

20220717 Colossians Chapter One Verses 1-14 Walking in a Worthy Manner



We should never be distracted from the truth nor attracted to falsehood. In this book, the Apostle Paul is writing the church in Colossae, urging them to focus on what is truth. I recently bought a new Toyota, and whenever I veer into another lane, an alarm beep goes off, and the car steers itself back to the center of the road. That is a lot like the book of Colossians. It is Paul sending a warning signal to the

little church in Colossae, telling them to stop veering from the course and encouraging them to get back into the lane. He assures them, “If all you have is Jesus, then you have all you need.” Corrie Ten Boom said it a little differently when she said: “You can never learn that Christ is all you need until Christ is all you have.” As Pastor Michael likes to remind us, “You’ll never come to Him until you come to the end of yourself.”

Paul wanted this church to stay the course. There were several belief systems in Colossae that were a threat to the peace that the church had in Christ. There was Gnosticism, asceticism, and legalism. Gnosticism is the belief that anything physical was evil; therefore, Jesus couldn’t have been a true man. It also incorporates the idea that these Gnostics had “special knowledge,” and you weren’t in the “know” until you had gotten your doctrine straight (like theirs). Asceticism is the idea that you became more spiritual by denying yourself all physical pleasures (like a monk living on a rock bed or something). And lastly, Judaizers insisted that following the Mosaic law was necessary for salvation (legalism). All three of these philosophies were and still are heresy. The interesting thing about heresy is that it always has minor elements of truth contained within it.

We know that Paul had never gone to Colossae, but he was in Ephesus for three years, and during that time, the people in Colossae heard the Gospel. While he was in Ephesus, we think that a fellow named Epaphras came from Colossae. He heard the Gospel, accepted it, and returned to Colossae, where he started a church.

So around 61 AD, Paul wrote the letter to that church to straighten out the problems that had seeped in, threatening the simple Gospel that Jesus plus nothing equals everything.

Chapter 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colossae: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the

Gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; 7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit. (Colossians 1:1-8, NKJV).

V. 1 Paul begins by declaring that he is an Apostle of Jesus Christ **by God**. Paul reminds his audience that God called him and not men. He was ordained as an apostle by God Himself. I want to remind the group that the time of the apostles has passed. I am called as a pastor by God, but I am not an apostle. No other pastors today are apostles. When I write sermons, they are not scripture. Apostles (other than Paul) had physically seen Jesus alive and had followed Him in His ministry. Paul was unique because he had seen Jesus on the road to Damascus. Likewise, I reminded a group of pastors that met at the Grove on Thursday that they were called by God and not by men, so only God can remove that call.

V. 2 Paul is writing the “saints and brethren.” I want to remind everyone that if you have received Jesus and His work on the cross, you are a “saint.” You are not just righteous by His blood but also “set apart” for His use. That is the real meaning of “holy.” It means God has a place, a plan, and a purpose for you while He has you on this earth.

Paul then gives them the characteristic blessing of “grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” I believe Pastor Larry has pointed out the importance of the order of these blessings. You will notice grace precedes peace. I will add that you must experience the love of God to receive and understand His grace. Part of coming to the Lord is realizing that even while you were still a sinner, Christ died for you and me (Romans 5:8). When we truly experience that love, we know the grace of God, and a peace that surpasses all understanding follows that grace. Many believers have not learned how to live in the grace of the Lord truly. They, too, like the Colossians, can get caught up in -isms such as legalism and every other kind of “ism” except for grace. The warning bells should be going off and you should be finding your way back into the lane.

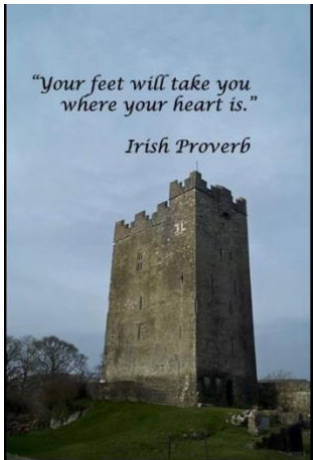


V. 3 Paul tells the little church how much he gives thanks to God for them. Thanksgiving is such an essential part of a joyful Christian life. I’ve said, and I’ll say now, “Grateful people are joyful people, and ungrateful people are unhappy people.” Gratitude really will affect your attitude.

Even as I am writing these words, it is 5:17 in the morning, and I stopped writing to thank the Lord for the very air in my lungs. It is a new day. It is a gift from the Lord, and I must treat the day with awe, respect, and thanksgiving. This is so necessary because it prepares us for the troubles and trials of life that WILL come our way. Paul then says that he is “always praying for them.” We talk so much about prayer but spend little time doing it. I think maybe it’s because we’re so task-oriented. It’s like we feel if we take the time to pray, we won’t have time for the “important stuff,” whatever in the world that might include.

V. 4 Paul was delighted when he heard of their faith in the Lord. He also had heard about their love for Jesus and one another. This morning, let me ask, “Is your love for Jesus and others evident to all?” It probably astonished Paul somewhat that he had not even been the one to bring them the Gospel, yet he was hearing such incredible things about an exciting growing church. As I mentioned in the forward, it had been the work of Epaphras who had come over from Colossae to Ephesus, to visit while Paul was preaching the Gospel there. Remember, Paul lived in Ephesus for about three years. It was there that Epaphras came to know Jesus.

V. 5 This love they had for Jesus and others emanated out of their “hope for heaven” that they had heard about in the Gospel. That hope is a REAL hope. It is a hope and assurance that there IS something after what we’re experiencing here on earth. We don’t just end up as “worm dirt”; instead, we are assured a place in heaven with Jesus and with each other.



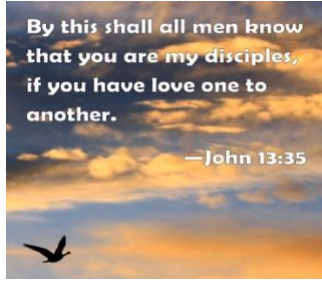
The hope we have is an *Elpida* kind of hope. That is an **expectation of something good**. We as believers should always expect something good because God is good and what He desires for us is for our good. We should never be dreading some “bad that is to come.” Much of this has to do with having a fundamental understanding of the sovereignty and goodness of God. When I experience difficulties that I do not understand, I CHOOSE TO BELIEVE THAT GOD IS GOOD.

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11, ESV).

“He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is

imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.” (1 Peter 1:3b-4, ESV).

V. 6 Paul tells them that this hope and this Gospel have brought forth fruit. I was thinking of something exciting and quite interesting. I can’t think of anywhere in the New Testament that indicates that the “fruit” that we bring forth is out of our own efforts. It is born of the Spirit. The “fruit of the Spirit” evidences God’s redemptive work in our lives. The fruit of the Spirit is our alternative to having the “deeds of the flesh” in our lives. Paul tells us in scripture all about this “fruit of the Spirit.” God is at work in our hearts and lives when we see love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control in our attitudes and actions. If these are missing, it’s time for a conversation with the Lord. Are any of these missing in your attitudes and actions? If so, admit it to God and let things be set right (1 John 1:9).



V. 7-8 Paul lets them know that he’s learned about them from Epaphras, who brought them the Gospel and gave them that hope. They had a love for one another and a unity that was being discussed even in Ephesus one hundred miles away. It reminds us of Jesus’ words, “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35, NASB). This reminds us that we aren’t known by having our doctrine all down perfect, but rather by how we love one another.

Preeminence of Christ

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1: 9-14, NKJV).

V.9 We, too, need to be filled with “the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” We gain that knowledge through the study of His Word, and we achieve our spiritual understanding through prayer, sound teaching, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Make sure you’re doing your part: staying in the Word, sitting under sound teaching, and enjoying a continual conversation with Him as you go about your life. There is a home-school curriculum called “Classical Conversations,” which made me think that what we should have is not a classical conversation, but a “continual conversation” with Him. That’s walking in the Spirit.

Walk IN A MANNER
worthy OF THE LORD,
FULLY PLEASING TO HIM,
bearing fruit IN EVERY GOOD WORK
AND INCREASING IN THE
KNOWLEDGE OF *God*
COLOSSIANS 1:10

V. 10-14 We’re told that living in that way is “walking worthy of the Lord and fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” We don’t experience the abundant life merely by the presence of the Holy Spirit. We experience the abundant life by CHOOSING to walk in His grace, mercy, and love. And yes, that fully pleases Him. There is a teaching going around that there is nothing that we can do to please God. There is much that we can do to please God. I am not saying that there is much that we

can do to earn one moment of our salvation, but Paul is telling us that there is a way that we can walk “worthy of the Lord.” That’s how I want to walk. That is walking in the Spirit. I can’t spend enough time on verse 10. This is the heart of the abundant life that we are promised. If we can get this down, we too can: (1) walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, (2) bear

fruit, and (3) increase in the knowledge of the Lord. So, what does it mean to “walk worthy of the Lord?”

worthy

ἄξιός (axios)

Adjective - Nominative Masculine Singular

Strong's Greek 514: Worthy, worthy of, deserving, comparable, suitable. suitable.

Walking refers to the daily conduct of our lives.

How are we living? How are we “walking” through this journey that He has for us? What are the spiritual habits of your life? Embedded within the

word *worthy* is the idea of “matching up.” The Greek word is *axios*, meaning “worthy of/deserving of/suitable.”

Our actions should match our words, and walking the talk would be an easier way of saying that. What we do should match up with who we are. We are righteous in Christ, so our doing ought to meet up with that righteousness. It should be “suitable” for that righteousness.

To “walk worthy” of our calling means that we should live up to that calling. This means that you and I should live in a way that honors God and His plan and purpose for our lives. In this passage, Paul ties “walking worthy” with four personal characteristics:

1. Being fruitful in every good work.
2. Increasing in the knowledge of God.
3. Being strengthened by the power of God to joyfully endure and patiently persevere.
4. Giving thanks to the Father for what He has done in qualifying us to be partakers.

This command to “walk worthy of our calling” does not mean we are to somehow earn or deserve our salvation (recipients of His grace alone as Ephesians 2:8-9). Paul urges the Colossians and us to live our lives out so that it proves that we belong to Him!

We are to be faithful and true to Jesus Christ and to live our lives with integrity. This integrity is to be in our relationships, our job place, our marriages, and our dealings with one another as church members. True believers will indeed display the fruit of what lies within them (John 14:17 and Galatians 5:22-23). A true believer’s life will match the gospel message, our position in Christ, and the character of Christ. We will be people that live out our salvation with our actions (fear and trembling). We will not be people who merely profess faith but we will live it.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.