

COLOSSIANS

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

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Colosse was located about 100 miles inland from Ephesus (in modern day Turkey) and at one time was one of the major trade centers of that area. It had begun to decline but still contained a large Jewish and Greek population (with their religious thoughts and doctrines). Paul had never visited the Church in Colosse (2:1) but he learned about it from Epaphras (1:7) and the Spirit inspired him to write this letter to them to enable them to overcome false doctrine and to realize their riches in Christ. The Church probably came into being from Paul's work in Ephesus- And they continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. Acts 19:10 (Paul scattered seed everywhere and reaped fruit!).

Colossians is one of the most profound of Paul's writings (It may have been the one Peter referred to in II Pet 3:15-16 as "hard to understand"!!). It is very difficult to just "skim" the surface of Colossians--but equally as difficult to "dig deep" without getting bogged down. The one great truth that Paul wants us to keep in mind is that we are COMPLETE IN CHRIST- Spiritually, Mentally, Socially, and Physically (See Luke 2:52). We do not need to add anything to Him to be complete, nor take anything from Him to be consistent.

THE COLOSSIAN HERESY-After talking with Epaphras, Paul realized he had a "double-barreled" problem in the Colossian Church. The Jews had brought Jewish Law with them when they accepted Christ and the Greeks had brought their Philosophy. What this had done was ADD some things to Christianity to "make it complete" or SUBTRACT some things from Christ to make Him fit men's reasonings. The Additions took the form of Laws and Rules that regulated the life of men so that righteousness became a result of man's effort instead of Christ's sacrifice (Much like the Pharisees of Jesus' day.).

The Subtractions came about because of the problem of GNOSTICISM (From the Greek word "Gnostic"=Knowledge). The Gnostics would only accept what they could explain (Like the Sadducees. The names have changed thru the years but the problems remain the same--Satan wants to "mash the gas or the brake". People always want to add to or subtract from the Gospel in order for them to feel that they can control the situation--reverting right back to the Satanic problem of wanting to be God!). This resulted in 3 major problems: (1) A pure God could not create Evil, therefore God had created a series of lesser emendations (angels) that eventually created the physical (evil)world. This made Christ lower than the angels because He actually took a human body. Not only did it dishonor Christ but it led to Angel worship! (2) Only a select few had knowledge enough to understand these things so that made them "Superior" Christians- dividing the Body of Christ! (3) Since Physical was "Evil", men must either avoid it at any cost or indulge it to show that it had no meaning to them.

This meant that some obeyed strict laws while others indulged in all evil. It also led to the denial of the Bodily resurrection since the body is "evil".

These errors had to be refuted because they cut to the very heart of the Gospel-We are complete in Christ. Nothing can be added--and nothing should be taken away.

Paul begins this letter as he did all his letters: Doctrine first and then the Duty that results from that Doctrines. What you Believe determines what you do !!!

Chapter 1 "Christ, the Pre-eminent One"

Outline of the Chapter

1-8 Introduction: Paul's Knowledge of the People

9-12 The Prayer: 7 Things Paul desired for the People

12-14 Paul Praises the Father for what He has done for us thru Christ

15-19 Paul explains How Christ could do this

20-23 The Purpose: The Reason Christ did this

23-29 The Preacher: Paul's Purpose in Life-Bring men to Christ

I. **INTRODUCTION:** Paul's Knowledge of the People 1-8

Note WHO Paul was- An apostle of JESUS CHRIST

Note HOW he described the Church- IN CHRIST

Note His Opening Greeting-Grace and Peace from God our Father and THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

(Making Them Equal)-Our Prayer for you is made to God the FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Notice that everything he did proclaimed Christ as Son of God.

A) What Had He Heard about them??

- a. -Their Faith in Christ Jesus. (Faith in a PERSON- not a slogan, or a program. Your Faith is only as good as what it rests in.)
- b. -Their Love to all the Saints. (Because of the fact that we all are part of the Body of Christ. We know that we have passed from death unto Life, because we love the Brethren I Jn 3:14. My little Children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in Truth I Jn 3:18).
- c. -Their Hope laid up in Heaven. (Because of What Christ did! They were living as Pilgrims; aware that this world is not our ultimate destination. Heb 11:13).

The foundation of their Faith: All of these things were based on what they had heard from the Word of God- not some man made philosophy.

The Fruit of their Faith: This belief in Christ had produced Fruit as soon as they believed and accepted it (Therefore the proof of its truthfulness was "in the pudding"!!).

B) Who had He Heard about them from:

- a. Epaphras: Paul's dear fellow servant (Probably saved during Paul's ministry in Ephesus. Now a minister as Paul).
- b. Their faithful minister of Christ. (Church Pastor?) He had declared to Paul their love in the Spirit. What do People tell other people about our Church?? Do they tell of our Faith and Love and Hope?? Do they see the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives??

When you talk about Fellow Saints, do you tell of their Faith... or their Failures???

II. THE PRAYER: 7 Things Paul Desired for the Church 9-12 As soon as Paul heard about God's Blessings on the Church he added them to his "Prayer List". He did not vaguely ask God to "Bless them. He had specific things he wanted to see God Accomplish in their lives.

1. Knowledge of God's Will - Filled with the Knowledge of His Will. The Greatest purpose any man can have is to do what God wants. The Greatest peace any man can have is when he's doing what God wants. Paul did not want them to merely glimpse God's will- he wanted them to be "filled full" of the knowledge of God's will. He wanted them to know it as surely and as clearly as possible .
 - a. Ability to Understand God's Will- in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. What God's will is try to accomplish:- The Amp. Bible calls this Wisdom "Comprehensive insight into the ways and purpose of God"
2. That it is GOD'S WILL- "understand" here means discernment. Paul wants them to learn not only what God's will is but also to discern between God's will and
 - a. Selfish Desires: There is a way that seems right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death Prov 14:12
 - b. Satanic Delusions: For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light II Cor 11:14
3. Application of God's Will to Life- That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Live your lessons! Faith without works is dead. (Sometimes the way to know His will is to DO His will Jn 7:17).
4. Bear Fruit- Being fruitful in every good work. If you do what God says you will accomplish what God wants and Fruit will be a natural result Jn 15:5
5. Increasing Acquaintance with God- Increasing in the knowledge of God. The more you serve Him the more you know Him, and the more you know Him the more you serve Him...until your chief goal in life is to Know Him above all (Phil 3:10).
6. Powerful, Pleasurable, Patience- Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. As you wait upon God to renew strength (Is 40:31) you learn the Source of your Power (God-who invigorates and strengthens us); the Suffering that Power brings (Patience and endurance that are the cost of obtaining and administering this power), and the Celebration that comes with Power (Joyfulness).
7. And, finally, A Thankful Heart - Giving Thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light. The "Road to Apostacy" begins with an unthankful heart (Rom 1:21) and Paul prays that the Colossians would know WHO to Thank and WHAT to Thank for.

What a great Church we could have if each member knew and understood God's Will, applied it in their lives to produce Fruit for God, and maintained a relationship with God so that they could receive Power to do what God called them to do. Surely then Thanks and Praise would ring in every service!!

III. PAUL PRAISES THE FATHER FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR US THRU CHRIST

1. Exalted us- Made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Rendered us fit to be included in the Will !! John 1:12 as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, Ep 2:6-7 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
- A) Freed us- Delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.
 1. Freed us from the "disorder of darkness" where Satan had us captive with blinded eyes. II Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.
 2. Translated (change from one form to another) us into the kingdom of His dear Son. God did not do away with my personality- He freed me from sin's disorder to walk in the light of the Lord. I walk in a new life with a new "Master" now.
- B) Bought us- In whom (the Son) we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. I am able to escape Sin's power and become a partaker of Heaven's inheritance because Christ paid a debt I could not pay- the wages of sin. He paid MY debt so I could enjoy HIS Blessings! Glory!

IV. PAUL EXPLAINS HOW CHRIST COULD DO THIS 15-19 If you accept what Christ has done for us then you must admit He is able to do this. This is easy when you realize who Christ is:

- A) He is the image of the invisible God. The visible representation of the invisible God. If you have seen me you have seen the Father Jn 14:9
- B) He is the Firstborn of every creature- He was before all creatures and has authority over all of them.
- C) He is the Creator of all things:
 - i. Location- Heaven and earth (everything)
 - ii. Substance- Visible and invisible (everything)
 - iii. Authority- thrones, dominions, principalities or powers (He is all powerful. Since He created all "Power" He is greater than any power.)
 - iv. Purpose- created BY Him FOR Him.
 - v. Time- He is before all things (Eternal)
 - vi. Necessary- By Him all things consist (are held together). If He could cease to exist so would everything else!! He did not simply create everything- He continues to hold it together!!
- D) The Head of the Body- the Church. He began the Church- It is HIS Body
- E) He is the firstborn from the dead-Basis of our belief I Cor 15:14. He is to be preeminent in everything in Church- and everywhere!!
- F) All fullness dwells in Him- He is completely permanently complete. He needs nothing- now or ever. He is GOD!!!

If He is God, He is greater than the Angels. If He is God and He provided Salvation, then there is nothing man can add to it.

V. **THE PURPOSE:** The Reason Christ did this vs 20-23

- A) To reconcile a sinful world to a Holy God- (Reconcile=to bring God and man into Holy Harmony!!)
 - a. How- By HIS blood on the cross-The only payment God will accept for the sin debt. See Heb 9:22
 - b. Who:
 - i. The ALL. In Heaven and in earth (Not just a select few)
 - ii. The Alienated. Hostile in our Attitude and Actions. Sin begins in the mind before showing in the Life. (Remember that Adultery can happen in the Brain as well as the Body!). That's why Satan seeks to control your mind (II Cor 4:4, 10:5) thru Songs, TV, and Ads. (Ever found yourself humming a Beer commercial?? or watched kids covet only advertised toys??)
- B) To Produce a Holy People. Holy= Separation FROM worldly defilement FOR God. Being separated does not make us Holy- that comes when we add dedication to God. (Because a building is not a Beer Hall does not make it a Church!). Because of What Christ did on the Cross we can now be set apart for God without fault and free of reproach (Meaning we don't have to Add anything or Earn our Salvation.). Only if Christ were God and man could He accomplish on the Cross what He did.
- C) To Provide all we need to maintain this reconciled relationship by simple Faith. Faith is our Foundation and we should be firmly established on it so that other doctrines and messages will not sway or trouble us. This is the Good news of the Gospel-Christ has provided all we need to come to God and to stay with God. Don't add Burdens of Law keeping or subtract Blessings of our relationship with Christ, the Son of God.

VI. **THE PREACHER:** Paul's Purpose in Life (To proclaim Christ and present every man perfect in Christ) 23-29

- A) Paul was willing to suffer as a Servant in order to help the Body of Christ-the Church (This is the suffering the righteous bear because of opposition to evil. In cannot produce salvation-Christ did everything necessary for that on the Cross-but it can allow us to know the "fellowship of His suffering" (Phil 3:10) as love for a lost world drives us on.).
- B) Paul was a "Manager of the Mystery" that God had revealed to him- that Christ indwells the believer. A Mystery is something previously hidden that God has now revealed. There are numerous "Mysteries" in the New Testament:
 - 1. The fact that God's Program with Israel would be interrupted was a mystery. Matt 13:II Rom 11:25
 - 2. The Wisdom of God in His way of Salvation I Cor 2:7 Rom 16:25
 - 3. God's work thru Christ. I Tim 3:16
 - 4. The development of evil into its culmination in the man of sin (II Thess 2:7) and the development of the great apostate Religious system (Rev. 17:5,7) are called Mysteries.
 - 5. The Rapture is a Mystery I Cor 15:51
 - 6. But the Mystery Paul refers to here is the formation of the Church (centered around Gentiles) as the Body of which Christ is the Head. (See also Ep 3:3-9). Paul was responsible (as we are) to reveal this "secret" to a dying and desperate world-See I Cor 4:1-2. Are YOU Faithfully Telling the Good News?????

- A) Paul's Preaching and Teaching had as their ultimate Goal the Maturing (meaning of Perfect here) of every Believer into Christlikeness.
- a. The Goal of some speakers is a commendation from the listeners.
 - b. The Goal of some is to faithfully "fill" the hour.
 - c. What is YOUR goal when you teach or Speak?? Are you reaching your Goal???
- B) Paul's Labors were based on God's Power- I Cor 2:4-5 *My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.*
- C) Because of His willingness to be used, God had worked thru him greatly. (The word Labor here means "working until exhausted").

Paul has tried to get across to the Colossians that their standing in Christ, the Ability of Christ to save, and even his own life and ministry all hinged on the fact that Christ was indeed God. If He was not then everything was a failure. Either Christ was God, and had provided all they needed to be saved, or they were lost!!

Chapter 2 Christ, All We Need

Paul begins the chapter by telling the people that he is in a great "conflict" for them. The word "conflict" here is the one used for an athletic contest. Paul wants the people to know that he is in a "contest" for the souls of the people--and if the false teachers win everyone loses!! This, of course, caused Paul a great deal of concern.

This concern is shown first by a Positive DESIRE for these people to know what they have in Christ before he begins to DENOUNCE the false teachings that would draw them away from Christ. This order is used first to show them their stability in Christ before he denounces "superior wisdom" and then he shows the victory and fullness we have in Christ before he denounces "sanctifying works". It all leads to the firm realization that Christ is all we need to be saved and Christ is all we need after we're saved.

Sad to say, even today many do not realize and apprehend this truth and live miserable Christian lives or else allow Satan to "run them ragged" chasing the "carrot" of a Better Blessing. May God help us to realize that all we need we have in Christ-- and adding more only gives us less.

I. THE CONCERN PAUL FELT 2:1-2

- A) Beyond contact vs 1 He had never met these people but he was concerned about their relationship with Christ. It is this kind of concern that will turn us into the mission minded people we are supposed to be. Are you concerned that people beyond your immediate contact know the truth of the Gospel??
- B) About Courage- "That their hearts might be comforted". Paul was concerned that some might "lose heart" and he wanted them to be "braced up" against anything that would lead them away from Christ. Satan tries to lead people into doubt and despair-do we seek to brace them up or drag them down??
- C) For Companionship- "Being knit together in love". Paul realized that when one part of the body suffers all suffer (I Cor 12:26) and he was concerned that they would be so joined and united until each would help support and protect the other. Do you "look out for" Christians around you???
- D) Unto Confidence- "Unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding". Paul realized that true riches comes with Peace of heart- and peace of heart comes from complete confidence (full assurance) in what we have in Christ. This complete confidence comes when we really understand what Christ did and who Christ is. Understand here means "to place together properly". Do we place the circumstances of life i their proper place--or do we allow circumstances to "cloud" our relationship with Christ??

E) Producing Confession- "Acknowledging the mystery of God in Christ" Paul did not want the people to simply know truths with their minds, he wanted them to confess them with their mouth (See Rom 10:9-10) and make them a part of their lives and lips.

The main thing he wanted them to confess was that everything they need was found in Christ (vs 3). All of the Wisdom (comprehensive insight into the ways and purpose of God) and Knowledge (enlightenment about God's work in your life) are hid in Christ as "buried treasure-worth selling everything else to obtain (Matt 13:44). If they realized and confessed this then these false teachers would not be able to mislead them into adding or subtracting anything from the Blessed Salvation we have in Christ.

Do you realize all you need is found Christ? Or are you continually seeking to learn more or live better thinking that that will fill the empty void in your heart? All you need is in Christ and digging elsewhere to find it only puts useless work on you and leaves holes along the way for someone else to fall in!!

II. **THE CONFLICT PAUL FOUGHT** 4-23 Paul now seeks to expose the errors of the False Teachers so the Colossians could recognize why they were wrong.

A) The Methods the False Teachers Employed.

1. "Beguile you with enticing words" vs 4- To deceive by False Reasoning. These False Teachers sought to get the Colossians to accept wrong doctrine by their "persuasive Reasoning". Beguile here means "to reckon wrong". The False Teachers were ending up with the wrong answers because they started from the wrong source. They figured everything from man's point of view instead of God's. Today it is called HUMANISM and results in people saying, "I don't care what the Bible says, this is the way that makes sense" (Modesty gives way to comfort. Beliefs give way to personal benefit.).

2. "Spoil you" vs 8- To take away your resources as in "the spoils of war". These False Teachers were all trying to "claim as a prize" these Believers. Today the idea is that the more people and resources a ministry has the more "Godly" it is and people become trophies instead of brethren. Many ministries are built on pandering to people's wants instead of dealing with people's problem--and most people would rather be petted than forced to face the needs in their life.

3. "Judge you" vs 16- Sit in judgment over. The False Teachers would decide what THEY thought was best for your life based on their on personal preference--only their music, or type of preaching, or order of service were "spiritual".

4. Beguile you of your reward" vs 18- Declare you unworthy to receive the reward even though you "won the race". They would "disqualify" people by making up the "rules" as they went along! Salvation by Faith was no longer enough-- you must discard some things and/or add some things to be "really" saved (Baptism, speaking in tongues. etc)

5. "Subject you to ordinances" vs 20b- Leave the liberty of the Lord for the bondage of the Law. Salvation becomes what YOU do instead of what CHRIST did (People consider themselves Christians because they pray, attend Church and give some money--failing to realize that all our righteousness is as filthy rags before God.)

There are all kinds of Methods but the things to realize is that each of them seeks to draw us from Christ or add burdens to our walk with Christ. Does your "Religion" draw you closer to Christ?? Are you carrying a lot of extra "weight" around (See Rom 12:1) ??

B) The Errors the False Teachers Enlisted

1. Enticing Words- Persuasive Reasoning (Like a Lawyer in a court that builds a "house of words" that has no foundation but looks very pretty. (If I can convince you to be saved; someone else can "convince" you to get "unsaved". Salvation is not in wisdom of words but the Power of God- I Cor 2:4-5)

2. Philosophy and vain deceit- One man said worldly Philosophy was like a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that isn't there. Another said it was the science of learning more and more about less and less until finally you know everything about nothing! This is the intellectualism that denies anything that can't be "figured". Things like Faith and miracles are said to be the vivid imagination of the lesser educated.

3. Traditions of men- Forms and customs added by men (Do something in a Church one way for a year and suddenly it becomes a "sin" to do it differently!!). Jesus denounced many of these in Matt 23:-

4. The Rudiments (Elemental) Things of this world- The Teachings of Society. Social etiquette replaces Salvation experience.

I Cor 1:26 For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

5. judgment of religious activities- Straining at gnats and swallowing camels.

6. Worship of "Heavenly Idols"- In this case, angels. In many cases we put Church ahead of God, or Projects ahead of people.

7. Self Control- This gives man the idea that the problem is not his sinful nature but his inability to conquer his passions.

The answer then becomes greater effort or education instead of faith in Christ.

III. THE "CONCRETE" PAUL USED FOR FOUNDATION. Paul did not simply expose the problem, he pointed to the ways to keep from falling for the tricks the False Teachers used.

A) Enranked in Order- "your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" vs 5 These are military terms used to describe a group of soldiers that are able to withstand the enemy's attack because they form a block that protects each other and fights as a unit. For the Christian this is the Body of Christ in which each has a part that works together with the whole.

The first thing the False Teachers did was to try to get the Christians away from fellow Christians. Isolated he then became a much easier prey.

Do you realize the importance of being Faithful in Church attendance for yourself and for others??

Do you "look out" for fellow Christians who may be under attack??

B) Established in Faith- "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the Faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" vs 6-7 We receive Christ by Faith and we live by Faith. This is a continuous Life built on the foundation of Christ. It involves being:

- a. Rooted- No tumbleweed(start and stop, hit or miss living) No transplant- Don't think "grass is greener" some where else.
- b. Built up- Growing in Grace and Knowledge of Christ. Your building is built on Christ's Foundation--not someone's fancy!!
- c. Abounding-Overflowing with thanks. Your life with Christ is not an overworking of self effort, but an overflowing of enjoyed Blessings.

C) Enlightenment about Christ's Work- We're satisfied with Christ because we know WHO He is and WHAT He's done for us.

- a. He is the head of all principalities and Powers-Nothing in the "heavenlies" or in earth is greater than he. Therefore nothing should be placed ahead of Him.
- b. Thru Him we are circumcised with Spiritual circumcision-We don't need external symbols of Spiritual Realities..
- c. He enables us to have a new life- free from previous "debts". Not a new beginning only; a clean past also!
- d. Thru Him we are victorious over our enemies- spoiling them! He turns defeat into victory and enables us to change the hindrances into helps.

What a Glorious Savior we have. Who could want anything more?? Who would accept anything less??

Ep 4:14-15 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Chapter 3- Christ: The Changes He brings to our Life

We have been examining the fact that Christ is above all things and therefore all we need to have a relationship with God. He does not need to have anything added to Him nor should we subtract anything from Him. This is marvelous Doctrine and great Truth but it must be translatable into a livable life if it is to have real meaning. Paul now shows the Colossians the changes that will come as a result of who Christ is and what He did for us.

I. A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE 3:1-3 There is a tremendous difference between a man who fishes for food to survive and a man who takes off from work to go fishing. To one it is a Job; to the other a Joy.

That's the way it is now in our relationship with God. Christ has provided everything we need to be saved and become a Child of God. Now our works are not "Burdens to earn favor with God: but methods to express our Love for and Faith in God.

Our identification with Christ in His resurrection gives us a new purpose in life- to seek the Heavenly things. There is coming a Physical Resurrection (or Rapture!) for us but now we identify with Christ in a Spiritual Resurrection- to new Life in Christ.

This new purpose in Life is manifested in a new "Mind set" (Affection in vs 2). My attitude is now to look at Life's situations from the Heavenly instead of the Human viewpoint. This give me:

a. Peace in life's circumstances- Is 26:3 *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

b. Humility in life's service- Phil 2:5-8 *Let this (servant) mind be in you which was also in Christ...*

II. A CHANGE IN OUTLOOK 3:4-7

Our anticipation of His return causes us to look for the Pure instead of the "Pleasurable". I Jn 3:3 *Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Our identification with Christ causes us to "slay" (Mortify) the sinful Passions that seek to control us.

A) What we were vs 5 Controlled by selfish sinful passions

B) Wrath this brings 6 on the children of disobedience (It brings death to the unsaved and chastening to the Christian)

C) Walk it exemplifies 7 Worldly walk (Lot as example). Things you used to think were Fun you now find are Folly.

III. A CHANCE IN "WARDROBE" 3:8-10 A person who loves the Lord will seek to wear the "wardrobe" of Godly Character instead of worldly control. This means you will:

A) Discard something 8-9 The old man (controlled by sin) who is exemplified by Temper (anger, wrath, malice) and Tongue (blasphemy, bad talk, lies).

B) Put something on 10 The new man (new creature in Christ) who breathes the knowledge of Christ in order to be constantly renewed. The New Man is not satisfied to simply know that Christ died for his sins- he wants to Know CHRIST. That's why Church attendance, Prayer, Bible Study, and Witnessing are so important to the Christian.

IV. A CHANGE IN RELATIONSHIPS 3:11 - 4:1

A) Our Relationship with Society vs 11

Greek- "Civilized" people

Jews- "Religious" people either circumcised or not/Committed or not)

Barbarian- uneducated

Scythian- undignified

Bond- Slaves to someone or something

Free- Liberated

Christ came to save all--and all are "equal" in Him.

B) Our Relationship with the Church vs 12-15

1. The Way God sees us: Elect- part of God's plan Holy- Set apart for God Beloved-Loved by God

2. The Way we should see others in the Church. With a heart full of:

Mercy- compassion, pity

Kindness-gentle, gracious disposition

Humbleness of mind-lowliness of mind

Meekness- acceptance of God's work

Longsuffering- not "blazing" up in anger

Forbearing one another-Putting up with one another, enduring

Forgiving one another- As Christ forgave us.

The elements that make this work:

Love binds us together

Peace rules our heart-acts as an "umpire" in our lives

Thankfulness expresses our Faith

C) Our Relationship with Ourselves vs 16-17

We have a Joyful Heart because the Word of God dwells there. (Note that the exact same things happens when we allow the Word of God to dwell in our heart as when we are filled with the Holy Spirit (Ep 5:18-19). Both exalt Christ and that is where our Joy flows from)

We have Thankful Lips because our Talk and our Walk glorify Christ- and that's our purpose.

D) Our Relationship with our Family vs 18-21

Wives- subject to husband under God's direction

Husbands-love wives as Christ loved you. Be not harsh with them.

Children- Obey your Parents. Respect their authority

Parents- Don't expect more of your children than they can give so they will Develop them-instead of discouraging them.

E) Our Relationship at work vs 2 - 4:1

1) Workers- Do a good job 22

Do a Godly job 23-25 God will reward our efforts God will reward our efforts God will punish our errors

2) Employers- 4:1 Treat your workers right Realize you work for God also.

Chapter 4- Christ: The Purpose of our Ministry

Paul has been talking about the Changes wrought by being in Christ. Now he wants us to translate these changes into an effort Christian Life.

I. COUNSEL FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING 4:2-9

A) Be a Person of Prayer 4:2-4

- i. Steadfast Prayer- "Continue". Earnest, unwearied. Pray without ceasing. Phil 4:6 Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
- ii. Alert Prayer- "Watch". Awake and intent (See Matt 26:36-41)
- iii. Thankful Prayer- Over and over Paul stresses this
- iv. Purposeful Prayer-Pray for God to give:
- v. Open Door-To Proclaim the Gospel (The reason Paul was in Prison. He wanted to get out to do it again!!)
- vi. Bold Speech-That he might speak boldly, fully, and clearly because of the importance of the message.

B) Behave Wisely 4:5-6

- i. Understand your influence upon and judgment by sinners and live accordingly
- ii. Redeem (Buy up) your opportunities. As a wise "Investor" realize that sometimes you only get one chance to "cash in" in your dealings with people and you need to be sure that their "Blood is not on your hands" (Ez 33:6).

C) Control your Tongue. The Tongue has power to Direct (Commands) Destroy (See James 3:6), and Delight (See Prov 25:13) therefore you need to be careful how it is used.

- i. Talk Gracefully-Pleasant and winsome
- ii. Talk Appropriately-Don't talk too much or fail to talk when you need to--just enough talk to "season" the conversation with the "salt" of Christianity.
- iii. Talk Intelligently-Think before you speak so you will know how to answer every man. (Some are silly, some are serious, some are seeking.)

D) Bear one another's Burdens 4:7-9 Paul did this by allowing Tychicus to do what he couldn't. Tychicus' example shows us the type of person we need to look for to help in the work:

- i. His Information- About Paul's affairs. This was not Gossip or Complaints but information to use in Prayer and Participation.
- ii. His Character- Beloved Brother (A Christian Paul respected)Faithful servant to the Lord (Could be trusted)
- iii. His Mission-Inform about Paul encourage them by sharing God's Blessings. (He had a Purpose; he knew what was expected of him)
- iv. His Partner- The Partner had a Partner (Onesimus). *In the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses shall every word be established.* II Cor 13:1 *Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses* I Tim 5:19

II. **THE COMPANIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY** 4:10-18 Paul now gives one of the most extensive listings in any of his writings of the people who labored with him. Everyone remembers Paul--but God wants us to realize that there are many members of the "Body of Christ: and each is important.

- A) The Circumcised 4:10-11 (Jews first, then Gentiles)
 - a. Aristarchus- A Fellow prisoner; not as famous but fellow prisoner
 - b. Marcus (Mark - Barnabas Nephew (Importance of Family recognition) RESTORED to Fellowship and Work(See Acts 15:36-)
 - c. Jesus (Justus)- Simply named. Some people are important because of who they are more than what they do.

- B) The Prayer Warrior- Epaphras 4:12-13
 - a. One of you- part of the group (Human viewpoint)
 - b. Servant of Christ-part of the Body (Heaven's viewpoint)
 - c. Laborer in Prayer- Type of Prayer: Fervent Purpose of Prayer: That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.
 - d. Concerned Christian-Great zeal for all of God's work (You, Laodicea, and Hierapolis)
 - e. The Physican- Luke 4:14 Ministry to physical needs of Paul

- C) The Failure- Demas 4:14 II Tim 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,...(Even Jesus had this problem with His disciples Jn 6:66)

- D) The Partners 4:15 The Brethren in Laodicea- a sister church. Send them your letter, read theirs. Share information.

- E) The Committed- Nymphas 4:15 He put what he had to use for the Lord (Let the Church meet in his house). You don't need Wealth, you need willingness.

- F) The Cautioned- Archippas 4:17 Consider the importance of your job- "Take heed to the ministry you have received in the Lord".
 - a. Was he allowing the "cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, or the lust for other things" to choke the fruit in his life? (Mk 4:19)
 - b. Was he distracted by "things" instead of his work?? (You become more interested in the color of the ship" than the fact that it's sinking!!)
 - c. Were persecutions, or problems, or poverty tempting him to look back?
 - d. Complete your task-Finish what God told you to do

Conclusion:

Paul's Signature- Stamp of Authenticity (God does not want us fooled with counterfeit writings)

Paul's Sigh-Remember my bonds (Even a man like Paul faced some very long and difficult days)

Paul's Salutation- Grace be with you. (May God's unmerited and unearned favor go with and guard you)