

Colossians

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

3We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,

4because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints--

5the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel

6that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.

7You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,

8and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

9For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with

the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

10And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

11being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

12giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

13For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

14in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

16For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

18And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the

firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,

²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

²²But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--

²³if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

²⁴Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

²⁵I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness--

²⁶the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

²⁷To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

²⁸We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

²⁹To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

2 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.

²My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,

³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

⁴I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.

⁵For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him,

⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

⁹For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

¹⁰and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

¹¹In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ,

¹²having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

¹³When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

¹⁴having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

¹⁶Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.

¹⁷These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

¹⁸Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

¹⁹He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

²⁰Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules:

²¹"Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"?

²²These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings.

²³Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things

above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

¹¹Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves

with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

¹⁸Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

²¹Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but

with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

²⁵Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

4Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

²Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

⁷Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

⁸I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.

⁹He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

¹⁰My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)

¹¹Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me.

¹²Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.

¹³I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

¹⁴Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

¹⁵Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

¹⁶After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

¹⁷Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord."

¹⁸I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.