



### **Growth Group Questions: April 16, 2023 – “A Life That Pleases God”**

This week we begin a new sermon series on the apostle Paul’s letter to the church at Colossae. No one is exactly certain when the city of Colossae was founded. There is historical documentation that shows it was a thriving community during the reign of Xerxes of Persia (485BC-465BC). It was located on the main East-West road from Ephesus. By the time the apostle Paul was living Colossae was no longer a prominent city, having been surpassed by Laodicea (see Revelation 3).

More than likely during Paul’s third missionary journey Epaphras came to Ephesus and heard Paul preaching about the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 19). He took this message back to Colossae and the church was founded (Colossians 1:7). This probably happened around 53-55 AD and the letter of Colossians was probably written 7-10 years after the founding of the church. It is considered one of the prison epistles that Paul wrote while he was imprisoned in Rome (Colossians 4:10).

Paul’s thanksgiving for the church in Corinth occurs in prayer. For the apostle Paul, prayer was absolutely essential. He prayed for all of the churches and prayed that they would be faithful in their presentation of the gospel to people in their community. Paul understood that the gospel was always in motion. The gospel moved from place to place and incorporated new preachers into it. Epaphras is a great example of this.

Paul prays that the people in Colossae might live a life that is pleasing to God. He prayed with thanksgiving because he realized the people of Colossae had fully grasped the message of Jesus. Paul prays that the church would continue to live in the wisdom that God had given to them.

In verses 10-12 Paul offers three insights into how a person lives a life that is pleasing to God. We continue to grow in our spiritual life (grow in grace). We preserve and endure. Finally, we live a life that is marked by joyful thanksgiving. As Colossians 1:28-29 makes clear Paul’s goal was to “present everyone fully mature in Christ.” This is what Paul would give his life to.



## Scriptures:

### **Colossians 1:3-14**

<sup>3</sup>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup>because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— <sup>5</sup>the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel <sup>6</sup>that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. <sup>7</sup>You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,<sup>[a]</sup> who is a faithful minister of Christ on our<sup>[b]</sup> behalf, <sup>8</sup>and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

<sup>9</sup>For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, <sup>10</sup>so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, <sup>11</sup>being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, <sup>12</sup>and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you<sup>[c]</sup> to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. <sup>13</sup>For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

### **Proverbs 4:25-27**

<sup>25</sup>Let your eyes look straight ahead;  
fix your gaze directly before you.

<sup>26</sup>Give careful thought to the<sup>[a]</sup> paths for your feet  
and be steadfast in all your ways.

<sup>27</sup>Do not turn to the right or the left;  
keep your foot from evil.

### **2 Peter 3:17-18**

<sup>17</sup>Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. <sup>18</sup>But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray continually, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

### **Colossians 1:28-29**

<sup>28</sup>He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup>To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.



## Questions:

1. Pastor Paul told us that we cannot live a life that is pleasing to God on our own. We need the power of the resurrection which allows God to see us through the lens of Jesus Christ. What does it mean that “God sees us through the lens of Jesus”?
2. As you read through Proverbs 4:25-27, what do you think is the key message that King Solomon was giving to us? How does this message relate to this week’s sermon?
3. Colossians 1:10 tells us that we need to “bear fruit in every good work.” What does it mean “to bear fruit”? What do you think is the key to bearing good fruit as a Christian?
4. Pastor Paul said that a life that is pleasing to God is a life that is growing in grace. What does it mean to grow in grace? How can you know if you are growing in grace?
5. Colossians 1:11 tells us we should grow in endurance and patience. What do you think is the relationship between endurance and patience? How can we learn patience and grow in endurance?
6. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 tells us to “Rejoice always, pray continually,” and “give thanks in all circumstances.”
  - a. What does it mean to rejoice? Can you really “rejoice always”?
  - b. What does it mean to “pray continually”? How do you do this?
  - c. Can you really “give thanks in all circumstances”? Why is this so important for Christians?
7. How have you grown in grace, increased in patience and endurance, and learned to give thanks continually over the past two years? Where are you still coming up short and how can you address this need?
8. Pastor Paul ended his sermon by telling us that to walk with God, we must learn to sit at the feet of Jesus. What does this mean to you? Why is this important?

