

## Spiritual Understanding

### Colossians 1:3-17

- The Apostle Paul speaks with "faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse" in today's passage
- He gives thanks for their faith and their faithfulness
- He assures them of his consistent prayer on their behalf
- And also reminds them of the wonderful blessings they have, together, in Christ
  
- He does more than this near the end of the passage we'll address today
- In the much more well-known portion of the text
- And that is, he reminds these believers of who Christ is
- And how He is actively working in the world today
  
- We'll cover a lot of ground today in 15 verses
- Focusing on the topic "Spiritual Understanding"
- Which we find in Colossians 1:3-17
  
- This is an unusual section of scripture that I have chosen to examine today
- Teachers covering this passage would have probably broken it up in a much different way
- I chose verses 3 through 17 of Colossians chapter 1, because the themes are fascinating
- The flow of the letter is really interesting to me
- The transition from good will toward the saints at Colosse to a declaration of His deity and creative power is instructive
- I wanted to take a closer look today
  
- Let's begin with a section just after the introduction of the book...

### Colossians 1:3-4

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,  
4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

- These are people who have trusted Christ as Savior
- And it has become obvious to those who observe their lives
- They are expressing their faith in a love for the brethren
- Paul and Timothy have heard about this
- And they have been consistent in their prayers for them
  
- Paul goes on to describe what is behind their love for the saints
- And gives a bit more of their story...

### Colossians 1:5-8

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

- Paul essentially says "your faith and love continue, because you know what is waiting for you in heaven"
- And he says this is "the hope you have had since you first heard the true message, the Good News"
- So, they are acting (in showing love) in accordance with who they are in Christ
- And what they know about their future in Him
  
- This good news is spreading throughout the world
- And it is going to other places, much like it came unto them
- Through the words and testimonies of people like Paul's fellowservant Epaphras
- Who came unto them preaching and ministering
  
- And it is spreading as a result of churches just like theirs
- That have understood the love Christ has for them
- And determined to show that love to others
- Not just by caring for one another, but by declaring the gospel themselves
- And by living according to Christ's commands
  
- Again, Paul and Timothy have heard about this
- That's why they are praying...

Colossians 1:9-10

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

- These believers were certainly showing the enthusiasm and the character needed to succeed
- But Paul was also praying for their knowledge and wisdom
- Which would be needed so desperately too
- He prayed that they would walk worthy of their calling
- That they would please the Lord
- And that they would be fruitful people
- Who were not ministering to others, but also increasing in their knowledge of God
  
- This is one of the points I find interesting, because Paul is also serving as an answer to His own prayer
- In that, he will help them to understand more about God in his writings to them
- Including in the last few verses of our section today
  
- This is a tremendous prayer for new believers or believers of any stage of growth
- That they would increase in the knowledge of God

- Because it is knowing Him, through His word, that strengthens our faith and increases our usefulness for Him
- Paul prayed for yet more in the lives of these Colossian believers...

#### Colossians 1:11-12

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

- To do the work God had prepared for these Colossians, they would need to be strengthened
- This is the case for every believer in Christ
- It is His glorious power that makes our ministry possible
- Patience, it says here, longsuffering and joyfulness would also be needed
- These, of course, are fruits of the Spirit
- Paul also gave thanks
- As another translation restates verse 12...

"giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light"

- As all believers, they would be joint-heirs with Christ
- And it was only Christ who had made this possible
- Here's what Jesus had further done for them...

#### Colossians 1:13-14

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

- The only reason any of this was taking place was because of Jesus' work in their salvation
- Taking them from darkness into light
- Bringing them into God's family by His own blood, shed on the cross
- Forgiving sins that could not have been forgiven in any other way
- Bringing redemption
- Why Jesus?
- How could He do this?
- That is where our last three verses come in...

#### Colossians 1:15-17

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

- This Christ, who saved the brethren at Colosse, is the Creator
  - The very image of the invisible God
  - The One who created the earth and the heavens
  - That which is visible and invisible
  - Whatever power that is in the world - He ordains
  - And He rules over all the powers He has ordained
  - He was before all things
  - And nothing is held together without His power
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- We're talking about the King over all kings
  - The Lord over all lords
  - The eternal Creator
  - Who has no beginning and no ending
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- This is the One Paul is praying these believers will learn more of
  - Paul is praying they learn and embrace His wisdom
  - And that they become equipped, by Him, to carry out their work
  - Continuing to love the brethren
  - And continuing to minister His light to others
  - Who will also have the opportunity to come unto Him
  - For redemption

*Christopher Harper, Take Note 2024*