

Colossians, Chapter One, Lesson Four

IN HIS KINGDOM Colossians 1:13-18

STIMULATE

** In our study together last week, the apostle Paul gave us an in depth look as to how we ought to be praying for one another. If our prayer life for one another is to be "**Pleasing the Lord**", what seven elements should it contain according to Paul?

We should be praying:

1. For them to know God's will
2. For them to gain all spiritual wisdom
3. For them to walk in obedience
4. For them to bear fruit
5. For them to receive strength from God
6. For them to attain steadfastness
7. For them to joyously give thanks

** Have you found yourself praying more for your brothers and sisters in Christ this past week?

For myself, I found that the frequent study of God's Word will always prompt my heart to be "**Pleasing the Lord**" in prayer. There is an added sense of accountability when I know what He wants me to do.

MOTIVATE

** In our study for today we will be blessed to hear from Paul the answers to two important questions. Where do we live and to Whom do we belong?

Our study is entitled "In His Kingdom" and is found in Colossians 1:13-18. Let's turn there now and read through that passage to help us set our hearts towards the things of the Lord.

Read passage (V.13-15) (V.16-18)

Opening Prayer

In His Kingdom

INVESTIGATE

V.13 ** As this passage opens up to us we are told "He delivered us". To whom is that referring?

God - the Father. cf. V.12 and the end of 13.

** From where did our Heavenly Father deliver us?

"...from the domain of darkness..."

** From a Biblical perspective, where is that?

Right here on earth! All see Matthew 4:8-11 cf. Luke 22:52-53 and Acts 26:16-18

** Do you recall from our study of Ephesians, any other passages which refer to Satan's realm?

Ephesians 2:1-3 "...according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience..."

Ephesians 6:12 "For our struggle...is against the rulers, powers, world forces of this darkness, the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

According to Ephesians 2:3 we were controlled by Satan and described as "children of wrath".

** Before we go any further in our passage, let's take a Biblical look at how the Father delivered us from such a terrible plight.

1) Colossians 1:22 - He reconciled us to Himself in the body of Christ. (Colossians 2:9)

2) Galatians 1:15-16 - He set us apart, called us by His grace and reveal His Son to us by faith.

Therefore we live for Christ...

3) Galatians 2:20 - "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"

4) Galatians 6:14 - A total separation, "the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

** All of this is connected to the term "delivered". The Greek word is rhuomai and means to draw to oneself, deliver or rescue.

That term is greatly different from paradidomai, which was used by Christ in Matthew 17:22, Mark 9:31, and Luke 9:44 where He said that He was going to be "delivered into the hands" of sinful men. That word speaks of betrayal or being handed over by someone.

Our deliverance was just the opposite, our Father drew us to Himself in order to rescue us from our sin.

** Still in verse 13; once He delivered us from Satan's domain, what did our Heavenly Father do next?

He "transferred us"!

** Think through with me on this one, why would our Father want to do that?

Having bought us with the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, we now belong to Him!
cf. 1Peter 1:18-19 and 1Corinthians 6:19-20

** In Biblical times, what would happen to the people who survived when one kingdom conquered another?

They were taken captive or "transferred" to the victorious kingdom for the purpose of becoming unwilling slaves, forced into various forms of labor. cf. Jeremiah 20:4-5

** According to verse 12 from last week, how is God's plan for us different?

Instead of receiving forced labor, we receive "the inheritance of the saints in light".

** By the way, to where are we transferred?

"...to the kingdom of His beloved Son..." That sure does have a nicer ring to it.

We can already answer our two questions from the beginning of our study.

1) Where do we live? "In His Kingdom".

2) To Whom do we belong? To God, through Jesus Christ.

To help us better appreciate those two powerful truths, let's look at the remaining five verses of our passage.

V.14 ** Paul now continues by describing God's Son from six different perspectives. What is the first characteristic of Christ found here in verse 14?

1) He is our redeemer!

** What does it mean to redeem someone or something?

It means to pay for or buy back - *apolutrosis* lit. "to release on payment of ransom", this was the common term used when describing someone paying for a slave's freedom.

cf. John 8:34-36, Ephesians 1:7

** According to verse 14, what did our redemption buy for us?

"...the forgiveness of sins." That amazing reality should never cease to overwhelm our hearts. We have been forgiven!

V.15 ** What is the next characteristic of Christ listed for us in verse 15?

2) "...He is the image of the invisible God..."

** That sounds very important, can someone tell us what it means?

Jesus Christ is God! This is the most significant message of Paul's letter to the Colossians!

cf. Colossians 2:3, 2:9, Matthew 28:18, John 1:1-4 and 14,

Philippians 2:6, Titus 2:13, 2Peter 1:1

** Still here in verse 15, what is the third characteristic of Christ listed by Paul?

3) He is "...the first born of all creation."

** Does that mean He was "created" first?

No - He wasn't created! Remember Philippians 2:6

** Then, what does it mean?

Jesus Christ is first in importance, preeminence, highest rank - over all of creation!

We will continue to see this important characteristic of Christ throughout this passage.

V.16 ** What is fourth on our list?

4) He is the Creator! Remember John 1:3 cf. Hebrews 1:2

** Remembering the setting for this letter, why would Paul draw attention to Christ being worthy of worship as the creator God?

With all of the heresies being spread throughout the Lycus Valley; Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis needed to be called back to worshipping the One and only God by seeing the Deity of Jesus Christ.

For example:

a. Paganism: Colossians 3:5-11

b. False philosophy: Colossians 2:8

c. Judaistic ceremonialism: Colossians 2:11,16,17,3:11

d. Angel worship: Colossians 1:16, 2:18

e. Asceticism (harsh treatment of the body): Colossians 2:20-23 and Colossians 3:1-4

** What did Jesus create according to this verse?

Everything! All things in the heavens, on earth, both visible and invisible as well as angelic forces. cf. Ephesians 1:20-22, Colossians 2:15, 1Timothy5:21

V.17 ** Paul again repeats the preeminence of Christ here in verse 17, but this time with a slight twist. Do you see it?

He is not only first in rank, but He existed before anything came into being. cf. Revelation 22:13

** Following that needful reminder, Paul now gives us the fifth characteristic of Christ in this passage, what is it?

5) He is the sustainer of all things. Our life is literally held together in Him! "Hold together" translates sunistemi which means to establish or stand near. cf. John 10:27-29

V.18 ** As we move into verse 18, what is the last characteristic of Christ on Paul's list?

6) He is an administrator - the "head of the body".

It is wonderful to know that we can trust the One who is in charge!

** What does it mean personally to you, that Christ is in charge of His church?

It means we had better be listening. cf. Colossians 3:16

** Before he closes out our passage, Paul once again returns to the preeminence of Christ with three rapid fire statements supporting that truth. What are they?

1) He is the beginning cf. V.17

2) He is the first-born from the dead cf. 2Timothy 1:10

3) He has come to have first place in everything. cf. Philippians 2:9-10

** What does all of this mean to us?

If we are living "**In His Kingdom**" and we belong to Him, we should put Him first in everything that our worship of Christ as God would be worthy of who He truly is in all of His glory.

EXTRICATE

** Ok, where do we live?

"In His Kingdom"

** And to Whom do we belong?

Jesus Christ...

1) Redeemer 2) God 3) Highest Rank 4) Creator 5) Sustainer 6) Administrator

DELINEATE

** Of which of these roles or characteristics of Christ were you least familiar?

For myself, I have a tendency to forget that Jesus Christ is there to sustain me through my day.

EVALUATE

** As each new day dawns upon us, how will meditating on this list help us in our desire to worship Jesus Christ, the greatest gift of all?

By focusing on what we have learned, He will get our hearts attention to the degree that honors Him most.

ACTIVATE

** Let's thank Him for allowing us to live "**In His Kingdom**" and for the joy we experience because we truly do belong to Him.

Closing prayer