

Colossians 1:1–2 (KJV 1900) — **1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, **2** To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He introduces Himself as Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ. Not as Saul who is widely known. He the Persecutor who had become a preacher. He gladly laid aside His old name and took the new name Paul- His past achievements meant nothing to Him, what was of value to Him was Christ Jesus. *“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, **that I may gain Christ**” (Philippians 3:8)*

You could say he desired rather to be known and recognised as a new creation in Christ, rather than a student of Gamaliel, *...yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.” (Acts 22:3).* In Romans it opens with Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. The Highest title put upon mankind is, **Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.** But it’s only the carnal man who thinks this nothing.

Paul had never been to this city of Colossae; the city is located in modern Turkey today in bible times it was a city that had approximately 25 to 30 000 people at that time. So about twice the size of Timau. Or half the size of Nanyuki. It was a very proud and Pagen city, but a city in decline. The trade route that made them so prosper had now been changed to Laodicea and the city was now in material decline. **But the Church was growing,** there were faithful brethren who were in Christ.

He establishes the AUTHORITY in which he is coming. Not a casual visit as a friend, **But an APOSTLE sent by God.** One who God inspires, who will bring you the inspired word of God.

He is writing and speaking to the ‘saints,’ meaning those who have been made righteous who have been forgiven, who have been made a most holy. The saints are men of faith, their holiness resulting from Christ Jesus. Not of self, lest anyone should boast. We see they were **Faithful-** they were **brethren-** meaning they had one Father, one hope, and they all partook of one truth, and were all destined for the same inheritance. **In Christ,** and only because of Christ could they be called saints or Gods very own, Gods peculiar possession - a peculiar people; that you

should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

His customary greeting Grace and peace. He has come by the will of God, He will bring the Word of God – **Absolute unchanging truth.** The final Inspired and established truth. Are you not grateful that our lives are built upon Truth which does not change. In the 1960 people thought and dressed and acted a certain way, as the 70 came dress and custom changed. Ten years more, and the 80s ushered in more changes. And now the ideas of the 90's are rapidly being replaced. **But Gods truth never changes-** it is settled forever in heaven. Grace and peace comes only from God, never from mans opinions.

From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We could clearly say that if God is not your Father and you have not the Lord Jesus Christ who gives us access to the Father. There is no grace and no peace. Rather there is confusion, and uncertainty- and wavering beliefs and opinions. **Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Now Paul begins to pray for them - there is great trouble in the city- There was a large Jewish community in Colossae, and these heretics wanted circumcision and Jewish ceremonies. **But they also had other strange ideas.** They are called Gnostics. They had the idea that **Christ was not a real person.** **They didn't value the Scriptures** – rather they criticised and denied the scripture. The thinking was 'There is a higher knowledge you need... that they could receive directly they looked down on scripture and valued their higher knowledge more. (when someone is not built upon the solid truth of scripture know its error) then also they would not listen to the **teaching of Christ being the only way** how can you say Christ is the only way. They **did not believe the Gospel.** They did not **believe Calvary.** They wanted the Jewish ceremonies. They were not just a little bit off, these were fundamental truths they were opposing. These Judaizers all around trying to influence the church with their doctrine – Epaphras, the pastor and founder of the church, is very concerned and travelled the 100 miles to Ephesus to ask Paul, 'What can we do about this? How can we protect the church?' Im sure The apostle gave Him much verbal encouragement, but kept this a matter of prayer. Now when He is in Prison, Paul writes this epistle from Rome. He gives instructions for the letter to also be read in the nearby church of Laodicea. It is a warning epistle. But it is not just a warning epistle. There are

tremendous passages that **exalt Christ and teach of him**. He is saying many things that would strengthen the Colossians against heresy but its fundamental purpose is to teach them and us and to give great encouragement and help.

How did Paul pray for these Faithful brethren in Christ? He didn't launch into a prayer asking for the Lord to protect them from all the error trying to get into the church.

"We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you," (Colossians 1:3, KJV) **'We give thanks to God'** – a great prayer is going to be offered, and it begins with thanksgiving. It is clear there is trouble, there is heresy knocking at the door. They have great needs. One would think Paul Aren't you going to pray for them, that they will be protected, and kept from this error? **Paul begins with thanksgiving before he moves to the petitions.** We see and learn from this.

When we begin to Thank God – for His greatness, for all His Attributes, His care His love His faithfulness. It's stirred in my mind this is to whom I'm praying. The Mighty one, the compassionate one. Faith arises when I think of His goodness. An awareness of His love for me wells up. A knowing comes *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"* (Romans 8:35, NKJV) - I am aware of true riches, eternity I know that what is most precious to me cannot be taken from me. I'm in his hand and nothing shall be able to pluck me out of His hand. As we begin to give thanks we realise just how faithful God has been, we see more and more that we are thankful for. *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."* (Psalms 100:4, KJV). The one who thanks God from the heart, how strong they grow, how patient to endure, how firm to stand fast, how swift to run. They mount with wings as eagles when they learn to serve the Lord and praise the Lord and give thanks to the Lord. Think how glum and down in the dumps the one who has nothing to thank God for, how weak how discouraged.

Paul starts His prayer with all that is worthy of being praised. He thanks God for the evidence of Christian graces in their lives. Faith in Jesus Christ, their love for all the saints, their hope which is laid up in heaven. Lively hope received when they heard the Gospel of truth and received salvation and an eternal inheritance. Oh, he saved me He washed me and cleansed me, he adopted me, I

am His, His eye is upon me. He cares for me. There is grace for me. **Paul set this before the believers to encourage them to run to Christ for protection and help.** In the same way we begin with thanksgiving for the unchangeable things. We run to Him and hide ourselves in his faithfulness. This is where we find his strength and consolation. **Comfort** so strong that it will overpower all doubts, fears, jealousies, sorrows, distractions, putting the heart into a quiet, peaceful, settled frame, and make us solid and firm in whatsoever temptations, trials, or persecutions we may come our way.

Now instead of rushing to the point by making the petition, pouring out to the Lord how bad things are. I begin by giving thanks. Yes, there may be quick arrow prayers in trouble. But we don't live off quick emergency prayer always. We go into our closet and close the door and pray. *"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."* (Matthew 6:6, NKJV)

Secret prayer is the duty of every believer. And it is the best cure for 'care' for worry - secret prayer and thanksgiving. Casting all your cares upon Him for He cares for you. "Let your requests be made known," not to your neighbors, but "unto God." Let it be supplication with thanksgiving.

The apostle gives thanks for what the Lord has done for them, it's also a reminder of His graces... Its also a summery of the doctrine of the gospel concerning the great work of our redemption by Christ. It comes not as preaching, but in the form of a prayer of thanksgiving.

Be reminded What the Lord has done for us. Especially when it seems things are very hard.

1. He has **Redeemed us.** *"We have redemption through His Blood" (Col 1:14). He "gave Himself for us that He might redeem us" (Tit 2:14). Our redemption price is incorruptible (1Pe 1:18), and so possesses eternal value. Valued forever.*

2. He has **Forgiven us.** *"Even the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14). He is ready and willing as a father to provide and to care. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? Luke 12 :24. Consider the Lilies consider how good cloths the grass of the field. Here today gone tomorrow- Will He not much more cloth you*

3. He has **Rescued us**. *"Delivered us from the power of darkness" (Col 1:13). Rescued from the grip of sin, from the fear of death, the terrors of darkness, and the dominion and the lies of the devil.*

4. He has **Settled us**. *"Translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son" (Col 1:13). We who were strangers and foreigners We were dead but now we are "Passed from death into life."*

These are Truths we keep in our minds. *This is what He has done for us. Oh, how much he is able to do for them that believe. The next verses are a rich storehouse of true treasure. Paul still doesn't pray for them to be delivered from all the error around them. Rather He Prays showing the antidote and where the help and strength comes from.*

1. To **"Fill with the Knowledge of His Will"** *"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;" (Colossians 1:9, NKJV) Filled and complete to the Brim like a bottle filled with clear refreshing water. Understanding and deeper knowledge of God's word which results more gratitude in our hearts. Which results in believing and not questioning. Which results in the next point-*

2. To make us **"Walk Worthy of the Lord"** *"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;" (Colossians 1:10, KJV). There are many references in God's Word concerning the **Christian's "walk,"** that is the outward and visible expression of their every-day life before men should be pleasing to God. "Walk worthy of Him who hath called you" (1Ti 2:12). Walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4). Walk as the wise (Eph 5:15). **To walk and not faint is the resulting blessing of waiting upon and giving thanks.** *"But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint."* (Isaiah 40:31, NKJV). **Hebrew writers use the phrase, "exchanging strength," to denote "gathering new strength," and thus "being restored."** He again includes increasing in the knowledge of God - - we haven't arrived at perfection we need MORE. You see we must make constant progress in growing in the knowledge of the Lord, in eagerness to hear and learn more and more, even up until the day we die. Its growth and growing happens over time.*

3. To **"Strengthen with all Might."** (Col 1:11) *"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;" (Colossians 1:11, KJV). He prays that they may have courage and constancy. Paul reminds them and us also of our own*

weakness, for he says, that they will not be strong otherwise than by the Lord's help. according to his glorious power. To be strengthened **is to be equipped by the grace of God** for every good work, and **reinforced by His grace against every evil** force: it is **grace that enables us** to do our duty, and still to hold fast our integrity.

5. To make us Meet (*who has qualified us*) (who has made us capable of communion with himself) to share for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light (Col 1:12). If it were not the great central truth of the atoning sacrifice: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." We would not be in communion with God. We would be totally unqualified to even come to His presence.

V 13&14 *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love," (Colossians 1:13, NKJV)* He has delivered us from darkness which speaks of the sadness and despair of the lost. We were held in bondage with iron fetters and totally unable to get free. And the Lord came to us who had done nothing showed no merit to be delivered and set free and He paid our redemption price with His own precious blood. He did not leave us in Darkness but translated us out of darkness into His glorious Light. It was His effectual call If He didn't draw me I'd still be lost. *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;" (1 Peter 2:9, NKJV)*

The full redemption has been paid- *"in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:14, NKJV)*

It's an eternal deliverance *His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.* We are not barely saved- the **full price** has been paid we are redeemed from the state of sin and misery. We are His purchased possession. He is the guarantee of our Inheritance. To His praise and His Glory. In Paul's prayer of thanksgiving, we have just seen a summary of the doctrine of the gospel Helping us to understand the wonderful work of Redemption.... we thank Him more and more for this gift- If there is any who is not sure of their redemption

come and talk to us- but more importantly bow you head and your heart and come to the throne of Grace and ask -for forgiveness – ask for salvation. Survey what He has done upon the cross for you. Amen-