

## Lesson 17 – Review and Colossians 4:18

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### Review

#### The Problem at Colossae

The Colossian heresy was an eclectic combination of ideas from various religions and philosophies (Roman paganism, legalistic Judaism, Greek philosophies, and ancient mystery religions) with the truth of Christianity. The resulting heresy later became known as Gnosticism, emphasizing a special knowledge (gnosis) and denying the deity and saving work of Christ. It became a major thorn in the side of the early church and is addressed in many epistles. Paul addresses Gnostic heresy by presenting Christ as preeminent and completely sufficient for all the believer’s spiritual needs. The theme of Colossians then is the supremacy and all sufficiency of Christ.

Gnostics believed they were privy to a higher level of spiritual knowledge than the average believer had access to, and this realm of knowledge (gnosis) was the key to spiritual illumination. This caused many to seek hidden knowledge beyond the Scriptures and Christ. Gnosticism was a very elite, exclusive movement that disdained “unenlightened” and “simplistic” biblical Christians. Sound familiar? Present-day gnostic tendencies include the phycological, pragmatic, and mysticism movements.

#### The Structure of the Book

Paul wrote to address the heresy that denied the supreme and sufficient person and a work of Christ. Chapters one and two present Christ’s person and work and supremacy and sufficiency for salvation and sanctification. Chapters three and four address how the believer is to walk in light of His supremacy and sufficiency. Union with Christ is the doctrinal prerequisite to walking with Christ. Paul exhorts the Colossians (and us) to strive in the power of the Spirit to walk in our position; to live out in practice what we already are in Christ.

Doctrine						Practice										
Chapter 1			Chapter 2			Chapter 3			Chapter 4							
Greeting (1:1-2)	Prayer of thanksgiving (1:3-8)	Prayer of supplication (1:9-14)	...Person (1:15-18)	...Work (1:19-23)	...Apostolic ministry (1:24-2:3)	Over human wisdom and philosophy (2:4-10)	Over legalism, mysticism, and asceticism (2:11-23)	Putting off the old man (3:1-9)	Putting on the new man (3:10-14)	Walking in the Spirit (3:15-17)	Marriage relationship (3:18-19)	Parent-child relationship (3:20-21)	Work relationship (3:22-4:1)	A heart for the mission (4:2-6)	Impactful relationships (4:7-17)	Farewell (4:18)
Personal			Supremacy and Sufficiency of Christ’s ...			Life in the supreme and all-sufficient Christ						Personal				

### Greeting (1:1-2)

Paul greets the church that he does not know with his standard greeting. He is an apostle Jesus Christ by the will of God. The sovereign “will of God” is a central theme with Paul particularly when identifying his connection to Christ and service of Him. He writes to the “saints and faithful brethren in Christ”.

- ❖ **How would your attitude to life situations be different than the world’s if you trusted God’s sovereign will? Do you view yourself as a saint? Are you faithful to Christ?**

### Paul's prayer of thanksgiving (1:3-8)

Paul prays for the church. He begins with thanking God for His work in the individuals at Colossae. The Colossians are people of faith, love, and hope. God brought them into a relationship with Himself by bringing the word of truth, the gospel, to them. It is evident they are saved because they are bearing fruit and increasing.

- ❖ **Does gratitude characterize your life? Do you voice that thankfulness?**

### Paul's prayer of supplication (1:9-14)

Paul prays for the church and his prayer is his first attack against the false teachers. They promised a special knowledge and superior spirituality. Terms like filled, knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual understanding were part of their vocabulary. So, he uses these same words in his prayer. He asks that God “fill” them with “the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (v 9). Paul's prayer was that the Colossians be controlled by the full knowledge of God's will, which would lead to obedience and moral excellence.

- ❖ **Do you pray like Paul for yourself and the brethren?**

### The supremacy of Christ's person (1:15-18)

The Spirit through Paul continues the attack against the false Colossian teachers. They rejected the deity of Jesus the Christ so Paul goes after that with clear teaching. Jesus is God incarnate. He is the “image of the invisible God”. He is the preeminent one over all creation. He is the Creator of the physical as well as the immaterial universe. He is eternal. He holds the universe together by His omnipotent power. He is the origin and source of the body, the church. Finally, He is the preeminent one who is the first One resurrected with a glorified body. He is first; He is supreme; He is preeminent.

- ❖ **Does Christ reign supreme in your life?**

### The supremacy of Christ's work (1:19-23)

Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is addressing the Colossian heresy that denies the deity and saving work of Christ. Paul presents Christ as preeminent in both His person and His work. Christ has reconciled you and I when we were alienated, hostile in mind, and engaged in evil deeds. He has saved us for the purpose to change us into worshipers of the true God being holy, blameless, and above reproach. That work is demonstrated by us continuing in the faith, being firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

- ❖ **Are you persevering?**

### The supremacy of believer's ministry (1:24-2:3)

Paul continues to attack the Colossian false teaching that denied the person and work of Christ while he presents his heart toward ministry, philosophy of ministry, and method of ministry. The heart of ministry is joy which we are able to possess in the direst circumstances by walking in the Spirit. Ministry is difficult and involves suffering. The goal of ministry is to fully preach the gospel. The method of ministry is to “proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ”. The power for ministry comes from the Holy Spirit. Finally, the concern of ministry is that hearts would be strengthened.

❖ **Is this how you approach your service to the Body?**

### The supremacy of Christ over human wisdom and philosophy (2:4-10)

Paul continues his attack on the Colossian false teaching that denied the person and work of Christ focusing the attack on philosophy which is empty deception and is according to the tradition of men and the elementary principles of the world, rather than Christ. He is looking to make sure the Colossians are not deluded with persuasive argument. Paul’s heart is with the Colossians and he doesn’t want them to be pulled away from the treasures that come from a relationship with the God-man, Christ Jesus.

❖ **Have you been deluded with persuasive argument and pulled away from the sufficiency found in the treasures of a relationship with Christ?**

### The supremacy of Christ over legalism, mysticism, and asceticism (2:11-23)

Paul continues his attack the Colossian false teaching that denied the person and work of Christ focusing the attack on legalism, mysticism, and asceticism. God has given believers a complete and sufficient salvation – completely made new, completely forgiven, and completely victorious in Christ. Christ is supreme over Jewish legalism because it is a mere shadow, but the substance is Christ. Mystic experiences are worthless because of the believer’s sufficiency in the Head, Christ. Asceticism is worthless because only union with Christ and the indwelling Spirit provides victory over the flesh.

❖ **Are you being pulled away from Christ alone for salvation and sanctification?**

### Life in the all-sufficient Christ – putting off the old man (3:1-9)

We have been given a complete salvation having been raised up with Christ. Therefore, we should continually devote ourselves to serious effort and earnestly strive to glorify God, being a doer of His word (will), having all our affections, will, and reason set on that. We are in union with Christ and our life is supernatural because we have access to the Spirit. One day, the world will see the great work Christ has done in us by seeing His righteousness. The believer’s heart should be to progress in sanctification by putting to death, laying aside heart level sin motives.

❖ **Are you putting forward maximum effort to strive to glorify God?**

### Life in the all-sufficient Christ – putting on the new man (3:10-14)

Because we have been united with Christ, the old man has been laid aside and the new self has been put on. Therefore, we should strive to put off the sins that cause division within the body and put on the characteristics that promote unity and harmony. Within the body of Christ, there is no place for making distinctions between people based on physical appearance, cultural background, religious background, gender, etc.

#### ❖ **Do you make distinctions within the body of Christ?**

### Life in the all-sufficient Christ – walking in the Spirit (3:15-17)

In our relationships in the body, there should be peace; Christ's peace. His peace should rule or be the arbiter in our relationships. Walking in the Spirit or being filled with the Spirit or making the words of Christ to dwell richly in you produces manifold blessings – observable, tangible manifestations of strength, character, and connectedness to God through Christ. Specifically, it produces supernatural words, worship, reactions, and fulfilling of relational roles. The usual, expected position of the believer is to be kept being filled with the Spirit.

#### ❖ **What would be different in your life if you were walking more consistently in the Spirit?**

### Life in the all-sufficient Christ – marriage relationship (3:18-19)

Marriage is not easy, yet with the Lord's strength it is possible to glorify God in your marriage. Walking in the Spirit results in fulfilling relational roles. In the marriage relationship, Spirit-filling will be manifested in the wife submitting to her husband and the husband loving his wife as Christ loves the church.

#### ❖ **What would be different in your marriage if you both walked in the Spirit?**

### Life in the all-sufficient Christ – parent-child relationships (3:20-21)

Parenting is not easy, yet with the Lord's strength it is possible to parent in a way that honors Him. Parenting must be accomplished as an outflow of walking in the Spirit – both on the child's side and on the parent's side. Neither the father nor the mother will be able to parent in a way that glorifies God unless they choose to bow before God and His word.

#### ❖ **How is Spirit filling manifested with your children? With your parents?**

### Life in the all-sufficient Christ – work relationships (3:22-4:1)

Work relationships can be difficult whether boss or worker. Yet with the Lord's strength it is possible to fulfill those roles in a way that honors Him. Both boss and worker must walk in the Spirit to find this strength.

#### ❖ **How might walking in the Spirit impact your work relationships?**

### Life in the all-sufficient Christ – a heart for the mission (4:2-6)

Walking in the Spirit also produces a missional (outreach / evangelistic) mindset. Missional life is devoted to prayer for oneself and other believers for opportunity and performance in speaking forth the gospel with clarity and accuracy. It is also a life that is lived godly in the world. The Spirit-filled believer will be missional minded and will consider his/her conduct and speech in the world so as to make the most of every opportunity for gospel outreach.

#### ❖ **Are you outreach minded? If not, what might that mean?**

## Life in the all-sufficient Christ – impactful relationships (4:7-17)

Paul brings this challenging letter to a close with a picture of his ministry team – faithful men who are fully surrendered to Christ and dedicated to His body. He greets the churches and challenges a Colossian elder to fulfill his ministry, the same challenge to us.

### ❖ **Are your closest friends those that are striving to follow Christ?**

#### Farewell (4:18)

<sup>18</sup>I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

<sup>18</sup>I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. (ESV)

It was not uncommon for biblical writers to use an amanuensis (recording secretary or scribe) (e.g., Jeremiah and Peter).

<sup>4</sup>Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord which He had spoken to him. (Jer 36:4)

<sup>12</sup>Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard *him*), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! (1 Pet 5:12)

For Paul, this may have simply been for a practical reason that he had a physical eye issue (Gal 6:11).

<sup>2</sup>I, Tertius, **who write this letter**, greet you in the Lord. (Rom 16:2)

However, he would add his own greeting in his own hand at the end of his letters.

<sup>11</sup>See **with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand**. (Gal 6:11)

<sup>21</sup>**The greeting is in my own hand**—Paul. <sup>22</sup>If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha. <sup>23</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. <sup>24</sup>My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen. (1 Cor 16:21-24)

<sup>17</sup>I, Paul, **write this greeting with my own hand**, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. <sup>18</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. (2 Thess 3:17-18)

<sup>19</sup>I, Paul, **am writing this with my own hand**, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well). (Philemon 1:19)

He says “Remember my imprisonment.” Or literally “chains”. This is a command to continually keep in mind, exercise memory, call something to mind or recollect that he was in physical bondage for the sake of the gospel. We can almost picture this. Paul takes the pen to write his own greeting and is encumbered by the chains. He then asks these dear brethren to “remember” (in prayer) that fact.

Paul’s farewell is his common salutation “grace be with you”. This is a great way to end his letter, focusing on grace as opposed to the false teachers whose means of salvation was works.