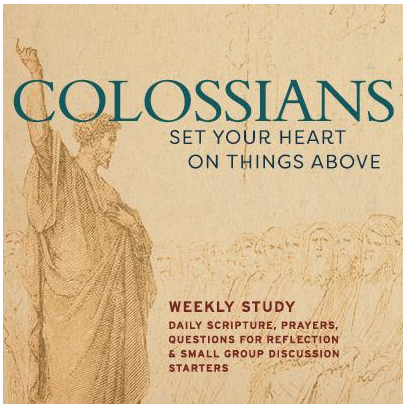


WEEKLY STUDY

Colossians - Week 11

We wrapped up our study of Colossians. Consider how your relationship with Paul has evolved as he has taught us about the centrality, supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. How have you grown as a follower of Christ in the last couple of months?

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for churches everywhere that need the encouragement of others who are following Jesus.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: COLOSSIANS 4.7-9 (NIV)

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. [8] *I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.* [9] *He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.*

- These characters referenced in the closing of Paul's letter to the Colossians represent the scope of the gospel. Tychicus was from the province of Asia. Onesimus was a runaway slave of Philemon who was now a faithful brother to all these in ministry. He is "one of you". Have you ever been surprised to find out that someone is considered "one of you"? What does this mean about the Kingdom of God and how we represent it as the church today?

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- **Prayer Prompt: I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.** [13] **When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. (2 Timothy 4.12-13)**
- *Heavenly Father, may your Kingdom reign on earth, even through me. And may your church reflect the Kingdom more and more as we witness to your grace and mercy that reaches all those who feel disconnected. Amen.*

TUESDAY: COLOSSIANS 4.10-11 (NIV)

My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)[11] *Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me.*

- Aristarchus accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey. He was with Paul in prison which means he most likely was convicted of preaching the gospel just like Paul. Mark was the one that abandoned Paul on his initial journey, but Paul highly commends him to the community of believers. Brotherhood in Christ is more important than personal disputes. These guys along with Jesus (Justus) were a great comfort (relief, consolation) to Paul.

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- **Prayer Prompt: And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers. (Philemon 24)**
- *Jesus Christ, I thank you for those I call brothers and sisters in Christ. You have used them to encourage and correct me. Please bless them and use them more and more. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: COLOSSIANS 4.12-14 (NIV)

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. [13] I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. [14] Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. [15] Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

- Epaphras wrestled in prayer for the believers in Colossae and the surrounding area. He was in agony for them as he wanted them to be mature believers who are being perfected in Christ (the theme of Colossians). Is there someone who has prayed for you, or someone you are praying for with the same kind of agony and wrestling?

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- **Prayer Prompt: *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. [13] Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (Ephesians 6.12-13)***
- *God, thank you for hearing the prayers of others on my behalf. May I be a person of fervent prayer that gets your attention on behalf of others. Amen.*

THURSDAY: COLOSSIANS 4.16-18 (NIV)

After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.
[17] Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord."
[18] I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

- You can see how these letters were meant to be passed around. They were more than direct communications between Paul and a single church. They were meant to carry the truth of what it means to live in Christian community within the young church movement. They were meant to carry the truth to us today. How do Paul's words to the Colossians seem to speak directly to your context today?

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- **Prayer Prompt: With all wisdom and understanding, [9] he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, [10] to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. (Ephesians 1.9-10)**
- *God, your Word is alive and well in my life and in this world today. Help me to see and to hear what you have for me. Amen.*

FRIDAY: GALATIANS 3.26-28 (NIV)

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, [27] for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. [28] There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- There are many things that divide and classify us in this life. We inherently categorize those we meet. It seems to be hardwired in us, but Paul says that Jesus has removed all of that for those who are in him. For those in a position of privilege, this can sound like a threat. For those who are struggling to be seen in this world, this promise of "one-ness" brings hope. You may find yourself on both sides of this worldly divide at different times. What is the day to day impact of the removal of stratification of Jew and Gentile, slave or free, male or female?

- **Prayer Prompt: How good and pleasant it is**
  when God's people live together in unity! (Psalm 133.1)
- Merciful God, I long for unity that seems so elusive in this world. Let your church band together despite our differences to bring you glory. Amen.

SATURDAY: ROMANS 12.4-8 (NIV)

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, [5] so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. [6] We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; [7] if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; [8] if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

- The body of believers is dynamic and highly functional when we recognize what we are. We are the body of Christ. He is our head. If we humble ourselves and live into our God-given gifts, the

Kingdom of God will become visible through us. How do you describe your role(s) within the Body of Christ?

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- **Prayer Prompt: Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12.27)**
- *God, help me to see how you have wired me to help the church live faithfully. Show me fruit in the areas you have equipped me and send encouragement to faithfully pursue you. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

Use the questions below to guide your conversation.

1. As Paul closes his letter, we see relationships built through shared experiences, encouragement, prayer, and serving together. What has helped you experience a genuine sense of belonging in Christian community? How is that different from simply attending church?

2. Even when we're surrounded by people, we can still feel disconnected. What do you think keeps us from building meaningful relationships with others? How can we begin to overcome those barriers?

3. Paul's closing greetings reveal people who shared in one another's lives, struggles, prayers, and work for the Lord. Which of these aspects of Christian community has been especially meaningful in your life? Is there an area where you'd like to grow in sharing life with others?

4. Paul reminds us that in Christ, the divisions that once separated people no longer define them. How can we make sure the community we've found in Christ remains welcoming to those who may feel like outsiders? What might that look like in our own small group? How can we pray for you?