

# CHRIST IS SUPREME

## Colossians

Thoughts come from a wide variety of sources. Some from messages I have heard from individuals, some from assemblies Bible studies, some from home life, and some from books I have read. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher who makes them real to me.

- "Colossians, Christ, All Sufficient." Everett F. Harrison.
- "Commentary on Colossians and Philemon," H. Dermont McDonald
- "Be Complete." by Warren W. Wiersbe. Victor Books, SP Pub. Inc.
- "The Life Application Bible." Tyndale House and Zondervan

### **Colossians 1:1-8**

#### **GIVE THANKS**

Not every work of God follows the same pattern. There are differences in people in one place compared to those in another. Thoughts, ideas, and practices that can be accepted differ because of geography, nationality, culture, and even philosophy. Only God can suit the messenger and the message of the Gospel to the place He sends him. Paul and Timotheus didn't take the Gospel to Colossae personally. God, in His wisdom and grace, arranged for Epaphras to hear the way of salvation from those who preached it and saved him. In turn, he was sent to his home city of Colossae and declared the Gospel to them, resulting in souls being saved, and an assembly gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was established in that city.

We may not know in our lifetime the results of our efforts in the proclamation of the Gospel. The Lord of the harvest can take a seed planted in one place and use it to produce a harvest of souls for the kingdom of God in another place. At times, those who are engaged in passing on the message of salvation hear of those God saved years earlier through their labor, now living for God in an area far removed from where they first heard the Gospel. That is a great encouragement to "cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

We may not be personally involved in the formation of a new work, but that does not mean we have no obligation to it. In the same way, Paul knew he was an apostle "by the will of God;" those who labor in the Word of God have a responsibility to teach the word to those whom the Lord saves "for the edifying of the body of Christ." "The saints and faithful brethren" are God's people who have been called by His grace to be saints and by faith lived out in their lives, show their fidelity to the kingdom of God. These brothers and sisters are in the family of God and deserve the interest and ministry of those who can help them living by faith. We are "one in Christ, one body in the Lord," by the living unity a body represents in whatever locations saints are found.

Grace is the basis of the union of those whom God has saved, "by grace are ye saved," and gives a unique meaning to every believer when we meet. "Are you a believer? Has God saved you?" has great meaning to Christians who greet each other. To non-believers, they are either embarrassed or don't know what we are talking about, especially when it is linked with peace. Peace to a child of God is a result of God's grace that has been demonstrated and accepted. Peace comes to one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ in spite of all the uncertainties that hinder peace in our generation. Grace and peace come from "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," not from the circumstances of life. Believers, wherever and wherever they are found, know what these words mean. We have common ground with all other true Christians on this basis.

A common reaction to meeting or communicating with other "saints and faithful brethren" is thanksgiving. When we meet or hear news of others of "like precious faith," thanksgiving for them is a normal response. We bow in our hearts to acknowledge the divine work of God in other men and women, and we are anxious to know about them and their welfare. The prayer of thanksgiving is not affected but is real when we hear of the faith others have put in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is where God's dealings with us begin. It is the principle on which our Christian life works. "The just shall live by faith." Faith establishes the preeminence of Christ in the life of a child of God. Our belief is established and relies on Him.

Following the actions and reactions of faith is a normal change in attitude toward other believers. "We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." Love is perhaps the greatest and most effective way we have of expressing our faith. Love is the spontaneous expression of the divine nature implanted in a child of God by the Holy Spirit. Love for God and our Lord Jesus Christ is demonstrated by love for God's children. Faith produces love, and love demonstrates the reality of faith.

A third characteristic of "a new creation in Christ Jesus" is hope. Hope also finds its basis in faith. Hope is out of physical sight but not out of spiritual reach. It is "laid up," or stored up for us in heaven. It is real even though its effect on us now is basically an incentive to holy living and faithful service. That treasure and the focus of our life is on the Person of our Lord,

who is preeminent in heaven also. Our new life in Christ begins with faith in Him, is demonstrated by love for God and His people, and is focused on the future when we see our Lord glorified and honored - and His name revered above all names.

These wonders in the Christian life have come to us and been revealed to us in "the word of the truth of the Gospel." This is not some deceitful message that has come from the imaginations of human minds. This is the absolute truth that has come to us from God. The Gospel is the authentic revelation of God to us through the Person who is the Truth Himself. When our minds are opened to the truth of the Gospel, our hearts are opened to receive the Lord Jesus as our personal Savior. So, there is cause for thanksgiving for the Gospel message itself. There is also cause for thanksgiving, when we hear of its effects on other people and other places.

The Gospel is a success wherever it is preached, both by the results of souls being saved and the truth of the Gospel is declared. Bearing fruit in salvation and the growing process of it producing godliness in the lives of believers is a great cause for thanksgiving. The farther the Gospel reaches, the greater the benefit for those who believe it and the greater the glory for God. The grace of God is what the Gospel is all about, and when it is accepted, that truth is focused on our Lord Jesus Christ. There is also a reason to be thankful for those who proclaim the Gospel, like Epaphras. Faithful ministers of the Gospel labor not only to present the message but to tell of its blessings. In this book, the preeminence and supremacy of Christ is the theme.

**Colossians 1:1.** *"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,"*

### **CONNECTIONS.**

*A man of great intellect in prison for his faith -  
A younger believer from another nation is with him in this place.  
Writing a letter to people who had never seen his face -  
How did they make these connections?*

*One was called to be an apostle by the will of God.  
The younger man listened when he preached the Word -  
Sent to a distant country because he knew Jesus as his Lord.  
God Himself was making the connections!*

*Together they traveled to new harvest fields afar -  
Now for the sake of the Gospel, behind prison bars.  
Hearing of new believers and wondering how they are -  
The Spirit of God is making connections!*

*It is not much different in this day and age.  
We hear about some distant, previously unknown place -  
So, we meditate and pray; then God, our interests raise -  
Until we seek to make some connections!*

*Amazingly, the Spirit of God calls us to go -  
And it isn't long until He is able to show  
To us places and people who need to know -  
It is God whom we need for a connection!*

*People around often ask how we know them.  
The neighbors are limited to work-mates and kin -  
They wonder how we know even China-men.  
It is God's will that we make connections!*

*I am still amazed at God's ways with me.  
It didn't cross my mind when young that I would see  
People from far nations and even one my wife would be.  
God Himself arranged all the connections!*

*"Father, how gracious it was of Thee to allow me to do what Thou hast called me to do, to go to the places I have been and marry the woman  
You chose to be my wife. I thank Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:2.** "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse; grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

**SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BRETHREN.**

*These people are not just common men and women.  
God knew who they were right from the beginning.  
There was placed within their personality  
A desire for spiritual things and sanctified curiosity -  
So that when the Holy Spirit, by His convicting power,  
Brought them to think about their life and beyond their dying hour.  
These set-apart people responded with faith in Christ,  
And with the Holy Spirit within, God, these people blest.*

*Many of them will not travel very far from home.  
Their field of service for God will be where they are known.  
Children will learn the way of salvation from a faithful mother.  
Believers will be shepherded through life by a faithful brother.  
The community where they live will know their manner of life.  
A husband will be faithful and provide for his children and his wife.  
Their testimony will be seen, although they are not aware  
Of the impact on their lives while living there.*

*One of the reasons why there is recognition in their place,  
Is that through them, God has chosen to reveal His grace.  
They received that dispensation when, with faith unfeigned,  
Their trust was put in Christ alone, and now His holy name  
Is revered by them, and they have a genuine love for the Lord.  
There is a consistent commitment to follow God's Word.  
They have a love for each other that shines out like a light,  
And the on-lookers know they have abundant life.*

*Contentment is missing in most people we meet.  
But saints and faithful brethren generally come together in peace.  
Not because they have done great things or won a war,  
But because they are conscious of their Father and who they are.  
The Lord Jesus is their Savior, and it is their delight to honor  
Him who has saved them, now they can say, "Abba Father."  
God is real to them, and so is heaven and hell.  
But they have found their peace in Him, who does all things well.*

*"Loving Father, it must give Thee joy to give grace and peace to the saints and faithful brethren and see evidence of their appreciation. I praise Thee for this - and so do many more, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:3.** "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you."

**GIVING THANKS.**

*A name comes to mind of a place or a person  
As I am at my work today.  
That is the occasion that God brings that I  
In some specific way will pray  
For those people in some distant place,  
That God in His great grace will grant  
What they need to be successful for Him,  
And then for them, I give thanks.*

*Thanks that I know them to earnestly be  
Engaged in the ongoing work of the Lord.  
Or thanks that I came to know them in the past,  
And out of all the people in the world,*

*They and I were joined together  
In the bands of God's saving grace.  
And that together we both experience the blessing  
Of being called to live by faith.*

*Another name comes to the surface of my consciousness,  
It is that of my oldest grandson.  
It seems to me that he is committed to righteousness;  
I give thanks for the man he has become.  
I believe he is a man who loves the Lord;  
In my mind I see him studying hard.  
And I pray that he will become a man of God's Word,  
Not just a successful man of the world.*

*The members of my family arise in my mind,  
Like an album of all those, I love so dear.  
I give thanks for them all and what I find,  
But also, for all the good that I hear  
Of their actions and accomplishments in life,  
That gives me assurance they're in God's family.  
I am thankful that they walk in the light,  
Giving evidence of love for God in their lives I see.*

*There are companies of people gathered in the Lord's name,  
Most of whom I hardly know.  
I give thanks for the testimony from whence they came,  
And that in their communities they can show.  
Their commitment to truth; to spreading the Gospel,  
And to worship in Spirit and in truth.  
I give thanks to those older ones who have been faithful,  
And also, the new ones who have been added to the group.*

*I give thanks for my wife who is faithful and true,  
Whose love for me has always been without question.  
For her service to God and His people too,  
And for teaching me many a good lesson -  
For her grace and contentment, her enthusiasm as well;  
Her willingness to connect with others.  
Yes, I have a lot of reasons for my thankfulness to tell,  
And for all of my Christian sisters and brothers.*

*"Lord God, may I always have a thankful spirit when I think of others, even though we may have areas of disagreement. I know there is much to be thankful for in every name that arises in my mind. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians.1:3-4.** *"We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints..."*

#### **HIS OWN.**

God's people are precious to Him. They are "the apple of His eye." We need to remember what God sees when He looks upon His loved ones. If we see them only as all the other people around, we are missing out on a key that is essential for Christian fellowship. Paul indicated that on every occasion when he prayed for the Colossian believers, he gave thanks to God for them. Even though he hadn't seen them, he appreciated the grace of God in them. He had heard of their faith and love: two important Christian virtues I need to cultivate and appreciate in the Lord's people. For over 70 years, I have known some of these choice people here in Flower's Cove. In many ways, they are overlooked by the Lord's servants who preach because their numbers aren't large, and they are off the beaten track.

I thank God for their willingness to continue on for these many years in a faithful way of gathering for the Lord's Day, regular weeknight meetings, monthly meetings in the community for those who are seniors, and for the occasional Gospel series. Maybe one of the best things I can do for them is to give thanks to God for them and bring them before the Lord regularly as those He has a great and loving interest in.

*"Father, these are people You love. These are those You sent the Lord Jesus to die for. These are the excellent of the earth. Each in his or her own way, wants to bring pleasure and honor to Thee. May I properly estimate those among whom I work and with whom I worship! May I never get the idea that any one of them is unimportant! May I always remember that the number of people attending a gathering isn't what makes it right! It is their desire and willingness to do what is Thy will that will make the struggle of isolation worth the effort they put forth. Bless them for their faithfulness to Thy Word and work and those among whom they live. In the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."*

**Colossians 1:4.** *"Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,"*

#### **YOUR FAITH.**

*From God, who in love and with wisdom unlimited,  
Came the message of Christ Jesus who in His grace inhabited  
Human flesh that He might become the Savior of men;  
Who when they heard the Gospel message would be conscious of their sin;  
They would hear these truths and be made aware of His saving grace,  
And awakened by the Holy Spirit would turn in repentance and faith,  
To the Lord Jesus alone who in forgiveness; their sins put away.  
Then the Spirit of God would be in them to stay.*

*From then on things change after putting saving faith in Christ alone.  
As a new creation in Christ Jesus a new nature has come  
To be reckoned with in every aspect of life -  
Whether it be business and pleasure, or as husband and wife;  
Old things pass away, and God makes all things become new.  
Things we once hated, now we do; things once indulged in - now we are through.  
Faith is in Christ Jesus, not in one's own ability.  
Though unseen to our eyes, He is our main reality.*

*An interesting addendum to putting our faith in Him,  
Is that we find there are many others with that same trust in them.  
There is a mutual drawing of ourselves to those dear people.  
No matter what nationality or culture, we find we are equal  
In loving the Lord, and so we love one another.  
As those who are accepted in Christ, we all know God as our Father.  
When something happens to them, and the news comes to me  
It affects me also because we are in the same family.*

*Putting your faith in Christ Jesus means life starts all over again.  
For those who first come in faith to Him, love is manifested in them.  
Doors once closed now are opened when we pray.  
There is a difference in what we do, as well as what we say.  
Life is much different on the narrow way than on the broad.  
Once we lived for ourselves and now, we live for the Lord.  
There is peace where once was fear; there is joy when before we were sad.  
There is a trust where once was doubt; faith in Christ has made us glad.*

*"Loving Father, the faith You initiated that led me to the Savior, really does work - even after 60 years, I thank Thee for leading me to trust the Savior. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:5.** *"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel;"*

#### **THE HOPE.**

*Faith and love have another friend that makes one's life complete.*

*Each one of these triplets is unique, they never do compete.  
Faith opens a door to things unseen and previously unknown.  
Love then steps in and through its ways, faith is plainly shown.*

*But there is one more part to this that has to do with motivation.  
Faith and love have another kin that affects our destination.  
This testing time; this training time has another time in view.  
There is a positive hope laid up when life on earth is through.*

*The tribulation and difficulties of this life are temporary.  
Faith and love; hope also, sails in the face of winds contrary.  
These three together go upstream while other things drift down.  
Faith is the engine that gives the power, love takes away the frown.*

*Hope though, shines brightly through the night showing the way home.  
Its light pierces through the gloom that because of sin, has come.  
It gives faith and love direction and keeps us from obstacles.  
And keeps reminding the other two, of the harbor ahead that calls.*

*Hope sings the songs of Zion that lift the hearts of men.  
Hope takes the words of faith and applies them to the problem of sin.  
It makes us look beyond the present temptation to the goal.  
It makes unseen things of faith become real to the soul.*

*Hope tells of a Savior who waits to welcome travelers home.  
It tells of our heavenly Father who invites all men to come.  
Hope tells of a sinless state where the sins of the past are done.  
And all those enemies that stood in the way forevermore are gone.*

*Hope tells of the saints of God we knew who by death were taken away;  
Who we shall see and be united again in that unclouded day.  
Hope stirs the heart to holy living because at any time -  
Faith will give way to sight as we move into heaven's clime.*

***"It certainly is true Father, that hope purifies. The effect of knowing the Lord is coming and that we may see Him today, certainly makes all the temptations around lose their appeal. Keep me from sin today I pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 1:6.** *"Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:"*

### **THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH.**

*There is a counterfeit now the same as was back when  
Strange ideas about God were put forth by false men,  
Who would say what they thought, and insisted was true,  
But all it is now as then is a "gospel according to you."*

*Real truth when presented in fellowship with God,  
Is the same message wherever it is preached all over the world.  
There is no difficulty in determining what is false from the truth.  
The Gospel of God is the message that brings forth lasting fruit.*

*When it is presented the Holy Spirit convicts;  
And the consciences of many by truth are pricked.  
Sin and righteousness and judgment to come -  
Makes hearers realize the path they're on is wrong.*

*Truth preached presents Christ as the only Savior from sin.*

*It can bring repentance about in the hardest of men.  
But when it is deliberately rejected, and people turn away;  
It will not be long until grace has had its day.*

*For those who turn to Christ when the Gospel is preached,  
Are those who appreciate how far grace has reached -  
To bring those who were aliens and strangers to grace,  
Into the fold of those who have believed in Christ by faith.*

*Evidence of reality doesn't take long to become known.  
The fruit of the Spirit in new believers is shown.  
People who knew them before now can see -  
There is a new life in those who are prepared for eternity.*

*This change is not something local, it is the same worldwide.  
The new life in Christ bears fruit we cannot hide.  
Faith came by hearing and hearing from the Word of God.  
Grace and truth lead to faith that acknowledges Jesus as Lord.*

***"O God of the Gospel: I have seen the fruit of grace received in many people. I pray for those who have received Christ as their Savior - that we all as members of one Body, bring forth praise and glory to Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 1:7.** *"As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;"*

#### **YOU LEARNED.**

*A man alone in the place of his birth,  
May find it hard when he comes home to tell  
Those who knew him of something of matchless worth,  
And convince them he never fell under some spell.*

*Often people will listen to some mysterious tale,  
And enjoy the story as a form of entertainment.  
But when sin is exposed, people begin to rail,  
Even to the extent of seeking physical containment.*

*To have a reputation strong enough that people will really hear,  
Is a good recommendation for the message they give.  
And when this is mingled with faith and godly fear,  
Then people may want what you already have.*

*A fellow servant is one thing when working with others.  
There is a fellowship shared and mutual faith to enjoy.  
But when one is separated from all sisters and brothers,  
It is your personal testimony you have to employ.*

*"A faithful minister of Christ" is a title to be desired.  
When one serves the Lord, it is with carefulness he speaks.  
He is not the servant of men like one who is hired.  
It is for the good of the people, and God's glory he seeks.*

*From that kind of servant, you can accept his explanations  
Of the truth, he has to pass on for the common good.  
Those people who live out what they preach have the highest motivation -  
They know eternal things are at stake and they are speaking for the Lord.*

*"May I be like Epaphras to the people where I live, Father. Let the words I speak be consistent with the life I live. Help me to always give Thy truth in a way that is understandable, and may my speech be always with grace and seasoned with salt. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:8.** *"Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit."*

#### **YOUR LOVE.**

*This kind of love is not just an emotion.  
We don't work it up or take a "love potion,"  
To try and have good feelings about God and others.  
This is a perfect love from the Holy Spirit that covers  
A multitude of sins and lets us see others as God sees them;  
And that love that God puts in us values others even when  
There have been times we didn't like them very much,  
But that love is still there because of the Spirit's touch.*

*We experience that love in many different ways.  
Perhaps we sensed it there on salvation's first day.  
There is implanted in us a love for the brethren,  
Where previously if we came near, we would try to avoid them.  
Also, when we look around at the people who are near,  
We think about their destiny and want them to hear  
The way of salvation so they too sin's punishment escape,  
When the Lord Jesus as their Savior they personally take.*

*There is also a love for the things of God;  
Communion in prayer and in reading His Word,  
Becomes a part of our life for these meet a need  
That can only be found when God's will we heed.  
There is evidence of love because we want to gather  
With God's people in fellowship and worship together.  
The words of the Gospel are a delight to our hearts,  
And being taught by other Christians gives our love a good start.*

*"I think Father, that the first evidence of love in me when You saved me, was I had a love for the preachers whom I feared before. Also, I loved to hear the Gospel rather than avoid it. I thank Thee for putting that love in my heart. May I never let it grow cold. May I truly find and keep "first love." In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:9-14**

#### **INTERCESSION**

It is not uncommon for much of our prayer life to be focused on ourselves and what we want rather than on thankfulness for what we have. Even more so is the general nature of our intercessory prayers on behalf of others. The Colossian believers would have no difficulty knowing what Paul was praying for on their behalf. It would have opened a whole new area of their understanding of who they were, compared to those promoting heresy among them. The heresy centered on ceremony and what they should not do. Angels were exalted, and Christ depreciated. Secret knowledge was contrasted to divine wisdom, and tradition and human wisdom was exalted. In this prayer, these saints were directed to the higher ground on which believers stand and to the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has forgiven us of our sins.

How greatly we appreciate hearing of fruit in the Gospel and how important it is that we become intercessors on their behalf. They hardly know what happened to them and are easy prey to unscrupulous deceivers looking for people to follow them and their false teaching. It is incumbent on us to earnestly pray for new believers from the "first day." Generalized praying has its place, but as we learn more about what God is doing, where, and who the new saints are, we need to commit ourselves to more specific intercession for them and the needs they have.

The need for spiritual perception is universal when God saves precious souls. Those new believers have just begun to live as those who are raised from the dead, and everything in their lives is new. How they interact with their spouse and family is affected. How they work, and their attitude changes as they begin to do their work "as unto the Lord." Leisure time, the source of their pleasure, the way they speak, what they listen to, and the control of the mind is all implanted by this new life



in Christ. The need for spiritual insight into every aspect of life is needed. The saints at Colossae needed spiritual intelligence to grow in what they already had rather than seeking something new, like miracles and signs that were being pushed by false teachers who had come among them.

They had heard the word of truth. They had believed what they heard, and God had saved them. They had been taught by Epaphras and had learned and been faithful to what they had been taught. Now they were responsible to make that knowledge real by using that knowledge of God's will and applying it in daily practice. Understanding comes when we use the wisdom God gives us. There had been evidence of true faith, hope, and love in the people of God there. Now they were called upon to act in agreement with God and do His will. Spiritual understanding is not real until there is some evidence that it is more than just wishful thinking. Some people have been led astray by those who emphasize feelings and emotional displays rather than faith and a Christ-like life.

The next part of Paul's prayer concerned the Colossian saints' obedience to the walk of faith that is "worthy of the Lord." Careless walking in life to please men is not what is in the mind of the one praying or the Lord to whom he is making his or her intercession. "All wisdom" in understanding leads to "all pleasing" in living. The point is that we are to be pleasing to the Lord, not just to men. When we have experienced God's grace and know God's will, we will learn Himself, which makes us fruitful. Learning and living go together in one who is walking worthy of the Lord. There is direction as well as progression in their life. Our walk and work go together. Service for God and worship of God go together as well. The more we obey God and yield to His will for our lives, the more we will increase our knowledge of Him personally.

Paul's prayer for those saints was that their spiritual perception would lead them to a worthy walk, a fuller life, a greater knowledge of God, and greater strength to serve Him. The request for power was that they might be able to endure with divine power, the suffering consistent with believers' godly walk. God's people need Him so that they can be patient and strong under pressure. A dark, stoic countenance is not what is anticipated in a Christian who is going through a difficult time. The patience displayed with a joyful spirit and countenance has a great impact for good on those who look on and wonder at the grace of God being shown. The moral excellence of a thankful spirit is not normal for those who suffer. By the power of God, His grace is made evident when a person chooses joy rather than resentment and thankfulness instead of selfishness.

That thankful spirit is an expression of one who is fit for heaven and is a "partaker" of all that heaven holds for us. To display a heavenly character here under suffering is evidence of those who are in "the kingdom of His dear Son" or "the Son of His love." The Jews wanted the kingdom on earth they once had to be theirs again. There will be in the future 1000 years of a peaceful kingdom under the reign of the Lamb who sits on the throne. Today we can now enjoy our inheritance in the kingdom of the Son of God's love - even when suffering. We can experience those blessings now under the stress of trials with joyfulness. How much more will we be enjoying such grace in the future?

In this prayer, there is also worship, thanksgiving, and remembrance. Paul includes in one short statement all that God, in His grace, has provided. Christ has delivered us from Satan's power, transferred us into His kingdom, provided redemption for us, and granted true forgiveness. Every aspect of this great salvation exalts the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who has the preeminence. His personal glory is in view in this statement that reads like a hymn of praise and worship. He is preeminent in the Gospel. He is preeminent in redemption and all that has resulted from that great work. In our prayers of intercession, it is good for us to be specific as to the present need and also as to the anticipated result and the blessings that follow.

**Colossians 1:9.** *"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding:"*

#### **MIGHT BE FILLED.**

*There are a lot of things that could fill my mind.  
But I am hopeful that in mine I will find  
The knowledge of God's will and how it, daily meets  
The need for wisdom and understanding as each event I greet.*

*Morning has come and my mind is quite fresh.  
It is important that I take time with the Lord so that He might bless  
Me with new thoughts of Himself, His mercy, and His grace,  
And by getting the truth from the scriptures to build up my faith.*

*My wife and I together later spend some time reading and praying,  
I am often filled with more knowledge of His will by what she is saying.  
Together we are nurtured in our spirits and can sense  
The value of our fellowship before we rise and go hence.*

*When meeting with others and with them spending some time,  
I am aware of the differences in their lives than in mine.  
Being filled with the knowledge of God's will keeps me  
From foolish and careless talk and worthless activity.*

*Decisions have to be made that affect me and others.  
I need that spiritual understanding to assist my brothers  
In making these choices that will direct the church,  
And help them to promote and help those in God's work,*

*By the time the day is over my mind is so filled,  
With thoughts of events and people, and yet the knowledge of His will  
Is still there and still working to bring things about,  
So, I pray, "Thy will be done," and in peace, turn the lights out.*

**"Father, I thank Thee for Thy people who pray for me. I thank Thee for the Holy Spirit guiding me. I thank Thee for Thy Word to give instructions to me. I pray that this day I will, in the activities before me, glorify and honor Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 1:10.** *"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"*

### **GODLY LIVING.**

*Spiritual intelligence doesn't come by chance.  
A person's mind and will are involved.  
God's Word has to be given more than a passing glance,  
Before the meaning of a text is solved.  
But when that happens, we can then expect  
The things happening in life to make good sense.  
No longer will we want God's things to neglect,  
But will want to serve Him with diligence.*

*The Christian life consists of a daily walk,  
On the road of practical obedience.  
Places I go, what I do, and even the way I talk,  
All reflect my attitude and spiritual intelligence.  
To walk worthy of the Lord is no small thing,  
His name and his words are in this way to be shown.  
The walk of faith is one way I am able to bring  
Those I know to the Christ and Him as Savior to own.*

*There are two kinds of work that people do.  
It may at first glance seem the same, but they're different.  
One's objective may be material gain, so when it is through  
Its objective will demand I be more efficient.  
The same work can be done for the Lord and His glory;  
That makes it a fruitful work with eternal gain.  
Then when the final account is added to His story,  
It will be the fruitful work of obedience, not just to make a name.*

*How can I increase my knowledge of God?  
Sixty years ago today; was when I came to know Him.  
An increasing knowledge comes through His Words;  
Spiritual truths are contained in and revealed through them.  
In order for me to know more about the Lord Jesus,  
I must read through the Gospels again and again.  
In the book of Acts and through all the epistles,  
The conduct of life and of the church is contained.*

*Moral excellence does not happen in just a moment,*

*Intelligence, obedience, and knowledge are all needed.  
It is true life as we know it begins in an instant,  
But real abundant life comes when God's truth is heeded.  
It is incumbent on me to diligently apply  
Myself to these three things, that I may continue to learn  
The depth of God's love and all the things grace does supply,  
That I, from the great privilege of serving God, will never turn.*

*"Father, I know there is nothing in me that deserves or earns the grace that Thou dost give. But to labor in Thy vineyard and harvest field is not some trivial matter. May all that I pass on to other people be always, and in every way, scriptural, spiritually intelligent, and practical. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:11.** *"Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."*

#### **MADE STRONG.**

*It is not in ourselves that this spiritual strength comes,  
It comes from the Holy Spirit within.  
The power of His glory and authority linked with His name,  
Is far greater than any ability of men.  
To produce this moral excellence, God increases our faith,  
As His Word becomes real to our souls.  
Even as Paul prayed for them that this would be the case,  
I too, pray for those saints of God I know.*

*There is a definite change I know in some who were impatient,  
There were times when their temper took control.  
Now they seem to have learned through tribulations sent,  
That God allows these difficulties to come and go;  
So others as well as ourselves know that God has done something  
That is way beyond changing some habits that were wrong.  
There are lessons to be learned and inward changes that do spring,  
From one who was weak, but now has been made strong.*

*A lot of people will say, "I guess that is just the way I am,  
I was born like this, so I guess like this I'll stay."  
But when we come to know the Lord, we find strength in Jesus' name,  
To bring short tempers to an end after we take time to pray.  
God in His grace can make us strong, so there's a fundamental change,  
And that temper that once was so short, is now by grace, made long.  
We may not understand all the changes, and even think it's passing-strange,  
That most of our strongest habits now are gone.*

*In this transformation there is another thing that stands out;  
Joy is there to be found in almost every situation.  
In the past when I didn't get my way, I might complain or have a pout  
On my face hoping for the other person's capitulation.  
Now amazingly there is a joy that arises from within,  
And I can see many reasons for joy to be made known.  
I now realize that complaints and grudges are really sins,  
And faith in Christ, by my joy, can visibly be shown.*

*"O God of all grace: the fact of knowing Thee more and more has wonderful lasting effects. Instead of agitation, there is patience. Instead of a short temper, there is a long one. Instead of grumbling, there is joy - and I thank Thee for this. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:12.** *"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:"*

#### **SAINTS IN LIGHT.**

*The Source is not in man nor of man to produce  
A moral light of holiness and love.*

*It is our Father God who has the power to induce  
In us what we did never have.  
He moved heaven and earth when Jesus died,  
To provide a way we could share  
In the inheritance He gives and the blessings it provides,  
That we His name with honor shall bear.*

*Truth is involved in the inheritance of the saints in light;  
This truth is found in God's Word.  
It is a lamp to our feet and on our pathway in life,  
It reveals where we are going and where we once stood.  
This inheritance is light is not a "flash in the pan,"  
Like a light for a moment, then gone.  
It comes from the steady glow of God's Word that can  
Through saints in the light show others the way home.*

*Love has a light with unique characteristics,  
That people find hard to resist.  
It doesn't demand a response nor is it very specific  
As to who by its light will be blest.  
It is God-like in nature and can be reflected in man,  
When we consider the inheritance we are in.  
It is not beyond every saint, for each one can  
Love others reflecting our love from His.*

*Actually, light is like a city set on a hill,  
A "kingdom of light" is what we seek,  
Even though all around us is darkness still,  
A little light makes the darkness flee.  
When all over the world the saints in light,  
Let their light "so shine before men;"  
The "kingdom of darkness" fades out of sight;  
The powers of darkness against God cannot win.*

*"O Holy God, may Thy light and Thy truth so shine out through Thy people, that men and women will take heed to Thy Gospel and be saved.  
May all the saints in light realize who we are and not be ashamed to let the light You give us, shine out to those around. In the name of the  
Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:13.** *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"*

#### **THE SON OF HIS LOVE.**

*A new power has taken over;  
Where once we were captives, now we are free.  
We have come out from under the cover  
Of a dark kingdom - now we live in the light where it is easy to see  
Where we are going and who else is going too;  
Because those who have been transfigured, know the Son of His love.  
And in this world, we are just passing through,  
We find many who are captured by love the same as we have.*

*There is a new way of thinking in this kingdom of love -  
We can lift our mind's eye higher than what we see 'round.  
Grace that was shown to us when eternal life God gave,  
Now is a part of this new "love life" we've found.  
The mind is directed to things that are holy,  
We think differently than those in the world.  
We have learned the value of loving God wholly,  
And our love now for others is like a banner unfurled.*

*We don't have to talk about love when it is real.  
It becomes evident that it is there like a flag in the wind.  
When there is no wind, the flag hangs in a curl;  
But becomes very obvious when forces against it are sent.  
When there is sickness and pain, or from broken hearts people suffer,  
The Son of God's love is there to show us what it means.  
In His kingdom, we learn the lesson over and over,  
The impact of love on those who need to be clean.*

*There is freedom to love when it is not under constraints.  
By the nature of His kingdom, we know what is right.  
As those with a new nature, we can overlook complaints,  
And show the reality of love in all the seasons of life.  
When young, there is enthusiasm and love is so urgent.  
A little later in life, our love seems to calm down.  
Later in life, there is a sort of resurgence,  
As the Son of His love readies us for our long home.*

***"O Loving Father, I thank Thee sincerely and gratefully for loving me. I want to show Thy love to me by showing love to others. May I be generous today in loving my wife, my children, and Thy people. May those who do not know Thee catch, through me in some way, evidence of Thy love for them. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 1:14.** *"In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"*

#### **FORGIVENESS.**

*It has been paid!  
The price unable to be reached by mortal man,  
Has been met in full by the highest cost.  
Who can conceive of spotless, innocent blood being shed,  
That a sinful man would not be lost.  
The sacrifice that One would make  
To free one bound by sin in life -  
Is so far beyond mere human measure -  
That there is no comparison in the realm of the mind.*

*But God unfolds in holy pages,  
The reason and way redemption can be made.  
Down through the years of the passing ages,  
He clearly stated that death is the price to be paid,  
For sin and that there is no other -  
But there is One who was willing and able  
To satisfy the claims of a righteous God, and so the Father  
Sent His to earth; born in a stable -  
On His cross, it was fully paid!*

*Forgiven! That word has a special ring.  
Forgiven! By God's grace from everything  
Forgiven! At a cost beyond my ken  
Forgiven! Impossible by mortal men  
Forgiven! Not by works or authority  
Forgiven! By One who by faith's eye I see  
Forgiven! Not stained by human hands  
Forgiven! By the only unique God-Man  
Forgiven! Not just in pity overlooked  
Forgiven! When the punishment for sin He took  
Forgiven! By the only One who has that power*

*Forgiven! From faith's beginning hour  
Forgiven! There is no other price to be paid  
Forgiven! By the precious blood that He shed*

*"Father God, Thy righteous justice, and eternal love have made it possible for me to be legally forgiven. I praise Thee and thank Thee from a full heart. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

## **Colossians 1:15-20**

### **LORD OF ALL**

Attacks on the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ are nothing new. To go on the defense and argue with people who challenge Christ's eternal existence and deity, can deteriorate into a verbal battle that does not solve the dispute. To the believers of the Colossian assembly, Paul dealt with the heresy they were being challenged with by answering it before there was a question raised. The heresy affirmed that all matter is evil and that God could not create evil. This was almost an early form of evolutionary teaching. They also taught that Christ was one of the intermediaries, or go-betweens, like angels and other "principalities and powers." According to them, Christ was not the source and way of salvation. They taught that we need tradition, ceremony, miracles, and signs to achieve a connection with God. Many of those same false ideas exist in one form or another today, and people will accept that teaching because it places their future in their own independent hands. There seemed to be a certain fascination for angels coming at their beck and calling and acting on their behalf. Paul dealt with that by establishing the fact of the supremacy of Christ by exalting Him in His deity, in creation, in His providence by sustaining all things continually, in the church as the Head, in redemption as the Reconciler, and in the Gospel.

He began his teaching with the worship of the Sovereign Lord as to who He is, His eternal existence, and His power and glory. His knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ far exceeded the human intellect of the false teachers and their vain speculation. His message was "Jesus only," not a mere comparison with angels or men. In Christ, the Son of God, as to His relationship to the Godhead, He is the exact likeness in His manifestation of God, making visible that which was invisible. He was the "firstborn" in the sense of being before anything and every being. That which was eternal and pre-incarnation has been revealed to us in Christ. He was before all angels who are created beings made by Him. There are "thrones," so they must have areas of designated responsibility, but His throne is above all others. In the image of Christ, God became visible to men and made that which once was invisible now understandable.

Christ, the Son of God, is exalted as the Creator of "all things." There is nothing that exists that He did not create. He was before "all things." He was prior to all things because He is the Creator, the One who made it all happen. It was His word and His power that made all things according to His own design. In every created thing, there is evidence of the supreme power and unique imprint of His divine personhood. He is the reason for all things; all things exist and are maintained through Him. Christ holds everything together no matter what they are. From galaxies to atoms, there is a controlling power that is only His. Our Lord Jesus Christ bonds together physical things and spiritual things. Even the moral restraints that are common to man find their source in Him. But man, in his heretical mind, depreciates and puts the Lord of all down in an effort to put man up. That attitude is what is the prevalent view almost universally, except for those who have been redeemed and forgiven by His grace.

Christ, the Son of God, is also exalted in relation to the church. He is the Head of the church as the Prince of life, the Captain of our salvation. In that position, He was the firstborn, the One who starts so that others can follow. Our Lord is the Originator of the church in the same way as He is the Originator of creation. He who is eternal in His being acted to produce that which did not exist. So, He was the beginning of the church, not its first member. That place of preeminence and authority was established by His supremacy over death when as the first one to defeat death by His own authority, He came out from among all those who had no power over it. Not even angels can do that. Our Lord is the supreme authority over both the natural order of all things in creation and the spiritual order of all things in the church.

Christ, the Son of God, is exalted as the Reconciler of all things to God. It is in the purpose of God that there will be unlimited fellowship between man and God. To accomplish that purpose, the One to whom everything is subordinate, and "all fullness" is preeminent in Him, has become the Reconciler of things on earth to things in heaven. When it came to creation, it started in perfection from heaven to earth as "all things" were established by God. When it comes to the church, the problem that separated us was our sin here on earth. This reconciliation had to begin with peace being made with God here on earth. This is what the Lord did when "He made peace through the blood of His cross."

God's will, acted toward us through Christ coming to earth to settle the accounts that had to be made between sinful men and a holy God. The "blood of Christ," His sacrificial death for us, is the solution to the enmity between heaven and earth. The Lord Jesus Christ is the One who made it possible for us to be accepted by a Righteous God. The false teachers at Colossae were teaching other ways of coming to God. But in this discourse, Paul brings such an exalted view of salvation

that one knows those who compared the work of Christ with anything else or any additions had no spiritual life. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His deity and humanity, is supreme in every way and aspect of anything others might teach. May we truly crown Him, Lord of all in our lives, as our Savior who has redeemed us and is the Designer, Creator, and Sustainer of all things. He alone is the Head of the church. No other person is the firstborn from the dead; the possessor of all fullness; the reconciler of all things. Angels and men all must bow before Him who is Lord of all.

**Colossians.1:15.** *"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."*

#### **WHO IS THIS?**

*Who is this One who makes visible Him who is invisible? He is Emmanuel, God with us  
Who is this One who is before every other creature? He is the Father of Eternity.  
Who is this One who created all things? He is from everlasting to everlasting --God.  
Who is this One who created everything in heaven? He is the Alpha and Omega.  
Who is this One who created all things on earth? He is the One with the keys of life and death.  
Who is this One who keeps everything in order and in its place? He is the Sustainer.  
Who is this One who is the Head of the Church? He is the One who died for her and rose again.  
Who is this One who has the preeminence over all things? He is my Lord and my God.*

*"Dear Father in heaven: To attempt to describe in words One such as our Lord Jesus Christ would only be presumption and certainly would be an exercise in futility. To know Him who is eternal life is to be identified as one of His own, and is an earnest of the delights of the glory that awaits. It makes real the things that are unseen. To be linked with Him gives gladness to my heart, strength to my hands, purpose to my walk, a song to my tongue, and a freshness to the air I breathe. He the Creator, Sustainer, and Upholder is the Peace-maker as well. No wonder it is entirely appropriate that in "All things He might have the preeminence." There is power and authority in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."*

*e*

**Colossians 1:16.** *"For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:"*

#### **EVERYTHING.**

*They may not have understood in whom they did believe,  
When the message of redemption, they willingly received.  
And the Person who gave His life as a ransom for them,  
Won their hearts and they were glad to be able to receive Him.*

*At that time, they did not realize His universal supremacy.  
About all they knew was that they were blessed with God's clemency.  
Probably they understood some of Christ's moral authority,  
But had not conceived in their minds the fullness of deity.*

*Think about "all things;" that means from the smallest to the greatest.  
That would include things we can see around us, and those things that evade us.  
Who can conceive the inexpressible power of gravitation;  
That keeps our earth in place and everything else in its position.*

*I can open my eyes and see high mountains and deep seas.  
And learn that my personal Savior made every one of these.  
When I look at a new-born baby, I see miniature body parts,  
And know that invisible to the eye, God created them at the start.*

*There are nations that men claimed to have established on their own.  
Some may acknowledge God in this, but most don't recognize a higher throne.  
Even the inner urge to press out and do something new;  
Is an act of the Supreme Creator who put that urge in you.*

*The Invisible God can not be seen by the eyes of mortal men.  
But there is evidence of His intelligence and power in all things made by Him.  
He is the power behind the evidence of everything that exists.  
Not only did He create them all, but everything we see is His.*

*"Almighty God, the Creator of all things and the Supreme One in all the universe: I bow in reverence this morning to acknowledge Thee and Thy greatness and to give Thee praise and honor. I also want to give Thee my grateful thanks for forever bringing me into Thy family and making me a child of Thine. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:17.** *"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."*

#### **BEFORE ALL THINGS.**

*Before there was this small city that I have come to call my home.  
Before my fore-bearers came across this country and ceased to roam.  
Before this nation had a name or adopted a constitution -  
God was here and arranged things this way, so that I might experience salvation.*

*Before there were nations in Europe and the Bible was printed on a press.  
Before the Dark Ages covered that continent and believers were oppressed.  
Before Rome ruled and many believers were martyred because of their faith.  
God was here and had sent His Son as the Redeemer to take our place.*

*Before His Star shone over Bethlehem, wise men came to see.  
Before the shepherds came in their haste to see Jesus lying on the hay.  
Before Mary and Elizabeth; before the prophets and the kings.  
God was here and planned out history that He might salvation bring.*

*Before Israelites wandered in the wilderness, even before they were slaves.  
Before Jacob sent his sons to Egypt that the life of his family would be saved.  
Before Abraham had offered Isaac, who lay on the altar and wood.  
God was here and had given promises that they might believe His Word.*

*Before Noah built an ark or Job was a successful farmer.  
Before Abel brought his sacrifice and Cain became the first murderer.  
Before Adam and Eve sinned by taking the forbidden fruit.  
God was here and had designed this way to unfold for us His truth.*

*Before an eagle flapped its wings; before a cow bent to eat grass.  
Before the herbs were made by God with seeds that they might last.  
Before there was a sun and moon before there was even light.  
God was here and His voice was heard speaking into the night.*

*Before the farthest reaches of my imagination, God did eternally exist.  
With all of His attributes fully intact, He designed the plan of redeeming grace.  
In His mind there appears to have been plans that reach way into the future.  
God is still here maintaining everything that these plans He might nurture.*

*"Lord God of the past, present, and future: I am awed by the fact that Thou dost let me and others know Thee personally. I am in one way fearful and in another way comfortable in Thy presence. I guess the best thing I can do is worship in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:18.** *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."*

#### **PREMINENCE.**

*He is above and before all others,  
Preeminent by His eternal existence.  
He is the Eternal Son who with the Father,  
Has endless life without any kind of assistance  
For all life finds its source in Him.  
He has the keys to both death and life;  
All things by His authority and power begin.*



*In His nature is both life and light.*

*In the church He is the Head from which the body  
Finds its being and through Him lives and breathes.  
Without Him, it would be a headless oddity;  
A lifeless corpse that could in no way God please.  
But the Head in its place of preeminence,  
Can make the body function miraculously as one.  
The head in an act of divine omnipotence,  
Rose in a resurrection body from death where He had gone.*

*He is preeminent in the Gospel presentation.  
He is the One who died for sin and rose again.  
He is preeminent in the work of creation.  
By Him and for Him did all things begin.  
He is preeminent in providing our redemption;  
His precious blood alone can cleanse from sin.  
He is preeminent in giving us salvation;  
Our every blessing finds its source in Him.*

*There is a glory that resides in Him,  
That which is seen is brighter than the sun.  
There is a fullness that He gives to men;  
That we receive because of what He has done.  
The body parts find grace for grace when needed;  
All those parts find unity from the Head.  
He makes each part that He has newly created;  
A role to fill in the body as He does lead.*

***"Father, as a member in the great universal body, I am asking Thee, if I should direct the interests I have in those at a distance, to some people in the body whom I do not personally know. At this moment this morning, I am quite uncertain as to what to do because I do not want the searchers to be misled. I must trust Thee alone, Father, to bring the right people to reach out to them with the Gospel. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 1:19.** *"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;"*

### **FULLNESS.**

*Usually, I use the words "full" or "fill" as verbs,  
But when God is in the picture things can easily change.  
For in Him, there is a totality of power,  
That makes it understandable what to a natural man is strange.  
The fullness of Divine Persons is seen in One.  
There is in the body of One, all Three.  
Each One has unique things they do;  
Different Persons but One in unity.*

*When I see Christ, I will see Him in His body.  
The same one He had when He was here below.  
In that body, He lived and labored,  
And in that body the marks of His passion show.  
In that Person, I can see displayed  
Evidence of God's mercy and God's grace.  
There is in Him such real compassion -  
That is the path of the love of God we can easily trace.*

*In Him and from Him there comes to us,  
The blessings of God are daily given in Jesus' name.*

*For those who know Him, we can trust,  
That good or bad, He has controlled what to us came.  
As days and years before us do unfold -  
In the course of life on earth we are called to live,  
We can be sure is under His direction,  
And of His fullness, we will still receive.*

*"Father, I rest in my mind more quietly now after listening to Thy voice and getting more assurance regarding the action I must take. May my actions in the matter before me, give me a greater appreciation of Thy fullness and willingness to meet every need, even if it is not in ways that I may not have thought of. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:20.** *"And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."*

### **PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD.**

*The problem of enmity is a hard one to solve.  
Right from the beginning when in the garden God called  
Adam and Eve to face up to their sin -  
Mankind does not want to acknowledge its blame.*

*For years it was dealt with by innocent victims,  
Who was put to death for the guilty, covering sins that afflict them.  
But those sacrifices were from creatures of a different kind.  
They dealt only with outward forms, not with the mind.*

*But One came, in fashion as a real man,  
To make reconciliation as only another man can.  
There was, and never will be, another who could make peace.  
So, the enmity between a Holy God and sinful man would cease.*

*He came full of grace willing to pay the full cost  
Of making peace by giving His life on the cross.  
Truth, with its demands that justice be done,  
Was satisfied by Christ's blood shed for our sins to atone.*

*So now peace is possible between God and man -  
It is not restricted to a few, but anyone can  
Come in repentance for sin and trust only in the Lord.  
Then reconciliation takes place as says God's unchanging Word.*

*Though sin is still here, there is coming a day,  
When the lion and lamb and children unafraid play.  
For peace has been made for all things through the blood of His cross.  
And God will restore all things that through man's sin was lost.*

*"Gracious God my Father, this beautiful verse has been a great blessing to me, and to others, who live in this war-torn world. We can see the results of enmity and the evasion of any lasting solution. How thankful I am for the Savior and what He did for me when He made peace with Thee possible. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

### **Colossians 1:21-29**

#### **RECONCILED**

The basis of the reconciliation of sinners to God has been clearly established. It has been accomplished through the blood of Christ. He gave His life for us on the cross when He offered Himself without blemish or spot to God on our behalf. Now that message is proclaimed to the world through the Gospel. Peace has been made between God and man through the Man, Christ Jesus. The death of the perfect Savior has made this possible on a legal, just, and moral basis. Sin has not been overlooked in any way. It has been dealt with and paid for in full by "the blood of His cross." That is why those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their own Savior only "glory in the cross." It means to us that the hostility between the saved sinner and God has been removed, and trust is established in the value of the Person and the work of the Savior.

He is the Person who has reconciled us to God. There is no other person who could make that happen. He alone is "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." The price He paid in order that reconciliation could be just was that He did it "through death." The wages of sin have been paid for by the death of the only sinless One who was "made sin for us, He who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him." The purpose behind His act of reconciliation was to present us holy, without fault or accusation, to God. Our position and condition were that we were enemies who were alienated from God because of our sins. That has been changed completely, and now we are set apart to God and for God. Because we are without blemish positionally because His blood has justified us, we can be absolved from accusations of our unworthiness by virtue of the worth of our Lord and Savior. The proof of reconciliation is lived out in the lives of grateful, redeemed people who are committed to living by faith in Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ died in our place physically. He is not just another intermediary, as the heretics teach. Those who have accepted Him and the forgiveness He gives are established in their lives by the truth of the Gospel being lived out from day to day. God has forgiven us, and we are declared righteous by His grace alone. We are not now moved by those who have their own notions of salvation but are settled in the assurance that when we were saved, we began the journey of hope that assures us of being with the Lord at the rapture of the church or at death. That Gospel message, good news, is the same for every man, woman, and child in the world. It was that message that Paul served when he proclaimed it to both Jews and Gentiles, and for that, he suffered.

The revelation of the mystery of Christ is cause for rejoicing. No one is given a greater advantage over others because of who they are or what religion they might have. And no one is put at a disadvantage because of their background or lack of privileges. The Gospel goes out "unto all," and it is "upon all them that believe." Every person God saves, no matter who they are now or were in the past, is a part of the church, which is the body of Christ. Paul presented Christ to the Colossians as the supreme sacrifice and the preeminent One in reconciliation because of His death for them. He now presents Christ to them in relation to his ministry of the Gospel and the unfolded mystery of Jews and Gentiles being one in the body. He actually rejoiced in his sufferings because it was such a privilege to preach the Gospel to the unconverted and teach the truth of the church to those God saved.

We also have that same privilege in our time and place. It is nothing to be ashamed of if we are called to suffer for the sake of the Gospel and for God's people. It is our responsibility to minister the word of God. No one has the right to add to a finished work, but we are responsible to make it known in doctrine and practice. Believers are members of His body, the church. The Lord Jesus is the Head of the church. No other person has that position or can claim the right to it. Christ is in believers, and believers are in Him, in His body, the church. The riches of this glory are often experienced to a greater degree when there is suffering for the truth rather than an easy life. The true servant presents the Gospel by heralding its truth, giving warnings as to its consequences, and seeking to win souls for the glory of God. But such a servant does not stop there. He is responsible to teach God's word with the intent of encouraging each individual, binding them together with other saints in fellowship, and bringing understanding of the mystery of the church. A true servant is an intercessor as well, who understands the need of men to be reconciled to God.

Labor, to the extent of striving and agonizing, has to be expended in order for this to happen. This is no casual stroll through life. So, when one is suffering in their service of the Gospel and fulfilling the word of God, the message of reconciliation is in us - "Christ in you." The method God uses today is the same as in Paul's day - the public proclamation of the Gospel. The motive behind the service is to present everyone God saves as a mature believer in Christ to Him. In order for this to actually happen, there will be earnest labor to pass on what we have personally experienced to others who need to hear what we know.

**Colossians 1:21.** *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled"*

#### **WICKED WORKS.**

*It doesn't take long in a human life*

*To recognize there is in each mind, something that is not right.*

*Parents try to teach children what is right, and yet there is a nature so strong*

*That in spite of what we teach, is fundamentally inclined to do wrong.*

*It is not just the things that we do, but something is inside,*

*That soon expresses itself outwardly in wicked works we cannot hide.*

*By reading the Bible and applying common sense, soon we easily find;*

*The problem isn't just external, but it originates in the mind.*

*Men by nature, want to keep a distance from the holiness of God.*

*There is a basic alienation that becomes clearer as we read His Word.*

*And then the Holy Spirit of God exposes wicked works of sin,*

*Impressing on us the reality that the source of that is within.  
Furthermore, when we are honest enough to stop and face the problems,  
We find ourselves powerless to address them and to solve them.  
The conviction that awakens us to sin, intemperance, and judgment to come -  
Leaves us facing our guilt before God, and we are completely undone.*

*God in His infinite wisdom, knows we won't take a remedy until we find,  
And face the fact, that repentance includes a change of mind.  
It is more than just an acknowledgment of guilt, needful as that may be;  
But it means there will be genuine sorrow for sin when my real self I see.  
It will also mean rejection and turning from those sins of the past,  
And a deliberate turning to Christ alone for peace that will forever last.  
Then one can lift the eyes of faith to Christ for His salvation,  
And will find the cleansing power of His blood removes sin's condemnation.*

*"Lord God of peace. this totally amazing act of grace when Christ died for my sins, moves me more than ever to try to thank Thee for what this means to me. I guess it is right that I cannot express in words what I would like to say, but I am thankful You know the scrambled thoughts of my mind and can receive from my heart the honor and gratitude I want to give Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:22.** *"In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:"*

#### **A REMARKABLE CHANGE.**

*Sometimes we don't realize all that came to pass,  
Or what the Lord Jesus on the cross accomplished by His death.  
His death was originally for God who had to be satisfied at first,  
Before we could be accepted in Christ who was of matchless worth.*

*He was absolutely without blemish, not a spot on Him was found.  
We in turn were full of sin and even our nature to it was prone.  
In the body of His flesh, His righteousness allowed  
A Holy God to be satisfied by putting our sin on Him alone.*

*There was no accusation made against the Lord that was true.  
He was morally perfect and His character was without stain.  
But we had a fatal problem, we were sinners through and through.  
So, by His death, He made it possible for us to be born again.*

*Now in Christ accepted, we who were aliens are reconciled  
To God because of His Person and His reconciling work,  
His death on our behalf removed all that once defiled  
Us and made us through our Savior, to be something of real worth.*

*Today in God's eyes we are clean from every blemish, every spot.  
In Christ our righteousness, we have been declared righteous too.  
Remarkably God does not accuse us, because, in death, Christ fought  
A battle against our enemies, and by His grace, we're made anew.*

*God forbid that I will ever forget or diminish what Jesus did in death.  
The holiness of God was satisfied in every way.  
From that cross-work, there have come myriad reasons for me to bless  
The Lord, honor and serve Him every day.*

*"Holy God, I am resting in Christ consciously this morning. So often I take this rest for granted - but not today. His death has removed those barriers and I have a reassurance that I am accepted by Thee. I really mean it when I say, 'I love Thee, Father.' In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:23.** "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven: whereof I Paul am made a minister."

### **THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL.**

*Everywhere I look there is evidence of God - unmistakable  
On which to build and base my faith - undeniable proof  
Which makes me confident in whom I have believed - an unchangeable Person  
And makes my forward steps to be firm on holy ground - unshakeable faith*

*By God's grace to me, I shall not be moved - unmerited favor  
In child-like trust, by God's help, I will not stay - unassuming optimism  
With God's Word, I mean to speak the truth - unalterable facts  
By God's Spirit, I want to be consciously led - unlimited power*

*The hope of the Gospel is not some vague superstition - reliable  
It is truth given to men producing life changes in the present - visible  
For the person nearing the end of life, it gives peace - consolable  
As we look into the eternal future there is joy - unspeakable*

*All of the earth is blessed by the Gospel - a Righteous God is satisfied  
Sin's hold on man and creation is shaken - a Holy God will purify  
He is not done with men and nations - an All-Knowing God will be magnified  
And from every part of His creation and in every person - the Supreme God will be glorified*

*The apostles were sent out to the world with the Gospel - the foundation  
Continually since then, the hope of the Gospel has been told - the proclamation  
People who have ears to hear and believe the Gospel - the salvation  
The day of the Lord's Coming draws near - the hope of the Gospel - the consummation*

*"Gracious God, Thou hast been pleased to give men the privilege of repenting and believing the Gospel. Now there has come to me the privilege of speaking that same Gospel to others. Please help Thy servant to present these holy, important truths in a way that others may understand. May I be able to speak in a way and tone of voice that is faithful and gracious. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:24.** "Who now rejoice in my suffering for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:"

### **JOY IN SUFFERING.**

*Not everyone is called to suffer in the same way some others do.  
God knows His people individually; He knows them through and through.  
One may be able to physically endure, what another may not be able to take.  
He suits each one by the gifts He gives, that each one a difference makes.*

*Physical sufferings are one thing; emotional sufferings are another.  
Men may be able to go through this one; emotional suffering is best known by a mother.  
When God called us by His Gospel and saved us by His grace;  
He gave us the power of the Holy Spirit that we might endure by faith.*

*Christ suffered while here in the world when He was troubled in His soul.  
He looked ahead to the cross on Calvary, and beyond it, to the final goal;  
Where He would see the result of the travail of His soul and would be satisfied.  
He suffered in His soul even before He went to the cross and died.*

*The betrayal by Judas was one time when we read, He was troubled in spirit.  
As He looked into the future of that pitiful man, He knew He would have to endure it.  
Even as the betrayer would go out into perdition; He would go into the darkness;  
As His spirit cried out in that terrible place, He suffered hell's pains for us.*

*On the cross, the Lord was troubled in His body, as physical pain came on Him.*

*A lacerated back; piercing thorns in His head; nails - He suffered through them.  
How could this bring joy? What does that word mean, when applied to suffering like this?  
He saw up ahead after He would rise from the dead, a grateful people uniquely His.*

*There will doubtless be times as we move through our life when we will be called to suffer.  
Of whatever kind of suffering that comes, there will come a time when our trouble is over.  
Perhaps we will look back at those things we passed through, and realize we were not alone.  
The tribulations in life and any suffering will seem small when all of the saints get home.*

*"Father, I have not been called so far, to much physical suffering for the kingdom of God's sake. Some have and still are. Give them strength for today. There have been other kinds I have experienced more, but I thank Thee for Thy acceptance when others rejected me for maintaining my balance when my integrity was challenged; for giving me rest when events normally would have made me bitter. I thank Thee again, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:25.** *"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God;"*

#### **A MINISTER.**

*It wasn't a choice he made; it was a call he received.  
God told him this fact, on the day he believed.  
Years passed by as God the Spirit unfolded to him,  
The Gospel of Christ, and what it would mean  
To those who heard it and the consequences it held.  
Some would accept the message and to the Spirit would yield.  
Others would oppose him and the preaching he gave.  
He was to preach the Word; God was the One who would save.*

*God has the right to expect His servants to respond to His call.  
All He saves by His grace are servants, but not all  
Are sent to minister the Gospel to the world at large.  
Those He does send have received a serious charge,  
To dispense what God gave and in turn, give it to men,  
That the Spirit of God would use it in convicting of sin.  
Then by preaching about Christ crucified, the Spirit can reveal  
The way of salvation, and those He saves, He seals.*

*A minister is not done when He has proclaimed the Gospel truth.  
To present the Word in its fullness means there is further worth  
To the Word of God, and he must bring it to completion.  
Not only are we saved and justified, but God intends sanctification  
To be a part of the servant's ministry so that those who hear,  
Will know that through life, God is with us and near  
When the pressures come on the people of God to conform to the world,  
There are resources at our disposal, and they're found in God's Word.*

*The servant of God is to serve the whole body.  
God intends every believer to be faithful and holy.  
We may not see the results of all we do and say,  
But God does, and perhaps will let us know in a future day,  
That what we said or did, had a far-reaching effect.  
Some may have been saved and others whom we least suspect,  
Were challenged to serve God in the place where they lived.  
And God will be glorified in the service they gave.*

*"I thank Thee Father, for allowing me to hear on occasions of the benefit received by ministry given, both in the Gospel and in teaching. May what Thy servant gives always be the truth, and may it always glorify Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:26.** *"Even the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and from generations, but now is manifest to his saints."*

## **THE MYSTERY.**

*A mystery in the Bible is not some enchanting story,  
Or some hidden religious formula to bring men some glory.  
It refers in the Word of God to the truth that God one time withheld  
From the eyes of natural man lest it led him to pride.*

*It gives words to a subject that though previously unknown,  
Now makes understandable some of the accomplishments that were done,  
When Christ suffered on the cross to bring us to God -  
And the Spirit of God to our new life can unfold.*

*The revelation of the Gospel is a mystery revealed.  
It is not by works we do; God's grace is not concealed  
From those who are convicted of sin and are seeking from guilt, relief;  
That God through the Spirit and Word, accepts them when in Christ they believe.*

*This is not limited to some nation or some creed.  
In every culture and tribe any person who heeds  
The striving of the Spirit to the extent of their light;  
Will find the Lord will save them and give them new life.*

*How difficult it was for those who were Jews,  
To accept the fact that even heathen Gentiles God would choose  
To be part of the kingdom of priests who can truly worship Him.  
Gentiles also whom God saves have a new nature in them.*

*The Church as Christ's body was hidden in the past.  
Even the prophets did not speak of this where their lot was cast.  
This has unfolded as the New Testament was written -  
Christ has chosen a Bride that will forever be with Him.*

***"I thank Thee Father God, for the mystery of the Gospel being revealed to us. May I be true to the truths of the Gospel this week as we begin this Gospel series. I believe it would bring great glory to Thee if some soul or souls would come to hear the Gospel, and they would yield to the Word and the Spirit, and receive Thy salvation. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 1:27.** *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory:"*

## **CHRIST IN YOU.**

*This is not a hidden secret for just a favored chosen few;  
God has intended this to be a fact for all the saints.  
In the past and even now, some people say, "Pray through,  
So, you can be one Christ gives a special strength."  
But that is not really how the matter is -  
Through Christ what was hidden has come to light.  
We are not our own, we have been paid for at a great price -  
Now the mystery is clear: Christ is in us - He is our life.*

*God's plan is to have Christ in us - He is the "hope of glory,"  
For those who know Him, He is not hidden from our view.  
This is one of the most blessed truths of redemption's story -  
Through the Spirit of God, Christ comes to dwell in you.  
We do not have to schedule appointments to connect with Him,  
He abides with us and in us - that the Master's plan.  
This holy calling when we are conscious of it, keeps our hearts from sin -  
Imagine! God is pleased to come and to dwell in man.*

*There is a reason behind this: God's glory He will unfold.*

*In every part of the world, Christ is in human flesh displayed.  
Not visible on His own physical body as happened years ago,  
But in saints He set apart, He shows to all His grace.  
Faithful amidst unfaithfulness; truth amidst the false -  
God's people live the "hope of glory" by living day by day;  
And responding to His will whenever He them calls -  
To show the "hope of glory" in all they do and say.*

*"Father in heaven, it was made known to me, the reality of Thy Gospel, in those I knew who were genuine believers. Family members, and Christians I knew around us - all left an impression. I didn't know at that time what exactly was the reason they were different from most people, but now I know; it was Christ in them. He was real to them, and to me now, and I thank Thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:28.** *"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:"*

#### **WARNING AND TEACHING.**

*Warning and teaching are two ways of preaching  
To bring about necessary and desired results.  
Teaching involves giving information that is important;  
Warning helps people avoid the influence of cults.  
The warnings may often be personal attempts  
To stop something wrong before it gets started.  
When we teach, we explain things over and over again,  
That the learners will spiritually grow by what's imparted.*

*Both forms of passing on things that must be known  
Call for sound teaching when we are giving instruction.  
On the part of the teacher, it will be far easier to grasp,  
When he passes on sound doctrine with his wisdom.  
The object in view is that everyone who hears,  
May grow further in their maturity in the Lord.  
None of that can happen if it is only personal ideas,  
That do not have their foundation based in God.*

*There is a responsibility upon those who teach the Word,  
To determine if those who hear, truly understand.  
We have not accomplished the task or work that's given,  
If in our teaching, we leave the listeners far behind.  
Illustrations are important and good common sense,  
Helps people to grasp the truth that they are given.  
I must be an example myself of what I teach and preach,  
So spiritual maturity marks those who are going to heaven.*

*"Father, for these next three nights I will be speaking to a number of people who know quite a lot, but are avoiding accepting their Christian responsibility to nurture Christian relationships. They show responsibility to their business and family, but for some reason, don't get involved in the nurturing and helping of other believers in the assembly. Please help me to help them realize the blessings of doing this as well as the need of it. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 1:29.** *"Where unto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."*

#### **WORTH THE EFFORT.**

*If someone hadn't cared, where would I be?  
Now that same responsibility is passed on to me.  
"Why bother?" you say, "It's a person's own choice!"  
That certainly is true, but God has given me the voice  
To use in admonishing and teaching that others may hear,  
And respond with repentance and reverential fear*



*To the God of the Gospel that they might be saved.  
It is worth a mighty effort to pass on all that we have.*

*When we present the Gospel, we are not speaking out of turn.  
We are passing on to others what we have personally learned.  
The work of God in me has worked often powerfully.  
The effect of that truth received will last eternally.  
Any person who accepts what Christ died to provide,  
Will experience the power of the Spirit who dwells inside,  
And instructs me to want others to hear and receive  
The Lord Jesus as their own Savior in whom they believe.*

*The ongoing work of God through us is God's way of passing  
His salvation message to others so that life everlasting  
Is not just a subject of spiritual songs we sing;  
But is the kind of life God gives when people believe the message we bring.  
Just imagine if no one to others would tell  
The way of salvation and deliverance from hell!  
To labor mightily in the Gospel is certainly worth the effort to me;  
Knowing others in their turn, fruit in the Gospel will see.*

*"I thank Thee, Father, for impressing the importance of Gospel preaching on me this morning. I have been thinking I may be too old for people to listen to. Thanks for reminding me that it is not the messenger, but the message that is important. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

## **Colossians 2:1-7**

### **CONCERN FOR OTHERS**

How thankful we are for those who have a genuine concern for the spiritual well-being of their brothers and sisters in Christ. Some of God's choice servants labor in prayer for and visualize the condition and needs of those in other parts of the world. They have never seen them but have heard about them and read about the work in which others are engaged and seek to assess the best way they can be involved. They minister in prayer and other ways to those who are new believers in places they will never see in their lifetime. Paul's ministry to the Colossians was an effective work in the written word. He was able to make known to them the importance of the church and to clarify clearly its composition to all those God had saved. By this means, the false teaching they were hearing was exposed for what it was. He personally testified of this by the suffering through which he was going for the sake of the Gospel. That lent great weight to his stated concern for the new believers at Colossae.

He was able, through this letter, to verbalize the toil, the struggles, and the strife he was going through to convey the heartfelt concern he had for the saints at Colossae and those in the assembly eleven miles away at Laodicea. It is no small matter when we realize God's people in other places are in jeopardy because of false teaching that can ruin their lives and testimony. His commitment to them was to educate them, to give them the treasure of wisdom. It is evidence of genuine concern when one is emotionally conflicted about the well-being of others. But that doesn't excuse us from making contact with them to pass on understanding and comfort by means of bonding with them through honest communication. Paul's concern was because of what others were doing to the people of God through false teaching, and the Colossian believers didn't appear to be resisting the heresy.

His concern for them exemplified Paul's admonition to them. When the saints are under attack by the challenges made to the truth of God, they don't need to be consoled; they need to be encouraged to take action to resist and stop that which is wrong. Love for each other has the tendency to unite believers and promotes real encouragement. Encouragement to commit to the truth brings understanding and knowledge. That insight into all the "riches" we have in Christ gives full assurance and full knowledge of what God is doing in the church. He is uniting the church composed of all believers so they understand who they are and what they have. The heretics were propagating things they said were hidden before they came. Paul's writing assured the believers of the "full knowledge" (acknowledgment) of the previously hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These were not things learned from religious hucksters but are truths already revealed to us.

Paul gave warnings to the Colossians against the heresy they were being attracted to through the deceptive trickery of false words. Spiritual perception shows that truth has order to it that originates with God. The firmness of faith counteracts any heresy because faith is based on God. We can greatly appreciate spiritual maturity when we see it or hear of it. When one receives Christ Jesus the Lord, that person has not just picked up some philosophy or strange ideas; they have received a

living Person who is the Sovereign of the universe. Because of Him and who He is, we must be committed to walk in Him. When we have received Him and walk in Him, then we will be established in Him and will be taught in Him. The evidence will be seen because those who abound in Him are, and will always be, thankful for Him.

The commitment to faith and the building of Christian character is enlarged and increases as we are rooted firmly in the teaching we have received, and there is evident growth. The evidence of one being established in the faith is trust and overflowing thanksgiving that is real. Such people are not moved by heresy because they are satisfied with the spiritual maturity that is unmistakable. There is evidence in an assembly of "order" as in an army that has a standard to establish and form its basis and a protocol to follow for orderly conduct. There is provision for the soldier to overcome the enemy of the flesh by putting on the armor of light [Rom.13:12] as Joseph did when he resisted Potiphar's wife. There is ample authority to overcome the world when the armor of righteousness [2 Cor.6:7] is put on, and we only glory in the cross. The devil was overcome by the Lord Jesus when He quoted appropriate scriptures, indicating that even to us, the whole armor of God [Eph.6:11] is available.

Our commitment as believers is evident when we "so walk" as a pilgrim passing through this world, obeying the call of God and not looking to settle here on earth as our permanent dwelling place. Pilgrims are looking for a better land with their God-given far vision. We are to "walk in Him" by faith, acknowledging our faith, until we die in faith. That faith is "rooted in Him" as a tree grows by the "rivers of water" and can be counted on to bear fruit. Whether the fruit is a healing balm or full of flavor, the whole purpose of believers who are "rooted" is to glorify the Lord, be consistent in their lives, bring comfort to others, and promote fellowship and protection for the people of God, including themselves.

"Built up in Him" indicates a work that is still in progress. God's people are God's building that is being "fitly framed together" by God's pattern under the principles of God's revealed will. We ourselves will be built up in our own faith like a student learning from qualified teachers who have been tried and proven. The Lord taught His disciples. Paul taught publicly and from house to house. Teachers of the word are to communicate that which they know experimentally and by spiritual wisdom, so that others may abound in their faith "with thanksgiving." This is the concern of a true and faithful steward of the Lord.

**Colossians 2:1.** *"For I would that ye know what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;"*

#### **IN DANGER.**

*Paul had never been there but he knew the danger they were in,  
When false teaching spreads from one church to another with insidious sin.  
It can have far-reaching effects and God's work seriously restrain,  
If it is left unaddressed and the danger it brings is not contained.*

*Any teaching that doesn't give the Lord Jesus His prominent place,  
Is a danger that can't be ignored; it must be squarely faced;  
So that those who are influenced by the personal opinions of men,  
Will learn to not heed false teaching when it comes around again.*

*Make no mistake: Satan will not take lying down,  
The invasion of God's truth into what he thinks is his ground.  
But take courage in this, "He that is in you is greater than he..."  
God will not allow Satan's evil to win the victory.*

*We must face this fact, a struggle will ensue,  
When we pray for, and preach the Gospel, before we are through.  
Opposition is to be expected when we are in enemy land.  
That is one of the reasons for joy when God reaches out His saving hand.*

*Whether in places like Colossae where false teaching seemed to get a start;  
Or in the church at Laodicea where people had lukewarm hearts;  
God is able to bring recovery when the Person of Christ is exalted,  
And again, produces Gospel fruit from ground that by sin was salted.*

*Be faithful to God and His Word, and struggle with all of your might,  
Against the powers of darkness that seek to turn off the light  
Of the Gospel of salvation by God's grace alone;*

*And confidently trust God Himself to do what needs to be done.*

*"Lord God, as I teach here tonight, may the things that can be used to motivate the believers, be clearly spoken of by Thy servant. May I not leave unsaid what needs to be said, or say what is best left unsaid. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:2.** *"That their hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;"*

#### **COMFORTED.**

*Uncertainty and uneasiness kind of go together,  
Almost like a pair of twins.  
They both turn their heads at the very same time,  
When someone says they both are sins.  
But that is not really the case,  
If we look in the right place to get an answer to the problem.  
Instead of paying attention to the unusual ideas of men,  
Turn to the Word of God to solve them.*

*God has revealed that salvation is by grace,  
Not by something we earn or merit.  
Forgiveness of sins is a work of God alone,  
We don't make it happen or in any way share it.  
What we do when we understand our sinful condition,  
Is repent of sin and turn to God in faith.  
Assurance and understanding of God's salvation comes,  
When we acknowledge it is all by His redeeming grace.*

*Hearts are comforted and fellowship is enjoyed,  
When we don't compare our experience with others.  
God deals with us individually,  
As He does with all our sisters and brothers.  
The uniting influence of the family of God,  
Isn't some mysterious experience to copy.  
But it is God Himself in the Person of Christ,  
Who imparts in us the spirit of family.*

*"Father, the comfort that comes from not having to try to make myself acceptable to Thee, but to know I am accepted in Christ, is comfort indeed. I rest in Thee alone. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:3.** *"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."*

#### **HIDDEN TREASURE.**

*Who would have known so much blessing could come;  
Through faith in an unseen Person.  
The more we hear, the more we understand,  
And the better it is then when we first heard them.  
The Father and the Son both reveal to us,  
Things we never knew or even heard of before.  
And from that treasure-house of God's wisdom and knowledge,  
Reveals to us some of what is in the future in store.*

*From the depth of His wisdom, He unfolds to me,  
The basis of salvation by grace alone.  
Grace in order to be truly grace that saves,  
Comes as a gift, not as something we earn.  
It involves substitution, not some man-made institution,  
As the reason God can forgive our sins legally.*

*He doesn't ignore our sin in any way,  
But through a perfect substitute can justify us freely.*

*Because the riches of His grace and full assurance of faith,  
The knowledge of God's work has been made known to me.  
The Holy Spirit within reveals what has been,  
And then reveals what God intends to be.  
Now out from the darkness of uncertainty,  
Comes understanding and the revelation of divine light.  
From the hidden treasures of God's storehouse, understanding comes,  
That makes this new life I have so bright.*

*It is a great relief when we can plainly see,  
God is satisfied, there is nothing we can do  
To make ourselves right in His perfect sight;  
Christ accomplished redemption, and that work is through.  
When that truth we believe and the Savior we receive,  
And we understand our salvation is an accomplished fact.  
Then to any attempts by our fleshly bent,  
There is found no basis for human efforts or acts.*

*When into the light comes these hidden treasures,  
We find the real foundation for our joy.  
And the feeble attempts to add to God's work,  
Does nothing but our new nature annoy.  
Our eyes are opened by faith that reveals God's grace,  
And we walk into new life with great relief.  
Anything others say that from grace takes away,  
We reject as some false form of belief.*

**"I thank Thee, Father God, for bringing into the light of Thy Word, the treasures of Thy plan and way of salvation. I appreciate so much, the Holy Spirit opening up these to me, by imparting the knowledge necessary to grasp and understand what has already been done for us. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 2:4.** *"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words."*

#### **ENTICING WORDS.**

*It is not uncommon for perceived failures in others to be an attempt to excuse ourselves.  
We hear something passed along from some brothers, then set about some story to tell  
That puts others down so we can put ourselves up and lay on them unfounded charges,  
That have no basis in fact but are used with swelling words that make things seem enlarged.*

*Some think they have secret knowledge that sets them above all others.  
They may even use enticing words that exalts them in the eyes of their brothers.  
The truth of the matter is that the knowledge God intends is accessible to all in Christ.  
Through the Holy Spirit we can openly learn all we need for spiritual light.*

*Some will have us believe all that is physical is bad, and we must rise above  
The others who live in these bodies of clay before we can know that we have  
The new life imparted by the Spirit of God; they talk about "out of the body experiences"  
As proof of their spirituality in the things of God, and our need of their special influences.*

*They overlook the fact that Christ lived in a body, and our life will be like His.  
God is the One who gave us these bodies of flesh, and uses us in our bodies to bless  
Those still outside of the family of God and in Christ's name bid them to come in.  
Even though we live in a fleshly body, we are able to abstain from sin.*

*Some with enticing words may say, Christ only seemed like a human.  
Because He was God, He could not become man, it only seemed like that to them  
Who saw the things He did and heard the words He said, and were convinced He was truly God.  
Those who use enticing words would say He was a spirit, His real feet never on earth trod.*

*But the scriptures are clear, God was truly here in this world as both God and man.  
He never stopped being God while here on earth, and He did things only God can.  
As God in human flesh, He became the God-Man, He is forever the only one of His kind.  
As man He could identify truly with us; as God He could read every mind.*

*There are things about the Lord we can never fully understand; they do not impede our faith.  
Evidences are there of His human and divine nature; what they do is reveal the fullness of His grace  
That brought God here in the Person of Christ, and as the only sinless one of our race  
Took our place on the cross, and in a day to come we will look upon His real face.*

**"Gracious God, my Father: as I step into this Gospel series, I am feeling quite inadequate to express the Gospel in a relevant way to those who are younger and have been taught to be skeptical. I am asking Thee to open my lips and fill them words fitly spoken. Use Thy servant in this work in body, soul and spirit. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 2:5.** *"For though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."*

#### **STEADFASTNESS OF FAITH.**

*Unseen, yet real; how can I know if it is true?  
All the things I have heard and am assured of  
Are based on what I hear - not see  
Am I whistling in the dark?  
Is there no substance to my belief?  
How has this calm assurance come to me?*

*It is not difficult to explain the reality -  
I have heard and personally read the report  
It has stood solid under generations of scrutiny  
Even my own finds it without fault -  
But even better, I have experienced it in life -  
And instead of darkness, there is spiritual light.*

*Even though there are many I have never met;  
There is a common link I have with some people;  
That link is actually a Person in whom I believe.  
I haven't seen Him but with steadfast faith,  
All of us communicate with Him, often in languages that differ -  
So that even unseen to each other, we are united in faith to the One Center.*

*The conduct of life, the songs we sing, conversations -  
All are similar in content, different in sound -  
Giving encouragement to others, strengthening ourselves  
As we watch and hear of the orderliness of life -  
Abundant life - that reaches beyond everyone's doorway  
To the world at large and declares the steadfastness of faith.*

**"I believe there are those here, Father, who do live by faith and have full assurance of faith. Would it please Thee to honor that faith by moving in gracious interference in the lives of those not yet brought to faith in Christ. Have them to see by faith, the great work of Thy grace done on their behalf. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 2:6.** *"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:"*

### **STARTING PLACE.**

*It seemed normal, although not very meaningful; probably all that could be expected.  
There was a vague awareness of God, but He seemed irrelevant and was neglected.  
Until an incident took place; an event out of the ordinary; an awakening.  
A loved one taken; a hope long held, dashed - the normal course of life was shaken.  
Then some news came; a message was given; thoughts long mixed were now clarified.  
God had spoken; He is real after all; Christ long ago came, and He died;  
The just One for the unjust, paying sin's price - just so we might be saved.  
A choice is before us that we can't avoid - God is offering salvation by grace.*

*The mind is opened, the heart is moved, the truth of the Gospel is believed.  
Repentance takes place as we are made aware of our need; Christ is turned to and gladly received.  
Relief may be the first indication that faith in Christ has given light -  
And a calm assurance comes that brings peace; we are started on a new life.  
New desires emerge, we want to give thanks to God for what He has done for us.  
Others come to our mind and we want to tell them of the Savior we have come to trust.  
We have not just turned a page in the course of our old life; that was just a starting point.  
The Spirit of God gave new life and moved into me, and this new life He then did anoint.*

*Now Christ is Lord, He is the One who is supreme, life is now lived with Him in control.  
New desires have come and old ones have gone; all part of the saving of the soul.  
Each day is lived with difference aims in view; we work but with a different motivation.  
When we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, we were given by God our salvation.  
We didn't then, nor will we ever earn or deserve this great blessing God gave as a gift.  
The difference now is His will is our guide as the Spirit through life does us lead.  
All the things we do and the way we do them, has the glory of God as our aim.  
Whatever we do whether it's a small thing or a great; we now do it in Jesus' name.*

***"Father, I can easily identify the starting point sixty years ago. There have been quite a lot of decision points since then but I thank Thee for giving me guidance and showing me the direction to take at those times. I do not know that is ahead but I want to be willing to act on Thy directions now, because I still have treacherous flesh and a tendency to be independent. Guide me to the right words to speak today and tonight in the Gospel meeting. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 2:7.** *"Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."*

### **PROGRESSION.**

*Fierce winds are blowing against living a life of faith.  
People think it is very impractical -  
How can that kind of living make any real sense.  
You have to be much more tactical -  
But when one's life is rooted deep, and there is trust in the Lord -  
That establishes a believer in the truth.  
No matter what opposition brings or ill winds blow;  
In Christ alone is where we have taken our root.*

*There are a lot of things during the course of our lives  
That will entice us to yield to temptation.  
Some will come from within, others from people,  
Whose desire is to stop our progression.  
By paying attention to things I've been taught,  
And in every blessing and situation give God thanksgiving.  
I will find He gives strength in my daily walk,  
And those deep roots will keep me from sinning.*

*The life of a Christian should be a consistent walk -  
That is fruitful as we are built up in Him.  
Each day that passes brings opportunities,  
To glorify God as we take advantage of them.*

*We cannot do this on our own, we need God in all things.  
We are established and built up by faith;  
The false things around us that seeks to claim us -  
Fade away in the bright light of God's grace.*

*"Gracious Father, I praise Thee this morning for the exceeding riches of Thy grace that enables me to live day by day to please Thee. Being rooted in Christ and built up by Him removes so many threats and obstacles. In spite of all that goes on around me, I find definite security in knowing I am in Christ, and accepted by Thee in Him. I thank You. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians.2:6-7.** "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

#### **A TREE.**

It is not uncommon for the believer to be compared to a tree in the scripture:

- "Trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted" [Num.24:6] – a healing balm.
- "Tree planted by rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit..." [Ps.1:3] – timely fruit.
- "Like a green olive tree in the house of God..." [Ps.52:8] – Flavorful provision.
- "The righteous flourish as a palm tree..." [Ps.92:12] – Comfort in trials.
- "Trees of righteousness..." [Isa.61:3] – to glorify the Lord; to show His splendor.
- "Tree planted by waters (green and fruitful year around)" [Jer.17:8] – Always counted on.
- "Many trees (on both sides of the river)" [Ez.47:7] – Fellowship; sustenance from the same source.
- "Branches spread as the olive tree..." [Ho.14:6] – Protecting the fruit.

A rooted tree is not easily moved and is able by its very nature to fulfill all of the characteristics mentioned. Being built up is a work in progress. As "God's building", "a building fitly framed together" and as one who should be "building up yourselves in your most holy faith," there should be evidence to others as well as to myself of one who is abounding and thankful.

*"O God who changes not, and is unmovable in Person and character. Help me to get my roots down deep where the life-sustaining moisture is found even though the desert scene is barren and dry. Let this tree that sometimes has dry and dead leaves, not be known by the dryness but by greenness of soul. May my leaves be exuding enough water to refresh those that are under the branches. May the shadow that I cast be a comfort to the children that draw near to rest. May there be some refreshing fruit on this tree that can help the hungry soul that needs sustenance. May there be enough shelter under this tree that some might seek it when the storm comes. None of this can come from me but is able to come from Thee alone. May this feeble conduit bring lasting benefit to weary travelers and lasting glory and honor to Thee alone. Amen."*

#### **Colossians 2:8-15**

#### **PERILS TO BELIEVERS**

The concern of the apostle Paul for those Colossian Christians should resonate in us today because we know history does repeat itself. The issues believers were facing then are similar to those we face. A certain part of our humanity is attracted to the intellectual ideas of various philosophies of men. It makes us feel like we are searching for wisdom and are important enough to be heard and known for our opinions. The warning against the religious philosophy being promoted at Colossae was seriously needed because it was appealing to new believers who had no deep understanding of all they had in Christ. There is a very real danger of being spiritually kidnapped and spoiled by those who compare their own philosophical ideas without any foundation to the plain teaching of the word of God. Biblical teaching has been tried and proven to be accurate over centuries by those who live by faith in God.

We need to be on our guard and take be careful in our discernment of those things to which we listen. Philosophy is the love of wisdom, which is not bad in itself, but if we seek it through our own research and personal intellectual interests rather than the wisdom which is from above, we place ourselves in a position to be deceived. There are smart people who are spiritually dead and morally unclean, who have a lot of "God-talk" but promote vain speculation, the traditions of men, and outright fraud in the name of God in order to benefit materially. In the pursuit of knowledge, not only are we in danger of trickery, intellectual nonsense, and fraud, but such speculation leads people to embrace the traditions of men as if they are fundamental truths.

Traditions claim authority because they came from those who have passed on ideas from others and give them over to those who do not have their convictions based on that which is from God. Traditions in themselves can be useful as well, as long as they are Bible-based and Christ-exalting. When we hear materialistic teaching that is motivated by worldly practices, and it disregards Christ in any way, we must remember that teaching is contrary to God. The appeal to the natural man and his fears leads people to worship the creature more than the Creator and appeals to human vanity. Any teaching that disregards Christ is evil.

There are various forms of Gnosticism today that deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and still claim to be Christian. Some of the well-known groups are growing rapidly because those who listen to their doctrine forget to compare authentic truth as found in the scriptures and the teaching of biblical practices with the deception of those who are seeking followers and funds. The contrast between them is starkly revealing. Our completeness as believers is in Christ alone, not in our understanding of the religious forms that are being propagated. The rudiments of the world are things set up in a row, like letters of the alphabet to repeat in elementary school or ceremonial training in religious practices, instead of after the Person of Christ, who is the basic measure of all human knowledge.

Paul took the time in the early part of the letter to the Colossians to prepare them for the main points he wanted to teach them by making plain who they were as believers and why he was writing to them. Now in these verses, he openly begins his charge against false teachers with a very clear statement of the truth. There is not one or more ways to view God - all aspects of God are seen in bodily form in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is only One Mediator, only One God who is revealed to us in Christ; there is only One who has all power and authority under His dominion. There is only One who is Head over all things; there is only One who is the Ultimate Source and Maintainer of all things.

The Lord Jesus is the truth in positive terms. He is not an agent of truth. He is not a god-like man. The fullness of God has its fixed abode in our Lord Jesus. God is active in Him; He is not just a part of God. All of the go-betweens the Gnostics taught about were false then, and they are false now. They have no connection with God as mediators. Angels as mediators or any other person or attempt to find some way to God or learn God apart from the Holy Spirit revealing Christ to us is wrong. Everything is in our Lord Jesus Christ, and we are complete in Him, not wanting any other requisite to salvation. He is God even though He has a human body; He is not some ethereal spirit or shadow form of God. He is the real, the one and only true God-Man who has bridged the barrier between God and man. As believers in Him, we are complete in Him - in a state of fullness in Him. We have no need to go to philosophers or rabbis to find the truth. Jesus is the Truth. All fullness is in Christ, so why should we go to anyone else or look for anything else? Our faith is in Him!!

Our faith is concentrated in the One who is the exact image of the invisible God. We are united to Him and have become part of the body of which He is the Head. He is the supreme authority and Ruler over every power or order, whether it be good or bad. The ceremony of circumcision was refuted because the whole body of the believer is to put off sin, not just a piece of skin cut off. Circumcision outwardly has nothing to do with being accepted by God or receiving His salvation. It is in the heart of a person that one puts off "the body of flesh" and the sins associated with that. Corruption of our natural and sinful passions are cut off, so we will live after the Spirit. That is the "circumcision of Christ."

"What think ye of Christ" is the key to any teaching. When we are alive in Him, we are set at liberty from the law because we are in Him who fulfilled the law's demands. He has made us victorious over the principalities and powers that seek to claim our allegiance. We testify to that inward fact of what took place in the heart by the outward act of baptism. Grace has done its work inwardly, and we testify to that publicly. Faith in Christ goes way beyond forms or religious acts to the "operation (working) of God": in our lives. We testify to our faith through this experience. Christ's death for us testified to the fact of God's love for us. Christ was raised from the dead by the "operation of God" for Him. He died so that we might live. We live for Him and through Him and die to ourselves. We died to sin so that we can live in Christ, and we live in Christ so we can die to the world.

We have been made alive together after the moral and spiritual part of our old nature had died and been buried. Now we live "with Him," joined together with Him. The "law of ordinances (bond)" has been canceled out, and the signed and sealed certificate of a debt that had to be paid is now set aside by the higher degree of grace. The work of the cross, which Christ has completed, has eliminated the decrees of the law. It had made demands that no one could meet to make us aware of sin. The law condemned us and stood against us, but on the cross, our Lord Jesus Christ took care of every charge by taking our place. The debt is forgiven, and the clean slate of a new life begins. The signed confession of the old debt is canceled, and it has been "nailed to His cross" as a testimony of the great triumph that took place there.

Those who held our sins over us as a threat to blackmail us have nothing now with which to charge us. The bond that was against our peace, happiness, and comfort, and burdened us because of an unfulfilled law, is no longer an obstruction between cultures or between God and man. Those "principalities and powers" that have been disarmed by the public death of Christ have been made a public spectacle, along with all the forms and traditions that make men feel good about themselves. The victory of the cross that focuses on the preeminent One still stands today as a victory for us. The cross's message remains relevant to every person's needs today.

**Colossians 2:8.** *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."*

**SPOILED.**

*We may not fully realize the kind of opposition we have to face.  
It is more like actual warfare than just a casual meeting in some place.  
Because the stakes are high when philosophies conflict;*



*Eternal destinies are the outcome, not just life and our approach to it.*

*The normal objective in human philosophy is to exalt the opinions of man,  
And place human beings higher than we are, and bring God down to a man.  
That way we are able, philosophers say, to be in control of our own lives.  
And man himself, sets the standards of life, even to what is wrong or right.*

*Men make their traditions, then practice them awhile; later turn them into laws.  
The main consideration is does it suit our needs and opinions, rather than what is its cause.  
Behind many traditions there were good intentions, but human traditions change.  
Those who established them at the first; after a few generations would find them strange.*

*The basic principles of this world do not have God's glory as their aim.  
The general consensus that the world has, is "Go for it! Make yourself a name!"  
That started a very long time ago when men built the tower of Babel.  
People are still trying to make their own way to heaven; and make their own heaven if they were able.*

*All of these philosophical attempts people make to get other people to follow them,  
Are doomed to failure and leave people empty, because none deals with the problem of sin.  
There is a fundamental problem that is overlooked by even the most reasonable philosophy made.  
Sin can't be dealt with in any lasting effect until the sinner is dead.*

*All of the philosophies mankind has thought up - each one is doomed to fail.  
Not only is that a serious problem, but it spoils what human life is meant to entail.  
Life doesn't even fulfill its purpose, when God isn't given all the control -  
And the inner man is never satisfied until each finds rest in the soul;*

*That only can be found in Christ; not in an idea, but in a real Person;  
Who though we haven't seen with our natural eyes, every human has something in them;  
That responds to the thought that there is One bigger than me, who someday I have to meet.  
One's whole life and existence is forever spoiled if they are not prepared their Savior to greet.*

***"Father God, there have been those in these meetings already who have expressed the vain ideas of men and think they are important. They have put up against Thy Word, their own opinions and take them seriously. Have mercy on them and help me to speak Thy word in the Gospel in ways that will reach their conscience and move them to repent and believe the Gospel. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 2:9.** *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*

### **THE FULLNESS OF DEITY.**

*Who could ever explain or even define God?  
But once a remarkable thing happened -  
God walked on the Galilee road -  
He walked on the road through Jericho -  
And He walked the streets of Jerusalem too.  
God came to earth and took on a human form -  
Every work and every word He spoke was true.  
He was in fashion as a man, but way above human norm.*

*If I want to see what the Father is like -  
I have to look intently upon the Son -  
For though in the human body He took -  
The Lord Jesus and the Father were still One.  
The actions He did, the places He went,  
Were sometimes led by the Spirit -  
The Spirit of God who gives new birth -  
Used the Son's voice that men might hear of it.*

*The Love of the Father and the love of the Son,  
Use the same physical body to express  
The grace that brought salvation to men,  
And the on-going ways of God to bless.  
When we see the One, we seem them all -  
Of that there is no question -  
To try and define the Godhead in words -  
Will take more than one eternal lesson.*

*"I thank Thee Father, for revealing Thyself through the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank Thee, Lord Jesus, for giving Thyself for me on the cross and allowing me to live in and through Thee. I thank Thee, Holy Spirit, for indwelling me and giving me new life. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:10.** *"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

#### **NO ADDITIONS NEEDED.**

*Salvation is a finished work, it would be wrong to say, "Jesus and..."  
To pay the price of redemption by any works is beyond the ability of man.  
God is supreme in every way, not just in creatorial power;  
Every government and every force, is in relation to God's, very much lower.*

*Yet He who is so preeminent that He is the head of all things,  
Has made anything we could do, unnecessary for we are complete in Him.  
We need no "out-of-the-body" experiences; we need no angels or men;  
To make us more fit to be in the presence of God - we are complete in Him.*

*Any additional work we would try; any sacrifices we would bring,  
Would only bring the value of what Christ has done down, we are complete in Him.  
The suffering of pain; the money we earn - even the hymns we sing,  
Would only add sin polluted stains to His work, for we are complete in Him.*

*When people make comments like, "I go to church regularly and I pray."  
As a reply to them, from scriptures of truth in the Bible I say,  
"Listen to what the Word of God says, lest you make a mistake and are lost."  
"For by grace are ye saved through faith... not of yourselves...lest any man should boast."*

*Our completeness makes us fit for the presence of God, of His fullness have we received.  
He gives His grace freely for the grace we need, and that is based on Him who we believed.  
His work is complete and we are complete in Him, with that God is satisfied.  
His righteousness imputed to me is what is acceptable, it was for me Jesus suffered and died.*

*To add anything to such a complete work would be insulting to say the least.  
To imply that anything I add to Christ's work, would bring to the both of us grief.  
All of the glories of man put together, fade into insignificance in the light of God's grace.  
The awareness of being complete in Him, is one of the strongest motivations to live by faith.*

*"Father, I thank Thee for this sense of completeness that gives rest to my soul and mind. I am not struggling to be made right with Thee. But I am certainly motivated to serve Thee. Help me to be effective today. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:11.** *"In who ye also are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."*

#### **A SPIRITUAL OPERATION.**

*There are a lot of signs and symbols around today,  
Many people think they're needed to testify.  
There's the crosses and the fishes, bumper stickers and words that say  
Some message like a hand and fingers pointing to the sky -  
All of these are outwardly seen, and I guess there is nothing wrong,*

*If folks use these things to try and spread the Word -  
But God has His way of doing things that has been around so long -  
He circumcised the heart of believers that Jesus Christ will be Lord.*

*I can have a symbol or a sign put in a prominent place on my car;  
But if I don't drive like a Christian that sign is a big mistake.  
I can have a pin on my lapel, or a cross as a tattoo on my arm -  
But those as a true Christian testimony don't in any way make.  
It is true man looks on the outward appearance and God looks upon the heart,  
But I need to remember what is inside does ultimately to others show out.  
A spiritual operation on one's heart is where God initially starts  
To bring and promote an effective testimony that will ultimately come about.*

*God takes away the old nature and gives us a new one like His -  
There is nothing in any way comparable or compatible about these two.  
To try and maintain friendship with the world is impossible when this  
Spiritual operation has been performed on you.  
There may be things people see but what makes the real difference -  
Are those unseen spiritual qualities God Himself imparts.  
Faith will be something real - hope and love will others bless -  
And grace to others will flow from redeemed and sanctified hearts.*

**"Father, today I will be talking with quite a few different people with different issues in their lives. May the Spirit be able to use Thy servant to transmit to them Thy mind and will for them in ways that are appropriate to each individual. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 2:12.** *"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."*

#### **WITH HIM.**

*The position of being "in Him" doesn't come just because we wish it so.  
Whether it be in our walk as believers, our growth, our completeness - we owe  
All of these to what has happened to us by way of identification -  
We have been buried "with Him;" raised "with Him," and "with Him have regeneration.*

*The burial took place after sin was paid for in full on the cross by Christ's death.  
When He died, I died - that death was more than simply losing one's breath.  
As far as God's righteous judgment is concerned, my sin separated me from Him.  
On the cross as my substitute, the Lord Jesus' shed blood paid the price for my sin.*

*Similarly, when He was buried, I of this can personally testify;  
One is buried as evidence that where justice is concerned - I, in the Savior have died.  
When the waters covered over my body, as carved stone all around Christ did.  
The old man and nature that was in me, forever in Christ's death was hid.*

*When the waters parted again and I rose, it testified that on Easter morning;  
Christ rose from the dead to justify me, the Holy Spirit within was adorning  
The glory of new life in resurrection; a life of imparted holiness and faith -  
That through my whole life from now on, will make me a trophy of grace.*

*Now daily life has the intention that my life will be reflecting the Lord's.  
My actions should be like His actions; my words should be like His words.  
My attitude and response to God's will should reflect, "Thy will be done!"  
By God's grace alone, there should be a fragrance of Christ that remains when I'm gone.*

**"Lord God, it has been a long time since I went through baptism in front of watching people. My prayer this morning is that I will still this day, be able to live out the truth that I testified then. I want to live holily, righteously and godly in this present world. To Thy glory and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 2:13.** *"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;"*

#### **FORGIVEN YOU ALL.**

*I cannot go back over every day of my life and recall every sin I committed.  
I try to confess them when sin occurs, but I am sure there is many I omitted.  
But when I read a verse like this and realize God forgave all my trespasses.  
It impacts me and purifies me as faith grasps hold of what it possesses.*

*New life, that quickening process, didn't come without a price.  
That only could happen as a result of Christ's death and His saving grace.  
I have been made alive in Him alone, but bless God, I am forgiven.  
On the basis of all those trespasses being dealt with by Him, I am able to go to heaven.*

*The fact of forgiveness is not something light, nor should it be taken for granted.  
A lot of people have been misled by the truth of forgiveness being slanted.  
Confession of sin to another person doesn't take the problem of sin away.  
When guilt is involved there is a cost to be faced; someone has to pay.*

*If I sin against a person and want his forgiveness, I must go to him in confession.  
Hopefully, he will grant forgiveness as I seek to restore to him his possession.  
It may be something tangible or some false information or statement I made.  
He may grant forgiveness and take the loss himself, or grant it after restitution is paid.*

*When the Lord forgave me all my trespasses, He was aware of every one.  
He paid that price by giving His life; the blood of Christ for sin atoned.  
He left none out, for by His divine omniscience nothing escapes His eyes.  
The virtue of His Person and work, I as a human can only partly realize.*

*But this I know and will forever be grateful, He freely forgave me all.  
It humbles me to think that it was for my sin He paid, and still answers me when I call.  
His grace is sufficient for every need, and forgiveness is one of my greatest needs.  
It stirs my soul to praise and worship, for His forgiveness is forgiveness indeed.*

***"O Gracious Heavenly Father, the acceptance I have by Thee in spite of who I am and what I do, stirs my soul to gratitude and a desire to express the worship of my heart. But Father, I can't get the words to say what I really mean. Please accept my simple thanks, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 2:14.** *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;"*

#### **THE HANDWRITING.**

*They were not just general statements written by the hand of God.  
Each word was carefully crafted that composed the Decalogue.  
No one could mistake what God intended to say.  
Those words were carved in stone and were not going away.*

*But even more than those, every word that I do speak -  
Especially those I carelessly spoke before the Lord I did seek,  
Is known to God and if not faced or in some way permanently removed  
Will have to be faced and dealt with, even though God is a God of love.*

*God knew our helpless condition before such a holy law.  
In love to us He sent His Son that He might to Him draw  
Every man because He was willing in grace to be lifted up  
Upon the cross of judgment that to Him we would be brought.*

*His name was written above Him there that everyone could see  
The value and the virtue of the One who was crucified there for me.  
He alone could remove all the charges I faced -  
And He was willing and able to do that when on the cross He took my place.*

*Now engraved upon His hand are the names of those who came  
To Him in faith to Calvary where for us He took our blame.  
He knows each one and with lifted hands intercedes for us with God.  
The handwriting of ordinances that once condemned us is now forever gone.*

*No wonder we humbly worship the One who took our place.  
No wonder it is natural for us to praise Him for His redeeming grace.  
No wonder we glory in the cross where the saving work was done.  
No wonder we want to praise our Lord - that condemnation now is gone.*

*"I will never know how much I owe Thee Father, but one thing I do know is - the charges against me have been taken away. To be accepted in Christ stirs in me this morning gratitude, words of thanks and the stirring of praise from within for the Savior and His abounding grace. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:15.** *"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."*

### **DISARMED.**

*The charges were laid legitimately, and each one had a right  
To demand full restitution in order that each would shine so bright.  
Death was there insisting that it too had claims to be met.  
The One with the keys of life and death, death wanted from His hand to wrest.*

*But I could not meet them myself, they were far greater than I could pay.  
So, the Lord Jesus Himself stepped down from heaven to take all those sins away.  
He suffered for sin, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.  
When He declared His work was finished, sin could not say a word.*

*He didn't do it secretly; the event was open so everyone could see  
The way He would disarm in a public way every opposing enemy.  
The array of those opposed, all gathered to each stake their personal claim -  
So the Lord dealt with each one in its entirety by the authority of His name.*

*Sin demanded not just a pound of flesh, it demanded that the sinner must die.  
Lifted up on Calvary's cross, my iniquities on Christ God did lay.  
But instead of death overtaking Him, He deliberately laid down His life on His own.  
And by His authority, every principality and power, at the cross, the Lord Jesus disarmed.*

*"What glory and honor belong to our Lord, Father, for the great triumphs of the cross-work. All opposition was conquered legally for Thy sake; publicly for the peoples' sake and personally for my sake. I thank Thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:15-23**

### **LIVE HIGHER**

All charges against a sinner are taken away when that person has accepted the substitutionary work of Christ as full and sufficient payment to bring us to God. The crucifixion of Christ was a public act on His part when He "suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." That work has been accomplished on our behalf, and as believers, our public testimony of baptism establishes to those who watch who we are and in whom we have believed. There are no additions of any kind to that great salvation that is of value in any way. In fact, any efforts to make an addition to that sacrifice our Lord Jesus Christ made are not only of no avail, but they would also be an insult to the all-sufficiency of the One who paid the supreme price.

No longer is a sentence pronounced on us because of the food we eat or what we drink, nor because we do not participate in the special religious day and festivals, others think make them more holy. Monthly observances are often connected with worshipping idols, animals, the moon, and the sun. Some immoral practices took on a religious connotation because they we considered a "celebration of life." We, as Christian believers who know the Lord Jesus Christ personally, are free in Christ. "Let no man judge you" doesn't mean we are to take aggressive action against legalism. It means we are no longer in bondage to the law and things associated with the attempt at law-keeping. The shadows fade because of the reality we have in Christ. Eating special foods or abstinence from food is linked with the natural man, not the spiritual. Such bondage was a foreshadowing of the reality of the blessings we have received by God's grace.

"Let no man beguile you" by promoting mysticism as a means of coming to God. They suggest that we are disqualified from receiving the blessings of God if we do not show visible evidence of humility in some outward form. Those who are mystics will declare you to be unworthy of any contact with God unless you feel some kind of pain through self-denial. False humility is just another way of saying I am responsible to get to God my own way and thus denies the all-sufficiency of the Savior. True humility is awed by the greatness of God and His mercy. When one's heart is filled with love for God, one's will is submitted to the purposes of God. Mock humility led people in Colossae to the worship of angels, which was false worship. True worship is the result of a consciousness of who God is and is expressed by honoring God and giving Him the respect that is due Him. Such worship is real because it is "in spirit and in truth."

The distractions of legalism and the delusions of mysticism have the tendency to enslave one who is deceived by those false teachings. Believers are not to submit to the rituals of man-made religions and lose their liberty in Christ to a shadow by demeaning the work of God into some material substance. Nor should believers substitute rules for the righteousness of Christ lived out in the lives of God's people. Self-abasement and the worship of angels being substituted for the worship of God is evidence of man's purpose to be equal with God through his own efforts or to bring God down to be on par with men. Substituting the obscure visions of the imagination for the written word of God is a human attempt to exalt self-centered men to the place where intellectual arrogance takes the place of real humility. All of those substitutes cater to the desire of men to be independent of God rather than depend on the Lord, who is the Head of the church.

There is great strength in truth, and by its nature, truth exposes errors. The Christian's position is that of one who is "in the world but not of the world." Christianity stands out against man-made superstitions that may have a good appearance but are valueless. The rules of men are not spiritual and have a tendency to draw us away from Christ and rob us of the blessings that are by faith. As those who belong to Christ, we are dead to the ordinances of human schemes. The deception that results from self-imposed pseudo-humility must be rejected. We are brought out from under the worldly elements, and there should be no connection of the living with that which is dead.

By faith, we touch, taste, and handle those things that are unseen. Such faith is in stark contrast to the rituals that promote self-centered worship motivated by human endeavor and human will. A "worship leader" is not to be one who takes the place of the Holy Spirit. By faith, we will not allow devotion to the wrong things and the wrong things to take the place of sincere devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is right for us to remember that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and to abuse this body for some so-called spiritual experience, is totally foreign to that which God intends in the lives of those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only are believers to be progressing as soldiers in an army, pilgrims on a journey, trees producing good fruit, buildings being erected, students learning the truth and a widening river - but our provisions to accomplish God's purpose for us are that we are separated to Christ, alive in Christ, free in Christ and victorious in Christ.

This doctrinal section of the book of Colossians sets the tone for the practical working out of a believer's life as taught in the remaining chapters of the book.

**Colossians 2:16.** *"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:"*

#### **OPINIONS OF OTHERS.**

*There are a number of ways to handle differences of opinion I must consider several things before I decide*

*If I am going to pay attention to what an opinionated person says,*

*Or if the course I am traveling on is the one on which I will abide.*

*If it is the opinion of a new believer or of a child,*

*I will respond differently than if it is one who is mature.*

*When everything is new to a person I will wait awhile,*

*But I won't with someone who just has a bone to chew.*

*Some people make a religion out of their own "do's and don'ts;"*

*It's a matter of their own personal preference.*

*Often, they insist that everyone follow them or they won't*

*Escape some opinionated verbal sentence.*

*Call them to a halt, do not let them continue*

*To load their superstitions as burdens on others.*

*Give the scriptures as the source of what we do -*

*Don't allow them to stumble the new sisters and brothers.*

*The people that insist that their own ways be followed*

*May not even be true Christians at all.*

*For them to undermine faith must not be allowed -*

*They must be stopped before others stumble and fall.  
Our sufficiency is in Christ, He alone is supreme -  
In everything done, He alone gives the word.  
The safety of the saints needs someone to come between -  
And protect the ones who newly trusted in the Lord.*

*"Father there are some coming out to these meetings here who have a suspicious background. They don't want the saints to know about them, but they want what they can get from Thy people. Grant Thy servants the wisdom to know how to help them and still not enable them in things that are wrong. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:17.** *"Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."*

### **THINGS TO COME.**

*What is coming anyway?  
Are bad events coming more than we have today?  
Or is this a reference to things of the past -  
That were temporary shadows of things that last?*

*Those shadows and types of generations long ago -  
Were given that people living at that time might know -  
Of a reality that was to come when God would bring to light  
God's love and grace, and redemption through Christ.*

*In those shadows of offerings and altars and such -  
People were reminded that God was constantly in touch  
With all they were doing, what it was and why -  
Pointing to the reason why the Lord Jesus would suffer and die.*

*The tabernacle in the wilderness was a visible shadow  
Of the Person of Christ and the things God does hallow.  
Whenever the people would come, there would be a sense of awe -  
That God intended to be reflected by the things they saw.*

*The Passover would have reminded them of deliverance from captivity.  
Christ our Passover who was slain, is the reality.  
That is the same for every shadow and type -  
Through the coming of Christ things were brought to light.*

*We have a few shadows for us in our time.  
Baptism typifies the death and resurrection that was mine.  
The emblems of bread and wine that sit Lord's Day morning on a table;  
Are reminders of the One who saved us because He was abundantly able.*

*"Father God, I thank Thee sincerely for every thing that reveals the value of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am always conscious of the reality of the Living Lord, but I also thank Thee for visible reminders. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:18.** *"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."*

### **DISQUALIFIED.**

*He talks about his inadequacy and seems to feel he is worth nothing at all.  
He seems obsessed with his own unworthiness, and is always about to fall.  
His talk is about his failures and he can't rise up and take his place.  
This kind of self-depreciation is really self-centeredness with a false face.*

*These people need others they think, to approach God; they turn to men or angels  
To plead their case to each level above them; often money is the angle.*

*You pay to confess your sin to one, and have to pay more so he can go to one a step higher.  
Each one has to go to one more important, until you reach God at the top of the ladder.*

*None of this is real or is real humility because it is self-centered and false.  
True humility, the kind God intends, has God at the center of it all.  
There is an awareness of our need of God and we understand who we are.  
In faith with awareness of our acceptance in Christ, we are children; and God is our Father.*

*An unspiritual mind turns people inward and that actually exalts the man.  
This false humility and worship of angels implies we have the controls in our own hand.  
The person who says the body is evil, the perfection of God's work defies.  
To follow such teaching and think it is right, from God's grace does disqualify.*

*Any sin-polluted works of the flesh that people think they are able to do;  
Disqualifies one from their reward, and depreciates the work of God too.  
No ideas of men that are contrary to scripture has any basis in fact.  
Those who follow such philosophies are truly traveling on the wrong track,*

*God's plan is plain: He intends for us to glorify in body and spirit which are His.  
It is never that we can change ourselves to make holy our sinful flesh.  
But when a person is redeemed, we belong to God and He makes us a new creation.  
He has saved and made us acceptable; now He challenges us to consecration.*

*"Father, on this first day of the week, may all that I am involved in, have the stamp of the divine nature upon it. Help me to say the right words, sing with my heart and pray in sincerity - that Thou would be honored in every activity, word and thought. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:19.** *"And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."*

#### **DISCONNECTED.**

*The body doesn't really work right if the parts are not connected -  
Not just connected to each other, but particularly to the Head.  
Actually, if each part is not from the Head continually being instructed -  
Not just one part is affected but the whole is certifiably dead.  
Every part of the body, from the smallest to the greatest,  
Is knit together forming one smooth-functioning unit.  
When each part fulfills what it is designed to accomplish -  
The Head coordinates the whole in order to effectively use it.*

*When any false teacher or one who tries to be independent,  
Tries to attach himself to the body like an appendage -  
He does not take life from the Head and is not part of the unit.  
He is like an open sore that can't be helped or bandaged.  
His life-source is not from the Head of the body  
But is likely from some demon or some man.  
The connection that he has is a dark spirit that is haughty -  
He and his false teaching must be banned.*

*The true body parts respond to God's Word  
And are increasing in strength as they hear.  
They apply what they learned in the service of the Lord  
And each part working together will bear  
Fruit that lasts because it is the truth -  
And that appendage will soon fall away.  
There will not be confusion in the work, and the unity of the group  
That form the body will as one functioning unit, stay.*



*"Lord God, the small groups of believers are finding it hard in some places because they are looking for numerical growth. Keep them safe from those who would attach themselves to them and are not truly wanting to be a part of the body, but are wanting to take the place of the Head. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:20.** *"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,"*

### **THOSE "RUDIMENTS."**

*There are fundamental principles in the body that are controlled by the Head,  
Each true believer in that body is willing by the Lord to be led.  
We have experienced His love and His grace, and follow His guidance by faith.  
When these principles are applied, they work, and the parts of the body are safe.*

*The world system too has its "rudiments," those basic principles it does use.  
The beliefs of the ungodly proliferate; almost anyone can pick or choose.  
"Do your own thing," is one of them; "There are all kinds of ways to heaven."  
"Each one has a right to believe what he wants;" that is a permeating leaven.*

*"Don't let anyone tell you, there is only one way to God."  
That is a "rudiment" - a basic principle; "One Way" seems to them very odd.  
They claim it is arrogant to say you know now, you have eternal life.  
And they don't want to accept the Bible as the way God reveals His light.*

*"Your truth is yours, and my truth is different;" the world system has no standard.  
"You only believe that because when you were young, it was of you demanded."  
"Rudiments" are composed of shifting opinions to accommodate to the masses.  
Dogmatic opinions are stated as truth only until that particular fad passes.*

*"You must be christened in order for God to know your name, that is what I believe."  
Some people cannot accept an omniscient God who they must personally receive.  
"I take the bread and wine, that my sins can all be forgiven."  
They will not accept the truth that Jesus is the only way to heaven.*

*A child of God is not subject to the world to build on the principles of men.  
The standard of righteousness finds its basis, not in some words men penned -  
And even our laws found their original source in laws God on the mountain gave.  
Those "rudiments of the world", are unable anyone's soul to save.*

*"Holy God, Thy Word and Thy testimonies I know are right without a shadow of a doubt. Preserve me and those I seek to teach from laying astray by any unscriptural opinions. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 2:21.** *"(Touch not; taste not; handle not;"*

### **RULES.**

*Religions have had a way of controlling people by imposing demands.  
Some are based on the premise; salvation is a work of men's hands.  
So, they wash a certain way or have specific things to do -  
And these are burdens put on people by those who teach salvation is up to you.*

*There are those who make money as a basis of their demands.  
They want a percentage of all you earn to be placed in their greedy hands.  
Giving to God is a good thing, but to make this a part of salvation,  
Is like adding your works to the work of Christ; that would be a desecration.*

*A religion based on human senses, is false because it is based on man.  
Man, at his best is a failure when it comes to overcoming sin.  
In order to get around the pricking of conscience or abiding guilt -  
Religions have been instituted to try to accommodate to man's will.*

*Standards are set with probably good intentions, at least that was so at the start.  
But those pagan practices change, and conform to the desires of human hearts.  
Often, they deteriorate into lustful things that attract the flesh.*

*People leave the concert or play insisting that God has that blessed.*

*Prohibitions that make legal demands often to new Christians have appeal.  
They like strict laws imposed on them that more holy they can feel.  
We have to be patient, that is true, but laying one's personal demands on others -  
Soon will divert people from the grace of God and separate brothers from brothers.*

*The kind of clothes, the food we eat, the special days we set aside -  
Are usually opinions of some strong-minded person; or maybe someone had something to hide.  
The balanced and moderate life God wants is that He is well-represented  
By those He has brought into His family, and those by whom His grace is presented.*

**"Father, may I this day maintain a balance in words and deeds that will reflect Thy grace, mercy and love. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 2:22.** *"Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"*

### **COMMANDMENTS AND DOCTRINES.**

*There are ways I can determine if a command is of men or of God.  
Often differences of opinions each claim to be based on God's Word.  
So, I will have to apply some test to see which things are right.  
I will have to reject the wrong, and be committed to walk in the light.*

*If man-made rules and taboos are the emphasis rather than grace -  
Right away I am sure this is a works-religion, definitely not one of faith.  
If it promotes a critical spirit and against others is always making complaint -  
That is contrary to discreet discipline and love that uses spiritual restraint.*

*Sometimes some people make claims of visions or knowledge known only to them.  
And insist they have some special formula not known by any other men.  
That is contrary to the Word of God, for the Bible is an open book,  
God's intentions are revealed in it if people only would take the time to look,*

*Any commandment or teaching that elevates self, rather than exalting Christ -  
Even though it may be taught by someone who is ever so kind and nice -  
Is wrong, and of that there is no doubt, God still resists the proud;  
And gives grace to the humble, that evidence of God's grace may abound.*

*Claiming to be the only ones who do right, and everyone else is wrong,  
Is evidence that a commandment or doctrine doesn't believe what God has done all along.  
There are believers all over the world God has been using for many generations  
To declare the Gospel of the grace of God, and He uses them to teach the way of salvation.*

*Asceticism is another false teaching that often appeals to those who are sincere.  
They try to humiliate themselves or go someplace where no one is near.  
Others turn their back on their families thinking this is what God demands.  
All these commandments and doctrines are only impositions placed on others by man.*

**"Father in heaven, preserve us from those who would side-track Thy people into a legalistic system made by men, or a careless system that appeals to the flesh. Keep us in Thy Word and faithful to Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 2:23.** *"Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."*

### **WILL WORSHIP.**

*It may look good; it may appeal, but stop before you act.  
Not everything people say is good just because it does attract.  
Truth is a fundamental principle when it comes to the worship of God.*

*Will-worship is a form of egotism that only appears to men to be good.*

*A show of wisdom is only just that; it is words without the deeds.  
It has all the answers before it knows the problems; in no way does it meet our needs.  
In time it becomes offensive because one seems to be a "know-it-all."  
But they are never around when there comes an urgent call.*

*Some people are truly humble, and to those we do take note -  
Because what they are and what they do is consistently both.  
False humility is a stretch; those who have that are trying to make an impression.  
The objective of that seems to be, to gain from others some kind of concession.*

*There are also those who seem to glory in all their pain and suffering.  
Instead of attending to their health, they are forever furthering  
The impression that it is for God they suffer and want others to compare  
The pain they have with the wellness of others, trying to show who really cares.*

*The Holy Spirit can discern what is will-worship and what is real.  
He also knows why there is sickness; who to leave sick and who to heal.  
Real wisdom and real humility do not need a disguise.  
Those things that are false or are only for show, His wisdom does apprise.*

*Our flesh is sometimes deceived but we can guard against that.  
When we apply the principles of kingdom living instead of worshipping at  
What some perceive to be important and that everyone else should do.  
Just do what you know is according to God's Word; don't let will worship stumble you.*

***"I thank Thee, Father, for the sincerity of worship I heard and saw in others yesterday. Keep the saints I pray, in the position where they will always submit to the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ. In His name, Amen."***

## **Colossians 3:1-11**

### **DYING AND LIVING**

The results of understanding the reality of the Christian life from God's perspective are changes in the everyday conduct and practice of our life in the world. In the beginning verses of this chapter, Paul begins with our conversion and goes to the appearing of Christ in the future as our incentive to holy living in practical ways. Our standing in Christ is identified as those who are dead to the world [v.3] and are raised to new life in Christ [v.1]. That could be called the indicative position in which we are found. Our state as believers is set as a challenge to us to act by what we do in accordance with who we are. This is the imperative condition expected of us as those who acknowledge the supremacy of Christ. We are to set our affection on things above [v.1-2]. We are to put to death, in a practical way, the old nature and its practices. We are to get rid of those things linked with our old self-life. Before we can really live, we have to die.

Our attachment to Christ is not linked to angels or star-gazing into the skies looking for something mysterious. It is the lifting up of the heart and its affections to our Savior, who is sitting alive and well on the right hand of God. This is not wishful thinking or some kind of mental detachment from ourselves to reach to God. This is a real act of faith as we look to our risen Savior, who, by virtue of His finished work of redemption, has justly brought us into the heavenly sphere where He is. There, in His dignity and authority, He calls us to live out our resurrection life here by His power.

Our affections, our heart's desire, is a humble-minded appreciation of our union with Christ. My affections are centered on that which is of major concern in my life. If the affairs of this world claim my attention more than anything else, then my attractions become earthly and materialistic, and my affections will be only here on earth. Believers are living here as patrons of the world system, but as pilgrims, our home is elsewhere - above, "where Christ sitteth." Our new life comes from our resurrection with Christ. Our spiritual life is hidden from the world. Our "affection" involves an act of understanding in which we know the worth of those things which are above. It also involves an act of our will to choose those things above all other "things" because we know their value and love them with a godly enthusiasm. Then we will pursue those things, grasp them, and love and prefer them far greater than those things which are below. We will be more than willing to part with earthly things when our affection is above.

When Christ appears, we will see His glory and enjoy it with Him and be participants in that glory. Our life lived by faith with grace will then be a life of glory that will forever display God's exceeding riches of grace." in a spiritual sense, we are able

now to share our lives here below with divine Persons. The blessed state of life in heaven with the joy that it will bring can, to a degree, be experienced now and here when our affections are in the right place.

In view of that standing we have, we must put to death those lustful members of our body that lead us to sin. The very first emotions that arise must be dealt with by us denying our consent to the attractions that try to usurp our new nature. Sin, and its activities and power, must be slain - put to death. We must deal decisively with any carry-over of sin in our lives by daily mortifying and subduing it and hating it rather than secretly responding to sin's appeal. Sin begins in the mind and is worked out in life through our physical bodies. The list of sensual sins is totally opposite to the character of God.

Fornication and uncleanness are outward acts of sensual sin. Any illegal access into another body is abhorrent to a holy God. When we died with Christ, we were given the power to have victory over such sin in our Lord Jesus Christ. Passion and evil desires are the inward motivation that initiates such outward acts. Covetousness reaches out its evil influence to control one's spirit ending in putting other things before the things of God. Covetousness is never satisfied. It always wants more. The reason it is called idolatry is because covetousness dictates what we serve. Divine reaction to the acts of the children of disobedience is holy opposition that will invariably end in just punishment to bring about a correction in behavior.

It seems like the Colossian believers had lost the sharp edge of their spirituality and were not what they once were when they first consciously experienced the grace of God. These sensual sins affect not only our public testimony but also our own personal life with God because we are catering to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Added to this were the social sins that interfered in a very negative way with their interaction with other people. Some people seem to have the attitude of anger as a habitual response to all that is going on around them. From that attitude comes the sudden outbursts of anger and rage that are called "wrath." There is a sense in which wrath takes on the form of vengeance that leads to the deep disposition of animosity we recognize as malice. Malice wants something bad to happen to another person. Slander puts into words that which tears down another person with abusive speech, blasphemy - that ends up in filthy words, defiling speech, and then deception, lying, and misrepresentation of the truth.

When a believer testifies in their baptism that they have died and been buried with Christ, they also are publicly declaring they have put off the "old man" with all its lusts and worldly ways, like putting off an old garment. It is wrong for us to give any place to those social and sensual sins - neither in thought, word, or deed. But to just put them off is not enough. There needs to be the Christ-like characteristic of the new man that indicates a radical change has taken place and we have a new identity. Being renewed with a view to spiritual growth assures us that we have the capacity for knowledge. This leads to a progressing, maturing Christian life that has the characteristics of our Savior, who gave us new life.

In that Christ-like image that begins with our inner life with Christ, there is a unity of saints where there once was a division among cultures and races. There are no distinctions made as to who is of the highest importance in the body. When we realize in a practical way that our affections are set on things above, then we will enjoy our unity in and with Him and His people. There will not be a competition as to who is more important. When Christ "is all and in all," all things to us in all situations, that is the highest possible kind of unity.

**Colossians.3:1-3** *"Seek those things which are above--- set your affection on things above--- Christ who is our life..."*

**"ABOVE" – what an expansive word!**

<i>There are no walls above; There are no fences. There are no fakes above, There no pretenses.</i>	<i>Christ sits on high above, At God's right hand. I too, am seated there, In Christ I am --</i>
<i>There is no night above, There are no fears. There's only light above, No cause for tears.</i>	<i>Accepted, free, forgiv'n, A child of God. Above is my true home, "With Christ in God."</i>
<i>Above's where I belong, Those things I seek, Things that are His are mine, All at His feet.</i>	<i>"Hid", but not in dark, "Dead", in Him I live. "Risen", yet still apart, "Seated", still Him to serve.</i>
<i>My heart's at home above, My mind's at rest. My hopes are based on love, My life is blest.</i>	<i>"Glory", it shines in His face, "Glory", it fills all that place. "Glory", when He shall appear, "Glory", His through ageless years.</i>

*Justice and the law had claims to be made, God is a holy God.  
He cannot ignore the sins I've committed and be true to His Holy Word.  
So publicly through three hours of light and followed by three hours of dark-  
The sacrificial Lamb met the law's demands, and took there the sinner's part.*

*Hell stepped forward to claim the souls of all those Satan had deceived.  
Hell wanted in the worst way possible to stop people before they believed.  
But right out in public before those who gathered, came the words, "Father, forgive!"  
The heel of the Lord bruised Satan's head, now the one who believes God, can live.*

*"Gracious Father in heaven, where our Lord Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God: It is true that sometimes we get homesick for heaven. Our Lord and Savior is there. Our dwelling place is there. Our expectations are all on high. Our hope both sure and steadfast, are focused there. We have a lot of loved ones there. All that we really want is there although You know it doesn't always seem like that. We love the thought of such a place to enjoy our eternal inheritance. The fellowship must be great; the music of the voices of men and angels can only be imagined. The activities will be so appropriate that it will be our great joy to serve You without the limitations we have here. We praise You for the anticipation as well as the promises that we look at when we set our affection there and not here. We want to be found looking up when the Lord comes. Amen."*

**Colossians 3:1.** *"If yet then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."*

#### **RISEN WITH CHRIST.**

*This doesn't happen a little bit at a time.  
New life comes from God, not from any efforts of mine.  
Self-denial and vain works are only actions of the flesh.  
God doesn't save because of them; He alone can bless  
Us with new life in Christ who died for our sins,  
He was buried and three days after He rose again.  
Now a new fact has clearly come to light;  
We are risen with Christ and now share in His life.*

*The evidence is there, the love of God is in our hearts.  
But sometimes we hardly know where and how to start  
To act right and do right that we might honor and please our Lord -  
It is necessary that we daily get guidance from His Word.  
His Word is one of those things that has come from above.  
The truths in the scriptures have been given to us with love.  
The Holy Spirit has come from above that in truth He will guide us;  
And faith through His Word will in testing times teach us to trust.*

*From above has come love for God and love for the brethren.  
Also has been given to us eternal life, and a home in heaven.  
There is hope that is sure, not based on vain speculation.  
We know God as our Father; we have eternal salvation.  
Grace has been given us that we might honor God every day.  
Heavenly peace is imparted by the Lord that will not pass away.  
Christ is our Mediator, as our Advocate before the throne.  
He makes us accepted in Him, and our life is His own.*

*"Father, I rejoice with Thee this morning in the Lord Jesus Christ. How assuring it is to know that all the Persons of the Godhead are involved in my life, and in that way my life and work is important to Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 3:2.** *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

#### **AFFECTIONS.**

*A lot of things seek to claim a place in my heart.  
Much more than mere emotion, I must concentrate on the part  
Of me that controls "self" and gives it direction,*

*And makes sure of what is right, and what needs correction.  
I must prioritize my activities and focus it above,  
Instead of concentrating on things that I do and have,  
To make me comfortable and contented here below,  
Because all that earth can give is a vain and empty show.*

*Eternal things to some people seem very ethereal.  
They can't conceive of or understand things not material.  
But when we are risen with Christ, there is a fundamental change.  
Unseen things become real and now our life we rearrange.  
Truth becomes important because it is embodied in Christ.  
Righteousness imputed to us came at the supreme price.  
Grace, we have received, and now grace we have to show.  
Faith is not just a buzz-word; now by "just" living, faith we know.*

*Peace seems to escape people and the nations of earth.  
Now peace I have and I know its results and its worth.  
Glory is above, even some of it on earth is revealed -  
In some scenes of splendor, or in the face of one God has healed.  
Life itself, though unseen has changed to have meaning.  
There is a purpose in it, not just days that are fleeting.  
Hope and love, and more importantly, God Himself -  
Is where our affections rest and our minds choose to dwell.*

**"Heavenly Father, I love Thee. My mind is at rest and is comforted when it is stayed on Thee. My hopes and joys are in Thee. Lift my thoughts and affections today to the heights where I can speak for Thee and You can use Thy servant to bring glory to Thee and blessing to others. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 3:3.** *"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."*

### **YOU DIED.**

*Really? Is that what happened to drain vain ambitions away?  
Is that why earth and its tantalizing attractions have faded?  
Material things do not have a great appeal, but I use them.  
Whether I can keep them or if I lose them  
Really doesn't make a lot of difference to me,  
Because I have died, but now am alive eternally.*

*What would a dead person want - on what would they feed?  
The past is ancient history, everything important is ahead;  
Waiting for me to claim what was in the past life unknown -  
But to one who is dead, I'm sure he is wanting to be shown  
How to live and participate in this new-found dimension,  
That in our previous life was beyond our comprehension.*

*You died, and now are hidden with Christ and are safe.  
A hidden component is concealed in a place  
Where it may fulfill its purpose and still not be seen -  
People don't know what it is doing or where it has been.  
But God does for He has hidden us safely in Christ -  
And one who is dead to earth, in Christ is alive.*

*Sometimes I don't feel dead, but I know it is a fact.  
And it does affect what I think and how I act.  
The fact of being dead in Christ doesn't mean I don't exist.  
But now I know what God wants of me and of what life does consist.  
No, I am not trying to in any way add to or earn salvation.*

*The old "me" has died, and I am alive as part of a heavenly nation.*

*"Gracious God, my Father, during the course of the day before me and the needs that only You know; please guide Thy servant in a way that can bring glory and honor to Thee and blessing to sinners and saints. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 3:4.** *"When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."*

### **CHRIST, OUR LIFE.**

*What has changed in life now that I am found in Him?  
It is a genuine fact, that when one is saved, new life begins.  
There is a new outlook on ourselves - we see ourselves in God's eyes.  
It is very humbling to know He loves us - that assurance keeps us down to size.*

*And yet it gives real meaning to life as it unfolds before us each day.  
It is not just a habitual form, when we read the Bible and pray.  
God really does speak in words that I can read over and understand.  
He then sends us out to live in the world, and guides us with His hand.*

*He instills into our minds truths that strengthen and also gives us peace.  
When we open our mouths to speak, He enables us to speak with grace.  
As the road opens up before us, although we can't see the end, we walk by faith.  
Looking back over the way we came; we are amazed as that path we trace.*

*Christ is our life here and now; He is not dead; He is alive in us.  
He opens the door to fellowship with Him, when in Him we put our trust.  
He brings people into our lives and lets us be part of His plan.  
It is the work of God that's being done, but He shares that work with man.*

*In this training time called life, we are being prepared for what is ahead.  
To many of the unsaved people around, they say, "When you're dead, you're dead."  
But we who know Christ and to whom He is our life, we know this is the beginning.  
When He appears in His physical form and glory, we will be with Him in His reigning.*

*What glory that will be when to every eye the Lord is revealed in His splendor!  
There will be no humiliating reproaches as when His first appearing was ended.  
Then there will be hosts upon hosts of angels and saints will be attending.  
His name and His Person will be honored, and a glorious future beginning.*

*"Father God, thinking about those words, 'Christ is our life,' really does give meaning to this day before me. It is not just another day but one in which I am anticipating being in fellowship with the Lord Jesus in proclaiming the Gospel. I pray that the words to be spoken to the man we are meeting will be used to give him light and lead Him to the Savior. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 3:5.** *"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:"*

### **KILL THEM!**

*Who would have thought that one to whom Christ is life;  
Would have any problems with these.  
That is why we are enjoined to walk in the light,  
Lest those sins of the flesh on us seize -  
And drag us down, then turn us away  
From the Lord to the power of deceitful flesh.  
There is really only one tried and proven way -  
That is to put each one to death.*

*Not one in this list has a place in the life,  
Or in the body of one who believes.*

*Some of them bring hatred followed by strife -  
Every one of them the Holy Spirit grieves.  
Some are within and some are without -  
Every one is accompanied by guilt.  
In this world all around us and about  
Are these sins which only by death can be dealt.*

*I must never allow my eyes or my mind  
To consider or dwell on these things.  
There is only one tactic that I can find,  
To deal with the consequences those things bring.  
It is death to the flesh; we are alive in Christ.  
Kill them! Before they kill me!  
One who has the Spirit and to whom Christ is my life,  
Has the power to mortify these enemies.*

*"Lord God, I thank Thee for giving the Holy Spirit to live in me. I thank Thee for the Savior who is my life. I thank Thee for being my Father and dealing with me as Thy son. Preserve Thy servant I pray Thee, from all of these fleshly evils that war against the soul - and are everywhere around us. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 3:6.** *"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:"*

#### **THE WRATH OF GOD.**

*God's wrath is not something peevish, unwarranted or unfair.  
It is a righteous act of justice that the disobedient have to hear.  
It abides upon the unbeliever who puts faith in Christ aside.  
Those who believe on the Son have life; on those who don't, the wrath of God abides,*

*This wrath is righteous, like that of the law, on those who ignore its precepts.  
There isn't a lot of complicated verbiage to cover fundamental concepts.  
To disobey means you will be lost; to obey means you are accepted -  
Not because of works you have done, but because in Christ you have personally trusted.*

*There will be a final and future punishment for those who disobey.  
This is a day of saving grace; there is coming a judgment day.  
Not to determine if one is saved or not, but to reveal the results of sin.  
To disobey God and reject the Savior now, will be openly exposed by Him.*

*Children of disobedience are like children who choose to ignore  
The instruction and guidance of parents who have gone long before  
And learned what is right and seek to show their children just how to live.  
But they can't control the inner will of a child who refuses the advice they give.*

*In the future, as now in life, there is coming a day when disobedience is exposed.  
Those who in their lives disobeyed, will find heaven's door forever closed.  
So, if you are tempted now to ignore, to disobey and reject God -  
Remember you were warned repeatedly; it is written in God's Word.*

*"Father in heaven, I know a lot of my thoughts are simplistic and child-like, but I am aware of the serious consequences of disobedience. I pray that it might daily be impressed on my soul, the need of child-like obedience to Thee, my gracious and all-wise Father. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 3:7.** *"In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them."*

#### **LIVED IN THEM.**

*It has been a long time since I first came to know the Lord.  
The privileges I had as a child, preserved me from much of the world.*



*The nature of every person is sinful, as every honest person knows.  
The disobedience inherent in human nature soon after one's birth then shows.*

*There is something in us by nature that to authority does not want to submit.  
When restrictions are imposed by others, immediately we start to resist.  
The human will wants what it thinks is freedom without any boundaries.  
I was like that as a child, even though Christians were all around me.*

*A time did come when I stopped in surrender and turned to others for help.  
When that action took place on my part, God had others there to tell  
Me in clear ways, of salvation, and how it would come to me.  
No longer did this matter; the Savior on the cross I could see.*

*Now I see the things that happened before, were steps on the road to faith.  
When the walk of self-centered introspection ended, God was there with redeeming grace.  
Things hidden were made plain, inner sins to my soul were exposed.  
All these evils that were latent within, were dealt with when Christ died and arose.*

*So that was in the past; the present is where I live now,  
To the will of God in my life, and to His purposes for me I bow.  
There is no helpless bondage to the sin-nature raging within.  
Now life is morally and spiritually different; my joy is to walk with Him.*

***"Eternal God, the work that Thou didst begin in me many years ago is still going on. I am delighted when I find my fellowship and joy in Thee, and am disheartened when the evils that are around find some temporary attraction. Help me to keep my mind stayed on Thee today. Use Thy servant in some way to display and honor the Lord. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 3:8.** *"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."*

### **OUTWARD SINS.**

*Social sins to some people seem normal and can be excused.  
This however, is not the case, we are never to use words to abuse.  
Those with whom we may disagree or find something about them offensive;  
We who have confessed Christ as Lord, must remember faith is the basis of our confession.*

*It is possible to be angry and not sin, but anger that is habitual,  
Is not as part of the new creation of God when we respond to what is factual.  
Anger may be a quick reaction to some statement or some act.  
We can control that initial response to determine what are the facts.*

*Malice is ill-will toward another person almost hoping that something bad  
Will happen to one we don't like, and secretly we are glad,  
Thinking they deserve what they are getting, but that spirit is not of God.  
Put that thought off and instead take time to think how to ease his load.*

*To blaspheme is speech that slanders; some even use the Lord's name in vain.  
When used against other people it can bring to them great pain.  
When a person has been redeemed, we need to build others up.  
Bad speech, coarse humor and obscene talk, should never come out of your mouth.*

*We need to make a daily practice of controlling the door of our lips.  
The tongue is often used against others, and sometimes others trip  
Over the stumbling block our words have put in the path of others.  
Our lips when closed and our mind controlled will a multitude of sins cover.*

*It takes a deliberate act to put off those things that don't belong  
To the believer in Christ, in order that our testimony be strong.*

*Just like taking off an old coat and casting it far away -  
Is what we do with outward sins, so that people will trust what we say.*

**"Father in heaven, may all that I am called to do and say today be done with grace and truth. May my words and thoughts bring honor to Thee and give light to other people. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 3:9.** *"Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds;"*

### **LIE NOT.**

*How terrible it is to misrepresent or deceive others with my words.  
Lying lips have in times past, led nations to war with their swords.  
In a Christian's mouth lying words can lead to breaking of relationships.  
And in an assembly of God's people it can ruin good fellowship.*

*Trust is something that takes time to build up and also to maintain.  
It comes after experiences are shared, the good ones and those that cause pain.  
The truth may have been told often but a lie destroys the whole.  
If one lie has misrepresented the truth, maybe everything is a lie that was told.*

*Even exaggeration can cause a person to not trust the speaker.  
And those who were opposed to the truth, to denigrate the truth are eager.  
The actual source of a false statement is he who was a liar at the beginning.  
And Satan takes advantage of a lie, to imply all that you did was sinning.*

*Putting off the old self and its practices, may not happen all at once.  
To many it is a natural way to behave with lying words and false fronts.  
The deeds and the words that accompanied the untruths  
Are to be put off and never taken on again; with that "old man" we are through.*

**"All-knowing God; Thy servant has to use words today in the course of the events before me. I am asking Thee, O God, to impose on me the needed pressure that I might not sin against Thee with my lips nor give false words or false hopes to other people. May I be able to speak true words in every conversation and in the Gospel meeting tonight as well. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 3:10.** *"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:"*

### **THE NEW MAN.**

*There is a new nature that is implanted within.  
God put it in me when spiritual life did begin.  
That was God's work as an act of His grace.  
The new creation began at a specific place.*

*But now there is my responsibility to match conduct with faith.  
It is not enough for me to know what the scripture says.  
This new man is not the same as the one before  
He is continuing to learn and mature more and more.*

*The new man knows what is right by reading God's Word.  
And is able to do what is right by the Spirit of God.  
What I know and what I do have to be consistent  
With the nature of God and the divine inner Resident.*

*The more I learn of God the more I should be like Him.  
Christ-likeness without should come from Christ-likeness within.  
Forms and activities can be done by me only for show.  
To be renewed in my knowledge of Him, my faith must grow.*

*There is no justification for me to be just drifting along.  
Things outwardly may, look good and I am doing no wrong;  
But to be reflecting God's image takes more than good intentions.  
I must consider my life as continuing Christian education.*

*This is done when I deliberately put on the new man.  
This new self is challenged to continually expand  
The process of learning and experiencing God's grace,  
By the practice of conduct matching the life of faith.*

**"Father, this day I would like evidences of the new man to be seen by my wife and other people with whom I come in contact. My meditations earlier have been on those who failed. Now I want to be like those who are living victorious lives. Most of all, I would like to reflect Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 3:11.** *"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."*

### **CHRIST IS ALL.**

*Barriers are broken down when Christ is all  
Prejudices have no place when Christ is all  
Nationalities are obscured when Christ is all  
Occupations don't count when Christ is all.*

*Christ is all when we learn from His Word  
Christ is all when we acknowledge Him as Lord  
Christ is all when He is the theme of our praise  
Christ is all when we obey what He says.*

*When we extend our hand of fellowship Christ is all  
When we care for the needy Christ is all  
When we meet together to worship Christ is all  
When we pray as one Christ is all.*

*Christ is all to the new Christian who God has saved  
Christ is all to the thankful who appreciates what God gave  
Christ is all to the humble when they bow to pray  
Christ is all to the aged at the end of life's day.*

*The farmer as he labors knows that Christ is all  
The fisher on the ocean knows that Christ is all  
The parents raising children know that Christ is all  
The preacher in his message knows that Christ is all.*

**"May I never, O Father, indicate or ever entertain the thought that I can do anything of myself. May faith look up to Thee alone as I confess to Thee, "Christ is all." In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

### **Colossians 3:12-17**

#### **ONE ANOTHER**

When Christ is all, and in all to the people of God, it should be perfectly normal for us to put on the graces that characterize Him as we relate daily to those around us. These Christian graces harmonize the unity of the Lord's people because it should be the practice of us all to have deliberately put them on as a wardrobe of a righteous person who is holy and beloved. We are motivated to walk in the newness of life because of the grace of Christ directed right to us whom God has chosen, set apart for God, loved by God, and forgiven by God. Now our strategy for daily living for God is to live godly in a Christ-like way. Gnosticism never does that for one's character.

Distinctions in the church are not made on the basis of one's culture, nationality, or race; but by God-given gifts for the benefit of all that harmonizes the function of the body. By God's electing grace, He made the sovereign decision to save His people, not to damn people to a lost eternity. The choice then is made by each individual as to whether they accept or reject the salvation God in grace has provided. Believers are picked out by God to represent what He

wants people to be like. He knows who we are, and we are motivated by His grace to display this grace to others. We have been positionally set apart by Him and called "holy and beloved." Now the charge is to be set apart in a practical way for God.

There are a number of things we have been blessed with that promote this motivation to be from the heart. Our affections [v.2], our heart's desire, save us from worldliness when they are set on things above. Peace in the heart [v.15] will save us from worry. Our trust is in the One who made peace and has given it to us. When the Word of God [v.16] is in the heart, we are saved from ignorance because we are learning from the Source of the highest wisdom and infinite knowledge. Grace in the heart [v.16] will save us from pride because we receive everything from Him through whom "all blessings flow." Singleness of heart [v.22] will save us from trying to serve two masters. It is either God or mammon, not both. When this heart-work is intact, we will be joyful [v.16], thankful [v.17], and submissive [v.17], people God intends us to be. By doing every service from the heart [v.23], we will not try to please men but God.

A heart of compassion (bowels of mercies) initiates a Christ-like attitude and ends with conscious forgiveness because we have been forgiven by God ourselves. There is an order in godly living that demonstrates grace to a watching world through the lives of the people of God. Compassion leads to kindness, doing good for others with genuine affection and goodwill - not just as a duty. Humbleness of mind is not just a physical position we take but a conscious awareness of who we really are that is seen in a lowly attitude, as opposed to arrogance. The strength of character to deny oneself and not be self-assertive is meekness. There is an absence of pride, and any power we might have is under control. To endure provocation with patience is long-suffering (a long temper). Accepting people the way they are, and putting up with their idiosyncrasies, is the attitude of forbearance without taking offense. Holding something against another and not letting it go is the opposite of forgiveness. God forgives those who confess and forsake their sin. So must we.

Surrounding all of these gracious characteristics is the binding together of the power of love. When we put on love as a garment or a band that holds all of these attributes together, we will be in a position for the peace of Christ to be the ruling authority, the umpire, of our lives. Applying the principles of Christian living in a practical way is consistent with the new nature we have been given. Everything God wants us to be and use in our lives is evidenced in the life of our Lord. When we use those characteristics in life, that is the peace of Christ at work. This is contrasted by discord, disorder, disharmony, and disobedience that brings a storm among God's people. This is what Gnosticism produces. When peace rules, we can accept differences and still work to meet the need of others. In this way, we avoid conflicts because our guidance is from Christ. Peace and love are both involved in maintaining the unity of those who share in common their life in Christ. Just to say, "I had peace about it," doesn't make a decision right. Peace with others is also needed to have sufficient evidence of the will of God in a matter. The peace of Christ is always available. Do I let it rule?

There is an order in the practical outworking of our Christian faith in everyday life. Grace is the origin of this new life, and peace is the experience of it. Thankfulness is the result. To bring this all about, we need the word of Christ to dwell in us in its fullness. It must be claimed personally for us to be what we should be. When the word dwells in us, it is permanently present and occupies the place of ownership, not as a visitor. It enhances and fills our lives with the good things of God. In a thankful person, the expressions of gratitude and resulting peace are the best way our fellowship is maintained. When we lose that peace, we need to stop and correct the wrong by applying the word of God to the heart. Praise, worship, and fresh expressions of thanks lead us to heartfelt singing. Singing with grace in our hearts is especially appreciated by others as well as the Lord and ourselves. The outward expression of inward appreciation gives comfort and contentment to the heart, joy to the soul, and a song on the lips. By such expressions of gratitude, we avoid discontentment and are motivated to take inventory of all the blessings we have received and to declare God's goodness openly.

"Word and deed" covers every area of our outward life. When we are consciously living before the Lord daily, we can best honor Him, serve Him, obey Him, and represent Him. Things done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ - the name of Christ, testify to the fact that we belong to Him and are identified by Him. We are under His authority. We are not "free-lances" with the right to act in our own authority. Praise is the natural outcome that joins the people of God together in common thoughts and healing hearts that testify to the truth experienced. Sainly activity identifies us with one another and for those who do not know or love our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Colossians 3:12.** *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;"*

#### **HIS CHARACTER.**

*The new life of believer is like putting on a new coat -*

*He is now in the family of God.*

*The apostle Paul, when these words he wrote*

*Knew they were the words of the Lord.  
The character of the believer is holy and beloved -  
Something new has happened within.  
The Spirit of God and new nature bestowed,  
That resists the pressures of sin.*

*There is a new attraction, a desire to show mercy,  
For mercy has been shown to us.  
God in His grace extended to us truly  
His arm creating faith and trust.  
Kindness to others no longer is a stranger,  
It is natural, for grace has this effect.  
What kindness was shown by the Babe in the manger  
That we might be part of God's elect!*

*A humble mind should be always in vogue,  
Humility has a power of its own.  
Meekness is power that is under control,  
That enable one to bear another's load.  
Longsuffering, or long temper means a pause  
Is needed when some issues arise.  
It searches for the reason that is the real cause,  
And the needs to be met that underlies.*

**"May my character reflect Thee, O God, and may these attributes not just be words on a paper, but reality in my life. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 3:13.** *"Forbearing one another. and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*

### **HIS COMPASSION.**

*How many times have we gone over this?!  
How many more times before we learn?!  
And yet I wonder how many times things were repeated to me.  
And even now I am apt to forget.  
So, it becomes me to quietly forebear  
The seeming inattention and careless response  
I don't know what going on inside another,  
Or even the hidden burdens they bear.*

*There is a cost here that someone must pay,  
Forgiveness is not some cheap act.  
The effect of offending another by what I say,  
Brings me to fact this fact -  
I am expecting them to forgive me for my words;  
They expect me to forgive their deeds.  
I have to pay the cost for what they have heard,  
And I should step in to meet their needs.*

*How did Christ forgive me? What was the basis  
Of the freedom from guilt He provided for me?  
There was nothing in me to initiate a favorable response on His part -  
He forgave me because of His love that is free.  
I am to forgive in spite of what I know,  
Or in spite of how I am treated.  
The forgiveness of God in me should show,  
And compassion too, whatever is needed.*

*"Father, I have some little physical distresses this morning, but I know You know all about them. If there is something I should yet do to alleviate the problem, reveal that to Thy servant. But I pray mostly that I will not respond in any negative ways to those I come in contact with this day. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 3:14.** *"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."*

### **HIS CLOTHES.**

*What is that he is wearing that seems so suitable?  
Those garments of charity are so right, she is just beautiful.  
Every seam and fold of charity matches perfectly.  
As one looks at a person so clothed, it reflects deity.*

*Every attribute; every movement; every character trait -  
Is bound together by love, and appropriate impressions make  
That show the love of our Savior, and the reality of His grace.  
The garment of love reveals the attraction seen in a believer's face.*

*Love as a garment isn't gushy -  
It covers over all that is of the flesh.  
Love attracts, it is not pushy -  
Love makes all other character traits to mesh.*

*Love when worn as a garment -  
Gives far more than it takes.  
Love is not just a piece of raiment -  
It practices what the mouth speaks.*

*Love as a garment unifies -  
What the flesh would seek to divide.  
Love when to the whole person is applied -  
The failures and mistakes can hide.*

*Love as a bond of virtue -  
Makes all other virtues work right.  
Love by its nature is true -  
Love enables us to walk in God's light.*

*"Father, it must be this cold I have that is making my mind so sluggish. Please forgive my childish attempts to put in words any thoughts after hearing Thee speak to me. I am really sorry for being like this today. Amen."*

**Colossians 3:15.** *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."*

### **HIS CALM.**

*The game of life is on! The play is in full force!  
We've long ago passed the starting gate; we are more than half-way down the course.  
There is much to attract on every side, there is jeering and there is praise.  
Temptation is always there to entice us to join those side-line frays.*

*But the child of God has an umpire whose rules he should obey.  
The peace of Christ can arbitrate every single day.  
When that peace is gone, I must stop and reconsider,  
What I have done or am intending to do, to see which one is the better.*

*When the peace of Christ is ruling one, that can be seen by others.  
The calmness of spirit and godly control links us closely with our brothers.  
A thankful spirit and thankful words often join with others in praise.  
The whole body of believers is benefited when I do what the referee says.*

*If that peace is missing, it is very important that I stop  
And think about what I have been doing; is it right or not.  
Or if the plans I have made have been made, not considering  
How this affects other believers; and if it glorifies Him.*

*The peace of Christ isn't dependent on things that are happening all around.  
It doesn't need perfect silence; it is there even when there's raucous sound  
All around the place where I am, but in the middle of all the noise,  
The umpire of my life is there to guide, assuring that I make the right choice.*

*What a blessing is this calmness in spite of all the turmoil.  
The peace of Christ doesn't depend on outcomes that it may nourish my soul.  
That peace has been tried and proven in this game of life I live.  
The calm assurance that God's will is done, makes my peace just like His.*

**"Heavenly Father, I find a quiet joy in my soul today even though I am a bit under the weather. But I accept this as right, and over it I have no control. So I rest in Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 3:16.** *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*

#### **HIS CORRECTION.**

*We are at liberty in many more ways than one.  
Our punishment of sin is past, it was laid upon God's Son.  
We are free because God Himself, in righteousness is satisfied.  
By Christ's blood and resurrection, we are freely justified.*

*There is another kind of liberty that needs guidelines to work right.  
It is something like the controlled liberty of airplanes that fly at night.  
There are set courses to follow even though they are free to fly.  
The only restrictions come when we trust the controller is that he won't lie.*

*The word of Christ is like that, we submit to His control.  
We trust in Him completely with body and spirit and soul.  
His wisdom is without limits, He knows what is ahead.  
When His word dwells in us richly, we can trust Him without dread.*

*One way of expressing trust is in the songs we sing.  
There is in psalms and spiritual songs, praises that we bring.  
It lifts our souls and spirits when we sing with grace unto the Lord.  
And that is real to Christ and us, who have in us His unfailing Word.*

*Another interesting fact is, if Christ's word does dwell in me -  
Other people are taught and learn by what they hear and see.  
Real grace in the heart is not something I can fake or hide.  
That only becomes obvious when I in Christ abide.*

*When I need correction, it may come from others to me in song.  
Or it may come when I am told the word of Christ when I am wrong.  
To me it is a great consolation, that I am not left to do alone  
What is so greatly enhanced and better when two share truth as one.*

**"Father God, I have noticed when the singing goes good in a meeting, it sets a good tone for the preaching. May the meeting tonight be one in which the power and love of God is felt. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians.3:16.** *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another; in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*

#### **THE SOURCE.**

I am impressed today with the fact that everything of value has Christ as its source:

- The grace of Christ, v.12-14: every evidence of real Christianity in me has its source in the grace of Christ that has granted me forgiveness. That grace continues all through life, providing the impetus to live Christ-like.
- The peace of Christ, v.15: the umpire or whistle-blower is such an important part of living that it surprises me I would even try to make a move without it. Yet, sometimes it seems that I try to act without assurance from God, and the peace is lost. Lord, keep me agitated until I have that peace that comes from Thee.
- The word of Christ, v.16: there is no way a casual stroll through a book of the Bible can be considered "dwelling in you richly." That richness comes from reading, learning, knowing, and practicing the word of Christ. When the word of Christ "dwells," it is at home, feels comfortable, and knows it belongs there. I pray that it feels comfortable in me, as I feel comfortable with it.
- The name of Christ, v.17: there is an authority in that name. There is dignity in that name. There is power in that name. There is a privilege in being associated with that name. There is responsibility in that name. There is life in that name.

*"Father of grace; Giver of grace: please keep me from ever taking for granted any of Thy gracious acts and ways. More than I can put into words are the emotions that the awareness of the grace of God places in me. In grace, Christ became poor; in grace He saved me; in grace He keeps me and in grace He has empowered me to use what little, feeble, weak faith I have, to do His will. I am Thine. I want it that way. I appreciate that position more than I can say. Thanks so much." Amen."*

**Colossians 3:17.** *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."*

#### **HIS CONSECRATION.**

*There is no honor to self when it comes to the things of the Lord.*

*Everything we do in life is done either in deed or word.*

*So, it is my responsibility when I apply myself to a work,*

*To do it with my might as to the Lord, and to never shirk*

*To do what is necessary with the very best of my skill,*

*That God will be glorified in it, and keep at it until*

*That particular work and effort has come to its completion -*

*That is what is involved in living a life of consecration.*

*Consecration isn't limited to only some effort or deed -*

*For there are among people many different needs.*

*There are words of comfort needed by those who are sorrowing.*

*And words of assurance for those experiencing harrowing*

*Times when they don't know what to do or where to turn.*

*Words of correction are in order when some of God's people spurn*

*The revealed Word of God because some other voices say,*

*"Don't pay attention to those scriptures, they were for an ancient day."*

*When one realizes he has been set apart for God;*

*His consecration is real to him, both in deed and word.*

*It is with a grateful heart one realizes that God chooses*

*Those who serve Him, and who living for self loses*

*That God may be honored and the Lord Jesus glorified.*

*The life he lives is resurrection-life, in Christ he has previously died*

*To self and ambition, to personal glory and fame -*

*He wants everything he says and does to be in Jesus' name.*

*"Father, I am almost overcome this morning with joy and expectation. I don't know what to expect but I do know that today I am finding great joy in Thee and fellowship with Thee. May Thy name be glorified and honored by all I am doing and saying today. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 3:18-4:1**



## **ORDER IN FAMILY LIFE**

The domestic life of God's people is one of the greatest ways to promote the Gospel. It is also one of the greatest ways to hinder the Gospel. The effect of a committed Christian family to the Lord and His intended lifestyle for this original social structure has a great impact for good on society and a nation when families practice divine guidance in a God-planned unit. Guidance was given for public living in the verses before. Now guidance is given for private life. Faith in Christ changes homes, but godly homes in an ungodly world are being challenged from within as well as without. A home ordered by God in which each member obeys the commands of the Lord in relation to their role is a testimony for good. If a Christian home resists or ignores these divine instructions, they are viewed by those around them as no better than those without any fear of God. When the roles and rank in a home are established, there is order, not chaos.

Reciprocal attitudes between all family members in a home enable relationships there to flourish with respect and cooperation. Each needs to appreciate the roles and responsibilities of the others and commit themselves to fulfilling their own. The peace of Christ and Christ's word and name are leaving their inward formation of our character, and they form the outward conduct of the Christian household. Domestic life gives dignity and status to each person when they realize there is equality of persons. When the roles of each are understood and accepted as divinely given authority, tranquility in family life is established and can be maintained.

The fact that wives are addressed first indicates equality in a society that subjugated women to a servant-like role. Now in the Christian community, this was changed to where not only nationalities and cultures are equal, but women and men are given equal status. This was true in God's eyes, and now it is enjoined in the family unit. The submission wives are charged with is the arranging in the rank of the different responsibilities of husband and wife. The ordinary toil of a person becomes divine service when it is "fit in the Lord." The rank of the husband in the family is that of taking responsibility for the headship and leadership of the family and not leaving that to his wife. Both are to submit to each other as persons and each to the Lord. The Lord is the one giving these instructions.

The wife indicates she obeys the Lord as one who belongs to the Lord by submission to the leadership of her husband. The husband obeys the Lord with self-sacrificing, Christ-like service toward his wife and family without the hard-handed ways of a dictator. As Christ loves the church, so a husband is to love his wife by his willing sacrifice and concern for her welfare. Harsh, authoritarian rule is not evidence of "agape" love. A husband should never harbor bitterness for something his wife did or did not do. Love is patient and kind, not rude or self-seeking. When we submit to each other because we have first submitted to Christ, then there will not be conflict and division between them or bitterness. One has well said, Christ first, others second, ourselves last."

Children need to know they are obeying God first when they obey their parents. To please God is the believing child's first obligation, and it will lead to a willingness to obey parents unless they are told to do something they know is wrong. The parent's responsibility to their children is to encourage, care for and nurture them spiritually as well as physically and morally. The responsibility of children is to practice obedience to those in authority over them. Children have a right to be born. For parents to abort a child is usurping a child's right to life for selfish reasons, even though the law may not prosecute them. Children have the right to be properly nourished by parents in every part of their personhood - body, soul, and spirit. Children need to be given responsibilities in the household that are defined. To obey is probably their first and hardest responsibility to accept. To participate in and contribute to family life needs to be taught as an obligation they have. Children may reveal problems in the family structure. The measure of obedience is often the motivation for appropriate behavior because it is being modeled to that degree by the older members of the family unit.

Consistent parenting by consistent parents will give strength to children who are Christians and have to face a lot of pressure against them and godly behavior by their peers and the educational system. Even the recent governmental changes to laws that long guided society, will be used to try to force our children to acquiesce to secular behaviors. Children need a safe and encouraging environment to meet their daily reoccurring needs. To irritate children builds resentment and discourages them from following the Christian lifestyle.

The servants referred to in the book of Colossians were probably unpaid slaves, but the principles are the same for employers and employees. The charge of obedience to their masters comes from God. The scriptures do not promote slavery but do deal with issues that are prevalent here in this society. When one fears the Lord and loves Him, He enables that person to get beyond eye service to singleness of heart in labor for the Lord's sake. The purpose of the church is to spread the Gospel, not change laws by aggressive social action and getting immersed in politics. A Christian servant owed obedience to his master in Bible times, and a servant owes that to his employer now. Our character is demonstrated by how we work and how we lead other workers. The ultimate reward is from the Lord who is the real Master. Wrongs committed against a master or employer will receive suitable recompense for the wrong they have done no matter who they are because God does not have partiality towards people.

Fairness is an expectation for labor performed. A fair reward is expected from Christians who employ other people. No matter who a person is, they have a right to expect reasonable compensation for their labor. There may be a division of responsibility in the labor force, but there is equality of persons who are in Christ. Society may change, but the changing social mores of society do not govern us. We are governed in life by divine instruction.

To properly maintain a Christian home, there should be a specified time to read the Bible and pray daily. Understanding of the order of domestic life should be made plain to all in the family. Each needs to know what is expected of them. Examples of respect and expected participation of each person in that family sphere should be understood and seen in order to maintain the family unit properly. Each should know and expect the consequences of misbehavior through appropriate discipline. Responsibility has to be described and taught and be suited to each person. The Lord needs to be set before each one, and commitment and loyalty to the Lord and to the family are expected. A balanced family life is maintained when we recognize our obligations and meet them. Consideration and respect for every family member need to be given regardless of age and position. We should never be half-hearted in any labor we do, and we should always be faithful to the Lord and to our family.

**Colossians 3:18-19.** *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."*

#### **MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

*Household relationships should never be taken for granted.  
From various perspectives, opinions are slanted  
To be more favorable to one more than the other -  
The biblical way is to always consider one another.*

*To submit and to love are the biblical relational traits  
That promotes happiness in marriage and contentment does make.  
For a wife to submit to a husband that loves  
Her with all of his heart making his authority easy to serve.*

*Husbands who know their wives will gladly submit  
To their leadership, will be careful as to how they exercise it.  
It will be their joy to share in common all aspects of life  
That God promises the loving husband and the submissive wife.*

*The example here for submission, is as is fit in the Lord.  
That means there is responsiveness to the guidance of His Word.  
There is a beautiful meekness of spirit and special grace -  
That is displayed by wives who are willing to live by faith.*

*A wife may not always agree with what her husband may say,  
His gracious words to her spoken consistently every day  
Will give her the assurance that he values her opinion -  
Each shared event continues to strengthen their union.*

*The consecrated person will come to understand  
That real consecration extends to a woman and a man  
Who are joined together as husband and wife,  
To live consecrated lives in one union for the rest of their life.*

**Colossians 3:18-19.** *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."*

#### **MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

*Parents must be respected when they follow the Lord -  
Even though they may not be perfect in deed and word;  
Because God has given them the responsibility to bear -  
Of providing for the children and for them to care.*

*A father has been designated as the head of the home -  
Final responsibility for everyone to him will come.*

*To obey him is wise as he and your mother  
Usually discuss the family needs with one another.*

*As a child you have to trust them even though you may not like  
The decisions they come to or the course you must take.  
Just remember that you are pleasing the Lord,  
Even though you may not agree with every decision and word.*

*Children deserve respect for they are humans like you.  
They just haven't experienced yet; all you have passed through.  
Be sure and don't embitter them; handle them with care.  
The future you have guided them to, is the one you will share.*

*Nagging and criticism are often self-defeating.  
Constantly correcting, and constantly repeating,  
Doesn't give a clear message - it is a mistake,  
To not plainly define what you mean when first you speak,*

*It will frustrate both parents and children, if they lose respect.  
Discouragement and defeat are what will come next.  
When both communicate in love and in faith - it is then,  
The harmony of family living will be a blessing to them.*

**"Father, the effect of proper and improper parenting is easy to be seen. The obedience and disobedience of children is also not able to be hidden. Grant the petition of Thy servant for his family - that both parents and children will honor the Lord. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 3:22-23.** *"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."*

### **MUTUAL REASONABLENESS.**

*Serving others without pay can cause deep resentment.  
The roles we have been given may to us seem unfair.  
But a servant who serves as to the Lord has a contentment,  
That extends to the master when their lives, they both share.*

*Labor to be seen really doesn't fool anyone.  
The evidence of their labor can be seen in their work.  
It is not only the boss you have to deal with when the day is done.  
The Lord also sees and knows every responsibility you shirk,*

*True service is not just what we can see and observe,  
Because some things we do take much longer than others.  
The principle of life we must follow when others we serve -  
Is to serve men with our heart, the same as we do our heavenly Father.*

*We cannot do everything, but when our responsibility is known,  
We do it as to the Lord and not just to men.  
A labor and work done with the heart is easily shown  
To be a blessing to all concerned when the labor is done.*

*When we serve men with our heart, we are serving the Lord.  
The earthly master will be pleased with the labor we do.  
Those who are blessed will be able to trust your word -  
And you will find a satisfaction personally when the task is through.*

*"Heavenly Father, the efforts put forth by many for just personal gain leaves them discontented and unhappy. May those who serve others find a joy in doing what they do as unto Thee. I pray this for myself as the kind of labor I do is changing somewhat. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 3:24-25.** *"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive fro the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."*

### **HIGH SERVICE.**

*It may not seem like a big thing you are doing at this particular time.  
But what makes an act of service important is the motive in the mind.  
A work that may seem small to you, may be what God knows is needed.  
And what God wanted has been done - it wouldn't have been if you had not heeded.*

*The inheritance the Lord gives is in the future that is true -  
But part of the blessing of the inheritance is in the joy when the labor you do  
Brings relief or comfort, a sense of contentment to the ones you serve;  
And you share in the result of your efforts, and of the time you gave.*

*The satisfaction of the master and of the laborer is the same.  
One is pleased with the work he did; to the master it establishes his name.  
Both find a reward in a job well-done, a useful task completed.  
That makes our service and honorable effort supplying what is needed.*

*Our service for the best of masters is one in which we gain -  
For labor in the present has a lasting effect even if it seems mundane.  
The Lord Christ gives no useless tasks, there is a reason for every one.  
That is why it is important we do what is right, and willingly reject the wrong.*

*There are rewards for what is done right, and consequences for the wrong.  
If the motive and the work is wrong, then that's what we get when we're done.  
How much more important it is we do what we do, to the Lord and not just unto men.  
When reckoning time comes around, we'll know the true value then.*

*May I always as a servant keep my mind on the Master's plan.  
When I do that, I will be pleasing Him, not serving to be seen by man.  
Then when the task or the project is completed, we have a good work to present  
To the Lord Christ who sent us to serve Him, and who we are called to represent.*

*"Lord God, may the service of this present project we are in be acceptable to Thee. Give me wisdom and understanding I pray, to do what needs to be done in the right way. May the words spoken be the ones needed to present Thy Gospel in a right way to those who hear. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 4:1.** *"Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."*

### **MASTERS.**

*Are there those who labor for you?  
Those whose work you appreciate?  
Are the things you ask them to do,  
Substandard, or are they just right?  
Be fair in your evaluation  
Of the work they did accomplish -  
Considering your expectation,  
And how the project was finished.*

*We too are called to labor  
For a Master who knows no deceit.  
He knows the amount of fervor*

*Goes into the work we complete.  
If I hasten to get His work done  
I can get on with something of my own -  
He won't entrust me with another one,  
I will be left to my labor alone.*

*If I am a master or servant,  
I need to always remember:  
There is a Master who is observant  
Who projects to me does tender.  
When I apply my effort and time,  
May it be to serve Him with all my might.  
Then when laboring time is over, I'll find  
We both will be pleased by what is done right.*

*"Lord God, there is labor to applied to Thy service here that is known to Thee. Thou dost know my limitations and abilities. Help me to know them and use them in Thy service today in a way that will be most effective and most glorifying to Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

## **Colossians 4:2-18**

### **USING WORDS**

The theme of the book of Colossians is the preeminence of our Lord Jesus Christ in His deity, in creation, in His sustaining power of all things, in the church, in redemption, and in the Gospel. From every point of view, He is seen in His dignity and glory. As those who are linked with Him eternally by His grace, we have access at all times to Him through prayer and He to us through the word of God. The Holy Spirit gives understanding as He reveals Christ to us. Prayer does not have to be analyzed, only practiced. The Holy Spirit makes intercession for us, and our Lord Jesus knows what we ask for and what we really need by His omnipotent and divine wisdom.

In our private life, we need to be persistent in our praying. Meaningful prayer involves sincere thanksgiving and a close fellowship with the Lord when we make our supplications for the needs and intercessions of others. One of the most important ministries in which we can engage is praying. Others mentioned in this part of chapter 4 are the proclamation of the word of God publicly, witnessing to those around us with words of grace as well as corrective instruction, and the sharing of concerns of others like Tychicus did when he told the Colossian believers about Paul's situation.

We are not wasting our time when what we speak about has a purposeful reason. By preaching the Gospel, we speak for God as Paul did when he was in prison. People need to hear the message of salvation simply and clearly presented. It is a mystery to them, but to us, has been given the responsibility to preach it as heralds and pass on truth in personal witnessing to those who are lost. Prayer life and private life, as well as public and personal life, are ways we represent our Lord Jesus Christ to those around us.

By "watching" in prayer, we don't run off to hear strange things as the Colossians were doing. Watching in prayer keeps us in the mind of God, and the mind of God enables us to keep our composure when pressure comes on us to accommodate the opinions of others. When we watch in faith, that is a solid shield against satanic attacks against the doubts and deceptions the devil initiates. Watching with hope anchors our souls to the promises of God, which we know will never fail. By watching steadfastly in prayer, we will continue to be steadfast in faith.

Seven times in the book of Colossians, thanksgiving is specifically mentioned. Thankfulness in prayer gives wings to our supplications and intercessions because we are confident that God has answered our prayers in the past. Intercession for those engaged in Gospel work is of great value. We pray they will have a clear understanding of God's truth and can present it plainly to the hearers. We pray for the servant himself to be kept holy and that he presents the Gospel consistently with clarity. Our interest is that there will be opportunities that will arise, and the servant will be ready to grasp them. In presenting God's truth, we need to be gracious, honest, and without hypocrisy.

Our public conduct is usually a reflection of our private life. The wise walk, the visible public life of a believer, is seen by those who are outside of the kingdom of God. Our enthusiasm for the Gospel and moderation to not make what we have to say unnecessarily offensive have to be joined. A casual approach to eternal things makes it of no more value to most people than a newscast. An exuberance that is without caution is offensive to most people. The balance of common sense and spiritual understanding needs to be joined together in a practical way. We have to think ahead of time about what we are going to say, and then the Holy Spirit will take that preparation of mind and

heart and use it appropriately. We need to be ready to pay the necessary price of time and intelligence and then use them both to act wisely.

The use of words can be either helpful or harmful. When speech is used with grace, there is something winsome about it. That doesn't only mean it comes from us in the gracious way the Lord used when He spoke to people. "They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." It also means that our words can be used to minister grace to others. Compelling words spoken in an attractive way create interest and convey a message that is at least listened to and hopefully acted upon.

These same words, when "seasoned with salt," can be purifying and corrective. We don't need to use cutting words deliberately, but "a word fitly spoken" has the tendency to address the real issues which people often want to avoid. Such words do not have to be witty but wise. It is usually best not to be too casual about important things. Common-place vernacular speech is not always spiritually wholesome. When we speak the truth of God, gracious words seasoned with pointed, unmistakable truths have the impact of lending weight to a conversation.

All of us have people in our lives with whom we share important things. This does not mean we act with partiality or show an elitist attitude toward others, but we may have labored extensively with them and gone through hard and trying times with them. To a degree may have even suffered with them. Some are relatively unknown to many but have made major contributions of one kind or another to the furtherance of the kingdom of God.

Tychicus, who was chosen to carry this letter, was an encourager who could be trusted to deliver what he was asked to carry to Colossae. At the same time, he could comfort those who needed comfort and confirm those things that needed to be said. His words would have been timely and understandable. Onesimus, who had one time been unprofitable, was now a useful person to Paul and his master, Philemon, because the power of the Gospel had transformed him. Those same qualities in the people of God today make such people of great value in the work of the Lord going on all around the world. Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus/Justus broke away from the Judaizers and were now effective as those who were involved in the ministry of the New Testament. One was in prison as a sharer of the afflictions of the Gospel. One who had been unable to stick to the work was now commendable to God's people, and another had labored with Paul in the work. All of the co-workers were a comfort to Paul in his time of imprisonment.

To be recognized by others as one who prays earnestly is a good recommendation. People like Epaphras have a concern for God's people and faithfully serve in their best interests even though most will never know or acknowledge the value of such persons. Epaphras was mature in his convictions and was not afraid to declare what was the will of God as he witnessed for the Lord. Others of the Lord's people are able to sanctify their abilities and use them for the furtherance of the kingdom of God, like doctor Luke. Others are just there, like Demas, and one wonders which way they will go. To have a whole assembly meeting in one's home, to some people, would be an unwelcoming responsibility, and to others would be a great privilege. Nymphas and the church at Laodicea heard and read all that Paul wrote to the assembly at Colossae. There are times when ministry given in one place is very suitable for those who meet in another place. It is not inappropriate to preach the same message over and over again when the Spirit of God guides in that way.

There are times when we have been given work to do for God, but we find it very tedious and time consuming, hard and unrewarding. However, any ministry that God gives us to fulfill, as Archippus had, needs to be done to the best of our ability and carried through to its completion. The ministry of speech may not seem to be the same to each believer. True, some have been called to preach and teach, so words are part of their work. But greetings sent in written or spoken words to others have great benefit in encouragement and comfort. In one way or another, we all can use our spiritually motivated words to bless others.

In all things: spoken, written or done, when done in the name of the Lord; the point is that He will have the place of preeminence as becomes the Supreme Sovereign of the universe in the world in the future and in the assemblies of His people today.

**Colossians 4:2.** *"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."*

#### **CONTINUE.**

*Persevering in prayer is a fundamental act,  
That makes effective prayer an actual fact.  
Hit and miss praying is often to sooth a bad conscience,  
And when one is done you hardly remember a sentence,  
Let alone the reason you prayed in the first place.  
Real praying involves the desire to seek God's face,*

*That He will give attention to what is important to you -  
And that you will be in fellowship with Him before you are through.*

*The initial purpose in prayer begins with real thanksgiving  
Because for our benefit God daily is continually giving.  
When communication with God begins in this way -  
We are on a friendly basis with Him in what we have to say.  
There is the watchful side of praying because of dangers all around,  
And we don't which side they are on or where they may be found.  
So when we make our appeal in the authority of Christ's name,  
Our expectation is to look above from whence all our blessings came.*

*To continue really means to devote myself to the practice of communion,  
And be in the condition of soul, that there is continuous union  
Of my mind with the will of God so when I mention to Him an event,  
I know God is involved even before my knees are bent.  
I try to be in the condition of heart that even if I mention a name,  
God knows what I mean and how He and I can both share the same  
Interest in the eternal welfare or daily issues in another person's life -  
And by intercessory prayer we can help make their burdens light.*

**"Father God, my concern at this moment is for those who are attending the Gospel meetings and are not saved. Would it not bring honor to the Lord Jesus if some were given eternal life now? If there is some motive in me that is hidden but would hinder Thy blessing in salvation, please show me that I might confess and forsake it. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 4:3.** *"Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:"*

#### **OPEN A DOOR.**

*I do love the Gospel but sometimes I am silent,  
Because when an opportunity came, I just walked on by it.  
Now there are those doors that are opened to us  
That I might speak the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

*Some doors are open wide waiting for me to come in.  
But I haven't taken the time to learn the language of those men.  
I thank God for others who have made that effort;  
And I will pray that by them the Gospel will be well presented.*

*There are many doors around me that seem shut so tight,  
That it is difficult to speak aloud and shed any Gospel light.  
In places like that I need to let my own light shine -  
And God may open that door to me in some other time.*

*I think of others who God is using and are reaching out in faith;  
Seeking open doors in some other more distant place.  
I pray that God will open doors that they can move right in  
And they might be in the right place and position to enter them.*

*There are those I know in Spanish speaking lands -  
And they are living and working where there are dangerous gangs.  
Lord, preserve them from all violence and injury and strife.  
Give them the opportunity to present the wonderful words of life.*

*Quite a number I know Lord, are across the western sea,  
Preaching in many Asian countries, especially the Chinese.  
May there be opened doors where once they were tight closed.*

*Let all who labor for Thee find the people Thou hast chose.*

*"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 4:4.** *"That I may make it manifest as I ought to speak."*

#### **MAKE IT CLEAR.**

*The Gospel should never be presented in a vague and obscure way.  
People have a right to know what we mean and what we say.  
One thing I must ask the Father when I prepare and pray -  
"Lord, help me make the message clear!"*

*When I read and think how to best present a subject;  
I must always make sure I do not obscure the object -  
For receiving Christ as Savior is the real and main prospect -  
"Lord, I want to speak with godly fear!"*

*During the reading of scripture; I should do so with reverence,  
Giving due emphasis on the major point of each sentence,  
And when explaining that text there should be no pretence -  
"Lord, when I read, make the scriptures clear!"*

*The things I say about the Word need careful explanation,  
As to why they are in the Word of God and the original situation -  
And how they can be applied to bring people now to salvation -  
"Lord, when I am explaining the meaning, make it clear!"*

*When I use illustrations may they help to give clear light.  
May these events I've experienced be like windows in the night.  
And through these windows may the light of life shine bright,  
"Lord, by the power of the Spirit, please draw near!"*

*As I press the message spoken in a way to bring it home -  
To the minds and hearts of sinners, may they be constrained to come -  
And may the urgency of the message meet the hearts of at least some -  
"Lord, by Thy grace help me to make it clear!"*

*"O Lord God, I thank Thee for the young teenager that says You have saved him. May others who have come to these meetings have a clear understanding of the Gospel, and may there yet be souls saved to bring glory to Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 4:5.** *"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."*

#### **WISDOM AND REDEEMING.**

Wisdom doesn't come easy! It is especially hard to know how to act toward those who are not saved. The easy way is to avoid confrontation and just blend in with what is around. However, they expect better of me, and I expect better of myself. To be offensive is to cut myself off from any positive influence. To be passive is not to be faithful. To be active is to appear less than genuine. To be wise is to be able to meet needs, be influential, and be authentic. And more than that, it is to be a walk, a continuous lifestyle that bears the stamp of authenticity even as the life of the Lord Jesus did when He was here.

To be one of those who are "without" means they are missing something. There is an inner place they are not a part of; a role they cannot fill; a work they are not involved in; a pleasure they do not enjoy. To be "without" includes being "without God, without Christ, without hope in the world." Walking in wisdom toward these people is one of the greatest ways I can bring the blessing of the Gospel of Christ to them. They may not listen to me, they may not want me to talk to them, and they may avoid me, but if I walk in wisdom toward them, in God's time, the opportunity will arise to speak of Christ. "Living Christ" is redeeming the time; speaking of Christ is redeeming the time; prayers of



intercession are redeeming the time; acts of kindness are redeeming the time; being zealous of good works is redeeming the time. May I always be ready and available to respond to any and all opportunities to redeem the time!

*"O Righteous Father, around me are people who are without. I am often not sure of how to approach them. Give me the wisdom that I lack. Give me the grace to seek the humility to get that wisdom. Help me to have a teachable spirit to get the wisdom I need. I need to learn to be sensitive to those close to me and those who are around me. I feel so hard hearted and self-centered that I don't know how to act appropriately. I understand what the hymn-writer meant when writing...*

*"I need Thee every hour, most gracious Lord." Amen."*

**Colossians 4:6.** *"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man."*

### **SPEAK WITH GRACE.**

*People who heard Him marveled at the way the Lord spoke when He was here.  
Even those who were looked down on by others, one after the other drew near -  
Because even though they knew what others thought, the Lord spoke with gracious words.  
I too must learn from Him how to speak with grace in my lips like the Lord.*

*Some people will come with belligerence and challenge because they don't like the message.  
Rather than try to argue a point, I am best to carefully and kindly explain a passage  
Of scripture that they may not know or perhaps have misunderstood.  
And instead of what they considered bad at the first, hopefully they'll learn that it's good.*

*There are some people around who think they are so bad, that God isn't interested in them.  
It is up to me with the scriptures in hand to try and lead them to Him.  
Embarrassment and guilt have overwhelmed them, they need to hear of God's love.  
It may be that they will look unto Him instead of continually looking at themselves.*

*The careless and indifferent may have to be stopped with a rebuke firmly given in Jesus' name.  
But we do not have to be discourteous or lay out some reason to blame.  
A story or illustration often works to make the careless stop and consider.  
Frank words spoken in a gracious way will the message of truth not hinder.*

*Interaction in speech, respectful conversation between two has an impact of its own.  
The tone of voice, facial expressions and hands gestures help the message to be shown.  
Words spoken clearly in a simple dialogue have a way to open doors that were closed.  
People can be disarmed and begin to listen when the conversation is different than supposed.*

*Questions when asked need to be answered, unless they are in mockery and anger.  
One needs to speak with grace even then to someone you know or even to a stranger.  
The light of God's Word needs to be used to focus attention on matters that are fundamental.  
We cannot dismiss even childish words; we must refrain from being too judgmental.*

**"Father God, tomorrow I have at least three public messages to give and no doubt quite a lot of conversation with a variety of people. I pray that the flavor and tenor of my words will be with grace. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 4:7.** *"All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:"*

### **BELOVED BROTHER.**

*Certain things come to mind when a brother's name is mentioned.  
Some people's names bring a smile to the face, while others cause us tension.  
But either way, there is something special whether one or the other -  
There is a sense whenever you meet a Christian, he is a beloved brother.*

*Over the course of years and sharing life and service with some men -  
There has developed a special bond of appreciation we have with them.  
We have experienced some difficulties and trials, and had some good times too.  
There is no doubt he is a brother beloved even though most of life is through.*

*During the years of laboring together a variety of things we accomplished.  
The same brother never left the work until he knew it was finished.  
When he started a thing, he stayed with it through the thick and thin.  
Whenever I hear of a "faithful minister," immediately I think of him.*

*In the work we were called to, we labored together, that was the nature of the task,  
When something came up you could count on him without him being asked.  
He wasn't one to take credit to himself, he did what he did for the Lord.  
He was a true fellow servant laboring in physical things as well as in the Word.*

*I am called to stop and wonder what could possibly be said about me.  
Would I be considered a beloved brother who is faithful in his ministry?  
In the labor I have been called to, have I applied myself faithfully?  
Am I one that can be counted on, or am I one of those who, "We'll wait and see?"*

*In stopping to reflect on the many men I have labored with -  
Every one has special gifts to give, and each one different strengths.  
The challenge to me is I wonder if there are those to whom I am dear -  
"Fellow servant" and "faithful minister" are words I would like to hear.*

***"Gracious Father, I know it is pretty late in life for me to be considering the reputation I already have. But if there are some changes I should make, please help me to know them and make them, that You will be able to be glorified in some way in me. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 4:8.** *"Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he may know your estate, and comfort your hearts."*

#### **COMFORT YOUR HEARTS.**

*"Tell us please, how are they doing?  
Sometimes it is hard to know just how they are feeling.  
Do they have a comfortable place to sleep?  
Are they getting enough to eat?"*  
*Those questions come to the minds of those who care,  
Whose fellowship with others they want to share.  
To comfort the hearts, we need someone else to tell  
If they are doing okay, and if all is well.*

*It is a good thing if we can find some way  
To give a first-hand report regarding those far away.  
Different than just the words of a letter -  
Are audible words, and examples are better.  
To get the big picture of what is going on in their life,  
Is someone telling it out loud; it seems to give more light.  
Pass on to others the news of what is going on -  
And they are more able to pray for you when they go to the throne.*

*The one giving the report can in turn take back,  
News of the things that are good, and where there's a lack,  
Then those far away can remember you  
In their prayers to God and their thanksgiving too.  
The mutual sharing of our life in the Lord,  
Comforts the hearts of those when they get the word  
That in spite of set-backs and failures, there are things  
That are encouraging the saints and glory to God can bring.*

*"Father, I know people at a distance want to know some of what is happening here. I also know I am not good at communicating the news of a work we are in. I guess I just want to be able to give an honest report without embellishments and make sure all glory goes to Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 4:9.** *"With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you, they shall make know unto you all things which are done here."*

#### **ONE OF YOU.**

*Two men traveling together on their way back home -  
One was a servant of the Lord, the other, a slave that was owned  
By the man who was a leader of the church, the saints gathered in his house.  
Both have a testimony of being faithful, though the slave had broken loose.*

*What a person was before being saved does not need to be held against them.  
When the Holy Spirit saves a soul, that is where new life in Christ begins.  
There may be some restitution necessary for deeds done to one or more -  
But as far as being in the family of God, the grace of God doesn't bring up what happened before.*

*There may be the tendency on the part of some to hold someone at a distance,  
And not accept them as a child of God even though there's lots of resistance.  
When a person is born again, they are a child of God by His grace.  
That person, the same as the whole assembly of saints, manifests new life by faith.*

*They are one of you, though they may look different, their background may not be the same.  
There are probably things they have done in the past, but when corrected don't continue to blame  
Them now for what has been put right, that the whole matter may be concluded.  
Now in the life of the assembly you are in, they really need to be included.*

*Onesimus, though saved in a far away place, came home a different man.  
The written words of Paul were taken then, and today we too surely can  
Receive such a one as one of us, and confirm unto him our love.  
Especially when one could have never let us know that while far away God his soul did save.*

*There are those I think of who have gone away, I would love to have them back,  
Perhaps the gifts that God gave to them would fill those areas where we lack,  
What joy it would give to see one coming who was once considered "one of you."  
Maybe God will show mercy to us and do for us what we cannot seem to do.*

*"Gracious God, the weakness of the assembly is well known to Thee. If there is some way some of those who were once one of us would return to us and add their strength and gift to the work, we would be very grateful. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 4:10.** *"Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him:)"*

#### **RECEIVE HIM.**

*Every one of us in some way have left a reputation  
Behind us wherever we go, often made because of some situation.  
One may have shared in some difficult work and suffers the consequences.  
Another may be known for tearing down, or being a mender of fences.*

*When someone comes who we may not know, there is a protocol to follow.  
A letter written by those we know gives a testimony as to who we allow  
To keep the testimony of the local church before the community bright;  
It is a real safeguard when one who comes brings a letter another person did write.*

*This also keeps us aware of a change from what was in a person's past.  
When there is salvation or recovery made, the negative reputation should not last.  
The grace of God working in one's life often is a wonder to behold.*

*How good it is to receive such a one into the safety of God's fold.*

*To extend a welcome to those who come, often brings a blessing to us.  
The fellowship can strengthen the saints and his ministry we can trust  
When assurances have been given of his testimony in the place he left.  
The visitors can bless us and we can bless them when we follow the pattern set.*

*I have just recently experienced the same words myself -  
"We gladly receive him to our fellowship and appreciate his help."  
It may not seem to some a real big thing, but according to God's Word:  
The rest of the introduction was something like this, "We receive him in the name of the Lord."*

***"The pattern of gathering for Thy people, Father, is so simple and yet so right. There are no complicated formulas to follow or unusual handshakes; just expressions of Christian grace and love. What a blessing it is to be received by Thy people in places where I haven't been before. I thank Thee and praise Thee for the design for the fellowship of Thy people. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 4:11.** *"And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision, these only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me."*

#### **A COMFORT TO ME.**

*There are special ties we have with some people.  
Certain things are about them that seem more equal,  
Because they came from the same place or have the same nationality,  
And because of that link there are similar interests and a certain sensitivity  
To the events going on around us that causes us personal concern;  
And when something of cultural interest arises, it is to them we turn.  
But as far as the kingdom of God is concerned, there is no difference.  
For with every believer, we all have been delivered from an eternal death sentence.*

*Sometimes we meet folks and can tell by their accent,  
They come from the area where we our early life spent.  
When we get talking together, we find we have a lot in common.  
We knew some of the same people and had mutual acquaintance with someone.  
Some landmarks we both knew and the same places had visited.  
We knew what people worked at there and how they existed.  
But in the kingdom of God our spiritual family expands,  
And includes men and women from here, and also foreign lands.*

*With people whose education and cultural heritage is the same as ours,  
There is a unique comfort when we share the common things for an hour.  
Nostalgia has a kind of comfort going over things of the past.  
And there is no question about it, cultural identities do last.  
However, in the kingdom of God, a whole new life is opened up,  
That has a larger and greater impact on life than some natural cup  
That we drink from on occasion when someone from the past we meet.  
A "Maranatha," or "Thank the Lord," is much different than a "How are you" when we greet.*

***"I thank Thee, Father, for the connections I have with people in Oregon, Newfoundland, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico and many other places I have been. There is a special bond with the saints of God wherever they are. Yet there are also those of flesh and blood that are a comfort to me. I thank Thee, Father, for all those we know and can share things in common with. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."***

**Colossians 4:12.** *"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant in Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."*

#### **LABORING FOR YOU.**

*There are some very special people who have a great care for others.  
It is their big concern to care for and meet the needs of their brothers.*

The bond they have with them is both natural and physical.  
Their interest is also in the welfare of their growth in things spiritual.  
A person with that kind of interest is one the Lord's people cherish.  
They want the believers to grow, and fear lest the lost they know perish.  
So instead of concentrating their life on pursuits of their own,  
They labor in prayer so the needs of those they know are all done.

A man who looks on the needs of others and personally seeks to meet them,  
Is a good example of the Master, who into His work has sent him.  
He has learned to see the people he ministers to through the eyes of the Lord.  
He applies practical help to them and labors for them in the Word.  
He knows what is needed and labors himself to meet the need  
And doesn't complain a lot when others don't seem to heed  
To what he thinks is an urgent need, so he hastens himself to apply  
The time necessary to labor fervently in prayer that those needs he can supply.

Such a laborer knows the Lord's people have a special need of God  
To enable them to stand firm in Christ, in spite of the world  
And what it thinks is important and all the things people say,  
So, what this laborer does is to continue to fervently pray  
As an intercessor who is asking God on their behalf  
To keep the saints from evil and some of the subtle traps  
That have been set to turn the people of God away  
From the path of obedience and the pressure to make them the devil's prey.

**"Preserve Thy people, O Lord God, from the pressures and powers that are around them, seeking to conform them into the ways of the world rather than unto Christ. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 4:13.** "For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are at Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis."

#### **GREAT ZEAL.**

Some people are zealous for money and fame.  
Others are very zealous over their family name.  
They want others to know them as somebody special.  
It is hard on their pride if they are considered as equal  
To ordinary people who labor hard from day to day -  
Or else are known as faithful Christians who daily read and pray.  
But every now and then someone really special comes along  
Whose chief concern is that they help other people to be made strong.

He or she has a sort of vision as to what they want other people to be like.  
The interests of others are on their heart both day and night.  
They can sense when there is a danger that others will stumble and fall.  
As an intercessor for other believers on the Lord God they will call -  
And make his concern known specifically, knowing the Lord will hear -  
Appealing to God that the Holy Spirit will draw near  
And bring to pass what is needed immediately to save them -  
Knowing a heresy or temptation is pressuring them to sin.

A person of great zeal usually can see farther than others.  
His vision of God and God's work is far greater than his brothers'.  
He looks beyond the events of the day and beyond tomorrow,  
And can see potential dangers that bring with them much sorrow.  
So, in order to help others, he takes upon himself more labor,  
That he might meet the needs maybe not even known for his neighbor.  
His urgency about the things that really count in the kingdom of God,  
Make him a beloved brother and faithful servant in the work of the Lord.

*"Father, Thou dost know the content of the late-night call. I ask Thee to please make plain to me what action I should take today. If it is urgent that I leave these meetings and go to see that man today, give me some definite assurance. If I should remain here today in order to be at the Gospel meeting, please make that plain too. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 4:14.** *"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you."*

#### **LUKE.**

*When certain names are mentioned, we often make immediate association  
Often linked with the place they live or their present occupation.  
That stands to reason as to how a person is known,  
But it is remarkable how one more word can really change the tone  
Of a comment and turn it into something very significant  
As it reveals a person's character trait or some spiritual bent.  
Like the one word "beloved" in front of the name "Luke,"  
Adds more weight to his testimony than the word "physician" lends to it.*

*One who volunteers to be with another in times of pain or trouble,  
Has a certain reputation that really much more than doubles;  
The respect people have for one who does not avoid association  
With another who is in need of encouragement like Paul in his incarceration.  
To be willing to identify with a sorrowing one and give aid,  
Or come alongside one who suffers and whose nerves are frayed,  
Is to be recognized as one who is a genuine friend indeed -  
And is counted trustworthy by others in times of great need.*

*I wonder what kind of a reputation the mention of my name gives.  
Do people consider me a trustworthy friend in the place I live?  
In places I have traveled to, and in the work which I have done -  
When people hear my name, would they really want me to come?  
Or would it be better as far as they are concerned, if I would stay away,  
Because they are not sure about what I would do or say?  
What word would people put in front or even behind  
My name when they speak it, or if it was written, what would I find?*

*"O Father, I am still in this sort of a dilemma. Should I stay like the Lord did for four more days and then go to see this sick man? Or should I drop everything going on in these meetings and go quickly to speak the Gospel to this one man like Philip did? Help me, O Lord God to know what to do today. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."*

**Colossians 4:15.** *"Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house."*

#### **HOUSE CHURCH.**

*Buildings weren't essential to the early saints  
Private homes were opened to them.  
In places where the apostles preached, God plants  
New churches, and there they gathered to Him.  
The "called out" believers are the church, you see;  
It is important to know the truth.  
Where the saints gather in His name is where He  
Is, not depending on the style of the roof.*

*A woman opened the door of her home and the saints came together,  
To worship and learn the Word of the Lord.  
At a regular time, each week, they would gather  
Like a little oasis of peace in an ungodly world.  
There the gifts God had given to be used for edification,  
Had opportunity to develop and were used*

*To bring to the company the benefit of spiritual instruction,  
As the Spirit guided their function as He would choose.*

*No doubt the use of homes still continues -  
The world is a very large place.  
God is not limited to buildings or venues -  
The believers just need some space  
Where they can come in sweet fellowship,  
And carry out their blessed Lord's commands -  
To continue steadfast in the faith and worship -  
That is all that a New Testament church demands.*

**"Lord God, I thank Thee that Thou dost meet with Thy people in halls, schools, homes and in rented buildings. In many places they are used for a variety of purposes but when the church gathers, it is sanctified by Thy presence among us. May we experience the power and presence of the Lord tonight in the Gospel Hall here. May other souls come to Christ at this time. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 4:16.** *"And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."*

#### **THIS EPISTLE.**

*I don't know how many letters I've written over the passage of years;  
But I do know what I wrote doesn't have the impact this letter bears.  
The Spirit of God knew what needed to be said to bring correction about.  
This epistle came from God that we all might know what to keep or what to cast out.*

*The preeminence of Christ, our union with Him, Christ as the Church's Head,  
All are important themes in this epistle to be heeded wherever it is read.  
Heresies are rejected, all the work of men's hands, anything that adds to grace;  
All of those emotional and psychic experiences in God's church have no place.*

*When one is a new creation in Christ, there are changes we choose to make.  
The things of the old life are put off like a coat; like a new coat, this new life we take.  
Things are different in personal life and in the life of our family.  
We consider what His will is and apply it to ourselves to live righteously.*

*Our freedom in Christ sets us free from the bondage that false teachers try to impose.  
The faith that we need comes from God Himself to us when His will we choose  
To learn from His Word as a company of saints, and it adds to us courage and strength.  
The impact at first may seem small to some, but it brings glory to God at length.*

*The size of the company, and how many attends, is not the measure of success.  
The place God gets and obedience to Him, is the gauge as to what He can bless.  
It is possible to "do church" and leave God out, so people are inclined to come.  
But the words of this epistle, and others like it, are the blueprint for what is to be done.*

*So, with faith, and hopefully, grace, we will continue on to carry out what is God's will.  
Even though some may pity us because we are small, we will maintain God's pattern still.  
This epistle gives guidelines to us in this place, and churches all over the world.  
And by God's grace, I intend to stick to His Word, even though the pages are curled.*

**"Lord God, please grant that Thy servant will never compromise nor demean in any way the written truths that have guided us for years. I fear lest I get senile and careless as age advances and I try to please others. Let Thy servant be kind and gracious, and yet trustworthy and faithful to Thee and Thy Word. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**Colossians 4:17.** *"And say to Archippas, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it."*

#### **YOUR MINISTRY.**

God has not left us here just to travel home with ease.  
There are opportunities around us He expects us to seize,  
And use to full advantage in the work of His kingdom.  
We serve Him when we serve people and are able to bring them  
The Word of the Lord or some clear biblical truth  
That they may learn in their lifetime, what has real worth.  
Then when life is over for both them and us,  
We will look back and see many ways God did bless.

Some work we do is not long by its very nature.  
It may have temporarily quite a lot of danger.  
In times like these we are more conscious of God's presence.  
Things are every limited in scope, there is no room for license  
To do things our way, for we have to make quick decisions.  
There is no one else around to answer our many questions.  
We trust the Lord alone and apply the biblical lessons we have learned;  
And that task is soon completed and, like the disciples, a bit of rest is earned.

There are some things we are called to do for all of our life.  
Day after day that ministry is there, often reaching late into the night.  
Sometimes it gets tedious and no results there can we see.  
And if we are not careful, we might wonder why God gave this work to me.  
The Master knows best who should do this work or that;  
How we are suited to do our ministry right where we are at.  
My obligation is to keep at it until it is completely done.  
This one might last for a lifetime, or until He gives me another one.

*"Father, I thank Thee for giving me opportunities to do some work for Thee from time to time. My hope and prayer are that I might be able to bring some satisfaction and glory to Thee in carrying out these tasks. There are a couple of short-term ones today and I ask Thee for wisdom to do them right. Then there is the on-going one I was called to years ago. Help Thy servant to not ever think I can do this independently or without Thy strength. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

**Colossians 4:18.** *"The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen."*

### **MY BONDS.**

I know there are brothers and sisters in bonds,  
Like Paul, they are often forgotten, some don't even know they are gone.  
Their names I don't know, many I have never seen -  
But I can pray for them and for where they have been.

I am sure their prayers are often heard by God at the throne of grace.  
And it is right for me to intercede for them in this place.  
I don't know what their present need is but I can plead their cause;  
And trust the Lord will allow them some relief, even a momentary pause.

My bonds are different, for I have never been bound or put in chains.  
I guess mine are like velvet cords of love, they are not the same.  
But there is a sense in which I am bound to fulfill a course.  
And when that time has past, God will give me another choice.

Paul appreciated people remembering him in his day.  
People today appreciate words of encouragement that you say.  
Their bonds may be those bonds of excruciating pain,  
Or some kind of illness that sometimes will wax and wane.

Other bonds people are in is a situation that seems extreme.  
They don't know what is the end of it or what is in between



*The day by day exhaustion that comes when there is no way out -  
That can be helped by our intercession when they don't know what it is all about.*

*It is definitely in my power to ease the burdens people bear.  
It is a help to them to know we take them to the Lord in prayer.  
There may be opportunities to some way their load to share.  
Possibly there is a relief that comes to them even though we are not there.*

*"Father, remember the family who are doing the hospital watch over their loved one who is not saved. May there be some way the message of the Gospel can get beyond the hardened heart of a man who has resisted Thy grace for over 50 years. Give Linda special help in the visit today and may I be able to present the Gospel effectively tonight so people know how to be saved. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*