stood out to me that God's judgement is always absolutely impartial, always, God is fair, always fair.

You know sometimes maybe we can feel subconsciously feel that because of who we are we are good people, we go to church every Sunday, we're with a Conservative church and after all my parents were this or that or the other thing or maybe because of our financial status or maybe because of our position in the church, you know after all I am a Minister and somehow that ought to make a difference with God and we could get a little slipshod in some of these things and after all and I can get away with it. No, it says that is not how it's going to be. God is always impartial and what your position is in the church, your financial status or any of these things, your nationality, your background, all those kind of things have nothing to do with God's judgement. He is always fair and He is always right. Just because you are a certain person doesn't mean you can get away with more, God always deals with wrong and He always rewards the right no matter who you are.

Now next to the last part of verses 2 through 6 continuing on with the some practical exhortations, I guess we could call it a last-minute reminders, I wonder why he brings these up here at the end of this letter but maybe they are areas that we are especially prone to become lax in, I wonder if that's not why it is and we just want to look at a couple of these.

[Colossians 4:2-6](#)

Firstly he reminds us about prayer: Continue in prayer. Prayer is so vital to spiritual life, prayer is vital to victory, the scriptures have many exhortations about prayer, pray without ceasing, [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#), everything by prayer, supplication, [Philippians 4:6](#), continuing instantly in prayer and [Romans 12:12](#).

The question I ask myself and I ask us this morning is "How is our prayer life been this last week? How has our prayer life been in the last couple of weeks? Have I experienced something lacking in my Christian life?" Well if I find something lacking in my Christian experience maybe it is time I checked my prayer life, have I been as vibrant, you know have I been like we sang that I found that pure delight. Maybe it has not been a single hour,

maybe it has been five minutes, maybe it's been 10 minutes but have I found that, and my finding that? That's a challenge for us. If we are not there is danger ahead, continuing prayer, don't get lax, when we get lax in prayer would become weak and vulnerable, seven days without prayer makes one weak the saying is.

Well then we have this phrase attached to it: with thanksgiving. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. [Psalm 100:4](#). Consider the goodness of God, cultivate a cheerful disposition and an attitude of gratitude. That is another area we can come complaining and murmuring.

Then he builds on this and he says: Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. [Colossians 4:3-4](#).

Pray for those in positions of responsibility, Paul had a responsibility, Paul had a place of position, he had a responsibility and he sensed that need of prayer and is making an appeal that the brethren would remember him as they prayed, that they continue in prayer.

And I am going to extend the scope of this, we think about those that are in responsibility, our President (*Bush at the time of this message*). He is under a lot of criticism right now, "Bush lied so thousands died" I saw on the back of a car, you know they are blaming Bush for what happened down there in New Orleans. Well how silly it is, who is praying for Bush? I think, I don't know the man that well but I think if the little bit I know of him I would think of him as a President that would say to people pray for me through this that I may be given the wisdom.

Well we think of the school board, teachers, ministers, fathers. We could think of the Mission board, publishing boards, bishops, you know those who are in responsibility pray for them, it is easy to become critical and fault finding when they don't do things right. But Paul was obviously taking his calling seriously, he needed wisdom, he sensed the need of wisdom in his responsibility and really as we think of this list that I gave I think they sense that too, they are taking their calling seriously too, I believe that our President is taking his calling seriously, I believe our school board is

taking it seriously, our teachers are, sometimes they make mistakes, yes, but they are still taking their calling seriously. Pray for them, pray for them.

Well another reminder here is in [Colossians 4:5](#), Walk in wisdom to them that are without, redeeming the time.

Well this is giving us an exhortation in relating to those outside the circle of Christian Fellowship. Who does this include? Well it could include our neighbours, it could include business acquaintances, it could include the nuisance caller, it could include family members that have lost out with the faith, it could include church members, it could include those who profess when questioned as a not living in obedience to the scriptures, those that are outside our circle of Christian Fellowship.

He says walk in wisdom. That suggests a carefulness and prayer-fullness. Isn't that what it is saying how we relate to them? That suggests that we need to be careful and prayerful, we need wisdom, wisdom from above, spiritual wisdom in relating to them, why?

Well there are two main reasons why I believe we need wisdom in relating to those that are without.

One is for our own spiritual good.

First of all we need to remember that evil communications corrupt good manners, [1 Corinthians 15:33](#), that is truth that is scriptural fact, be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners. We must guard how chummy we get with those outside, them that are without, lest there is a subtle influence in our own lives, our family. Well that is one reason that we need wisdom in relating to those that are without.

Secondly we need wisdom because of the influence we are on them and have a carefulness that we leave a proper testimony to them. Yes, a life in testimony that could win them to Christ. That is another reason it is so important that we have wisdom in relating to those who are without because we want our influence in their lives to be read attentively and so that takes wisdom and sometimes it is hard to know where that is. We need the direction of the spirit. I find that in my experience we need that.

Redeeming the time it says in conjunction with that. Making use of the opportunities that God gives us. We need to see people more than as some-

body to make money off or somebody to fun and frolic with. You know we can have that kind of fun and frolic relationships with our neighbours and those that are without. No, that is not good, although we do need some interchange but not that kind of relationship. Maybe we need to see people in our business as more than somebody to help our cheque-book out.

Well we move on into speech, another point that he reminds us of: Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, [Colossians 4:6](#). Speech, how important is speech, how important does the Bible makes speech? The Bible has a lot to say about speech.

Well the Bible tells us that our speech has a lot to say about ourselves and that is true, you judge other people by their speech and we hear somebody steaming off and using profanity we have a pretty good idea who he is and what kind of person he is. If somebody calls and he is just very casual with his speech again we have an idea of what kind of person he is. If you talk with somebody and you have somebody with a kind voice at the other end of the line, you might have never seen or met the people, but how many times do we get an impression of people when we talk with them on the telephone without even seeing them? Yes, our speech says something about us.

They said of Peter your speech agreeth thereto. [Mark 14:70](#), and he could deny all he wanted to about who he was but his speech made real clear who he was. And that's how it is.

Moreover the Bible says by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. [Matthew 12:37](#).

That's how important speech is.

Speech will be hindrance or help to others. Let your speech be your communication that which is good to the use of edifying, [Ephesians 4:29](#). You see speech edifies others, yes and speech is important, let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt.

Now what is that? What is speech that is graced and seasoned with salt?

Well I think of salt as something that makes food very tasty and pleasant to eat and you know it just makes it a lot more acceptable. You get something served and someone forgot to put salt into, why something is wrong with this, I don't know you just don't feel like eating much of it but you put salt in there and it makes it tasty, let your speech be with grace seasoned with

salt, that which lifts people up and makes you know it does the right thing to people.

We should be avoiding speech such as slander and gossip, complaining, jesting, deliberate exaggeration, untruths, slang, casual, flattery and I suppose the list could go on.

That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man, [Colossians 4:6](#), every man. That's the challenge, that means we can never go off duty. He says always let your speech be always with grace. That means that suggests that there is no time to relax, no time to let the guard down, no time to become careless.

Set a watch O Lord before my lips, keep the door of my mouth something like that the Psalmist has said that his you know where we need to be. [Psalm 141:3](#) Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

Moses seemingly was very careful about his speech but one day he'd let his guard down and he spoke unadvisedly with his lips and brought reproach on God and he suffered much for it himself, [Psalm 106:32-33](#). We need to exercise sensitivity as to what flows from our lips.

Well the last part [Colossians 4:7-18](#) is the closing then, Paul's personal greetings and commendations.

Some things we notice here are the terms that he uses to describe the brethren. There is a lot we can learn from how Paul related to his brethren. He was a man of commendation.

[Verse 7](#) he says beloved, he calls Tychicus a beloved brother, a faithful minister, a fellow servant in the Lord.

In [verse 9](#), Onesimus a faithful and beloved brother.

In [verse 10](#), Aristarchus my fellow prisoner.

In [verse 11](#), These only *are my* fellow workers in the kingdom and they have been a comfort unto me.

[Verse 12](#), a servant of Christ, Epaphras a servant of Christ labouring fervently for you in prayers.

[Verse 14](#), Luke the beloved physician.

It was the heartthrob of Paul and how he felt about his brethren, an attitude of appreciation, a sense of a need of them, a dependence on them, a focus

on their good qualities, no pushing down of others so that he could be on a pedestal or look better or something like that, but he gave credit where credit was due, you don't notice any feelings of superiority.

Paul, as he laboured in the kingdom, in one place it says that he laboured more than them all and yet there is a sense of dependence on others. He'd gotten a call to be an apostle, he said I magnify my office, [Romans 11:13](#), he gave it everything he had and yet he laboured with others, he sensed the need of others.

He saw kingdom labour is not the work of one man by himself doing everything but it was a joint work with others and he saw that God was working through his brethren in building the kingdom and that God was using his brethren to do things that he, as Paul alone, could not do.

You know that is so vital in inter-reaction to find our place. And I think it is interesting that among all these men he had something good to say except Demas in [verse 14](#), all he said about Demas is that he greets you. One writer suggested that it was six years later that Paul wrote to Timothy and said the Demas has forsaken me having loved this present world, [2 Timothy 4:10](#), the writer suggested that maybe Paul sensed that happening already back here in the life of Demas, that Demas was not where he should have been. And instead of saying anything bad he said nothing. He didn't have anything good to say about Demas. That's reading between the lines possibly but that is something for us to think about.

Paul cultivated a good feeling about his brethren.

It is interesting as I did a study on these men, and I guess we don't have time to get into them, but some of these men really stuck with Paul, Tychicus was one of Paul's companions travelled with him partway in his missionary journey, his third missionary journey, he was a man of Asia. One writer suggests that he was that brother talked about back in the book of Corinthians that was responsible to carry the offering from the Corinthian church wherever it was to go to, he was a trusted brother. He apparently was with Paul in his bonds in Rome. He wrote this letter, part of his letters, it says that it was written by Tychicus and Onesimus shared in the writing of this letter that Paul had dictated and he was one of those who delivered the letter to Colosse.

Paul had a lot of confidence in his dependability.

Onesimus was a convert of Paul's, in one place he calls him in the [letter to Philemon](#), calls him my own son, and so that would suggest that he was one of Paul's converts, Onesimus was a runaway slave and apparently he proved to be a changed man and Paul called Onesimus a faithful and beloved brother. Onesimus was soundly converted and there was a change and he helped in the writing of this letter, he helped Tychicus in the writing of this letter and helped to deliver it back to Philemon and to the Colossians church.

Aristarchus was a man of Thessalonica he was also one of Paul's companions in travel, the third missionary journey, you can read that in [Acts 19:29](#), he journeyed with Paul to Rome, Paul called him a fellow prisoner, in [Acts 27:2](#), his fellow prisoner.

Marcus, this was an interesting one, the end of [verse 10](#), Marcus was a cousin to Barnabas and he was the same man that in other places is called John Mark, Mark and Marcus are used interchangeably, that is sort of interesting. Barnabas was to take a John Mark along in that second missionary journey and you know we talk about family cliques and you know how family can get between, family ties as you know sometimes can affect church relationships, I don't know if that had anything to do with it here or not, but they were cousins, and Barnabas wanted to help John Mark, maybe there is some sentimental attachment there that made it that way. [Acts 15:35-37](#). Well Paul had no sentimental attachment to Marcus so I don't know if that had something to do with it but it was an interesting observation.

Well this Marcus had left the work and Paul didn't trust him anymore, that you know it is rather interesting Paul had commendation for him. Apparently Paul gave him the benefit of the doubt, Marcus proved himself and rebuilds his confidence in him again. I thought that is outstanding that this Marcus was benefiting for the work. These are my fellow workers unto the kingdom, he is profitable to me. In [2 Timothy 4:11](#) Paul said he, Marcus, is profitable for me for the ministry. The Bible does not tell us much about Justus here.

Epaphras is one of you. In [Colossians 1:7](#) he calls him a faithful minister. It seems like he was ordained may be an ordained leader for the church in Colosse and it seems like he made a journey to Paul in Rome and shared

with Paul how the Colossian church was doing. He was with Paul over that time that Paul wrote this letter and I don't know if he was there voluntary or just how that was but his heart was still back with the church there at Colosse and laboured fervently in prayer, he couldn't be with them but he laboured fervently, his heart was there and his prayers were with them.

Luke was the writer of the third gospel and the book of Acts, he was the beloved physician, the doctor, his writings reveal that he was a man of education and culture, there are some details that are brought by Luke, the birth and the death of Christ, that the other gospel writers did not. He was a man loyal to Paul. Paul told Timothy that everybody else had left him that he was left alone except for Luke, Luke stood with him.

Archippus was possibly the son of Philemon. The letter to Philemon was addressed to Philemon and Apphia was probably Philemon's wife and Archippus it seems was maybe a son, he also had some kind of responsibility in the church there in Colosse and Paul kindly reminds Archippus to keep to the ministry that thou hast received that thou fulfil it.

And that is good for anyone of us who is ordained, it gives us a responsibility, to take heed to it, don't get side-tracked, don't try somewhere else, don't neglect the work of the ministry for something of lesser importance.

Well I guess there's a lot more that could be said but you know when we think of a book like this and we see Paul's great care and great desire that the church the people of God, the Church of Jesus Christ would be faithful, that is the consuming passion that we sense in Paul that the church of Jesus Christ be faithful. He says "We preach and warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ"  
[Colossians 1:28](#)

It was Paul's desire that the church would be faithful and vibrant and growing in the Lord and steadfast in the faith.

May we be challenged and encouraged by Paul's experience.

Compiled & Edited by: J van Loon

E-mail: [shimaracourier@gmail.com](mailto:shimaracourier@gmail.com)

Web: [www.anabaptistmennonites.net](http://www.anabaptistmennonites.net)