

INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS

Summary notes of message by Keith du Plessis

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Introduction to Paul's letter to the Colossians

There are shifting moments that change us forever - events that shape, move, make and develop us.

Colossians 1:3-7 ESV

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.

This was a fledgling church planted by Philemon and Epaphras as result of hearing Paul's preaching. The church at Colossae had a shifting moment when heresy crept in – in the form of a combination of Jewish legalism and Gnosticism.

We have similar challenges today, with all the theological "crossflows". The thing that suffers the most is the **purity of the gospel**. **We must go back to the simplicity and authenticity of the gospel!**

Paul calls them back to what they originally received: Jesus is centre of everything.

What does the gospel message mean?

I will show you how it affects you in your daily life.

Summarise 3 aspects of what effect the gospel should be having on your life daily.

V3 reputation that they were committed to the **faith, loved** each other, carried **hope**.

Faith can never be divorced from its source. The pursuit of the theology of the gospel or knowledge is a futile exercise. It is **faith in Christ Jesus**. He's the founding moment.

Both Legalism and Gnosticism (the desire for more and more knowledge) make you compare yourself to others, but none of these say, "I walk with Him and He daily changes my life." It is Him we are trying to please. We're not supposed to be judgmental or proud.

The gospel transforms us completely. Knowledge puffs up and legalism causes us to be judgmental.

Love is societally focused. It's self defeating if only directed at me.

Genuine biblical love is counter cultural.

Historically, pandemics were times when the churches grew. We became so familiar with the trappings that we didn't know how to live our authentic life. In these times of crisis, Christians cooked meals, nursed those who were dying etc at the risk of dying. We could say, "I'm safe, I love you enough to look after you."

A church that can relate to others and loves its neighbours in meaningful ways stands out.

You have a **hope**. "Living in the already but having one eye on the not yet." Because you recognise the way you live now, if governed by the future. Start to love by that beat rather than the world's way.

3 effects of the gospel on our daily life:

1. Transformational.

If no change, there's a problem. We must change and must continue to change – to become like Jesus and live like Jesus taught us and showed us.

2. Demarcated by participation.

The gospel by nature is not one of withdrawal but engagement with society. Not just live by a moral code and do good or pursue the purity of knowledge. Both views say withdraw from this earth.

We love between experience and expectancy. There is a temptation to become negative about the world and withdraw. We can struggle with injustices and inconsistencies we see. No people of statesmanship capacity. Can't look to politicians and economists.

Colossians - Everything was coming against them. They were coming against 'Caesar is lord.' Being persecuted. All over this world this gospel is growing. The light of the gospel continues to shine. **Don't disengage!** God if you can use me, use me.

The way we engage must be Christ-like. Don't try force a kingdom way on society and just want to have our way. Doesn't work!

There is no excuse to withdraw or dominate. The kingdom is inside. Jesus redefined blessing: you're blessed when you mourn, are persecuted etc.

3. Duration.

We're in it for the long term. No giving up, no half measures. Jesus didn't give up when persecuted. **The opposite of Christianity isn't atheism, its idolatry.** When you worship what you should use you end up using what you should worship. We take discipleship for granted. We get people saved then don't disciple them. We get them into the kingdom then don't teach them the kingdom.

Idols can be the pursuit of knowledge or morals. Anything that gets in the way of Jesus in my life.

Living in the temporariness.

Living in today by tomorrow's principles - what Jesus told us to. That way will be the standard, one day! His definition of love. No excuses or loopholes.

Churchill - Never give up!

Our enemy is convenience and selectivity. We cut and paste what suits us.

Ephesus, once a thriving church, is now a ruin.... relics in a nation that has chosen to be secular. It's a warning for us. Don't allow yourself to be lukewarm, don't abandon your first love, Jesus.

Don't drop the ball. Don't let us be the break in the link in the chain for future generations.