

## Colossians, Chapter One, Lesson One

PRAYING ALWAYS Colossians 1:1-4

### STIMULATE

\*\* Today marks a marvelous beginning for us as we start our study together in the book of Colossians. As the apostle Paul penned this letter he addressed critical issues of the day for the life of the Colossians, but those same issues speak to our hearts today. We are going to be blessed as we learn together all that can be gained from the apostle's teaching. Over the next six weeks, here in chapter one, Paul will instruct us in the areas of:

*PRAYING ALWAYS* - Colossians 1:1-4

*LEARNING TO SERVE* - Colossians 1:5-8

*PLEASING THE LORD* - Colossians 1:9-12

*IN HIS KINGDOM* - Colossians 1:13-18

*HOLY AND BLAMELESS* - Colossians 1:19-23

*COMPLETE IN CHRIST* - Colossians 1:24-29

### MOTIVATE

\*\* For today; what is our strongest weapon or tool, which properly used will bring about the spiritual growth, obedience and commitment of our fellow Christians to the Lord Jesus Christ?

It is prayer! cf. Colossians 1:3, where Paul said he was "praying always for you"!

\*\* We will be getting just an introductory look into the heart of Paul as we study the first four verses of chapter one, but in so doing we will also learn the importance of forming the practice to live out our mutual Christian lives by "**Praying Always**". Please open your Bibles to Colossians, chapter one as we turn our hearts to the instruction of God's Word.

Read passage (V.1-4)

Opening Prayer

### *Praying Always*

### INVESTIGATE

\*\* Before we start our study of the passage in front of us today, let's start with an introduction to the book of Colossians. We can do that by answering just five questions.

\*\* First of all, who wrote this letter?

The apostle Paul, the letter itself verifies this fact in chapter one, verse one and also in chapter four, verse 18 ("I, Paul, write this greeting...").

\*\* Second, where is Colossae?

Located in Asia, Colossae was approximately 100 miles east of Ephesus and 1000 miles due east of Rome (in a straight line). We are going to want to remember that next week as we study what verse 8 says about Epaphras.

**\*\* Third, when was the church established in Colossae?**

Approximately 54-56 a.d. when "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord".  
cf. Acts 19:8-10

**\*\* Fourth, what is the historical time setting for the writing of this epistle?**

As we have learned from our study together in the books of Ephesians and Philippians, this letter is also one of the "prison epistles" penned between 61-63 a.d. from Rome, during Paul's first Roman imprisonment and delivered by Tychicus. cf. Acts 27:1 and 28:16 with Colossians 4:7-9 and Ephesians 6:21-22

**\*\* Fifthly, why did Paul write to the Colossians?**

1) Perhaps at the request of Epaphras, who was probably the founder of the church. He was a faithful worker for Christ in the Lycus valley (Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis). cf. Colossians 1:7 and Colossians 4:12-13

2) To strengthen the new believers, so that they would not fall back into their old patterns of life by following after the many heresies taught in and around Colossae at that time.

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 3:1-4

Now with that brief back drop to help our understanding, let's get into our text for today.

**V. 1 \*\* With what familiar term does Paul describe himself?**

"...an apostle..." (of Jesus Christ)

**\*\* What have we learned about that term, in that it differs from a disciple?**

The word "apostolos" is used 79 times in the New Testament and means "sent one". Disciple, "mathetes" on the other hand, means "to learn or learner".

cf. Matthew 9:36-38 and Matthew 10:1-2

**\*\* When was Paul "sent" and by whom?**

On the road to Damascus, by Jesus Christ Himself!

cf. Acts 9:3-6 with Romans 1:14 and 1Corinthians 9:16

**\*\* According to verse one, is there any doubt in Paul's mind regarding Who's idea it was for him to become an apostle?**

No - it was in fact "by the will of God"!

1Corinthians 1:1 "by the will of God"

2Corinthians 1:1 "by the will of God"

Ephesians 1:1 "by the will of God"

2Timothy 1:1 "by the will of God"

Galatians 1:1 "an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raise Him from the dead)

\*\* Next, Paul includes Timothy in his opening greeting. Does that indicate that Timothy wrote part or all of this epistle with Paul?

No, throughout this epistle Paul will use the singular, first person reference to himself. He is merely including his close friend and companion in the faith in this opening greeting.

cf. Colossians 1:23, 1:24-2:5, 4:3 and 4:7-18

\*\* How does Paul describe Timothy?

He calls him "our brother". Do you recall from our study of Philippians how highly Paul regarded this faithful worker for Christ? cf. Philippians 2:19-22

**V. 2** \*\* To whom in Colossae is Paul writing?

"...to the saints and faithful brethren..."

The word used here for "saints" is *hagios* and means holy or holy ones or set apart. It is used 169 times in the New Testament to refer to that which is set apart unto God. cf. Romans 1:1

\*\* Is Paul referring here to two groups?

No - the definite article "the" is not repeated before the second noun, indicating a single thought. Paul is saying that the "saints" are in fact those who can be referred to as "faithful".

Is that how the Lord looks at you? Do others see your faithfulness, because Christ has "set you apart" for His service?

\*\* What is the significance of the phrase "in Christ"?

We (as Christian) are in union with Jesus Christ. This marvelous theme is repeated in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1&2 Thessalonians and Titus. It is impossible to think of yourself as a Christian without understanding that your life is hidden in Christ. cf. Colossians 3:3

\*\* The next descriptive phrase used by Paul gives us the geographical location of these saints, but are they the only ones to whom Paul was writing?

They were "at Colossae", but Paul also wanted other Christians to benefit from this Holy Spirit inspired masterpiece. cf. Colossians 4:16

\*\* Still in verse two, Paul's description of his recipients is followed by one of his shortest salutations. What are the two ingredients of this salutation?

Grace - cf. Ephesians 2:8

Peace - cf. John 14:27 and Philippians 4:7

Note: Paul's shortest salutation - 1 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul's longest salutation - Romans 1:1-7

**V. 3** \*\* As we move into verse three for today, who is the "we" to whom Paul is referring?

Those that are with him at the time of this writing. Paul, Timothy and possibly:

Tychicus Colossians 4:7

Onesimus Colossians 4:9

Aristarchus Colossians 4:10

Mark Colossians 4:10

Jesus (Justus) Colossians 4:11

Epaphras Colossians 4:12

Luke & Demas Colossians 4:14

\*\* This amazing group of servants join together with Paul in giving thanks to God for the Colossian believers. Was this group thanking just any God, possibly even a pagan god?

No - Paul is very careful to point out that he is referring to the only God, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". Throughout this epistle we will see Paul come back to this all important theme of the link between Jesus Christ and His Father, God Almighty.

cf. Colossians 1:15-19, 2:9-10, 3:1 & 3:4

\*\* How does Paul now represent his true concern for the Colossians?

By telling them that he (and his companions) are "**praying always for you**". Herein lies the answer to the question put forth at the beginning of our study. "What is our strongest weapon or tool, which properly used will bring about the spiritual growth, obedience and commitment of our fellow Christians to the Lord Jesus Christ?"

It is found in our "**Praying Always**".

cf. Colossians 4:2-3, 1Thessalonians 3:9-10 and Philippians 1:19

\*\* What do you suppose was the content of those prayers?

cf. V.9 - "...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding..."

\*\* What is the result of those prayers according to verses 10-12?

We walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him, bearing fruit, increasing in knowledge, strengthened in power, attaining all steadfastness and patience, joyously giving thanks to God for qualifying us to be saints in light!!! This again shows the importance of "**Praying Always**" for our fellow believers.

**V. 4** \*\* It is wonderful to see Paul and company praying for the victorious faith of the Colossians. But from where did they hear about the Colossians' faith in Christ?

From Epaphras! cf. V.8 We will look more at that next week.

\*\* What does Paul mention in verse four that is inseparably linked to true saving faith?

"...the love which you have for all the saints..."

\*\* Why is love for the saints so important as it regards faith in Christ?

It is the stamp of verification to our own hearts that we truly do belong to Christ! Our faith works itself out through love! cf. Galatians 5:6, John 13:34-35 and 1John 4:7-11, 20.

## **EXTRICATE**

\*\* If we are truly concerned for our fellow believers, for their spiritual growth, obedience and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, what will we be willing to do "always"?

Like the apostle Paul, we will find ourselves "**Praying Always**" for those of like precious faith.

## **DELINEATE**

\*\* What examples have we seen today of this kind of godly concern?

Paul and his companions being preoccupied with prayer for the victorious faith of the Colossians.

## **EVALUATE**

\*\* Would you ask yourself, "How do I feel about other believers? Am I concerned that their faith be grounded in the sound doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

## **ACTIVATE**

\*\* How can I best apply what we have learned today as I go about my week, day by day? Hopefully we have seen the need to be "**Praying Always**" for one another and are willing to do it!

Closing Prayer