**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

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**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**Introduction**: 1:1-8

**1:1-8**

 **“Food for sawdust”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-2 God made people**

**III. 3-8 Four stages of the Christian life**

**I. Intro.**

In a recent book by John S. Dickerson titled “*The Great Evangelical Recession*” the author offers a wake-up call for every born again believer in America. He cites “The Barna Research Group” that proclaims that American evangelicalism will continue to erode over the next few decades. Currently Evangelicalism is losing 2.6 million per decade which places the actual percentage of true evangelical Christians in the United States somewhere around 10%. At this rate the evangelical church is not winning enough new believers to keep up with the population growth. Extensive research by the [*American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS)*](http://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=23051675&msgid=2190539&act=YJ69&c=128593&destination=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.americanreligionsurvey-aris.org%2F2009%2F03%2Fcatholics_on_the_move_non-religious_on_the_rise.html) shows the significant decline of religion and the rise of secularism in America. USA Today states, “*The percentage of people who call themselves in some way Christian has dropped more than 11% in a generation….everywhere, more people are exploring spiritual frontiers – or falling off the faith map completely.*” The Washington Post recently commented that, “*The only group that grew in every U.S. state since the 2001 survey, was people saying they had ‘no’ religion*.” Another study revealed that the “*Biblical Worldview*” of Americans finding that among “*born-again Christians*” only 19% had such an outlook on life and those from the ages of 18 to 23 is, “*less than one-half of one percent.*” The obvious question is: “***What do we do about this?***” I believe that Paul’s letter to the Colossians offers the answer as Paul addresses the secular influence of the world among this church. His antidote is to offer this church the superiority of Jesus.

The story is told of a Roman colony in Northern Africa that was going through a sever famine during the reign of Caesar Nero. The starving people looked out upon the Mediterranean Sea and saw Roman ships on the horizon and rejoiced saying, “*Caesar has sent us ships*.” When the ships made it to port instead of grain they were full of sawdust to lie on the floor of the circuses. ***The people were longing for food and got sawdust; they craved substance and got a circus***! That is what Paul faced in the church at Colossi as the folks longed for the Bread of life and had been only receiving the sawdust of false teaching, they craved the substance of Christ but the church had become a circus!

**II. Vs. 1-2 God made people**

Vs. 1 Vs. 1 Right at the introduction by Paul we gain an important Christian principal: “*A person’s worth and value is not what they have made of themselves, but what God has made of them*.” Furthermore Christian authority and office is also completely different than what the world has as Paul uses a familial term to distinguish a person’s position, “brother” as that is what he calls Timothy! Timothy was not described by what he did but by the way he related to others. Family is what comes before talents and gifting a truth the modern church would do well to remember!

Vs.2 The letter is addressed to the “*brethren in Christ in Colossi*”; Colossi being the location geographically in Christ being their location spiritually. *Every Christian is a citizen of two worlds:* The earthly location and the heavenly location and the question is which one is going to influence the other. In this life we may move from one earthly location to another but God forbid that we ever move from our heavenly location of being “in Christ”. The church was probably about five years old when Paul wrote this letter and was located in what we now call Turkey, in the Roman province of Asia Minor, about one hundred miles south and east of Ephesus. Near the city of Colossae were two other cities, Laodicea and Hierapolis, located about ten miles apart on the Lycus River. The church at Colossae was the smallest and the least important. But this church at Colossae became the founder of other churches which started up in the nearby cities. This letter also is connected closely with the letter to Philemon, who was a businessman friend of Paul and a citizen of Laodicea. It seems as though Epaphras was the person responsible for bringing Jesus to this little town and based upon chapter 4 verses 12 may have been a native of this community. He also brought the gospel to neighboring larger cities of Hierapolis and the more familiar Laodicea all a part of the Lycus Valley. Epaphras is believed to have been a part of the group that heard the gospel during the 3 years Paul was in Ephesus as Paul taught daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus as all of Asia heard the Word of the Lord.

 To Paul, “***Every person who is in Christ is a Saint but not every one of those may be a faithful.***” To these believers Paul offers the common greeting of grace and peace but places the common greeting in the ample supply of “*God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” People everywhere are in need of grace and peace but the problem is that most are looking for grace and peace outside of the only supplier God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

**III. 3-8 Four stages of the Christian life**

Vs. 3-5a There are ***three words*** that are crucial here: **faith, hope, and love**. Love is what the world needs but according to this love comes from faith. These words mark what we could well call the qualities of authentic Christians. The important thing to notice is that hope produces faith, and faith in turn grows into love. ***Hope is the root, faith is the plant, and love is the fruit***. What the Greek text actually says is, “*hope is available to you in the heaven****s***”---***plural***. This term is a reference not to heaven after death, but to the invisible spiritual kingdom that surrounds us on all sides right now. Paul also calls this gospel “*the word of truth*.” Dorothy Sayers, the Christian philosopher, said, “*The test of any religion is not whether it pleases us or is comfortable, but whether it is true.*” ***Does it do what it says it will do?*** That is the test. Paul traces the four stages of the Colossians:

1. Vs. 5b-7 **Listeners**: We are told that these Colossians “***heard***” the word of truth of the gospel. Apparently Epaphras couldn’t wait to go back home and tell his family and friends about Jesus. Furthermore Paul outlines four things that the Colossians heard about the message:
2. Vs. 4 ***It centered upon a person – Jesus Christ***: The message wasn’t a philosophy, or religion. The message was on the person and works of Jesus the Son of God! You can’t remove Jesus from Church and still have Christianity, as the message is all about a relationship with Jesus!
3. Vs. 5 ***It was the “Word of truth”***: The message they heard was “truth” that came from God and therefore could be trusted. No amount of lies can ever take away the truth. Everybody has faith in something but your faith is only as solid as the object it trusts. If your faith is in your education, money, religion it is only as good as that. But if it is in Jesus and the Word of truth that it is upon the Rock who calmed the storms, spoke and creation sprang into existence.
4. Vs. 6a ***It was for the whole world***: It is the one message that is suitable to every person, everywhere. The gospel can bear fruit in any climate, upon any soil, any time of season. Sometimes it will only one plant other times a forest but it can produce fruit in any heart that will believe.
5. Vs. 6b ***It was the message of grace***: The word they heard was God’s favor shown to those who didn’t deserve it and could never earn it or repay it. God is willing and able to save all who trust in Him.
6. Vs. 4 **Believers**: It is possible to hear and not believe as many hear the truth but not all believe. But those believed did so not by having faith in their faith but rather by having faith in Christ. Just believing has never saved anyone but just believing Jesus has saved everyone!
7. Vs. 7 **Learners**: The word translated learned is the Greek word “disciple” and it reveals that believing in Jesus is only the beginning. We must never forget that even after we have trusted in Jesus that we need to continue to learn from Him day by day. The great commission isn’t just about decisions for Christ it’s about making disciples for Christ. Epaphras was faithful inasmuch that he didn’t just win them for Christ he continued to teach them about Christ. The word disciple is found 260 times in the Gospels and Acts and in this time meant more than just listening it meant who lived with the teacher and learned by listening, looking and living! The closest we have to this today would be an apprenticeship.
8. Vs. 8 **Doers**: Finally Paul declares that many of these Colossians had become doers of the Word as Epaphras had told Paul about their love. That is the cycle of life as we go from a hearer to a doer, from being sown to a sower.

At Colossi a small community of people experienced hope and that caught the attention of others who shared the reason for their new found hope. That’s God's favorite way of evangelism. God chooses to use people who have been impacted by Christ to touch lives of those who are need of that same impact. That is how the gospel spread throughout the Roman province of Asia, and hundreds of churches came into being and that is how God will reach the Bitterroot Valley and make it the Better Root Valley!

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**Statement of Purpose**: 1:9-14

**1:9-10**

**“*Show them what they won when they won*”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 9 One thing needed**

**III. Vs. 10 Discovering the will of God**

**I. Intro.**

We now move to the reason for Paul’s writing this letter which is housed in his continual prayer for this church. Reading this section is extremely insightful as it is a prayer for maturity of the believer. But Paul doesn’t write them telling them they need to “*Put on their big boy pants*” neither does he says, “*Time to grow up and get busy*!” Instead ***these 6 verses are not telling these believers to do anything instead they are completely devoted to explaining to them what Christ has done for them***. Based upon this observation I can see two very important truths as it relates to spiritual immaturity:

1. ***The weakness of the church is to be found in far too many remaining baby Christians***: Don’t get me wrong I like babies but they aren’t always pleasant to be around. In fact most parents look forward to the day when their little one can feed themselves, go to the bathroom on their own and get dressed. There ok with the baby stage for a while but not for 10 to 20 years. Someone once said of babies that they are “*A digestive apparatus with a loud noise at one end and no responsibility at the other*!” Babies are notoriously selfish and self-centered. Their whole world is centered on themselves and you meeting their needs. That is all they think about, all they know. I think that description can fit prolonged immature Christians as well.
2. ***Maturity happens when we emphasize what Christ has done for us and not emphasize what we can do for Jesus***: What immature believer’s need isn’t a list of things to do and work on. No, what they need is to realize what is already theirs in Christ. Paul spends these 4 chapters telling these Colossian believers ***what they have won when they won***!

**II. Vs. 9 One thing needed**

Vs. 9a Paul in his opening introduction spoke of the three fold Christian characteristics of faith, hope and love. These new Christians had experienced these truths in their lives but hadn’t continued to grow in those same characteristics. What threatened their maturity was false teaching, a mixture of works, mysticism and pride as the false teachers were saying that they had special insight that only a few had. Paul had been told their condition by Epaphras and while chained between two guards in room a thousand miles away he wrote this letter. But notice that before he wrote this letter he committed to continual prayer on their behalf. Here is a man who had very little personal connection to this church, he didn’t know them personally, had never been to Colossae yet he writes: “*For this reason we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you*.” The “IT” that Paul speaks of is their faith in Christ. Every time the Holy Spirit brought these believers to Paul as he was chained between to guards and 12 hour shifts he prayed. It is obvious by this that prayer for Paul was not bound to bending his knees and grasping his hands together. It was the kind of prayer that was just a thought in his head where he placed them into the Lord’s hands. And what follows in this section is the specifics of this prayer for their maturity and interestingly enough ***he asks for only one thing***, though he will explain it many ways. In making the prayer about one thing Paul is saying that the primary problem with the Church was that they had forgotten who they were in Christ!

Vs. 9b Paul asks God that they be: “...*filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*” That is the content of his prayer; everything else in the passage flows out of that. The one thing he asks for is that the Colossians might come to understand God's will. It is clear that this is the important thing to Paul. He knows that if they begin to understand the will of God, everything good that he desires for them will follow. Thus, the chief aim of a believer's life ought to be to know God's will.

Many Christians think that the will of God is some ***sort of spiritual itinerary*** whereby God instructs us on where to go and what to do. But by the context Paul is not speaking about “***direction***” he is speaking about “***position***”! Paul’s making a very profound truth: “***Who we are in Christ determines where we go in life***!” That means when you and I get lost, lose our direction, the way back is not trying to find our path, it’s about the rediscovery our identity in Christ! There is a spiritual truth to that old hippie saying: “*I’ve got to go and find myself*!” But you will only find your true self in Christ! 2 Cor. 5:17 tells us that “…*if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*.” No wonder we feel a bit lost in our new relationship in Christ. God has made us into something different than what we once were. The more we understand who we now are, and what God has done to make us that way, the more our behavior will automatically change.

Having told the Colossian believers that they needed to know their position in Christ Paul now tells them in his prayer where to look for this. ***There are two things that enable us to discover the will of God.***

1. **The first is “*wisdom*”**: Paul is speaking of divine insights into human life: “*How we are to understand ourselves and how the world functions*” These are divine insights because apart from God the natural man knows nothing about them. As believers, we Christians need to discover what God thinks about us and life. All of us are on this spiritual quest of personal discovery but the discovery of who we truly are is only found in discovering who Jesus truly is.
2. **The second is “*spiritual understanding***”: This is the application of the wisdom of above. The first thing we need is to understand is who God is and how he sees us and we will find that in his word. Once we do that we will see a clearer picture of what needs to be done, what steps we need to take or not to take. These are not natural abilities they are given by the Holy Spirit.

**III. Vs. 10 Discovering the will of God**

Vs. 10 Look at what Paul says in this prayer that will follow the Holy Spirit giving us insight into who God and is and who we are as we read in verse 10: “*You may have a walk worthy of the Lord…*” The outcome of those two discoveries is that our direction, our ***spiritual itinerary*** will be heading the right direction. What follows in this passage is ***five things that indicate we are going the right direction: The first three are activities that we have a choice in:***

* ***Worthy walk***
* ***Fully pleasing Him***
* ***Being fruitful in every good work***

***The last two are results that will grow out of those three:***

* ***Increasing in the knowledge of God***
* ***Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power***

This prayer of Paul makes two great requests:

1. It asks for the discernment of God’s will
2. It asks for the power to perform the will: D.L. Moody often said, "*Every Bible should be bound in shoe-leather*."

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**Statement of Purpose**: 1:9-14

**1:11-14**

**“*A Worthy Walk*”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 10-12 Five things that indicate that we are growing up**

**III. Vs. 13-14 Three things we can always be thankful for**

**I. Intro.**

As Paul sat down and dictated this letter I’m convinced that he wasn’t thinking of the larger question of why people do awful things. But right here in verse 13 Paul speaks on the work of Jesus in ***conveying us from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love.*** Admittedly most of the time we humans aren’t confronted with the face of evil like we have been over the last few weeks; and because of this we come up with some pretty strange views about evil. We tend to analyze what is wrong by thinking in selective categories when delving into the question of “*What is wrong with the world*”.

* We tend to answer this in the political realm
* Or the Sociological realm
* Sometimes we place it in the environmental realm

The atheist and evolutionary view is that people are “Good” and it is religion that has made a few of them make life horrible for the rest of us. The problem with that few is that it ignores the facts of history as most evil has been committed by atheists. Every now and then you will find an honest atheist who will say as Jung said, “*We need more understanding of human nature because the only real danger that exists is man himself…His psyche should be studied because we are the origin of all coming evil*.” Though I don’t agree with Carl Jung’s view that we humans are the “origin of all coming evil” I would say that if you want to know evil look into the mirror and if you want to know LOVE look in the Bible at Jesus!

**II. Vs. 10-12 Five things that indicate that we are growing up**

Vs. 10-12 Look at what Paul says in this prayer that will follow the Holy Spirit giving us insight into who God and is and who we are as we read in verse 10: “*You may have a walk worthy of the Lord…*” The outcome of those two discoveries is that our direction, our ***spiritual itinerary*** will be heading the right direction. What follows in this passage is ***five things that indicate we are going the right direction: The first three are activities that we have a choice in:***

* ***Worthy walk***
* ***Fully pleasing Him***
* ***Being fruitful in every good work***

***The last two are results that will grow out of those three:***

* ***Increasing in the knowledge of God***
* ***Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power***
1. Vs. 10a ***Worthy walk***: *When we understand what God has made us to be, though we don't deserve it, we will be changed in our direction in life*: We are God’s children, adored by him! He has taken our guilt and sin and dealt with it. He is our loving Father who guides and guards us. And because we are so loved, what others think of us isn’t important when compared to what our Father thinks of us. ***A walk worthy of the Lord will reflect those truths.*** ***Our impact upon others is in direct correlation of God’s continual impact upon us.*** So if our impact upon others is negative or non-existent, what needs to happen is that we need to go back and look with fresh eyes upon how God sees us, that’s a continual choice we need to make.
2. Vs. 10b ***Fully pleasing Him***: *The chief aim of every believer is to please our Father, to live in a way that God delights in*. But what is the ***WAY*** that is pleasing to our Heavenly Father? We don’t have to guess or make a list as Hebrews 11:6 tells us ***the quality of life that is pleasing to God*** as we read, “*without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*.” Our Lord always commends people for trusting Him and acting on what he says. When we make a choice not to conform to the customs of the world and swim against the stream of life we are trusting him and doing that which pleases God.
3. Vs. 10c ***Being fruitful in every good work***: In Galatians 4:22 we are told what the “***FRUIT***” is as Paul says it is ***LOVE*** described in 8 characteristics of: ***joy***, and ***peace***, in our relationships. ***Patience*** in our actions with regard to others; ***kindness***, ***goodness***, and ***faithfulness*** in times of others stresses. ***Gentleness*** and ***self-control*** as we bring God’s word of peace into a troubled, hostile world. That’s a choice we can make in being fruitful in every good work.

***As we make these three choices two results will follow.***

1. Vs. 10d ***Increasing in the knowledge of God***: *Paul’s prayer was that the Colossians would come to know God's will and now he says that as they put these things into practice they will know God better than ever before*. Knowing God is the secret of excitement and vitality in a life. Thus if you are bored, as a Christian, it is because you don’t adequately know your God. When we are in God’s presence it is impossible to think of anything else. He is the most exciting, captivating Being, filled with fresh ideas, concepts and possibilities there will ever be. That is why being around people who know God are exciting to be with.
2. Vs. 11 ***Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power***: Another result of those three choices is we will have true spiritual power which is characterized by three things:
3. ***Patient***: The word means *endurance when circumstances are difficult*. It is said if we don’t first have “*patience*” it is doubt full we will ever have anything else! Patience isn’t complacency, it’s endurance in action! It’s the runner on the race track, refusing to stop because he wants to win the race. It is always too soon to quit! Spurgeon once said, “*By perseverance the snail reached the ark.*”
4. ***Longsuffering***: Here the word is different than patience as the word means “*self-restraint*” and deals with people and not circumstances. Because God has dealt with us in longsuffering we find that it is a garment of grace that we ought to wear as we deal with others.
5. ***Joy***: The last strength of God’s power is a joy filled heart when both circumstances and people are difficult. It isn’t enough to just endure if we aren’t also enjoying! If our ***happiness*** is dependent upon ***happenings*** we will never find lasting joy. Joy isn’t in the happenings, it is in the Holy Spirit! There are far too many Christians that miss spell G-l-o-r-y spelling is G-R-O-W-L!

**III. Vs. 13-14 Three things we can always be thankful for**

Vs. 12-14 The closing paragraph states ***three things that we can always be grateful for***. We can always come back to these three things for they are continually true of every believer. The more we think about them, the more an attitude of gratitude will control our life.

1. Vs. 12 ***Privileges we don't deserve***: We have been qualified by God “*to share in the inheritance of the saints*” which is in the resources available to all Christians. These are:
* The Father's love
* Jesus’ continual presence
* The Holy Spirit’s resources
* A family to support us
* The certainty of glory

If we remember these we can rejoice in the midst of whatever comes. These are privileges we don't deserve for which we have been qualified by God.

1. Vs. 13 ***Perils from which we have been delivered***: “*He has delivered us from the power of darkness.*” Think of the things that might have happened to us if we had never became believers. Where would we be if Jesus hadn’t intervened in our lives? The Lord Jesus has rescued us from the increasing uncertainties of life.
2. Vs. 13b-14 ***Pressures from which we have been freed***: Finally Jesus has “*brought us into the kingdom of the Son that he loves.*” We have been freed from the feeling of being unwanted. The feeling that nobody cares, nobody wants us, nobody loves us. That is forever rendered untrue by the work of Jesus. He has brought us into his kingdom and, with him, we share the love of the Father.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

1: 13-2:3 **Walking in the Work of Christ**

1:15-20 Through creation

**1:15-17**

**“He’s got the whole world in His hands”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 15 Jesus: What God looks like and what man was meant to look like**

**III. Vs. 16 Jesus: The Plan, Power and Purpose of creation**

**IV. Vs. 17 Jesus: Holding everything together**

**I. Intro.**

Charles Wesley wrote a wonderful Hymn that gets played only at Christmas called: “*Hark, The Herald Angels Sing*”, in it is a line that comes right from this letter as Wesley wrote of Jesus: “*Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the Incarnate Deity*.” These words capture the central truth of our Christian faith and every other doctrine flows out of that great truth. I believe that there are two reasons that caused Paul to make this truth to the Colossian believers.

1. Paul is concerned that these new Christians grow up: Because of false teaching the Colossian believers were losing their clear vision of Christ. A person can’t “*Imitate Christ*” if they couldn’t see Him clearly? (1 Corin. 11:1) To some in the Church today Jesus has lost His visibility. The Church has been what most focus on and because of this Jesus isn’t seen as active in their lives here and now. Jesus has become to some like the British monarch, striped of power, just a figurehead to be treated with respect and reverence, but to not expect anything from. Paul’s, letter places Jesus clearly in view so they couldn’t miss who He is!
2. Paul can’t help himself: As young man known as Saul of Tarsus he believed that Jesus of Nazareth was a deliberate blasphemer who got what was coming to Him. Paul considered it an honor and mission in life to go after and take out anyone who believed what he believed were Jesus’ lies. But that all came to a screeching halt as he was on his way to Damascus, there 20 plus years earlier he heard a voice saying to him, “*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?*” In amazement Paul cried out, “*Who are you, Lord*?” and here Paul states the answer he found to his own question 20 years earlier, “*Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the Creator of all things.*” Paul goes on to point out three truths about Jesus and two ways He demonstrated those truths in verses 15-17:

**II. Vs. 15 Jesus: What God looks like and what man was meant to look like**

**Vs. 15a Christ's nature as God**: What does Paul mean that Jesus is *“the image of the invisible God*?” Is it like the little boy who was drawing pictures one day when his mother asked him, “*What are you drawing*?” And the boy replied, “*I'm drawing a picture of God*.” Hearing this, his mom said, “*Honey no one knows what God looks like.*” The boy never looked up and instead just said, “*They will when I get through*!” There are a lot of people who are drawing god as they think he is but that’s not what Paul is doing. Paul says if you look at Jesus you will see two things: He will be the exact photograph of God and He will show us what mankind was meant to look like! Jesus Himself told Philip in John 14:9 when He said, “*Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'*?” The word “*image*” here means “*an exact representation and revelation*” and combined with the word “*firstborn*” would bring the meaning of the word firstborn not to mean “*time*” but rather to “*status or place*”. It is only in Jesus that the invisible God is revealed perfectly.

**Vs. 15b Christ’s work as Creator**: Next Paul says that Jesus is “*The firstborn of all creation.*” The Jehovah's Witnesses say that this phrase proves that Jesus was a created being and not God. The word “*firstborn*” in the Greek is a word that **doesn’t** speak of ***chronologically*** but rather of ***priority***. In Exodus 4:22 Jacob is called the firstborn and in Jeremiah 31:9 Ephraim (Joseph’s youngest son) is also called the firstborn. In both cases they had older brothers chronologically but were first in order of priority. Paul isn’t saying that Jesus was the first created being and therefore not eternal in nature. He is saying that Jesus was first in priority as He created! That’s what John said in his gospel in John 1:1-3 **“***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*”

**III. Vs. 16 Jesus: The Plan, Power and Purpose of creation**

Vs. 16 This is again affirmed as Paul says Jesus created all things and therefore could not be created Himself. No wonder the wind and seas obeyed Him, and death and diseases fled from Him, they had no choice! Saints the truth is everything exists IN, FOR, and THROUGH Jesus.

* ***He is the Sphere in which they exist***
* ***He is the Agent through which they came into being***
* ***He is the One for whom they were made***

For centuries, the Greek philosophers had taught that everything needed three things:

***A primary cause***: Or ***the plan***

***An instrumental cause***: Or ***the power***

***And a final cause***: Or ***the purpose***

***But when it comes to Creation Jesus Christ is***:

The primary cause (***He planned it***)

The instrumental cause (***He produced it***)

The final cause (***He did it for His own pleasure***)This verse reveals that Jesus cannot be part of God's creation, for all created things were created by him. Jesus is the originator of all life including what Paul describes here in verse 16 as “*thrones and rulers and powers and authorities*” all of these were created by him. The Colossians were being influenced by Greek teachers that the universe consisted of a “*hierarchy of divine beings*” like Hermes, Poseidon, Apollo and Zeus etc. and they had a kind of eastern concept of reincarnation. *It’s strange how folks will reject Christianity with all the historical and archaeological evidence and then receive false concepts of reincarnation, horoscopes and astrology as influencing and governing their lives. Others go after Transcendental Meditation as the means of getting in touch with invisible beings that are to them Astral Teachers and Divine Masters to impart knowledge*. Over time people have ***progressed*** and ***evolved*** into a complete state of ignorance of God and are lost to the gods of their own making. To all of this Paul proclaims that Jesus is above all creation in heaven or on earth, visible or invisible, thrones or dominions, principalities or powers. As “***ALL THINGS WERE CREATED THROUGH HIM AND FOR HIM***.” Christian we are forever freed from the bondage to our horoscopes, tarot cards and any of these attempts to have direction and favor in this life.

**IV. Vs. 17 Jesus: Holding everything together**

Vs. 17 This verse declares, two ways of how Jesus controls the creation: Time and Space or history:

1. Vs. 17a ***Time***: “*And He is before all things*”: My little grandson has a favorite word “MINE” but there is only one person that can truly claim that upon everything He sees, Jesus. There is a mystery to me in men like Carl Sagan who worked in the field of astronomy, knowing the great secrets of the universe, breathed the air, ate the food, and relied upon the moment by moment heartbeat all of which God has supplied, yet still insisted in telling everyone that only man mattered! Jesus controls time because He has always been and therefore before time.
2. Vs. 17b ***Space***: “*And in Him all things consist*”: Jesus has the power to sustain and to prevent breakdown. The scientists, who work on the linear accelerator at Stanford University smashing the atom apart, know that it takes incredible power to do so, but what holds them together. Well the answer to that isn’t a “What” but rather a “WHO” as the atom isn’t held together by a something it’s a Someone!

There is a law of science known as Coulomb’s Law of Physics which describes the electrostatic interaction between [electrically charged](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electric_charge) particles and is essential to the development of the [theory of electromagnetism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_electromagnetism). The law can easily be tested with two magnets as two positive ends will repel each other where the opposite ends attract. But here in lies the mystery as the nucleus of an atom are packed full of only positive charged particles. Since all of creation is made up of atoms what is keeping it together instead of them doing what they naturally want to do, REPEL? You can study Quantum Physics and hear lots of theories but the truth is no one in Science knows what the ***Atomic Glue*** is that holds the atom together with such force that to split causes a very big bang! I believe that 2 Peter 3:10 holds the answer as Peter wrote, “*the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up*.” You see the answer is that Jesus is holding the atom together and one day Peter says He will just let go and things will get very hot and there will be a very big bang! The things of creation is temporary and Jesus is holding everything together so the next time everything is coming apart in your life just give everything to Him as He is very good at keeping things together.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

1: 13-2:3 **Walking in the Work of Christ**

1:15-20 Through creation

**1:18-20**

**“Priceless Treasures from Worthless Junk”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 18 Christ and His Church**

**III. Vs. 19 The Great I AM**

**IV. Vs. 20 One Way**

**I. Intro.**

The incredible description of Jesus that Paul writes of in verses 15-20 have caused some to speculate that Paul was quoting from an early Christian hymn now lost except for what we have here. What we do know is that these words describe Jesus work in creation from two views:

1. Vs. 15-17 Describe Jesus’ work ***material creation***: In heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.
2. Vs. 18-20 Describe Jesus’ work in ***recreating mankind***: Here we are taken to an even more amazing work that reveals Jesus’ creative ability making people a new creation in Him, a new humanity.

I’m impressed with Jesus’ work in creating but I’m even more amazed at His ability to recreate what mankind completely ruined. There is a song I used to sing when I was a baby Christian with the chorus that said:

*Heartaches, broken pieces
Ruined lives are why You died on Calvary
Your touch is what I long for
You have given life to me*

**II. Vs. 18 Christ and His Church**

Vs. 18 The Church is not an ***organization*** it is an ***organism***, something that is eternally new and never before seen. Every time a person becomes a New Creation the Church adds something never before seen as that person is a one of a kind masterpiece. I’m afraid that the majesty of Jesus’ re-creative work isn’t always what people see when they look at the church as they are apt to say the church is a:

* 1. ***Religious Country Club***: A group of folks that sole existence is for the enjoyment and benefit of its members.
	2. ***Religious Cult***: A collection of emotional misfits who can’t wait for the first bus off the planet.
	3. ***Religious Kooks***: A bunch of self-righteous, money hungry, hypocritical thugs who act like they are better than everybody else.

But that is not what Jesus looks like and it’s not what His recreation of humanity is supposed to look like. If that is what folks see than the Church has made the mistake of taking up the paint and brushes themselves! The first thing Paul does is tell us what the Church ought to look like as he says, “*And He* (JESUS) *is the head of the body, the Church…*” This description by Paul is very helpful as it has to do with likeness and proportion.

1. ***Likeness***: No matter how you try to photo shop a person’s head onto an animal it just doesn’t look right. So when folks look at the body they should see a likeness to the head and if they don’t they will have a misconception of what Jesus the head looks like.
2. ***Proportion***: Since Paul is using this human analogy it is easy to understand how the Church ought to function as humans function. The Church, (like humans) have a head on top of our bodies which is the control center for the body. It is the head that runs the body and not the body that runs the head. I think some Churches have forgotten that they have a HEAD as they either look out of proportion, having a tiny little head, or have become altogether headless. No wonder folks look at the church weird!

Whether you are looking at a local church or the Western Evangelical Church as a whole this description by Paul of Jesus’ connection as head to us, His body provides a visible depiction of health. If the church (the body) is spastic, lifeless, and partially dead then we know that part of it is out of touch with its head, Jesus. When we started this letter I shared the obvious that: “*We don’t go to Church we* ***ARE*** *the church, body of Christ*.” Each individual needs to be directly connected to the Head, (Jesus) and not just on Sunday’s but each and every day as we expect Jesus to guide us and direct every aspect of our lives. Where that takes places daily the (*the body receiving everything from its head, Jesus*) His body the church starts impacting society on every level. Paul also in verse 18 tells two more things:

1. ***Who is the beginning***: Jesus is the beginning of the Church! He is the one we get our life, power, joy, love, and truth from. Because of Jesus the Church (you and I) are part of a new humanity that God has rebirthed upon this earth. In Matthew 13:45-46 Jesus spoke about the “*Pearl of Great Price*” and a lot of folks misinterpret this parable saying that the Lord is the “*pearl of great price*” and the unbeliever is to seek Jesus out and purchase Him so that they might possess Him. But the right interpretation is not of the sinner seeking Jesus, but rather of Jesus seeking the sinner. A pearl, starts out as an irritated oyster! A grain of sand gets under the oyster's shell. It covers the irritating grain of sand with a beautiful nacre that hardens into a lustrous and gorgeous pearl. That is how the church was born. It emerges from the wounded side of Jesus. He covers over our sin and heals it, making it into a beautiful pearl of great value.
2. ***The firstborn from the dead***: The word “firstborn” is the same word as we saw in verse 15 which dealt not chronologically but in priority. So what Paul is saying is that Jesus ALONE possesses the resurrection life and He gives this life to each person who trusts on Him. That is what John said in 1 John 5:11 where we read“*And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son*.” There is a sentence added here by Paul that gives understanding to why Jesus is the sole possessor of the resurrection as he adds “*that in all things, He may have preeminence.*” You see Jesus is the creator of the old and He is the creator of the new that means that there is nothing out side of His control and that means because He has granted us resurrection power over the old life. Because of Jesus we are overcomers, overcoming our former life that continually wants to drag us back into bondage and death.

**III. Vs. 19 The Great I AM**

Vs. 19 Having given Jesus’ re-creative work in humanity Paul is quick to again point out the reason for His ability to work, He’s God the Son! The word “*fullness*” in the Greek means “*The sum total of all the divine power and attributes*” and Paul will use this word 8 times in this short letter to describe Jesus. The word “*dwell*” means “*to be at home permanently*”. Noted Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest in his word studies on this passage says, “*this fullness was not something added to His Being that was not natural to Him, but it was part of His essential Being,… it was permanently part of His constitution*.”

I can’t state it more plainly then what one writer said: “*If Jesus is not God, then I do not have a Savior*.” It is Jesus’ exclusive claim of Deity that separates Him from every other religion. If you could have asked:

* Buddha…. “*Are you the Son of Brahma?*” He would have said, “*You are still under a vale of illusion.*”
* Socrates… “*Are you Zeus?*” He would have, “*Laughed at you!*”
* Mohammed… “*Are you Allah?*” He would have, “*Cut your head off!*”
* Moses… “*Are you God*” He would have said, “*No, there is one greater than Me who is God the Son.*”

But when they asked Jesus He said plainly and repeatedly ***I AM***! He alone is “Immanuel” God with us!

**IV. Vs. 20 One Way**

Vs. 20 It is because Jesus is both God and man that he alone is able to “*reconcile all things to Himself.*” In verse 21 we understand what He has reconciled to Himself as we are told “*you, who once were alienated and enemies in your own mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled*…” The word “*reconcile*” in the Greek means more than just salvation it means “*To remove all impediments to peace*.” *That’s why Paul says in verse 20 “whether things on earth or things in heaven.*.” Jesus will one day remove the hostility evil has against the rightness of God, it hasn’t happened yet but it will. One day evil will forever be subdued and will be forced to cease its rebellion against the goodness of God. God will no longer allow evil, injustice and suffering at this time they are allowed by God and although it is a mystery they are serving God’s ultimate plan.

Dear ones a time will soon come where every hurt and heartache will be resolved, every tear will be wiped away, every pain will be relieved and all will live in peace. Isaiah the prophet describes this time in chapter 11 where he writes “*The wolf also shall dwell the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.*” It will be a time when “*every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father*.” Friend that is where all of history is headed, we having nothing to fear Jesus is coming back! What has happened that will cause history to culminate into such bliss? Jesus “*has made peace through the blood of His cross*.” It was His sacrifice on the cross that will put everything right. Out of His death on that dirty, bloody, horrible means of death, His life flowed out onto all of creation that has caused the re-creation! Saint’s the “Good news” just keeps getting better!

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

1: 13-2:3 **Walking in the Work of Christ**

1:21-23 Through the curse

**1:21-23**

**“Blessed and nothing less”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 21 The way we were**

**III. Vs. 22 The way we are**

**IV. Vs. 23a The way we stay that way**

**I. Intro.**

From verses 15-20 Paul’s focus was on Jesus as creator, first through the physical and material realm. Then Paul spoke of Jesus’ ability to recreate humanity thus His ability to create in the spiritual realm. But where does a person go to prove Jesus’ ability to recreate? In verses 21-23 Paul suggests the mirror! Pete Heron was a man who I met years ago. He had been an outlaw biker, heroin user and dealer, an ex-con from San Quentin. When I met Pete he was living in rundown bedroom of an abandoned house. Pete started coming to church and never left, with his West Virginia accent and a heart for those like himself he started a drug and alcohol ministry in the church I pastored, then he led worship. His driving record was so bad that it took 5 years for him to get a driver’s license and when he did he used the transportation to go to school and after 4 years he got his master degree in counseling. This wonderful reconciliation project of the Lord had a great line that he would use every time someone would ask him, “*Pete how are you doing*?” He would always answer no matter what was going on in his life, “*Blessed and nothing less*!” Pete like the rest of us was proof of transformation and the re-creative power of Jesus Christ.

**II. Vs. 21 The way we were**

Paul is speaking of the power of Christ to do three amazing things to broken people:

1. Vs. 21a **Arrested decay**: “*Once were alienated*”
2. Vs. 21b **Restored damage**: “*He has reconciled*”
3. Vs. 22b **Presented perfection**: “*To present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.*”

I suppose looking out into fallen humanity with its rising crime rates and moral decay most would just settle for the “arrest of decay”, some may dream of restoration for the damage but I’m certain that very few would ever go so far as to believe that anything or anyone could ever take someone, who had been damaged to a place of perfection far beyond their best days. Yet that is the three fold claim of Paul with regards to Jesus! In fact Paul is making what is in practical purpose a “guarantee”. Looking at verse 23 it does come with an exemption clause to make sure that folks understand what Jesus can do is limited in a person actually being in a relationship with Christ. In other words no one can expect to see the results of Jesus’ work in their life if Jesus isn’t in their life! This process of transformation requires the Lord to take us through three stages:

1. Vs. 21-23a ***Attaining a new attitude***
2. Vs.23b-25a ***Realizing the reality***
3. Vs. 26-29 ***Mastering the Mystery***

Vs. 21 Notice the change in tone as Paul writes “and you” making this section personal not theoretical. At one time their attitude about God was reflected in the way they lived their life by “*wicked works*”. Yet even in the face of bitter rebellion and hatred Jesus still went through with the work of reconciliation. He took the initiative and didn’t wait for mankind to meet Him ½ way. Griffith Thomas sees five stages of mankind that the work of Christ continues to work in: Alienation, Reconciliation, Presentation, Continuation and Evangelization and I suppose he’s right.

Paul says that we were once “*alienated*” from God. Apart from a relationship we had no use for God and we didn’t even think about Him unless it was to complain or blame Him for something that didn’t meet our expectation. We didn’t want His involvement in our lives unless it was to fix something that was broken; than once it was fixed we wanted Him back into His bottle until we needed Him again. We started each day without a thought of Him and we went about our plans living life for ourselves doing whatever we thought was best for us. There was little or no thought or thankfulness for the gift of life and His bountiful blessings that went well beyond our sustenance. As we got older we really didn’t want Him involved in our lives as He would be the unwanted guest at our party whose presence would kill our fun. That’s why Paul says in verse 21b that we were “*enemies in our mind by wicked works*.” The Greek wording of this statement is very important as it means that our alienation and estrangement from God is what caused our hostility towards Him and that caused our sinful behavior to increase.

“*Yet now He has reconciled*”, all that has changed, Paul says. We had shoved God out of our lives, broken off any knowledge of Him let alone a relationship yet He without any cause or reason forgave our estrangement and hurt and still chose to love us. It was that love demonstrated by His death upon a cross that changed our attitude towards Him. As John said in His letter it is because of His unconditional love towards us that our attitude towards Him changed from hatred to love. No longer was God a kill joy judge he was a loving Father. Saint’s don’t you see that if we are going to be transformed that the first and most difficult thing to change is going to be our attitude? ***Our wealth must no longer be seen in the created instead they must be seen in the Creator***! God is into transformation and there can’t be any better news than that for fallen humanity.

**III. Vs. 22 The way we are**

Vs. 22 The means to this reconciliation was in the body of Christ, through his death. The gulf between fallen mankind and God is impassible by man but God sent His only Son who has become the bridge by which we can come home! Yet the bridge of Christ is so effective that it not only takes us home it transforms us by presenting us as a “New Creation” whole, blameless and above reproach. I don’t know about you but upon my completed transformation I’m going to really enjoy finally being “*whole, blameless and above reproach*”. We were never saved to be refugees, 2nd class citizens living in a ghetto.

 “*Blameless*” means “*without blemish*.” The word was applied to the temple sacrifices which had to be without blemish. It is amazing that God looks at His children and sees no blemish on them! “*Above reproach*” means “*free from accusation*” and once we have been reconciled to God, no charges can be brought against us. Dear ones as I’ve said before this transformation starts with our attitude but according to verse 22b it is headed to a certain goal which Paul says (*and I’m paraphrasing*) to “***present you whole, well balanced in spirit, soul and body in His sight.***” And we know according to Paul’s letter to the Philippians that “*He who had begun a good work will see to it until He completes it.*”

**IV. Vs. 23a The way we stay that way**

Vs. 23a Paul used an architectural image in this verse—a house, firmly set on the foundation. The town of Colossae was located in a region known for earthquakes, and the word translated “*moved away*” can mean "earthquake stricken." Paul was saying, “*If you are truly saved, and built on the solid foundation, Jesus Christ, then you will continue in the faith and nothing will move you*.” ***In other words, we are not saved by continuing in the faith. But by continuing in the faith we prove that we are saved***. Someone has well said, “*If your faith fizzles before you finish, it is because it was faulty from the first*!” That doesn’t mean that our faith may not wobble at times, even grow so dim that it is barely visible for long periods of time but deep down there is still signs of new life and a changed attitude. Jesus’ work in humanity isn’t limited to just a “*get out of hell free card*” it is a pass go and collect the jack pot! Jesus died that He may live in us, be available to us every moment of the day! *Jesus had to be who He is and do what He did in order that we might have what He alone has, a* ***VICTORIOUS LIFE***! This is why Paul preached Jesus, Christ in you:

* The hope of glory
* Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

1: 13-2:3 **Walking in the Work of Christ**

1:24-2:3 Through the church

**1:24-29**

**“The Master’s Mystery Tour”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 23b-25 Realizing the reality**

**III. Vs. 26-29 Mastering the mystery**

**I. Intro.**

Think of the mystery of that promise in Isaiah chapter 40 where we read, “*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint*.” That promise wasn’t dealing with heaven as we won’t need renewed strength, we will have it forever. No, that promise is to live life today, right now in this body as we wait upon the Lord. In fact Paul says in verse 29, “*to this end I labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily*.” Thus Paul was operating in this life by Jesus’ working which was working in him mightily. Saint’s that’s what Paul is going to sharing with us this morning just how this work came into being.

**II. Vs. 23b-25 Realizing the reality**

Vs. 23b The 2nd part of this transformation happens as we start realizing the new reality of our transformation. That new reality started with hope in the “good news”. Paul would write to the Church in Rome that “*Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the world of God*.” The truth about Jesus’ work may have been heard long before a person ever responded to it and it may have been heard multiple times but at some point in time it became a reality in your life. It never ceases to amaze me that God in His infinite wisdom would chose to use such a faulty delivery method as people to deliver such life altering and saving medicine as Jesus Christ. I can come to only two conclusions when I think of this:

* 1. The medicine of Jesus must be incredibly 100% successful that it can still work despite the obviously flawed way in which He is distributed.
	2. The flawed human syringe must be part of the truth that all are in a continual need of the antidote which is Jesus.

Some way wonder about Paul’s assertion that the “*gospel is preached to every creature under heaven*” when as yet in this generation this still has yet to have been accomplished. In Roman’s 10 Paul quotes Psalm 19 about the truth that the “*Heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech and night unto night reveals knowledge*.” God’s creation is His first preacher so that all are without excuses. There has never been a single person who having heard creations message and received it, that God will not bring them into the knowledge of the Savior. Oft times it is the first preacher that leads us to a human preacher. As Paul describes three characteristics of those that have been given the privilege to proclaim the truth about Jesus:

1. Vs. 23 b **Servant**: This is what the word “minister” means. I believe that you should always be able to tell if a person is a true minister of Jesus as you will be able to see they are a humble servant. Jesus is the only one that should receive credit for the message and the transformation. I recall the story of Billy Graham that was interrupted by a drunk on a plane flight who loudly proclaimed that he was one of Billy’s converts to which Billy calmly said, “*You must be because you clearly aren’t one of Jesus’*.”
2. Vs. 24 **Sacrifice**: Paul talks about what it cost him to be the syringe that places the Word about Jesus into lives and in saying this he isn’t saying that something is lacking in the atoning work of Jesus, that something more needs to be added to deal with sin. The word affliction is never used to describe the death of Jesus as Jesus is able to save all on His finished work upon the cross. The sacrifice that Paul writes here is not Christ’s but the sacrifice that Jesus has for Paul in his own life. A fact that was brought to Ananias at Paul’s conversion when he was told that Paul would “*suffer much for Jesus’ sake*.” Saint’s someone always has to pay the price in order that others come to Christ. The gospel is always FREE but it is never CHEAP! Just as every parent knows of sleepless nights, tears and broken hearts that they have gone through for their children so to those who have had the blessed privilege of spreading the gospel. Our bibles are red with the blood of those who have died for the blessings of sharing this truth to the world.
3. Vs. 25 **Stewardship**: The word rendered “*stewardship*” is an old Greek word that means a “*house manager*”. This was a person who was in charge of their Masters household. The steward was responsible to manage the resources of their master to the betterment of the master so that the master would receive all the glory of the steward’s labor. As such this deals not just with the message but the way in which the message is delivered. Paul didn’t ask “*What do I get out of this*?” instead he asked “***How much will God let me put into this***?”

**III. Vs. 26-29 Mastering the mystery**

Reading through this “*mystery*” which Paul records in verses 26-29 it is clear that it covers two things:

1. **Christ in you the hope of glory**: Now most folks are familiar with this mystery as it deals with their ***salvation*** and future ***glorification***.
2. **Every man perfect in Christ Jesus**: This 2nd part of the mystery is something that very few understand and this deals with our ***sanctification*** by which Jesus’ resurrection power is available in our life today, to overcome temptation, power over doubt and fear, making us champions over this world and life in it.

Vs. 26-27 The word “*mystery*” in the Bible doesn’t mean something that cannot be known but something that was previously incomprehensible but now is understandable! A “*sacred secret*” hidden in the past and now revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Vs. 28 I notice in this verse **four things about the message** that Paul was privileged to proclaim:

1. **Him we preach**: The essential aspect of Paul’s message was the person and work of Jesus.
* False teachers, teach themselves and their achievements
* Educator’s, teach teaching and philosophy
* Entertainers, present a program worthy of applause

Paul didn’t teach Jesus, he ***presented Jesus***, ***introduced Jesus*** and let the Holy Spirit communicate His goodness and truth.

1. **Warning every man:** Paul didn’t stop at proclaiming Jesus he warned people as well. Like any parent would their child Paul saw that ***the message needed to have application to guide and protect children***.
2. **Teaching every man:** The message must be ***instructive*** for in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, (Col. 2:3) There is no “*new teaching*” as all we need to know is related to Jesus. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge and all wisdom will lead a person to humility and brokenness!
3. **Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus:**  Paul’s ***message has an end which is to present every believer “complete and mature” in Christ***. It described an apprentice who was no longer a novice but was now a journeyman. The goal of preaching, warning and teaching is maturity!

Vs. 29 The message of the gospel had four elements to it but it also according to Paul has a balance of power as he describes ***three ways in which he delivered the message***:

1. **Preparation**, “*To this end I also labored*”: Labored is the word “*toils*” in the Greek and describes a person who works to the point of exhaustion but keeps on going. There are some who think teaching the Bible takes little or no time and I’m afraid with some that I’ve heard it shows. I remember talking to one fellow who had taught a few times who believed that for the message to be “*anointed*” you should do no preparation and just allow the Holy Spirit to teach. My response was that the Holy Spirit required a human to teach and I was very confident that He would do His best work through a vessel that “*labored*” at his study. Every week I’m blessed to spend 20 plus hours in preparation in which I share about ¼th of what He gave me. Paul wrote to his young protégé in 2 Timothy 2:15 **“***Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*.”
2. **Perspiration**, “*Striving according to His working*”: Here Paul uses a word in the Greek where we get our English word “*agony*” from. The word describes a wrestling match and most often the word is used in conjunction with prayer. I believe that prayer is under-utilized by most in the pulpit in all three aspects: Before the study, during the study and during the delivery!
3. **Inspiration**, “*Which He works in me mightily*”: The word “*works*” is the Greek word translated “*energy*” in English and “*mightily*” in the Greek is where we get our English word “*dynamite*”. As such this ***describes teaching that has been hard work, bathed in prayer now electrified and dynamite because of the Holy Spirit***.

Saint’s let me apologize for the multiple times that the teaching of the Word of God was not been energizing and explosive to you because the fault lies with me in my feeble preparation and perspiration and not in His Inspiration. And I might add if the Word of God has got you to move or blown apart something that need to be removed in your life that this was a direct result of the Holy Spirit as only He could use one as week and needy as myself!

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

2:4-23 **Walking in the Word of Christ**

2:1-3 Through the church…2:4-7 In Faith

**2:1-5**

**“Hidden in plain sight”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-3 Never a dull moment**

**III. Vs. 4-5 Nothing real about imitation**

**I. Intro.**

Webster’s dictionary defines boredom as: *The state of being weary and restless through lack of interest*. I don’t care what generation you are from; every parent has heard their child say at least once, “*I’m bored,… there’s nothing to do*!” As if their condition is someone else’s fault or responsibility. At the heart of boredom is that most folks look to outside stimulus to get and keep them excited about life. The truth of the matter is that boredom is really our own problem of not finding anything within our own resources anything to draw excitement and interest from!

 The reason why this is relevant to our study is that these dear believers had started to listen and follow after false teachers because they had become apathetic and bored with Jesus! Paul’s antidote to “*Christian boredom*” is revealing afresh the person and work of Christ. Jesus is not just Someone you knew in the, He is an endless life of discovery, a joy filled quest where every turn and twist leaves you wanting more of Him. Saints, it’s time we get excited about Jesus again and anticipate the next great adventures into the mystery of His unending love. He is the book that you can’t put down, the story that you never want to end! This is one of the reasons why Paul employs the word “*riches*” and “*treasures*” in his letters 16 times, three in Colossians. The use of these words speaks of the wealth of living available to the Christian which will enable them to escape the boredom of life.

**II. Vs. 1-3 Never a dull moment**

Vs. 1 The word “For” tells us that the thought of chapter one verses 28-29 are carried forward into chapter 2. Paul having said in verse 28 that he preached Jesus is such a way as to present every person mature in Christ. He goes on to say in verse 29 that this work was one in which he gave the balance of preparation, perspiration and inspiration. Paul wanted these believers to become excited about their pursuit of Jesus so that they would quit pursuing false teaching. I remind you that while Paul was dictating this letter he was chained between two Roman guards around the clock in Rome. Paul’s passion for Christ wasn’t circumstantial; it didn’t wavier when times got tuff.

Vs. 2-3 We have all had the experience listening to someone who has had an experience with something or someone that as they speak of it we become excited and want to meet that person or experience what they have, just because of what our friend has told us. There are folks who have heard about Jesus for all if not most of their lives and He just doesn’t excite them. And the Bible, well they have one but they would rather watch paint dry then read it. Paul wants them to take another look at Jesus in order to “*attain to all the riches*” and “*full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ*.” His heart is that they would be a church knit together in Love for Jesus and each other. A church that is **not** knit together in love is not a Church. Performance or activity can never be a substitute for a body that loves. *A body that knits together in love stays together because of love*! But such love isn’t in absence of the mind as Paul says that they were to be a church that was seeking three things for the intellect:

* 1. ***Understanding***: This is a word in the Greek that refers to critical knowledge or the ability to asses any situation and decide what practical course of action is necessary to take. The Christian and the church must possess the ability of practical discernment so that will be able to take the right course of action.
	2. ***Knowledge***: Is the Greek word that means intuitive or instinctive truth such as that which is gained through experience. It is the hands on kind of learning that we gain only through living life.
	3. ***Wisdom***: This word describes knowledge that is applied and commended and confirmed and acted upon before we experience its benefits. It is this wisdom that enables us to reason, trust and obey!

Sometimes our “*boredom*” is because we didn’t investigate the further advantages of our Christian life. Like a computer in the hands of an infant isn’t something that is going excite them, they aren’t going see any use for it and probably just end up playing with the box it came in. Could our problem be that we haven’t fully investigated the enumerable advantages that are ours in Christ?

Sometimes I get that feeling when I look at the Westernized Evangelical Church, with all our programs and entertainment that some think Jesus needs our help, a good public relations campaign, in order to excite the masses as people are bored of their faith. If anyone had the potential to be “*bored*” it would have been Paul who was at the very moment of writing this letter chained between two Roman guards under house arrest unable to leave. Yet, he is bursting at the seams with excitement over a man most in the world had never heard of and many who had heard of Him thought that He was a dead trouble maker. It’s time that we rediscover Jesus afresh anew because if we do we can never be bored again. Oh, Church with its feeble and unwanted attempts to entertain us may be boring but never JESUS!

 Friends sometimes the treasures that we are looking for are already ours and we don’t realize it. The story is told of the News Paper tycoon William Randolph Hurst who was looking through a book of famous art work when one painting caught his eye, “*I want this painting*” he told his curators. But after an exhaustive search they couldn’t find its location and came back empty handed. Hurst was furious and threatened to fire them if they didn’t return with the painting. Three and a half months later they came to him and told him that they had finally found the painting. Hurst asked, “*Where is it*?” There reply was, “*Sir we found it in your own warehouse; you already own it*!” Saint’s the treasures we often seek are already ours in Christ. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. So go back to your own warehouse of the Word of God and you will find what you’re looking for.

**III. Vs. 4-7 Nothing real about imitation**

Vs. 4-5 Because these precious saints had lost their view of Jesus they had become followers of fancy sounding words. The word deceived means to “*reason beside something*” to “*produce a forgery*” that looks almost identical with the real one but isn’t. ***The deception is that it passes its self-off as the original so that the casual observer will be persuaded to except the phony as the original***. These days many a manufactured thing is a counterfeit of the original. Our cars have simulated “*wood grain*” panels which is nothing more than painted plastic. Our leather chairs are made of Naugahyde, a vinyl product also known as pleather (plastic-leather). You can buy fabric flowers that never fade but neither are they fragrant and alive! How about those vegie burgers? Not for me I want the original, not a cheap imitation. There are always going to be folks who are going to try to pass some new spiritual thing off as the original but the real problem is when you and I begin to regard it as equal to or better than Jesus.

* I don’t want the Michael the Archangel version of Jesus
* I’m not interested in the spirit brother of Lucifer version either

I only want to submit my life to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lord’s who spoke and the world leaped into existence. The Jesus that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He alone is Lord! To me this true alive Jesus is never boring, always exciting, pure joy and peace. It is to this Jesus that Paul wants to present as the One to keep our eyes fixed upon and our lives obedient towards! *The answer to boredom is to reject the cheap imitation so you can discover the exciting God whom we serve*.

 In verse 5 Paul says that there were two things that the Colossian believers possessed that encouraged him that they would reject the false and go after Jesus:

* 1. **Good order**: These believers were living a disciplined ordered life. They made themselves do the right things even when they didn’t want too. A disciplined life is always harder to be deceived because it doesn’t fit into the path of least resistance. It doesn’t mind getting its hands dirty and sacrificing things to achieve the truth. There is a dichotomy in life that says: ***The greater the discipline and practice the greater the ease and freedom***! Someone who has disciplined their life to play a musical instrument with ease is a person who has spent tremendous hours of practice to make it effortless! If you want ease and freedom then you will need discipline as shortcuts will never get you there.
	2. **Steadfastness of your faith in Christ**: These believers had the right order in their faith as it was Jesus who held them and not they who held Christ. They didn’t have faith in their faith, they had placed their trust in a person! It is always difficult to mislead and deceive a person who isn’t trusting in themselves to begin with.

 **Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

2:4-23 **Walking in the Word of Christ**

2:4-7 In Faith 2:8-10 In Fullness

**2:6-8**

**“True verses False”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 6-7 Antidote to a boring life**

**III. Vs. 8 Teaching your horse to spit**

**I. Intro.**

We left off at Paul’s appeal to a boring life which is to represent Jesus Christ. Paul will conclude this then move on to the danger of being spiritually deceived. Pitch men are everywhere trying to convince us that the product of service they are pushing is the key to what ails us. Many people think that because they saw it on the web it must be true. But such deception isn’t new, back in the 1940’s in a farm magazine an ad appeared promising a solution to “*slobbering horses*” for only $20.00. Hundreds sent off their hard earned dollars only to receive a thin envelope with five words on a single sheet of instructions that simple read “***Teach your horse to spit***”. There are a lot of false teachers giving similar spiritual instructions today and for only $19.95 you can get their book or video that will instruct you on how to teach your horse to spit but all you will end up getting is spitting mad! It is a tragic truth that there are those who peddle their false teaching to the spiritually bored believer, some go door to door, some do so on the T.V. and still others sell their lies right next to God’s Word at Christian Book Stores!

**II. Vs. 6-7 Antidote to a boring life**

I believe these two verses give the antidote for a boring Christian life:

Vs. 6 **Faith**: We need to answer the question that Paul indirectly proposes here in this verse: “*How did you receive Christ Jesus*?” The answer is that we simply trusted in Him alone. Boredom has come because we have supplanted simple trust with works and religion and when that happens excitement goes out the window. When have-too’s become the norm instead of get-too’s! The way to revitalize any relationship especially one with Jesus is to get back to the simple trust we had at the beginning. That’s why Paul says to walk in the same way as you first received him. When our relationship is back to that moment by moment trust in Jesus life become a thrill ride of adventure and fun as we are just hanging on to Him at every turn!

Vs. 7 Next Paul gives us four ways to test if we are in a “*faith walk*” with Jesus:

1. **Rooted**: *Rooted* is an agricultural word. The tense of the Greek word means “*once and for all having been rooted*.” Christians are not to be tumbleweeds that have no roots and are blown about by “*every wind of doctrine*” (Eph.). Nor are they to be “*transplants*” that are repeatedly moved from soil to soil. Once we are rooted by faith in Christ, there is no need to change the soil! ***Roots have two functions***: Draw up the nourishment so that the tree can grow and give it strength and stability.
2. **Built up**: *Built up* is an architectural term. It is in the present tense: “*being built up*.” Trusting Christ to save us puts us on the foundation where we can grow in grace. Paul uses the phrase “*as you have been taught*”. It is the Word of God that builds the Child of God.
3. **Established**: Trust is what we put to work in every situation and circumstance. As such to make spiritual progress means to keep adding to the temple to the glory of God.
4. **Abounding in it with thanksgiving**: The word *abounding* suggests the picture of a river overflowing its banks. The sad truth is that far too many have only stuck their big toe in the Water of the Word instead of being in over their head. A thankful life is a mark of Christian maturity, one that will not easily be led astray.

**III. Vs. 8 Teaching your horse to spit**

Vs. 8 Paul tells reveals two things about false teachers:

1. ***Outcome***: What will happen to us if we buy what these charlatans are peddling as he says “*Beware least anyone* ***CHEAT*** *you*.” The word “*cheat*” is literally “*kidnap*” “*taken hostage*”; the word implies ***a loss of freedom***. The outcome of spiritual deception and false teaching is to limit our glorious liberty in Christ. These bored believers had been kidnapped by false teachers and now they were bound by works; ***forced into trying to obtain the promises in Christ that were already theirs by faith***! Today we see folks “*trying to teach their spiritual horse to spit*” by going door to door hoping to inherit the earth by getting folk’s to become just like them by not taking blood transfusions, celebrating birthday’s or saluting the flag. Other’s tell you how much of your money you have to give to get a temple recommend and that you have to serve a mission for two years to become a god one day and populate your own planet.
2. ***Weapon***: Most of these false teachers aren’t using weapons of violence as in Islam; instead they use something as seemly benign as “*philosophy*” which is the Greek word that means “*the love of wisdom*”. Not all that passes its self-off as wisdom is truly wisdom that produces freedom! Paul goes on to tell his readers **two ways you can determine if the “*philosophy*” is true or not**:
	1. **Empty**: The word he uses here means “*hollow*” thus it lacked content or had no basis in reality. Most false teaching has no logic to it; instead it’s just an illusion, pure fantasy, made up by someone to seduce folks that will take it at face value. I’ve been very candid about my early spiritual journey, how I tried lots of “*spiritual horse spitting*” but every time I went further I was told I couldn’t look any further and that was always the time I was out of there. Only in Christ am I invited to continue to “*taste and see that He is good*” only in the Bible am I told to “*study to show my self, approved.*”
	2. **Exploits**: The 2nd thing Paul mentions about these false teachings is that they all exploit the follower. **Deception and exploitation are always the bottom line with these false teachings**. To determine if a philosophy is deceptive and exploitive would require a person to have to be in it and looking at it for some time which is in its self, dangerous to our freedom. So Paul offers ***three characteristics of false philosophies***:
3. *Depends upon the traditions of men*: Paul is addressing religious traditions that become popular and widespread, that get pushed onto succeeding generations. Paul would write elsewhere of endless geologies, special holy days and practices. Recently I had a lady call me to ask a few questions about this fellowship. She wanted to know if we took communion every week and I told her it was offered every week and that we participated in the Lord’s Supper corporately once a month. She was fine with that then she asked if we recited the Lord’s Prayer. I tried to get her to explain what she meant by that then told her that we pray often during our time together but would only recite the Lord’s Prayer when we were in that passage of scripture and she hung up on me. That’s the thing about “*traditions of men*” they tend to make a person “*Feel Holy*” but they do nothing to cause they to “*Act Holy*”! There are a lot of traditions that the church has placed in practice that has nothing to do with what Jesus said or did and are nothing more than man made.
4. *Depends upon the principles of the world*: The word “*principles*” means “*things in a row*” and became associated with the ABC’s of things. But it was also a word that was used to speak of ranks in a military. This seems to speak of the enemy behind these principles. Satan is a liar for the beginning and because of this these “*principles*” arise out of the thinking of man and get a foothold into society. Such as Darwinism, the theory that evolved into a fact a lot quicker than primordial ooze grew a tail and legs. Soon everybody believed the “*millions and millions of years*” until a few years later it became “*billions and billions of years*”. Adaptation becomes evidence of evolution simply because rabbits in the snow with dark fur got eaten by fox and wolves leaving only white coated rabbits. In evolution the only thing that is becoming extinct is truth while the lie of evolution continues to evolve. There are many principles of the world that end up being little more than urban legends and myths.
5. *Denies the person and work of Christ*: The final characteristic of a false philosophy is that it ***always seeks to demote Jesus and our need for Him***. Any teaching or doctrine that makes Jesus greater and me less is probably correct. But with false teaching that they want to strip Jesus of His deity, or make man equal to His deity. Sometimes they want to diminish His sacrifice or take it away all together by saying He died but didn’t raise to life. Or that He didn’t die on a cross He died on a stake.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

2:4-23 **Walking in the Word of Christ**

2:8-10 In Fullness – 2:11-17 In Forgiveness

**2:9-15**

**“All I ever wanted and needed”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 9-10 Jesus completes me**

**III. Vs. 11-15 We’ve changed**

**I. Intro.**

Last week Paul warned the Colossian believers not to be cheated through false teaching and this week he speaks about why such a further pursuit is a waste of time as we read in verse 9 “*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*.” Amazingly Paul doesn’t counter this false teaching by attacking the teaching, instead He chooses to speak yet again of the person and work of Christ. The word “*fullness*” means “*sum total*” and by it Paul is saying that in Jesus the sum total of all of God’s being and attributes exist. The remarkable truth is that every believer shares that fullness as Paul declares in the Greek that we are permanently complete in Him. When we become born again we are born complete in Christ and our spiritual growth is ***not by addition*** but rather ***by nutrition*** as ***we grow from the inside out, nothing needs to be added***. Paul will highlight ***five truths*** with regards to Jesus. The first 1 has to do with the character of Christ and the next four deal with the work of Christ on our behalf.

**II. Vs. 9-10 Jesus completes me**

Vs. 9-10 This statement of Paul is a full declaration of the complete and full Deity of Jesus and says that, “*Since all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus, then He cannot be Michael the Arch Angel, …. the Spirit Brother of Lucifer etc*.” If Jesus isn’t who he declared to be then we aren’t complete in Him. ***Our completeness in Christ isn’t something that we achieve it is something that we enjoy***!

1. “*In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*..”: ***When they received Jesus they already got everything they needed***. This phrase of Paul’s isn’t meant to express that Jesus is both the Father and the Son as Oneness Pentecostals suggest. What Paul is saying is that when you and I received Jesus by faith the whole of the godhead came into your life. Spiritual boredom had left these new believers susceptible to false teaching that was claiming that there was something more that they could add to Jesus, some secret teaching that would cause them to be super saints. So Paul tells them, “*What more can you add to God*?” All that remains for us is a continual quest, an unending discovery of who God is and how Who He is can be applied into every aspect of our lives.

Having made the statement, Paul now traces how this happened to them. ***In these next four statements he tells how believers share in the fullness of God in Christ***.

1. Vs. 11 **First, he declares, they were circumcised with Christ**: There are some in the Christian faith that want to equate circumcision with baptism but it is clear by the next verse which Paul speaks of baptism that he doesn’t view them as the same thing. Because most circumcision today is done for hygiene reasons its biblical meaning is often not considered. There are ***three things to consider about circumcision:***
	1. Circumcision involves the male reproductive organ; that which God has ordained for “***procreation***”.
	2. It also is a “***private***” part of the male body, one that is for the most part covered, hidden from view of others.
	3. Throughout history this organ was directly related to a man’s ego, his machismo, his manhood or if you will his “***pride***”.

Those three realities (***procreation, private*** and ***pride***) go a long way in understanding why God chose circumcision as a symbol both to Abraham, the Israelites as well as Christians. Deut. 10:16 and 30:6 speak of this reality calling it a symbol of the “*circumcision of the heart*.” What God is saying symbolically is ***that if you want to be able to “reproduce”, to be successful in this life then you are going to have to expose that which is private and cut off the pride filled life***. *When we expose our pride to the knife of the Word of God we see what fallen humanity really is, just dead flesh and there is nothing to brag about with dead flesh!* Now notice in verse 11 that Paul says that, “In Him (*that is Jesus*) you (*those that by faith have received Jesus*) were also circumcised.” Then to make sure that these Colossian believers understood his symbolism, Paul goes on to explain it saying, “*with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ*.” This is what Paul called the “***circumcision of the heart***”. Jesus took upon Himself our fallen flesh our “*pride*” and sin nature and when we receive Him we are declaring that our pride and self-worth is worthless and does nothing to make us right with God. Oh to be sure unrepentive man will still boast in and praises it but it will never gain us one inch before God. The Old man is dead and as Jesus said in John 15:5 “*Without me, you can do nothing*!” The truth is apart from Jesus mankind is impotent and cannot please God no matter how hard they may try all their works are like filthy rags!

1. Vs. 12-13 ***Next Paul speaks about baptism: And he declares two things about baptism in these two verses***:
	1. “*Buried with him in baptism….being dead in your trespasses*”: The first symbol of baptism has to do with ***our identification with the death and burial of Christ***. Jesus took on our trespasses, our sin and in baptism we are publically declaring our death to our former life. So as we go under the water we are publically saying that our former way of self-centered living is dead to us and we are burying it under the water.
	2. “*You were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God….He has made alive together with Him*”: Ah but that is only one part of the symbol of baptism as we don’t leave a person under the water buried, we raise them up. ***So in baptism we not only identify with the burial of Christ we identify with His resurrection and imparting new life and power to live the new life in Christ***.

Trespass is a specific type of sin and means to “*overstep a boundary*”.So in baptism we are recognizing Christ’s work in overcoming our old nature by burying it and being raised and alive in Christ.

1. Vs. 14 In this verse we see another work of Christ, **forgiveness**: What’s great about Jesus’ forgiveness is that it doesn’t stop at our sin and failures, past present and future. No it goes all the way to, “*wiping out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us*.” Handwriting of requirements has in mind a list of moral debt before God. Jesus changed the law, as the basis of being our right standing with Him. It still stands to as a standard of morality and conscious, a compass to point us towards Jesus. But it will never again for us be the standard by which we will be declared right with God. Jesus nailed the old standard to the cross. ***Sin still affects our fellowship with God but can never affect our relationship with God as we are in Christ***! Don’t miss understand me we will still need to deal with our sin by agreeing with God about it but forgiveness towards us is the heart of our Father in Christ. That means that every one of my sins, mistakes, failures, unloving words and actions are forgiven. And every day I can start each day with a clean slate as Jesus has nailed all of those things to the cross and now we are free to go and sin no more.
2. Vs. 15 ***The final thing we see is that we are forever freed from the power of these evil influences***: There is in this world “***rulers of darkness***” or as Paul calls them “*principalities and powers*”. These are evil influences that continue to insert their evil into the world through attitudes and philosophies that are counter to God’s Word and our renewed mind. And what Paul says is that they no longer can enforce their ways upon us. Oh they are still at work in the “*sons of disobedience*” and they can crop up in us when we yield our hearts and mind to them. Paul declares that when Jesus died he seized these powers by the throat, chained them, and dragged them in triumph behind him, like a Roman general marching through the streets of Rome, his chained captives walking behind in total subjugation. That is why John can say "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." There is no need, therefore, to give way to evil teaching or evil temptations, for we have a Power and a Person within who is superior to anything Satan can throw against us---the world, the flesh or the devil!

Paul is encouraging the Colossians to see that there is absolutely no need to believe the doctrines, the teachings or the rituals that he will next enunciate to them. There are two things every believer must continually look into if they are to have a joy filled life:

1. ***We need to understand who we are in Christ***
2. ***We need to continually discover what we already have in him***

Paul describes what has happened for us because in Jesus all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. There is no need to be weak, faltering, or failing. We may rise up and be the men and women that God intended us to be.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

2:4-23 **Walking in the Word of Christ**

2:11-17 In Forgiveness – 2:18-23 In Freedom

 **2:16-23**

**“Jesus, our life jacket”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 16-17 Ritualism**

**III. Vs. 18-19 Mysticism**

**IV. Vs. 20-23 Legalism**

**I. Intro.**

Most folks view warning signs in two different ways: a “***life jacket***” or a “***strait jacket.***” When a warning sign is seen as interrupting our fun it’s a strait jacket pinning us down. Ah but when it keeps us from harm’s way it becomes a life jacket. My granddaughter can’t swim yet but loves to go boating with us, last year she didn’t want to put on her life jacket while on our boat as she saw it as uncomfortable. That’s because she has never needed it, had she needed it she would have insisted that we put it on her. Warnings often go unheeded because they are issued before trouble is spotted or needed.

The opening of this section with the word “SO” is very important as it links Paul’s words about the five truth about Jesus and why we need not explore false teaching to this section here. In these verses Paul speaks on three aspects of false teaching that seem to be alluring to people: **Ritualism, Mysticism and Legalism**. So Paul is issuing warnings about false teaching that we need to listen, the question is will you view this as a life jacket or a strait jacket?

**II. Vs. 16-17 Ritualism**

Vs. 16-17 It is clear in the New Testament that New Covenant Christians aren’t to be into counting “***calendars and calories***” because those things were just shadows of the real deal in Jesus!

1. **Ritualism**: Ritualism is the “*The making lists and checking them twice to see the knotty from the nice*.” The problem with lists is that they are mechanical and you can just go through the motions without the emotion and then judge everyone else by your actions. Paul goes on to list the two most popular “*lists*” in his day and remember that most of these were influenced by Judaism and Paul at one time held all of these as true:
	1. ***Food or drink***: The first one deal’s with ***special diets.*** In the Old Testament God gave the Israelites a specific list of things they could eat “*clean and unclean*” animals. So should we practice those things today? The simple answer is found in verse 17 where Paul acknowledges that they had a purpose designated by God for the time that God instituted them as they were a “*shadow of things to come*” but now “*the substance is of Christ*”. In other words they were road signs saying to slow down or stop because there was a cliff and a great chasm but now the bridge has been built and you can cross safely. I’m not saying that you ***should*** eat and drink anything you want, I’m saying you ***can***. As you read your Bibles the key in the New Testament is ***personal conviction,*** ***moderation*** and ***not causing others to stumble***.
	2. ***Festival***: These ***special ceremonies and rituals; centered on the calendar either yearly, monthly in the case of the new moon or weekly in the case of the Sabbath***. There is nothing wrong with these parties and celebrations only the use of them to judge other who either participate or don’t participate in them

All foods are pure and everyday belongs to Jesus; this is the day the Lord has made so I will be glad and rejoice in it while eating bacon! All these things are like pictures that you would carry of your family; when you are away from the real thing they can remind you of your loved ones, the memories and lives you share but they are only photos. I think most folks would be upset with me if they showed me a photo of their loved one before I met them and when I had an opportunity to get to know their loved one chose to hang onto the photo instead of hanging out with the real person. It’s like parakeets when you put a mirror in front of them they become fooled into thinking they are tweeting to a real bird when all they really are doing is singing to themselves! Jesus is a real person the center of life, the only lasting source of excitement and only place of refuge during the storms of life so don’t settle for a mirror of your-self, get to know the real Person of Jesus!

**III. Vs. 18-19 Mysticism**

The author of the book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus is so “*much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name.*.” Yet there still seems to be fascination with angels and getting info from them.

1. **Mysticism**: Paul describes by including two characteristics of this “*mysticism*” as “*false humility and the worship of angels*”. At the this time there was a popular teaching that was around that held that people could gain a special knowledge and enlightenment by placating angels and ascended masters and through continual obedience a person could attain a higher state of Oneness with God and even become God. This type of mysticism has been repeated in Hinduism, Buddhism, Transcendental Meditation. Even Mormonism tells their followers, “*As man is, God once was; as God is, man will be.*” All of this is packaged in false humility as folks are sold that we are to stop seeing ourselves as self and instead starting seeing ourselves as part of the universe. Paul goes on to say that there are two dangers with mysticism and both deal with losing:
2. Vs.18 ***Lose reward***: Paul tells us of the danger of going after this mysticism is that it will “*cheat you of your reward.*” It will keep you from experiencing “Christ in you the hope of glory”! It will rip you off of the true joy, excitement and peace that only come from a relationship with Jesus. We don’t need some person’s book or teaching on their encounter to tell us that God is real and that He loves us; we have His Word on it. We don’t need some persons account of what happened to them to tell us that there is life after death Jesus has already told us all we need to know about that. Paul tells us that such a pursuit in these things just “*vainly puffs up our own fleshly mind*”.
3. Vs. 19 ***Lose your head***: When a believer gets involved in mysticism they cut themselves off from their head, Jesus. When a person gets their head cut off all life ceases. Initially there will be frantic activity but soon life will cease and there will be no activity. Losing one’s heads also causes a person to lose contact with the other members of the body. They no longer are fed by what every part of the body is fed by and supported by.

Saints listen to what Paul had to say about this in Galatians 1:8 where he wrote, “*But even if we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.*” So tell me again why I should believe what is written in the book called the ***Koran*** or the book of ***Mormon*** when both Mohamed and Joseph Smith claim a different gospel delivered to them by an angel? Cased closed!

**IV. Vs. 20-23 Legalism**

Vs. 20-23 Paul gives us the perfect simple definition of legalism: ***Do not,…do not,…do not…*** Our faith is a moral faith with clear boundaries but its foundation is positive not negative. Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians 10:23 “*All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify*.”

1. Vs. 20-23 ***Legalism***: Paul was no doubt countering a false belief system that insisted that the renunciation of worldly pleasures made it possible to achieve a higher spiritual and intellectual state. This type of false teaching is an over developed dedication and discipline that has led to extreme self-denial that the Bible doesn’t demand. When this happens people make a god out of their discipline and it has been seen in monasteries where they live a life devoid of any pleasure including communication with each other all because they believe that this is what God wants. There is three things wrong with this view:
2. ***Wrong View***: Everything is negative, don’t touch, don’t taste, don’t handle! ***Pleasing God is not in giving up things it is in giving yourself to God***. Holiness is never achieved by self-effort it is ours by dying to self all together! The legalist says, “*Everything is wrong unless you can prove by the Bible that it is right.*” But God’s word says, “*Everything is right, unless the Bible specifically says it is wrong.*”
3. ***Temporary***: Next Paul says in verse 22 that all this will parish with the using. In other words you start out motivated but 9 time out of 10 you go back to what you were denying because it was based upon self-effort and false teaching to start with. People may praise it and even try to emulate it but it is all temporary.
4. ***No lasting change***: Finally Paul says that this all just a façade, an appearance of wisdom but is just self-imposed religion, false humility and of no value against the indulgences of the flesh. If we try to regulate the externals instead of walking in the fullness and freshness of a life in Christ we will never be able to clean the dirt off our lives. The best way to clean a dirty vessel is turn on the water and let it do all the work.

All three of these errors will only cause us to lose the only One that we truly need to achieve a higher spiritual plane, Jesus! Don’t make your life about a list of don’ts make it about a life of Christ!

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:1-4 Position in Christ

**3:1-4**

**“Looking Up”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 1-2 Seek and set**

**III. Vs. 3-4 Put on and Put off**

**I. Intro.**

Near the end of Jesus’ public ministry as He was in the temple He said that not a stone shall be left upon another. Everything that the Jews held dear Jesus said was going to be destroyed. The disciples were shocked and wanted to know when this was going to happen, so Jesus told them the signs. I can only imagine the long faces of despair on those that heard Jesus’ true predictions of the future of the world. Ah dear ones listen to what Jesus said after those dire predictions in Luke 21:28“*Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near*.” Is your world coming apart, the walls of your temple falling down? Are all of your hopes and dreams coming to an end? “***Look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near*.**” Far too many of us have set our affections on the things of the earth and all its bringing us is *heart aches* and *heart burns*! Heaven is where it’s at, so now you can simply enjoy life! It does little good for Christians to declare and defend the truth if we fail to demonstrate the truth in our own lives.

**II. Vs. 1-2 Seek and set**

I’ve noticed as I’ve traveled that despite the different cultures there is always a distinguishing characteristic of believers everywhere. Spend any time with a believer and no matter where you are they always have a positive, optimistic joy about them despite their circumstances. It’s like they have a secret switch, an invisible reality that enables them to go to another gear to pass by the obstacles that stop the ordinary person. They don’t use this extra dimension to best their fellow man they use it to help their fellow man and are ready to share their secret success so that they too can have that inner energy.

It seems that what lay at the base of the Colossian’s quest was growth in Christ but though their aim was right their approach was wrong. Twice in the first four verses Paul tells them that if growth in Christ is what they sought they didn’t need to look elsewhere they only needed to look up.

Vs. 1-2 Paul uses two words that give us the keys to this extra gear in life: ***SEEK*** and ***SET***! These two words are ***action*** words but more than that they are ***attitude*** words! There use suggests to us that the Colossians lack was ***not because of a lack of resources*** but rather because they lack two things:

* Effort
* Direction
1. ***Seek***: The truth was they already had everything they needed to be victorious Christians but had simply failed to tap into what they already had in Christ, as they were coerced to look other places than Jesus. Paul offers this secret to only those who have been “*raised with Christ*”; in other words **this secret is in a person not a formula**! If it was a formula then any one could have exercised the ritual and pop-O-presto, instant life. Paul like a father to his young child even tells them where to look, “*Seek those things which are above*”. The word “*above*” would better be translated “*within*” but this word “*within*” is yet another relational word that is telling us that what we need isn’t outside our relationship with Christ it’s **WITHIN** the relationship we already have with our Lord! The word also comes with an action attached: “***Make the choice and decide to look at what you already have available to you in Christ…don’t separate your life from Him,…you belong to Him so yield your life over more to Him and you will experience more life through Him.***” *Oh saints there is no greater poverty than the person who lives starving for sustenance while seated at the banqueting table full of provisions. Their hunger is because they won’t take a bite and taste and see that He alone is good*? Here was a fellowship that had a never ending supply of Christ but had been conned to look elsewhere for scraps.
2. ***Set***: The second step is also an action and attitude word as seeking was not enough they needed to ***SET*** their mind on those things above and not on things on the earth. The word “*mind*” can also be rendered “*heart*” and is a word that is used to describe a person’s “***emotions, intellect and will***”! Paul is saying while you are thinking on the things that naturally consume us you like: family, work, home etc. don’t forget to SET your mind also on the things of Christ. When we only set our minds on the things that trouble our emotions intellect and well we will soon get depleted and begin to dwell on our poverty and total inability to deal with what life is tossing at us. Ah but when we set our minds on the things above we will still see our total inability but we will also see His total ability! Friend there is nothing wrong with “*getting to the end of yourself*” as long as you don’t start believing that your poverty is God’s poverty. You have in the “THINGS ABOVE” all His resources of wisdom and knowledge. You have His power that has conquered death and you don’t have to wait in line or be concerned that He may run out.

This two-step process is also known as a walk because it involves to equally important steps: SEEK and SET that all we have to do is moment by moment repeat the same two steps.

**III. Vs. 3-4 Put on and Put off**

Vs. 3-4 Just in case we didn’t get the two steps he repeats it using another analogy that I like to call as he does elsewhere “***PUT OFF***” and “***PUT ON***” or death and life!

1. ***Put off***: Paul starts with the negative by reminding these believers of what has already happened when they received Jesus, “*For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*” Paul phrases this by saying in the past tense; “*for you died*” and because of this in the present tense “*your life IS hidden with Christ in God.*” Christ is our life and this life isn’t something that we have to wait to enjoy we ought to start living eternally NOW! John wrote in 1 John 5:12 “*He that has the Son has life…*.” He didn’t say WILL have life, but HAS life! Paul wrote in Phil. 1:21 “*For me to live IS Christ…*” Years ago I heard a story about two sisters who loved to attend wild parties. Then they gave their life in Christ and discovered what life was really all about and didn’t want to party any more. A short time later they received an invitation to a party with a RSVP in which they sent back in these words: “*We will be unable to attend your party because we recently died.*”
2. ***Put on***: The next part of this is the positive “Putting On” as Paul says, “*When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory*.” Our shedding of those old rags enables us to put on Christ who Paul says “*is our life*”. The context of this passage is the certainty of the return of Jesus and how that truth transforms us in the present as well as permanently in the future. The putting off only makes sense if it enables us to putt on someone better. There is a saying made famous by the then US Senator Hubert Humphrey with regards to voting when he said, “*You must remember that in politics, how you stand depends on where you sit.*” I would add that this is true as believers in Christ “*Where we stand and walk on this earth depends totally upon the fact that we are seated in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*”

Paul’s simple message for the Colossian believers was, “*Live for heaven and you will enjoy life*!” How do you do that, you ask? I suggest ***three T’s***:

1. **TREASURE**: Matthew 6:21 “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will also be*.” First step is you’re going to have to ***redirect where you keep your assets***! To do this you will need to start making deposits in eternal things and when you do this a strange thing always happens…your heart always follows what you treasure!
2. **TRIALS**: 2 Corinthians 4:17“*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*..” Second trials cause us to start living for heaven as we lose our affection for the things of this world. If we didn’t lose the things of this world we would have never known what we were missing! In 1 Corinthians 2:9 Paul wrote that, “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,* *nor have entered into the heart of man* *the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*”
3. **TRANSFER**: 1 John 3:2 “*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*.” The third and final way you can live for heaven and enjoy life is by realizing that those departed believing loved ones will be reunited with us for eternity. They may have preceded us but we will be together for eternity.

Consider old Joshua and Caleb who had to wait 40 years to enter into the promise land as the only two who were ready to enjoy the blessing and provisions by faith. How did those two make it 40 years? Well they had their heart ***SEEKING*** the things above and their mind ***SET*** of the land of promise! That is the key for us as well saints!

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:5-11Practice in Christ

**3:5-7**

**“Sanctified sex”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 5-7 Sanctified sex**

**I. Intro.**

We come now to a “*negative section*” and most folks would prefer pastor teachers to pass by this. But if you consider me as a Doctor and you went in for a checkup and I didn’t give you all the truth with regards to your examination because I knew you don’t like negative things you wouldn’t be very happy with me. So as one old rancher once said, “*Fella, no amount of talking about the beauty of the horse, will clean out the stall*!”

This section reminds me of Irena Sendler an amazing woman of great courage who was dedicated to saving Jewish children during the Holocaust. Her father had always told her, “*If you see someone drowning you must try to rescue them, even if you cannot swim*.” As the Nazi’s swept through Poland she saw that the Jewish people were “*drowning*”, and decided to save as many Jewish children as possible. She smuggled over twenty five hundred Jewish children out of the Warsaw ghetto by drugging the babies and infants and put them in coffins, boxes or sacks to smuggle them past the Nazi’s as dead to safety. Thus in death, life was birthed, so too Paul’s words now to the Colossians in dealing with human sexuality the misuse of it!

**II. Vs. 5-7 Sanctified sex**

Vs. 5 Based upon Paul’s admonishment in verse 1-4 we see specifically what “*old clothes*” he wants the Colossians to “*put off*”. There are five things listed here and in the Greek they all deal with human sexuality. That in its self is quite revealing as it suggests two very important things:

* 1. First ***God created human sexuality*** and intended it not just for procreation but for pleasure as well. God has placed human sexuality as a very important part of life; it is the way in which life is brought forth. God designed sex and tied it to our senses of pleasure; we humans are prewired with a sex drive that is vastly different then the animal kingdom.
	2. Second, because the above is true ***satan will continue to come in to corrupt humanity and seek to distort, pervert and enslave humanity to their passions***. As far as God and His Word is concerned human sexuality is not what should define and consume humans. Instead sexuality is to be placed in such a high regard that it is used in the freedoms that He alone has placed it in. God’s design for sex is that it ought to be like fine china and brought out as often as we celebrate with joy the union He has made but people have treated it like paper plates and its use has been with everyone they meet and then just tossed to the curb. ***The truth of the matter is what we desire usually determines what we will do. And what Paul is telling us is that sense we are new creations in Christ God has changed our appetites and that should have changed our actions***!

Before Paul describes these five areas that satan and the world system has corrupted of God’s design, he starts with what to do with these things as he writes, “*put to death your members which are on the earth.*” What he is saying is that the Christian is to “*put off*” *any and all sexual misbehavior which is defined as being outside God’s design*. The fact that he uses to word “***death***” suggests two things:

1. ***The passion with which Paul views we Christians need to handle this***
2. ***The completeness with which we Christians are to do the job***

Here then are the **five areas that the enemy of our faith has sought to enslave God’s people**:

1. ***Fornication***: This word refers to all sexual immorality, all sexual intercourse outside of the protective bounds of marriage as defined by God as one man and one woman. Specifically this word is used elsewhere in scripture for adultery where a person has violated their covenant with God and their spouse by having sex with someone that is not his or her mate. The Word of God is clear on this, there is no debate about the use of this word and it is why Paul has already said to put off with such passion and commitment as one would use to put to death something.
2. ***Uncleanness***: This word means “*unnatural lusts*” and refers to that which nature its self would regard as unnatural or going against nature. This is the center of much debate within our society today with regards to the ***definition of marriage***. I believe the Bible and nature are in agreement with this as to what is natural as procreation just isn’t possible in same sex, sodomy, bestiality, pornography, pedophilia, etc. I don’t believe that Christians should single out the homosexual community as “*super sinners*” but I cannot agree with their agenda that makes their lifestyle on equal footing legally with that of heterosexual marriage. Since God created and gave the gift of sex it must be used and enjoyed within the context of how He defines marriage one man and one woman. Any use beyond this will eventually cause emotional, spiritual and even physical devastation between people and the society they belong too. ***God sees equal value in every life, but not in every chosen lifestyle***!
3. ***Passion***: The context here would be “*erotic lusts*”, which arouse passions especially in men who are predominately visually stimulated. Clearly pornography falls into this category but it would be also include literature, movies and even music that are geared to stimulating passions outside of how God intended human sexuality.
4. ***Evil desire***: This word refers to mental lusts, or what we use to call a “*dirty mind*”. These things are used to stimulate the kind of thought processes through the telling of dirty jokes and passing along emails that treat human sexuality and people as inanimate objects fantasizing in their body parts for self-gratification.
5. ***Covetousness***: This word is most often associated greed, money and things which money can purchase. But in this context linked with the word “*idolatry*” ***Paul is using it as greed to possess another’s person’s body for their own pleasure***. The best example of this is the sorted affair of David’s children where David’s son Amnon lusted for his 1/2 sister Tamar the full sister of Absalom who became distressed over her that he became sick with lust and pretended to be ill so that she would care for him and then raped her. We see folks committing this type of idolatry all the time under the false name of “*falling in love*” but in reality they are falling in “*lust*” and unable to restrain these affections and passion give themselves over to the worship of their passions. The sad truth is that this has become common place in literature, movies and music as it is almost exclusively given over to this idolatry.

Vs. 6 This all has become so common place like it was in the first century when Paul wrote this letter that unfortunately even Christians are practicing this behavior. Paul says there are two things wrong with Christians thinking that this is ok:

1. Vs. 6 “*The wrath of God*” is not some divine temper tantrum where He zaps folks that make Him angry. ***The Bible describes the wrath of God as God acting judicially to evil***. It is the way a Holy God who can do no wrong reacts to an individual, society or civilization who turns their backs upon God’s laws and moral absolutes. In Romans 1:24-32 we are given a description of how God gave people over to their ***own lusts***, ***vile passions*** and ***debased mind***. The end result is a society where moral restraints have been removed and people have been allowed what sin and evil always produce death and destruction. The freedom from restraints soon turn into bondage to said freedoms, then society collapses under the sheer wait on no moral absolutes and anarchy reigns. God’s punishment is natural consequences while folks believe that they are getting one over on God or somehow He is powerless to do anything in reality he is giving them the worst possible judgment He can by allowing them to have everything they want without having any of Him. He has not lost His holiness nor His power and judges by allowing folks to have their fill as He did the Israelites in the wilderness. In Numbers 11 they complained against God about only having Manna and wanted meat so God gave quail to fly over as they bashed them with clubs and gorged themselves on it until they became sick.
2. Vs. 7 The second wrong with way of thinking that it’s ok to practice such immorality is that ***it’s going backwards***. They are behaving in a way that doesn’t represent their new nature in Christ. **God’s law as a form of morality to all mankind is an “*Owners Manuel*” from the Manufacture telling us the best way to use what He has made to live a full and joyous life**. If we violate that as those who read the “*Manuel*” and believe in the “*Manufacturer*” than we are doing so not out of ignorance but willful disobedience. Prior to trusting in God what we did was out of ignorance and should us that we were irreparably broken and hopelessly lost. But according to Romans 6:14, “*Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law but under grace.*” We have a new source of power in Christ whereby we can no say NO to our former immorality and deal with each temptation each and every time it comes up. We have a new ability that prior to a relationship with Jesus we didn’t possess that enables us to say NO.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:5-11Practice in Christ

**3:8-11**

**“Lose him and let him go”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 8-9 Six sins in “good standing”**

**III. Vs. 10-11 Become what you are**

**I. Intro.**

We are still in the “*negative section*” of Paul’s letter to the Colossian church and what they need to put off. G. Campbell Morgan called this list the “*Sins that are in good standing*” on account that they are so common that most folks aren’t shocked or convicted by their use. It reminds me of Jesus words to in John 20:1-10 where Lazarus was buried in the tomb and Jesus raises him from the dead, then instructs people to “*Loose him, and let him go.*”

Raised people should not walk around in old grave clothes of their former life even if the sins they are wearing are common place! Saints, all religions boiled down to the common denominator say the same thing: “*Become what you ought to be*!” Christianity says, “***Become what you are***!” Religion demands that we become what in our natural fallen state and human effort we can never attain. But Christianity changes us from the inside out then reminds us that we can now live what He has made us to be, “*a new creation in Christ*” and He supplies the power in the Holy Spirit to do so!

**II. Vs. 8-9 Six sins in “good standing”**

Verse seven made it plain that walking in these ways is past tense and should not be present tense! A true Christian cannot be comfortable in habitually practicing sin. It’s possible that these sins can occasionally mark a Christian’s life, but they must not be a part of their walk and manner of living.

Vs. 8-9 Here Paul tells us a six other sins that we can say NO to other than five sexually immoral sins that we need to rid ourselves of. The problem is these attitudes and actions are harder than the five as we tend to justify their use in our life. I again remind you that Paul in mentioning these things is speaking to Christians to STOP because in Christ they now can! “But ***NOW***”, Paul says we are “*to put* ***OFF*** *all of these*”! We are no longer what we once were, we are a NEW CREATION and old things have passed away. Saint’s the number one reason we lose battle with our former life is because we have failed to remember who we now are in our new life! ***If morally you are still diving in dumpsters then it’s NOT because you prefer the cuisine, it’s because you have forgotten you have a free never ending invitation to Che’ Jesus that you can dine at every day***! Here then are the 6 attitudes and actions that Christians are now able to say NO to.

1. ***Anger***: Anger, wrath and malice are all sins of that result from a bad attitude towards others. The word “anger” is the same as the word for wrath in verse 6 but this word in the context refers to a habitual attitude. The difference between God’s wrath and man’s anger has to do with character; God is holy and just and has every right to be angry at sin and to judge it. Man however is not holy and just and has no right to judge others guilty for what he also practices. We are to no longer give into to our anger and the word used here is that impetuous anger that quickly flies off the handle and begins name-calling and character assignation. Jesus referred to this in His sermon on the mount as “*Raca*” or calling someone a fool.
2. ***Wrath***: This word is different than the one above as it means “*temper tantrums*” or violent displays that attack either by word or action another person. Saints we aren’t going to be able to avoid the temptation but we can flee the sin as the old self life is still hanging onto us but we don’t have to hang around him!
3. ***Malice***: This word means that silent, hidden hatred that waits to take out revenge in secret. It’s an attitude of ill will towards another person; if we have malice towards a person we are saddened we they are successful or happy and happy when their life is falling apart. The kind of thing that says, “*I’m not going to get mad, I’m going to get even*!”
4. ***Blasphemy***: This word is also interpreted by the word “*slander*” and is an attack on another’s character, whispering and gossiping about another, whether true or untrue, with the desire to ruin what others think of that person. Often this masquerades as spiritual concern; “*I can’t tell you about this person but I can tell you that you need to pray right away as it’s very bad*!!!” If you have deep-seated ill will toward a person, you will use every opportunity to say something bad about him.
5. ***Filthy language***: This is foul talk, crude and coarse words, or even curse words. The kind of words that slip out of your mouth when you are hurt and angry. There are some pastors now that are letting off these kinds of words from the pulpit in an attempt to be relevant to the culture they are trying to reach but there isn’t anything relevant about this kind of speech. If someone says, “*Now, take this with a grain of salt*!” you can remind him of Col. 4:6 “*Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.*” Salt is a symbol of purity, and grace and purity go together.
6. ***Lying***: Untruth breeds suspicion and destroys trust. There was a little boy in Sunday School who was asked to give a definition of what a lie is and his reply is what far too many Christians treat a lie as when he said, “***A lie is an abomination to the Lord, but a very present help in time of need***!” But that isn’t true as a lie is quickly said but hard to gain trust back once it’s discovered asked Washington D.C. the capital of lies! A lie is ***ANY*** misrepresentation of the truth, *even if the words are accurate.* The tone of voice, the look on the face, or a gesture of the hand can alter the meaning of a sentence. A lie can also be the motive of the heart. If my watch is wrong and I give the wrong time, that is not a lie. Lying involves the intent to deceive for the purpose of personal gain. There is an old proverb that asks a riddle, “*When is the half of something a whole*?” the answer is…, “*Half a truth is always a whole lie*.” One old pastor was preaching on Acts 5 about the lie of Ananias and Sapphira when he said, “*If God struck every person dead for lying, where would I be*?” the congregation broke out into a laugh realizing that he had just called himself a liar until he continued, “*Why I’d be right here …..preaching to an empty church*!”

**III. Vs. 10-11 Become what you are**

Vs. 10-11 When we put off the “*old man*” we must also put on the “*new man*”. The Greek verbs for “*put off and put on*” indicate a once-for-all action. And the word “*renewed*” literally means being constantly renewed. The context of these verses is linked to what Paul has just said and the fact that there is NOW not a reason to continue in these behaviors. Some folks might object to the term “***put on***” as it seems to indicate playing a part or a role. But friend **you aren’t playing a part if you are still in character after the curtain has come down**! Consider the old actor and romantic leading man actor Cary Grant. Born in 1904 in Bristol England he was anything but the “*Mr. Sophistication*” as he was known for. He had a ruffian cockney accent for most of his early life and got into acting as an easy way of making some money. But as he began to play the part of a sophisticated romantic ladies’ man during his 70 movie the suave personality stuck. When asked by a reporter if he had always been suave and sophisticated he laughed and said, “*I just played the part so frequently that it became me as I put on this character and I became the person I played*.” But the trouble was that when the curtain came down Cary Grant went back to a ruffian as he had five marriages, battled depression and became a raging alcoholic all the while people in the audience believed he was “Mr. Sophistication”. The trouble was that “*He just put on a role that at the end of the day he just took off and put back on what he had taken off*!”

Vs. 11 The new man is part of a family, which favors no race, nationality, class, culture or ethnicity. It only favors Jesus, because in this new family, Christ is all and in all. We can’t say that I do things because I’m of this heritage or that ancestry as the Old Man has passed away and behold we are brand new and Christ is all and in all! All such all backgrounds of class, national origin, training, education, whatever it may be, is all set aside because you are now linked to Christ. We look to Jesus the “*author and finisher of our faith*”! In 1 Thessalonians 5:4-7 Paul said, *“But you brethren are not in darkness so that the Day of the Lord should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness, so then, let us not be like others who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled, for those who sleep, sleep at night and those who get drunk, get drunk at night, but since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breast-plate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet, for God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”*

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:12-17Peace of Christ

**3:12-13**

**“New Outfit, New Outlook”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 12-13 Royal robes**

**I. Intro.**

In chapter 3 verses 5-11 Paul wrote to the Colossian Church about putting off and putting to death the “*old man*” of our former life. I’m thankful he didn’t stop there as in verse 10 he told them that they needed to “*put on*” the new man and here before us in verses 12-17 he tells them new man looks like! Years ago Bing Crosby sang a song that accurately describes this section as the song went:

“*You've got to accentuate the positive,
Eliminate the negative,
Latch on to the affirmative,
And don't mess with Mr. In-between*.”

The Christian life isn’t just about what we “*put off*” friend it’s about ***WHO*** we put on! The great thing us each and every day we can put off the old man and put on the new man in Christ! It can be difficult to get up in morning and get going with the old man, as Albert Einstein noted while working on the mathematical equation for the “*speed of light*” he turned to his research assistant early in the morning and said,… “*The problem with the speed of light is, it comes too early in the morning*!” There are a few Christians I know that act as if they don’t even believe in God before 10 in the morning. Saints could it be that part of our problem in the morning is that we haven’t gotten dressed in our grace clothes?

**II. Vs. 12-13 Royal robes**

Before Paul tells the Colossians what the 7 characteristics of the new man looks like he first tells of the f***our things God has done for them that make it possible to “put on” the new man***:

1. Vs. 12a **He chose them**: As was the case with Israel described in Deut. 7:7-8 the choice was not based upon earthly qualities or characteristics but was done before the foundation of the world according to Eph. 1:4. If we were saved upon potential or merit heaven would be empty! But because His choice is grace heaven is full to the praise of His glory alone! How do you know if you are chosen? Receive Jesus and apparently you are chosen!
2. Vs. 12b **He set them apart**: That’s the meaning of the word “*holy*” we are no longer captains of our own ship we exclusively belong to Jesus as such we all could wear a shirt that says, “property of Jesus”. No longer are a slaves to the world’s ways and our passions, we belong to God.
3. Vs. 12c **He loves them**: Paul says that they are His “*beloved*”. Though God loves everybody and is not willing that any should parish there remains a difference when a person has not chosen to love God. Some people, by their own choice, *remain content to part of His creation that has broken His holy heart. What they may not understand is that as their Creator and Judge, He will respond to them as their Creator and Judge and act accordingly*. But when we have chosen to receive the love of God, we are *no longer just His creation we are His children And something marvelous happens when we choose to become His child, you see when we break His heart now we do so not just of our Creator and Judge but also of a loving Father, and no He chooses to act towards us as a Loving Father not a Creator Judge*! Saints as we grow in His love we will grow in our desire never to allow anything to separate us from His love and walk in His love through obedience.
4. Vs. 13-14 **He has forgiven them**: We will take this up more in detail next week but, thank God that He has chosen to forgive “ALL” our trespasses and sins. His forgiveness is complete and is not conditional or partial because it is based completely on His sons sacrifice on our behalf. There remains no stone unturned in all our past, present or future failures that needs not be made new in God’s grace.

Vs. 12-13 The phrase “*Elect of God*” means that God has chosen the Christian to be unique in His plan. Each one of these 7 qualities is expressed through relationships with our fellow man and as such the measure of the “*new man*” that we are to “*put on*” is best seen in how we treat others. Having said this now we can look at the seven qualities that are best represented in the life of Christ.

1. ***Tender mercies***: The word is literally “*bowels of sympathy*” and there is a reason why we don’t translate it this way anymore as there is very little sympathy that comes from most of our “bowels”. When this word was first written by Paul it came from a belief that emotions came from within, like we would say today… “*I’ve got a feeling deep down in my gut.*” Tender mercies, is an attitude, a heart of pity and sympathy. We are to put on compassion and pity towards people the moment we get up in the morning. I’ve noticed the older I get the easier it is to put “*tender mercies*” on as I’ve lived enough life, had enough tuff experiences now that I want to be a blessing towards others and not just demand to be blessed. Human heart ache and suffering demand tender mercies and the older you become the easier they are to put on as we have experienced those same things.
2. ***Kindness***: When we are putting on “*tender mercies*” we are putting on an ***attitude*** but when we get “*kindness*” we are moving beyond the ***attitude*** to ***action***. It comes from that empathy but it can take on many forms to a warm smile, a kind word, a hug or an invitation to get together or an offer of help. Augustine wrote of this in his confessions where he wondered into a church and was converted not by the preaching of Ambrose but by the kindness of this man. ***Saint’s don’t ever under estimate the value of kindness as it is the key that unlocks the door of most hearts***!
3. ***Humility***: Humility in the ancient world was not seen as a virtue as they valued pride and arrogance. Humility is not thinking “***poorly*”** about one’s self it is thinking “***properly***” about one’s self. John Stott call humility the “*rarest and fairest of all Christian virtues*” as it is the opposite of the worst of sins, “pride”! It was the lack of this virtue that caused the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as we are told in Ezekiel 16:49 **“***Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy*.” We are to consider other better than ourselves and act accordingly with a heart that says, “**THEY** *deserve better, instead of a heart that says* **I** *deserve better*.”
4. ***Meekness***: This word is also rendered “*gentleness*” but I’m afraid that in today’s world it often gets mistranslated as “*weakness*” but in reality meekness literally means “***strength under control***”. It’s the kind of inward strength that doesn’t need to display its self or show off as its will to let go its rights for a good cause. Meekness doesn’t demand to be satisfied instead it’s willing to suffer the loss that others may gain. It’s the opposite of rude abrasive behavior.
5. ***Longsuffering***: Or patience endures that which would normally cause folks to fly off the handle. It means to hold back and restrain one’s self from becoming upset before we behave in a way that destroys another instead of encourages another. I witnessed the lack of patience at a store the other day as there was a mom with a young teen who wanted the most expensive item on the shelf and wasn’t listening to the reason of the mom. Instead of just ignoring the selfishness of the young daughter she let her have it with a profanity laced tirade that made the young teens look tame. Saint’s *that’s what happens when we don’t put on patience as we end up looking far worse than the person or event that was trying our patience*.
6. ***Bearing with one another***: “*Forbearance*” or “*bearing with one another*” is the positive side of the coin for patience. It means ***to uphold and support someone whereas patience means only to restrain yourself***. Man could I ever use putting on this quality on more than just hanging in there with someone who is trying my patience actually being a blessings. That’s what Jesus was talking about in Matthew 5:41 in the “*sermon on the mount*” where He said “*And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two*.”

Saint’s we will pick up the seventh quality or characteristic of the new man (***forgiveness***) next week as well as what the Church ought to look like in the world today.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:12-17Peace of Christ

**3:13-17**

**“Grace Clothes”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. 13 No hunting or fishing allowed**

**III. 14-17 What the church looks like**

**I. Intro.**

In the 3rd chapter of Colossians Paul reveals to his readers that every believer has two garments: The first I call “***grave clothes***” which Paul admonishes his readers to “*put off*”. The 2nd I call “***grace clothes***” which Paul says that we Christians need to “*put on*”. This two-step process is what causes believers to look different in the world. These two out fits came in play our own area during Lewis and Clark's famous expedition in 1804. Half-starved and frozen, the men staggered out of Bitterroot Mountains into a camp of the Nez Perce Indians. Lewis and Clark were the first white men ever to reach them and in the absence of more prominent leaders, who were out on a war party, chief Twisted Hair had to decide what to do with these strangers. The tribe's oral tradition, proposed killing them and confiscating their goods which would have made the Nez Perce the region's most powerful tribe.265 That would have been their fate if not for and elderly women named “*Returned from Faraway Country*”. As a young girl, she had been captured by an enemy tribe, who sold her to another tribe farther to the east. Eventually she had been befriended and treated kindly by white people in Canada before escaping and making her way back to her own people. For years she had told them stories about the fair-skinned people who lived toward the rising sun. She was aged and dying by the time Lewis and Clark arrived. When she heard about the plans to kill them she spoke up and said, “*These are the people who helped me. Do them no hurt*.” Thus someone else’s “*grace clothes*” years before saved the life of Lewis and Clark right here in the Bitterroot.

**III. Vs. 13 No Hunting or fishing allowed**

Last week we took a look at six of the seven traits of “grace clothes” that we Christians are to put on. We noted that:

* The **threads** of the fabric are made up of “tender mercies” an attitude of a heart of sympathy and empathy towards our fellow man
* The **stitching** on the fabric or what holds it together is the action of “kindness”
* The **construction** of the garment of grace is humility that enables us to think of ourselves properly
* The **inner lining** of the garment of grace is meekness where we have strength under control
* The **durability** of our grace clothes is patience that holds its self, back from being upset when others are pushing our buttons
* The **style** of the garment is forbearance that upholds others instead of just restraining myself

That takes us to seventh and final aspect of our grace garments, forgiveness.

***7. Forgiving one another***: Take all the other aspects of our grace garment into consideration then the seventh quality has to be ***how others view the garment or its appearance***. Forgiveness is a promise made in response to repentance to completely put out the offenders offense from our mind. As such the phrase, “*I’ll forgive but I won’t forget*” is biblically speaking untrue! Even if true forgiveness and reconciliation cannot be made because there is no recognition of wrong, the offended party still *can* and *must* give it to the Lord God and make the promise of forgiveness unto God. I think Paul put this last quality at the end for a reason as Paul isn’t asking us not to feel he is asking rather that you deal with what you feel! If you have something that is eating at you then you need to go and deal with it and if you can’t talk it out you at very least need to forgive them for their wrong. The Lord doesn’t ask us to repress our feelings or injustices, we are to go to that person and say what’s bugging us but having done that we need to forget it and move on. Far too often we just stew on it instead not allowing our self not to dwell there. As it deals with forgiving those that have wronged us and we have shared out heart with the person who has hurt us we then to put up a sign on our hearts with regards to that person and the incident that reads “***NO HUNTING OUR FISHING ALLOWED***”. And this means that we don’t allow anyone else to fish or hunt on this property as well. And the reason for this is once we have forgiven we treat the incident as never happened! This subject comes up quite often in the body of Christ just as it did during Jesus time. In Matthew 18:21-22 Peter came to Jesus thinking that he was setting the bar pretty high for his fellow disciples when he asked the Lord, “*how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times*?” And Jesus responded back “*I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*” So I offer this **rabbit trail on what biblical forgiveness means**:

* 1. It means that we are not to bring up to the person whom we have forgiven the thing we forgave. We are to treat him as though it did not happen. We are not to keep a “historical record” to rehash the incident in light of new allegations. Folk’s aren’t you glad that the Lord keeps no record of our wrongs to through back at us each time we blow it?
	2. It means that we don’t tell anybody else about the matter that has been forgiven. We are not to share “*for a matter of prayer of course*” as it has been erased from memory and we are not to allow ourselves to go back to that which has been forgotten. Again aren’t you glad that the Lord doesn’t share you failures with others and instead is always before the throne of grace prayer for you. Jesus is on our side and once we have forgiven someone we are on their side.
	3. It means you don’t dig that which has been buried in Christ. If you start to dig it back up you will need to remind yourself that it was buried for a reason….it is dead!

**IV. Vs. 14-17 What the Church looks like**

Vs. 14 All these wonderful qualities must be wrapped with the bow of LOVE. Love is the summary of all seven qualities listed and it perfectly fulfills what God has for us in our earthly relationships. It is love that will bind these 7 qualities together and the reason why we don’t see these qualities more frequently in our lives is that they are not bind in love so we just become unraveled. Love, Paul says, is the bond of perfection it reveals to us that we are a new creation in Christ and have put off our former life and Put on Jesus. The basis for this was found in verse 12 where Paul reminded the Colossian believers that they were the chosen of God, holy and beloved….! We aren’t trying to be something we aren’t we are reminding ourselves of what He has made us to be. We chose Him and He chose us to be Holy so our holiness is His work! And all of this is because we are dear to His heart, that’s what the word beloved means in verse 12.

Vs. 15-17 These three verses move beyond the 7 qualities of the individual Christian to three characteristics of what the church ought to look like in the world.

1. Vs. 15 ***Peace***: The word rule here is used in the context like that of a baseball umpire. The peace of God is the “*umpire of our life*” and it this peace of God in accordance to His Word that cries out “*fair*” or “*foul*”! Peace is to rule our lives unruffled by all the action around us. The Churches primary witness in the world is peace in the midst of chaos and anarchy. When the world is kicking up dust in our faces and yelling horrible things at us we are to remain calm because we know that the Lord is in control. This is the primary reason why we can not only be at peace but also be thankful. Life is a gift and the body of Christ is our family and we can be thankful for each and every one.
2. Vs. 16 ***Praise***: It is interesting to note that praise is the direct result of believers allowing the Word of God to dwell in us richly in all wisdom, teaching. A teaching church will be a worshipping celebrating fellowship. This book gives us enumerable reasons to worship as it gives us insight into life as God intends it to be. It dispels fears, casts aside anxiety which alone is reason to sing His praises. Most people are familiar with Hawaiian music but the history of their music is that prior to the Christian missionaries coming to the Island their music was primarily just chanting and the first songs the people sang were hymns taught by missionaries. Christian truth has been the greatest inspiration of music the world over as Praise is the natural conclusion to truth! We sing to bless others and bless the Lord as well as ourselves in singing His praise.
3. Vs. 17 ***Practice***: The third and final witness the church has in the world is practice as our activity whether word or deed is always aimed at pleasing Jesus. Our whole life is to be in the sphere of our relationship with the Lord and an act of worship. Billy Graham’s wife Ruth had a sign over her kitchen that read, “*Divine services held here three times a day*!” Washing dishes can be an act of worship; so can everything else you do if what you do you do as unto Him. Christian the right motivation will always make hard work light and praise flow from your heart. There are many things you could never get me to do for money that I would do for love, there is no such things as labor when what you do you do in service to the Lord.

We will need to be reminded of this next week when Paul will take us through the various areas that this will be applied in our lives.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:18-21Pleasing in Christ

**3:13-17**

**“Grace Garments in Marriage”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. 18 Five things about a wife’s role in marriage**

**III. 19 How to love your wife**

**I. Intro.**

Paul doesn’t just challenge believers generally he challenges them specifically, in their homes and on their jobs. He has something to say to wives, husbands, children, parents, employees and employers. The first thing to note is that these challenges were to believers as his call to them was to live a life pleasing the Lord. Looking out upon America today it is plain to see that something is wrong with the home today. A full 1/3 of all US households or 15 million children are being raised without a father. Another 5 million children are being raised without a mother. There are 13.7 million single parents raising 21.8 million children which is 26% of all families in America. The highest rate of this by far is in the African American family where 72% of all households are single parent households. Saints the first institution the Lord established on earth was the home and as the home and family goes so goes the society and the nation. Confucius once said, “*The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its home*.” Saint’s prior to this section as truthful as it was it still remained a theory but the moment Paul takes it out in these verse it quickly moves into a reality as he places the practice of this tow step process in the most difficult areas we human face,…RELATIONSHIPS.

**II. 18 Five things about a wife’s role in marriage**

As Paul wrote what “grace garments” would look like in a marriage we need to remember just how radical that would have been for the reader of this letter at this time.

* Under Jewish law a wife was a possession of her husband not a person. She had no rights as a husband could divorce his wife for anything where as a wife had only three reasons whereby she could divorce her husband, leprosy, apostasy, and rape of another woman.
* In Greek society a wife lived her life incomplete seclusion. She was not allowed to go out alone, and did not even join her husband for meals. She was his servant and was to be loyal to him alone. Whereas he was free to have as many relationships outside of marriage as he wanted.

Under booth of these cultures 100% of the duties belonged to the wife and 100% of the privileges belonged to the husband. The Christian ethic of marriage was one of shared duties and privileges as in a Christian marriage a person doesn’t ask “*What can my spouse do for me, but what can I do for my spouse*?” Christian marriage is a partnership where the duties and responsibilities may by different but they are shared and equal.

Vs. 18 Paul chooses to start with ***wives*** but I believe that he does so because the family is the key relationship we humans have and there is none more important to the harmony of the family then wives. The word for submission is a military term that means to arrange under rank and suggests not superiority but different roles. Whenever a man teaches on marriage and starts talking about wives and “*submission*” he is at an extreme disadvantage but let me start out by pointing out ***five things about a wife’s role in marriage***:

* ***Paul addresses this section to wives***: He doesn’t say, “***Husbands, tell your wives to submit to you as it is fitting in the Lord***.” As such this section is a word of the Lord to ***women only*** not to husbands or men. We have no right to come to wives in specific, or women in general and demand submission. For us husbands and men it as though verse 18 doesn’t exist; our verse is verse 19 which as we shall see in a minute doesn’t exist to wives and women.
* ***Submission must be defined as understood in New Testament times***: The word doesn’t have anything to do with equality and in fact this word is also addressed to men in the Bible so in no way can it be described as sexist. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, just before he speaks to wives about submission, he uses the very same word and says that we Christians ought to be, “*submitting to one another in the fear of God*.” It is also a word that is used of Jesus willing submission unto death to the Father. Clearly this submission was voluntary and not forced and in no way lessoned His equality to the Father. The word means *as we are filled with the Spirit our desire ought to be* ***the yielding of our lives for the benefit of our spouse***.
* ***Submission is specific not universal***: Paul made the use of this voluntary yielding of a wife’s life “***specific***” and “***not universal***” to all men or other husbands as he placed in this sentence the words “***own*** *husbands*”. She is not under the same obligation with other men that are not her husband other than the generally ***yielding of our lives for the benefit of others*** spoken of in Ephesians 5:21. Let alone men who seem to think it is their place to order women around as their personal servant as some inferior species to them.
* ***Submissions attitude and aim***: Wives voluntary submission to their husbands is the attitude in which the wife is doing so. She is doing so because it is the Lord’s will that she do so and in so doing she is “*pleasing the Lord*” as well as ***voluntarily relinquishing her rights*** to Jesus!
* ***Submission means strength***: Paul adds that it is “*fitting in the Lord*”. There is an order to His creation and he has so designed the family with a structure where the husbands greatest need is to be supported, to be under girded that will enable him to stand up to the stresses of life. It is not a lesser position as the two are one; it is the way in which she was created to be a help mate where her strengthens complement his weaknesses.

**III. 19 How to love your wife**

Vs. 19 In this headship it is the husbands responsibility to treat her is a self-sacrificing love that Jesus has demonstrated towards his bride the church. Paul gives husband what their “*graces clothes*” look like in a marriage and again we need to understand specific things about this.

* ***Paul address this section to husbands***: Just as was the case with wives this section is exclusive in nature, addressed just for husbands and not for wife’s to tell their husbands. Husbands need to be concerned with verse 19 and wife’s need to be concerned with verse 18.
* ***Love needs to be defined in N.T. terms***: The word Paul choses “*love*” is specific in definition as he uses the word agapao and not eros, philo. Paul is telling husbands that they need to treat their wife’s like Christ treats the church.
* ***To not do so is bitter***: Husbands can’t treat their wife’s like they do their buddy’s by being sarcastic, sharp, or silent.

I like the fact that God only gave each partner “***ONE***” rule instead of some exhaustive list. These two commands reveal that there is a difference between how men and women sense “*love*”:

* *Men*: Define love generally by “***support***”. Support the fellow and he will know that you love him. So you can see why Paul’s words calling for the “voluntarily relinquishing of her rights” is so important to maintain harmony in the home.
* *Women*: Define love in terms of “***security***” A woman needs to feel secure in her marriage and that is how she defines her husband’s love.

You see **God intends our marriages to harmonious in which we sing a duet and not a battle in which we have a duel**.

**In Ephesians 5:25-33** Paul gives ***four views on what “loves security” looks like for a woman.***

1. Vs. 25b **Sacrificially**: “*gave Himself for her*” Paul uses Jesus’ example for His bride, the church saying that Jesus “*gave Himself*” for her. This sacrificial love can be seen in two ways:
2. Positively: Jesus shared Himself with us. Husbands are to be sharing all of our emotions, dreams and thoughts with our wives. This kind of sharing is sacrificial for husbands and it requires for us to feel supported because you will really know how vulnerable we are.
3. Negatively: **Jesus loved us to death**, literally, the death of Himself. Husbands are to love their wives to the death of ourselves. We will be dying to all our self-seeking pursuits and we will be placing our wives interest’s above our own.
4. Vs. 26-27 **Specially**: **Jesus spoils or treats His bride as being extremely special**. Jesus’ love for you and I is the kind of love that wants us to “*be all we can be*”! Paul lists two specific ways in which Jesus sees His bride, than he reveals the two ways in which Jesus accomplish His goal for His bride, (you and I):
5. Vs. 26 **Sanctify**: Our wives were created to be our **companion** to **complement** us in what God has called us too. It is the water of the word of God that cleanses the character of a person and a character that has been cleansed will be equipped to function as God has designed us!
6. Vs. 27 **Glorify**: Jesus’ goal is to continually beautify His bride. Looking at this section of scripture the inward beauty of a wife is the direct result of the husband loving her in a special way. If that is our goal then I’m betting our wife won’t have a hard time voluntarily relinquishing her rights!
7. Vs. 28-30 **Unconditionally**: The husbands love for his wife is to be automatic as his care for himself. Husbands don’t treat our hands with anything but the utmost care. When my big thumb gets in the way of the head of the hammer I don’t call it stupid or laugh it. In verse 28 Paul tells us that there are two things you and I always do with regards to our own bodies:
8. ***Nourish***: We spend time every day making sure that our bodies are taken care of. Paul says, “*Just treat your wives as you treat yourselves*.”
9. ***Cherish***: In the Greek this word means to foster tender care, so not only to we provide for the physical wellbeing of our bodies we are constantly trying to pamper them. Husbands we need to spoil our wives all the time not just on special occasions. Can you imagine your mouth wanting an ice cream Sunday and your brain saying, “*Hey, it’s not your birthday, who died and made you boss*”?
10. Vs. 31 **Unbreakably**: You see how secure our wives would feel if they experienced love that won’t ever allow anything or anyone to come in between us. For “loves” sake that we will leave our parents and by “*glued*” to our wives men. Our bounding with our wives fellows is to be unbreakable.

Vs. 32-33 The goal of marriage is the same goal of our relationship with Jesus, “Oneness”! Paul has not one time spoken about our “rights” in marriage, no he has instead of spoken to us about our “duties”.

1. Wives biggest challenge is to continue to love their husbands by supporting them by “voluntarily relinquishing their rights”.
2. Husbands biggest challenge will be to continue to love their wives in a way that cause them to feel secure, sacrificially, specially, unconditionally, and unbreakably.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:18-21Pleasing in Christ

**3:20-21**

**“Grace Garments in the Family”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. 20 Adult making**

**III. 21 Parenting 101**

**I. Intro.**

Paul addressed what “*Grace Clothes*” looks on husbands and wives, now reveals what it looks like on children and parents. It is interesting that Paul is addressing human relationships, specifically the family unit. This reveals that these human interactions were very important to the early Church. Paul seemed to understand that what happened in the family and on the job had far reaching implications. We Christian’s can’t expect to leave a lasting impression with the truths about the person and work of Jesus if His impact isn’t visible in the most personal of our earthly relationships. Notice that Paul addressed the marriage and applying “*grace garments*” to both husbands and wives before he addresses children and parents. When a marriage is under the submission of Jesus Christ the family will be in harmony. There is no room in our witness for us to say to a lost and hurting world, “*Do as I say, not as I do*!” Instead what we hear over and over again is “***Imitate me as I imitate Christ***!”

**II. 20 Adult making**

Vs. 20 If some chafed at the word “*submit*” in verse 18 as it relates to the wife’s exhortation to ***voluntarily demonstrate love to their husband by support***; then children are going to have a similar reaction to this word “*obey*”. The Greek word has a duel meaning: “*to hear and to be under someone*”. A lot is mentioned today about “Children’s Rights” I believe they have the right and expectation in a Christian home according to Ephesians 6:4 to grow up in the “*nurture and admonition of the Lord*”. But they have responsibilities as well and the first is to obey their parents in all things, not just the things that please them. They are to recognize that their parents have authority over their lives. The only area where a child may disobey their parents is on the occasion where the parent is asking them to do something that that goes against God’s word. Children that grow up habitually not obeying their parents will grow up rebelling against all authority, teachers, police, employers and anyone else who tries to exercise authority over them.

* **Instruction is towards children**: Like the above two commands that Paul gave in the marriage this one as well is ***mutually exclusive***. This command assumes that the “*children*” would be mature enough to comprehend and apply the command. As a parent and grandparent it is not the independence of the child that I object to. The truth is “*independence*” is a natural progression to becoming a productive adult. As parent’s we ought to be fostering independence, which ought to include good problem solving capabilities. What parents object to is the attempt to **exercise independence apart from personal responsibility**. Parents are in the “*adult making*” business not in the “*child rearing*” business. There are some in society with the mistaken notion that 30, 40 and 50 something ***children*** are cute! This society has given people all the freedoms of adulthood without any responsibilities then wonders why people rebel at having to suffer the consequences of their actions. This has allowed some in the government to keep them attached to a seemingly never ending supply of sustenance, prolonging their irresponsibility and ensuring their continual support of that politician. I do not fault the children as they have a fallen nature that will always look to be on “*easy street*”. To many parents are:
1. **Either living through their children vicariously** in a false reality of wanting to be their child’s “*best friend*” or be seen as being “*cool*” (or whatever they are calling it today.) God has not placed us parents to be our children’s “*best friend*”! He has placed us there to instruct them and guide them into adulthood. Liking us will come when they are in the same position one day and realize that what we said no too and placed boundaries on had merit and reason to it.
2. **Or secondly, they lack instruction themselves in a cycle of irresponsibility that seems to be multi-generational**. I have observed this historical pattern of **generational irresponsibility** as “*adult children*” are raising “*adult children*” who have now started their own brood. This **generational irresponsibility** is spreading like a plague across this nation. Hard work, where a person has to forgo instant self-gratification has been replaced by an attitude that expects to be paid millions for no work. And again we have adult children (***called*** ***politicians***) who are ever so pleased (for a vote of course) to offer adult children just what they crave, more freedoms without any responsibilities. This circular society has failed to anticipate one thing in their master plan for society….what happens when those who are responsible and hard-working stop working? Who is going to continue to pay for the Instant Fun when no one is responsible? The “*perpetual party*” will inevitably run out of “*party favors*” then what?
* **Children’s “Obedience” is not situational**: The **measure** of a child’s obedience is “*all things*” and the **motive** is to “*please the Lord*”. As adults, we understand that hard work and sacrifice it is the surest path to success. If our children are going to be successful the sooner they learn this, the better. ***To prolong perpetual irresponsibility through willful disobedience is to diminish opportunity***.
* **Obedience greatest reward**: Obeying parents, motive is not to please the parents but it is “*well pleasing to the Lord*”. **It pleases the Lord because it preserves the *sanctity* and *sanity* of the family and society**. Obeying parents with the motivation of pleasing the Lord teaches the child that they are not just doing a duty, arbitrarily following a list of dumb and antiquated rules they are relationally living as pleasing the Lord. Parents need to impress upon children the need to develop and maintain their own personal relationship with Jesus. In “*obeying parents*” is a lesson of respecting all people and treating other better than one’s self. It is a way of life of peace, joy and love that makes a difference through self-denial and sacrifice for a great good and glory. Obedience makes a choice because it doesn’t want to lose the greater “*pleasing the Lord*” for the lessor “*the temporary pleasures of sin for a season*”.

**III. 21 Parenting 101**

Vs. 21 The word translated “*fathers*” is translated “*parents*” in Hebrews 11:23. Notice that Paul starts out with a negative…. “*do not provoke*”. The word in the Greek means to “*stir up, arouse, or to irritate*” but in the context is in the present continuance tense which is saying: “*Don’t keep on badgering your children*.” It has to do with verbally harassing our children pointing out every little flaw to where they become convinced that they just can’t ever please us. They work hard doing their homework on time studying for their test but when the grade comes in all we can say is that they should have got an “A”. The goal of discipline and instruction is to build up not to tear down and destroy. There are three things parents do in their relationship with their children that can be irritating that they need to stop doing:

1. ***Ignoring them***: Absenteeism is a great problem especially among fathers today. One survey in a town indicated that fathers spent only *thirty-seven seconds a day with their small children*! Parents who are so busy that they have no time for their children will soon find that his children will have no time for them. We can also ignore them when we don’t listen and just say no when they ask us for something. We need to give them the courtesy of at least listening to their request. Failure to do this will cause a child to feel as though they aren’t important and worthless. Cat Stevens sang a song called “*Cats in The Cradle*” about a father’s neglect and the sons promise that one day he would be just like you dad. And when the father got older the boy was disconnected to his father.
2. ***Indulging them***: A second source of irritation is when the father tries to counter abandonment with materialism. Children know the difference between ***indulgence*** and ***intimacy***; and will not be “bought off ” for long. Children long for ***intimacy***, not for superficial ***indulgence***. If I was to ask most people what they valued most about their parents they would say that it was the TIME they spent with them. I can tell you as a father that my biggest regret is that I wasn’t involved in their lives enough. It would also be what I would encourage young fathers today; you won’t have another time like this to be involved in your children’s lives.
3. ***Insulting them***: The third and final thing parents need to avoid that their children will find irritating is insulting them, putting them down. Parents try to live through their children and when they don’t measure up to their expectations they often put them down. If you need to correct your child do so privately if possible so as to not embarrass them publically. When they are hurt don’t be afraid to pick them up and hold them and tell them that you love them. Along with listening we need to pick our words of encouragement and instruction carefully and make sure that we pray with them. We must be careful not to compare or cause our children to have to compete against each other for our acceptance and approval. When a child doesn’t receive the attention they need at home they will seek it elsewhere.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:22 – 4:1 Presence of Christ

**3:22-4:1**

**“Grace Garments at work”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. 22-25 Set apart slaves**

**III. 4:1 Mastered master**

**I. Intro.**

The section that deals with the 3rd relationship in which the Christian will need to wear “Grace Clothes” (*the work place*) and is the largest of the three. Its length should not suggest “*greater importance*” but rather a more “*pressing need*”. Paul included this letter the letters to Ephesus as well to his fellow shepherd Philemon who had to be encouraged to do right by his runaway slave Onesimus. The geographical proximity to Colossi was a story these believers were very familiar with. ***Saints the person God choses to use in a work is inevitably the person that knows how to work!*** **Consider this truth**:

* **It was when Moses was at work tending his father-in-laws sheep that God appeared to him in the burning bush and called him to reach his people**
* **Elisha was plowing in the field when Elijah called him into ministry**
* **Peter and Andrew were fishing when Jesus called them to be fishers of men**

Saint’s waiting on the Lord doesn’t involve sitting and doing nothing instead as the above truths indicate it involves working!

**II. 22-25 Set apart slaves**

During Paul’s day slavery was an established institution with well over 60 million of them. Some wonder why the church didn’t seek to destroy this horrid institution.

1. First, Christianity was at its infant stage and had no political or military power to change anything. Slavery was established on social order thus Paul taught that the Christian slave should secure their freedom if they could but never at the price of rebellion as they were first and foremost a slave to Christ.
2. Second, the purpose of the church is to spread the gospel which sets free all people from the tyranny of sin and death. Had the early church left their true calling for social action they would have been branded an antigovernment group and would have never been an instrument of change.
3. Third, Colossians was a part of a three letter set which included Ephesians and the little letter to Philemon which was written to encourage a church leader and slave owner “*Philemon*” to receive back his runaway slave Onesimus who had come to Paul escaping Philemon’s treatment of him and had become a believer. Paul corrects both by encouraging Philemon and by sending Onesimus back with the letter.

The positive side of obedience is ***single heartedness to the Lord which will produce sincere hearts in service***! Though the gospel didn’t immediately destroy slavery it did gradually change the relationship between slaves and masters until society could no longer practice slavery at the same time treating each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. You cannot have a society of slaves and masters when all are brothers and sisters under one benevolent Master in Christ! At the heart of every problem is a problem of the heart and only the Holy Spirit can change and control the heart.

Vs. 22-23 Paul divides this section as he has in the last two into mutually exclusive commandments. The church was the only place where both slaves and masters would be present at the same time on the same social level without racial and class distinctions.

* Like Paul’s words two marriage and the family he says things both to slaves and masters that would have been revolutionary concepts to both. I will use a more contemporary terms like “*employees*” and “*bosses*”.
* Slaves must be “conscientious workers” in Christ more effect and more efficient slaves. ***Telling people who had no choice to make a choice to be the best would have been unheard of****. A relationship with Jesus never means an escape from hard work; it means an escape from the wrong attitude and motivation that often accompanies it.*
1. ***Negatively***: The slave must not be content with just getting buy when his overseer is watching. ***He must not sweep things under the rug instead he needed to sweep under the rug!*** There was a man in a foreign country that owned a factory that noticed that his workers would be busy earning their pay as long as he kept an eye on them. As soon as he stepped out they stop. He had been injured years earlier and had a glass eye so knowing they were superstitious he would put it on a stump in front of them. The plan worked wonderful until one day he came back to see the crew sitting and noticed that his glass eye had been placed under a hat by a worker who had snuck around behind the eye so it couldn’t see him and hid the eye under the hat.
2. ***Positively***: We are to work with “*sincerity of heart, fearing God and doing things heartily as to the Lord and not to men*.” The best witness a person can have at work is by being the hardest most positive worker on the job the company has. It shouldn’t matter what the employer treats you like or passes over you for promotion because you aren’t working for yourself or for them but for the Lord.
* Slaves are to remember who their true Master is and work only as unto Him who loved them so much that He sacrificed His life for their freedom!
* Slaves could never possess property is promised an inheritance from God who is the weighed the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Vs. 24-25 The great encouragement of this is that the reward or lack thereof will be ***supplied by Jesus at you promotion into His presence***. The Christian worker always needs to remind themselves that they work as “*unto the Lord*” and “*not unto men*” so that our motivation stays correct and won’t lesson based upon how we are being treated by our earthly employer. It’s easy to become discourage if we lose this perspective. I think it would be good for the employee to have on their desk (or somewhere handy) this phrase, “*Jesus, I’m working only for You today…thank You for reminding me of this and please give me the Holy Spirit’s power and joy to do a great job for you today*!”

 Paul says that there is a bonus tied to this realization that you are to work as “*unto the Lord*”. ***When you work as unto the Lord your attitude is changed and the quantity and quality of your work is best you can expect to receive your bonus upon your promotion into His presence***. *Ah but listen up in verse 25 Paul says that you may be losing your bonus if you haven’t been work as unto the Lord*. ***There are going to be people who work unto the Lord that never got promoted or compensated in this life time***. Perhaps they wondered, “*Man this just isn’t right, why I’ve worked unto the Lord and here I sit*!” Listen up saint and be encouraged because God has seen that you have been working unto Him and rest assured He isn’t going to miss the opportunity to give you that promotion and raise with interest. Maybe you’re thinking “*Well it sure would have been nice to have gotten it while on earth…*!” If He would have given it to you now:

* **It would only have been temporary and not the full amount.**
* **It would have been subject to taxes, added pressure and responsibility.**
* **It would also been vulnerable, to *rust*, *rodent* and *robber*.**
* **It wouldn’t have been able to be fully enjoyed, because you haven’t retired, you’re still working.**

**When He rewards you for your faithfulness of working unto Him He will be able to reward you without those limitations**. The reward Jesus gives now for our faithful service according to Jesus’ parable in Luke 19:12-27: ***Is a greater opportunity to demonstrate your love in still greater service.*** That’s why sometimes even though you are working as unto the Lord you don’t get that earthly promotion and pay raise as Jesus is giving you a greater opportunity to demonstrate His love and that doesn’t always equate with a pay raise and a promotion.

 Ah but saint’s notice that in verse 25 Paul warns that the opposite is also true as those who do wrong of the job will be paid for what they have done, as there is no partiality. If the Christian employee isn’t working as unto the Lord and is instead just working with eyeservice or as a man-pleaser they may get promoted, get pay raises but the Lord has seen the truth and you will receive less of an opportunity to demonstrate His love here and now and less bonus in the future. Heaven is the great equalizer as with God there is no partiality.

**III. 4:1 Mastered master**

Vs. 1 Now to Christian Employers Paul speaks to them about being generous and fair. The reason is that they too are to realize that they have a Master in heaven. God is concerned with justice and fairness on the work place. It seems as though Paul is suggesting to, bless slaves financially so that they could eventually but their freedom. And looking out over history that is what happened as the Christian influence in the work place changed society creating the equality that God attended.

* To masters Paul says that they must not treat their slaves as mere objects, tools, things to be used and discarded. Employees are people just like they are.
* The master is also to remember that he too has a Master in Christ in heaven so he will have to answer unto his Master for how he treated God’s servants! The master and the slave are equally both working for God.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**III. Main** **Teaching**: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:22 – 4:6 Presence of Christ

**4:2-6**

**“Prayer, has it come to that?”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 2 It’s come to prayer**

**III. Vs. 3-6 What to pray for**

**I. Intro.**

In July of 1994, Cindy Hartman a pastor’s wife from Conway, Arkansas was confronted in her home by a pistol-wielding burglar who surprised her when she came in to answer the phone. He ripped the cord from the wall and ordered her into a closet. To the shock of the gunman, Cindy fell to her knees and began to pray for God’s Help. The robber was even more stunned when she asked if she could pray for him! She proceeded to tell him about Christ’s love and expressed her forgiveness for his actions. This was more than the robber bargained for he broke into tears and knelt beside her to pray. What happened next surprised Cindy as, the man yelled out the window to a woman in a pickup: “*We’ve got to unload all of this stuff. This is a Christian home and we can’t do this to them*.” She remained in prayer, while her furniture was being returned and robber then used a shirt to wipe off his fingerprints, apologized and departed, leaving his gun behind! Friend, “***Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His willingness****.*” Prayer is asking God for that which He wants to do and give, according to His will.

**II. Vs. 2 It’s come to prayer**

Vs. 2 This section (verses 2-6) gives us great solutions on how to live as a Christian in a world completely given over to false values, where our senses are under a complete bombardment of every kind of evil and pursuit that directly opposes our faith and virtue. Paul starts off with one word that tells every Christian throughout the ages what to do when they are faced with such corruption….***PRAY***! One version interprets verse 2 by saying “***Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful***.” Jesus had similar words for His disciples on the night of His betrayal in Matthew 26:40 as He told them to “***watch and pray***” while He was in the garden called Gethsemane. You might recall that those men had a similar obedience problem as we do as they “***fell asleep***”. ***Is that not indicative of our struggle***? **We fail to rest is His presence when we should and a fall asleep when we should be on guard!** The outcome of this is seen in the garden that fateful night as we note:

* **Peter denied the Lord**
* **John fled in the darkness**
* **And all the others abandoned Jesus**

I have noticed how little I’m prepared for the dangers of daily living as it takes a very little thief to **rob** my joy, **ransack** my peace and **restrict** my love! How better prepared I could have been if I would have just headed Paul’s words to “***Devote my self to prayer, being watchful and thankful***.” In light of my confession my greatest need is to “*continue earnestly in prayer*”. ***Why must I wait for the tsunami in life, the inevitable avalanche of catastrophes before I believe that the events have reached the level that warrants prayer***? Paul’s counsel is to be “*vigilant*” in prayer with thanksgiving. I love that word “*vigilant*” also rendered “*watchful*” as it conveys the thought of being aggressively going after something or someone. We need to be a “*vigilante*” with regards to the pursuit of prayer life. When the seas of life are calm except for the infrequent ripple we ought to be praying for the strength to endure what may come at any moment. That’s the surest way to not be taken off guard or drift away during the storm. What are we to do in the times when the waves don’t come? Paul tells us that such vigilant prayer is covered with “*thanksgiving*”. I’ve listened to a lot of prayers (***especially my own***) and I’ve noticed that much of what I call conversation with God is:

* Long in ***explaining to God what my particular situation*** is. It’s as if I act like He is senile, absent minded or hard of hearing. **None of which is true!** He knows me a far off, is everywhere present and doesn’t need to have me explain to Him what is going on to help me. After all think of how ***illogical*** it would be to come to a being for help that you first have to explain the what and how of the help? If I’ve I got to wax on to God about my situation and how “this time” I need it to be just so and right on time, then I’m praying to someone that can’t help me in the first place!
* Next my prayers are often spent in ***reminding Him what He has already promised*** to do. I do this “***reminding***”, at least in part to convince myself of the hope I have in my relationship with Him. A way of checking my wallet to reassure me that I really do have enough in my account of grace to handle what life is throwing at me. The other reason I do this (*and I’m ashamed of saying this*) is just in case He has forgotten the deal He made with me, which was to bless me in spite of me. Again this is ***illogical*** because what good is the promise if the One who had promised can’t be trusted in the first place to remember that He promised me.
* Finally, ***I thank Him***! Usually this happens a good deal after my prayer has been answered satisfactory to my expectations, as a brief post script I say… “*Oh and thanks*”. As if to say, “*Well it’s the thought that counts!*”

I believe that my prayer is a look at a heart that struggles with believing that God only knows how to give good gifts to His children. Perhaps we all should start with thanks giving: “*Lord I thank you that you only know how to give good gifts to your children. I thank you that your love for me never fails. I thank you that you never leave me or forsake me.*” Then we could move to the petition: “*Lord, I just realized that in thanking you for who you are and what you always do on my behalf that my request has been answered…. so thank you for answering my request*!”

**III. Vs. 3-6 What to pray for**

Vs. 3-6 You may be thinking, “*Well if I prayed like that I’d have little to pray for with regards to myself…..so what would I talk to God about*?” Paul has a suggestion in verse 3 “*meanwhile* ***praying for us also***.” Since you will be spending less time on yourself in prayer as you will have moved to thanking Him for what He has already promised to do, you might as well fill what you would have spent on yourself, on ***OTHERS***! And it’s just like **Paul to suggest four things that he would like us to pray for as it relates to others**.

1. Vs. 3 “*That God would open to us a door for the word*”: One Christian web site listed the top ten prayer requests and this one of Paul’s wasn’t even on the list. Here was the top 10, all of which are great things to pray for, just not the request that Paul asked for:
	1. Health of others
	2. strength to get through grief
	3. guidance and wisdom
	4. personal love, peace and happiness
	5. finances, jobs or help with exams
	6. personal health
	7. salvation of others
	8. family issues, marriage and divorce
	9. protection for children
	10. the needy, hungry and poor

Paul under house arrest in Rome and the prayer he wants the most from others is for an ***OPEN DOOR*** for the Word. Before I asked for a door I’d be asking for a place to live instead of a prison cell! But the open door was not to escape but for the Word of God that others may escape! Paul’s situation left restrictions upon his opportunities to share the Word of God but what I find interesting is ***Paul doesn’t limit the work of God by suggesting his freedom as the sole means to answering the prayer. Instead he prays not for his freedom but the Word of God’s freedom which was the reason why he was imprisoned to start with***. Saints I pray that you continue to pray for “*open doors*” for the word as currently our radio program is on 5 stations and we would love to see is spread to other opportunities. Our weekly words is being sent out via email’s that you are passing on and our website and phone app is being picked up all the time. These are opportunities for the Word that we may not know the results until we are in His presence. The mystery that Paul refers to here was what he had described earlier as “*Christ in you the hope of glory*.” We are in desperate times and what we are in need of is a ***revolutionary*** that is capable of changing the world in which we live in and it just so happens that we have in the Word of God empowered by the Spirit of God just such a revolutionary.

1. Vs. 4 “*That I may make* ***IT****..(the mystery of Christ in verse 3) manifest*.” The Message renders this phrase as “*Pray that every time I open my mouth* ***I'll be able to make Christ plain as day to them***.” This is closely linked to what Paul wanted them to pray for above only here he realized that the only restriction that the Word of God empowered by the Spirit of God has is the instrument that God choses to use. Oh saint’s pray for me and for others who have been given the great blessings and responsibility to be able to make “***Christ plain as day***”.
2. Vs. 5 That I might “*Walk in wisdom towards those who are outside, redeeming the time*”: Paul wants prayer for the way he lives and speaks among those who don’t yet know Christ. That’s the definition that Paul applies to “*walking in wisdom….redeeming the time.*” The greatest limitation that I have to the power of the Word of God by the Spirit of God is the way I live and act among those I’m called to reach. I know of no greater need in my life, that I won’t be a hindrance to the Word of God.
3. Vs. 6 That our “*Speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you might know how you ought to answer each one*”: Along those same lines Paul asks for prayer that the way he generally spoke and conducted himself be “*always full of grace*” **pleasant and courteous…easy to be around**. ***What we have to say may indeed make folks mad but the way we say it should not***! The idea behind salty isn’t provocative language but rather language that stimulates a person’s spiritual appetite arousing their curiosity.

**Colossians**

“***A Worthy Walk***”

**IV. Closing 4:7-18**

**4:7-18**

**“You are the Church”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 7-11 People who stayed**

**III. Vs. 12-15 People prayed and strayed**

**IV. Vs. 16-18 People with passion**

**I. Intro.**

There is a tendency when reading New Testament letters to skip the closing as it is usually personal notes to people whom the writer knew. These hard to pronounce names provide yet another window into the lives of the early church. They were common ordinary people who had been transformed by an extraordinary God. There are three general observations that these 12 verses provide us:

* **Family**: These 8 names all have words like “*fellow*”, “*beloved*”, “*brother*” “*one of you*” attached to their name. The implication is obvious; the early church was ***not an institution*** it was a ***family***! This is a great word to the church today that far too often it is run like a corporation and loses its compassion and intimacy.
* **Faithful**: Second the use of the word “*servant*” or “*bondservant*” along with the word “*faithful*” suggests that the early church hadn’t divided it’s self into “*professionals*” and “*amateurs*”. The early church ***didn’t GO to church*** they ***WERE the church.*** There weren’t any spectators in chairs there were only participants in the streets.
* **Followers**: Finally, Paul knew these folks and it appears that discipleship was the norm within the early church. How would Paul know “*Onesimus was a faithful brother*”, or “*Tychicus was a faithful minister*” if he hadn’t mentored them and coached them? The early church had taken Jesus’ words at the great commission seriously and were not engaged in making “*decisions*” for Christ they were involved in making “*disciples*” of Christ!

I have little doubt that if the church today would adopt these three principals that the early church had we would be far more successful in reaching a lost world.

**II. Vs. 7-11 People who stayed**

Vs. 7-9 Paul mentions people that were a part of his mentoring program. These men had earned a great deal of trust from Paul not only in his praise of them but also in his trust of them to carry such a letter. After the resurrection Jesus didn’t start a seminary, He sent the Holy Spirit to empower and turned them lose on the world. Rabbis that examined Jesus methods and took note that although He had unlearned fishermen they marveled realizing that they had “*been with Jesus*”. Paul mentions three groups of people:

* People who ***STAYED***
* A person who ***PRAYED***
* A person who ***STRAYED***

 **People who STAYED**!

1. **Tychicus**: His name means “*fortunate*” and in Acts 20:4 we are told that he was from Thessalonica and a part of the delegation that traveled with Paul as he took a love offering from the churches in Macedonia to the suffering church in Jerusalem. In 2 Timothy 4:12 we are told that Paul sent him to Ephesus to replace Timothy. In Titus 3:12 Paul was about to send him to the Island of Crete to help with the work there. Paul gives three descriptions of his character:
	1. **Beloved Brother**: Before Tychicus was noted for any other attribute he was a loving brother. Paul had taught him that the best way to be faithful servant and teach others is by a demonstration of love.
	2. **Faithful Minister**: Paul assesses the ***quality*** of his work and says that as a servant of Christ he was faithful. God doesn’t ask us to be brilliant, popular or eloquent, He asks that whatever the assignment He gives us we will be faithful to complete it.
	3. **Fellow Servant**: Finally Paul addresses the ***equality*** of the workers and says that Tychicus saw himself on the same level as everybody else. He didn’t see himself as over others but rather served as though he was under all. No wonder he was loved and seen as faithful. Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 23:8 “*for one is your Master, and all are your brothers*”.

It is interesting to note the priority of Paul’s assessment of Tychicus: What Tychicus ***did*** was not as important as the way in which it was ***done***…as he performed his service in love. No matter what we are called to do in Christ’s service “***beloved***” ought to be in front of it!

1. **Onesimus**: Name means “*profitable*” and was no doubt attached to his life as he was a slave. His story is told in Paul’s companion letter to Philemon a pastor of a church in the region and slave master of Onesimus. During this one page letter you read of Paul’s appeal to Philemon to receive the runaway slave Onesimus back not as a mere slave but as a brother in Christ. To add more drama the punishment inflicted upon a runaway slave was death and Paul had Onesimus carry the letter back to his master Philemon. Paul describes him **three ways** as well:
2. **Faithful**: Prior to his conversion Onesimus might had been “*profitable*” but he was not “*faithful*”. Paul speaks to the ***attitude*** and by which a person serves. You can be of value in your service and still not be faithful in your service but if you are first faithful to serve as unto the Lord you will always be of more valuable then you were.
3. **Beloved brother**: Here again this speaks the ***motive*** of his service as now it was as a beloved brother not as a servant to his master. We will always serve greater when our motive is love.
4. **Who is one of you**: Paul addresses his status which was total ***equality*** as he was “***One of You***”. Our service will be better when we are equal with each other, part of a team that share in the victory and blessings!

Vs. 10-11 This section give us some more names:

1. **Aristarchus**: He came from Thessalonica and most likely became a Christian under Paul’s ministry in that city and then later joined Paul when he was sent from Caesarea to Rome as Paul calls him a “*fellow prisoner*” suggesting that he had also been charged with a crime against Rome that dealt with his trust in Jesus.
2. **Mark**: Is referenced back to Paul’s first missionary journey where Mark (also known as John Mark) went along with his cousin Barnabas. We know that because of Mark’s flaky nature there arose a dispute about whether he should continue with the team. Paul refused to take him and Barnabas refused to leave without him. Years have passed and restoration has happened as Mark is now with Paul. Paul has written instructions for the Church in Colossi to welcome Mark with now hesitation. Saint’s make sure you move in grace, as God is a God of multiple chances.
3. **Justus**: Is also known by the common name of Jesus but chose the Roman name so as a Jew he could be a better witness to the Romans as had Paul who was known as Saul.

**III. Vs. 12-15 People prayed and strayed**

1. **Epaphras**: **A person who PRAYED**: We have already read his name in the first chapter and know him as the evangelist that went out from Paul’s time in Ephesus to plant church in Colossi, Laodicea and Hierapolis all sister cities. Paul says of him that he had a great concern for their wellbeing. This was visible as he was a “*servant by choice*” and always laboring in prayers for them that they would stand confident in the will of God. Here was a man that didn’t stop his ministry at evangelism but continued on as a shepherd laboring in prayer for those he a shared with.
2. **Luke**: In 2nd Timothy Paul’s last letter he writes that “*only Luke was still with him*”. Here was a man who remained connected to Paul throughout his whole ministry. Paul’s calls him the “*beloved physician*” and I believe that his healing touch went well beyond the body to the soul and spirit.
3. **Demas**: **A person who STRATED**. We know that he was from Thessalonica and had served with Paul a while as he is mentioned in other letters so he must have traveled with him. In Paul’s first letter to Timothy 4:10 he writes of Demas that “*he has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica*.” What a reminder to us that it is not how well we start the Christian life but how well we finish it! We have all known a Demas who started well was on fire for the Lord but has left their faith and went back to the world’s attractions.
4. **Nymphas**: Some versions have this name in the masculine others in the feminine but it is most likely that this was a woman who had had opened her house to for fellowship. At any rate here was a person who served with the gift of hospitality as many in this fellowship have and what a blessing they are to the rest of us.

**IV. Vs. 16-18 People with passion**

Vs. 16-18 We do not have the letter other than Jesus’ to the church that met in Laodicea but these letters were to be shared, studied and applied which shows that the first century church already recognized this letters as being divinely authored and that Paul and others were just the pin.

***Archippus***: Paul’s mentions him in his letter to Philemon and many feel that he was the son of Philemon. Paul exhorts him not to neglect the calling that was upon his life. Saint’s we all have been given a ministry by the Lord. ***The question is***: **Are you taking heed to it that you may fulfill it?** I can’t fulfill your ministry as I’ve been called by the Lord to be a part of the ministry found in Ephesians 4 that is to “*equip the saint’s for the work of ministry*.” I’m called to equip people not so they can be entertained but for the work of service to the King and His children. You have every right to expect that out of me…I pray that I am equipping you. And the only way I can tell how I’m doing is by watching most of you go to work for Christ. How do you know what your work is for the Lord? Well what are you passionate about? What are your interests? Answer those questions and you will know where your work is. That’s why we here don’t have programs that I appoint people towards we have folks with passion that get to work. Recently someone came to me with a heart to start a book club and now we have a ministry for those that love to read good Christian books and share with each other. I met with another person who saw the need to reach out to folks like her and her husband so they are going to start a ministry called “***common ground***” for 20-30 something’s every other Saturday night in He-Brew’s café.