

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

Published weekly by the Forest Hill church of Christ

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Forest Hill Church of Christ

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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship... 10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS (Part Three)

Barry M. Grider

AN EXPOSITORY SURVEY OF COLOSSIANS

Paul And The Will Of God (1:1-2)

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ "by the will of God" (Col. 1:1). If Paul had chosen not to follow the Lord, would God's will have been accomplished? God's will is always carried out regardless of the acceptance or rejection of man. Yet, in this passage it is stated that Paul's apostleship came as an appointment from God. Paul made it clear that such did not come from man. "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). While Paul received his apostleship through a special, unique call from God, every Christian ought to find his place of service and carry out the will of God for his life. As the apostle reminds every Christian, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). What a tragedy it would have been had Paul refused the offer of pardon through Jesus Christ. Not only would he have remained lost, he would have missed carrying out God's plan for his life, "as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:8), becoming the greatest proclaimer and defender of New Testament Christianity.

All That Really Matters (Col. 1:3-8)

So many squander time and refuse to see what is really important in life. Many, trying to climb the ladder of success, will step on others without any hesitation, just to get ahead. Far too often, responsible people obey the fundamental terms of the gospel, yet, refuse to change their lives. This was not true of the brethren at Colosse. Nothing brings more joy to the heart of a gospel preacher than to know brethren are living lives of faithfulness. Epaphras had shared the good news of the Colossians with Paul. The apostle rejoiced because these brethren were committed to all that really matters.

They had faith in Christ, love toward the brethren (v.4), and hope in heaven (v.5). In Christ one finds all spiritual blessings (Eph.1:3), which includes forgiveness (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). For one to have faith in Christ he must be obedient to the will of Christ. Notice the synonymous terms used in this passage—"the word of the truth of the gospel" (v.5) and "the grace of God in truth" (v.6) are equal to the "faith in Christ Jesus" (v.4).

They had love for their fellow saints. This is a natural response of the one who has obeyed the gospel. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22).

The security of the Christian rests upon his hope of eternal life. The goal of heaven ought to constantly be kept before him. Some lose their perspective and lose sight of the goal. However, those who refuse to do so remain ever faithful and their hope is the anchor of their souls (Heb. 6:19). One whose faith is in Christ loves the brethren. He has his hope set in heaven, and he cannot but bear good fruit (1:6).

The Power Of Christ (1:13-14)

The Colossian brethren are reminded of their deliverance from sin. The phrase "power of darkness" has reference to being in the clutches of Satan and wholly giving oneself to his devices. Only Christ has power to take one out of darkness and translate him into His marvelous kingdom of light. Christ's power in regard to this matter goes back to the fact of His death, burial, and resurrection. At Calvary, Christ's *head* was bruised, but on resurrection morning it was obvious that Satan's *head* was bruised, i.e., his power over sin and death was taken away (cf. Gen. 3:15). Jesus journeyed into the realm of death and came forth again that He might establish His kingdom—one where a soul can find protection (Mt. 16:18-19; Acts 2:47). His power of redemption is offered to the human race (Mk. 16:15-16), literally redeeming (buying back) lost souls with His blood (Col. 1:14; cf. Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7).

The Preeminent Christ (1:15-18)

Jesus is preeminent because of His deity. When one saw Jesus, he was looking upon God (Jn.14:9; Phil. 2:5-6). Just as the image on a Roman coin would be the exact replica of Caesar, so Jesus is the express image of the Father (Heb. 1:3). Firstborn of every creature identifies the fact that He is *first in rank*.

Jesus, as Creator, is preeminent because of His relation to that which He created. The second person of the Godhead is heaven's chief spokesperson (Heb. 1:2). "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:9). Not one thing came into being without Him. Parenthetically, it should be asked: "if, as Jehovah's Wit-

nesses contend, Jesus was a created being, did He create Himself?"

Jesus is preeminent in the church. The church belongs to Christ. He bought it. He reigns over it as head. He is glorified in it.

The Peace Of Christ (1:19-29)

Jesus came to take the sinful hand of man, cleanse it, and return it to the holy hand of God, reconciling the man back to God. No other passage demonstrates the fullness of Christ's redemption better than this passage.

It should be noted from the Scriptures that God is not reconciled to man, as is taught by the Methodist Discipline. Instead, fallen man must be reconciled to God. Paul said: "[W]e were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5:10, emphasis added). Again, in 2 Corinthians 5:20, he exhorted: "[B]e ye reconciled to God." Since it is the man who sins, and by sin is separated from God, it is necessary for the man who sins to be made clean and be reconciled to God. Some characterize this by saying, "The man must return to the One from whom he has fallen."

The meaning of the cross is to offer peace through the blood of Christ. The motive of the cross is to change the unrighteous and make them righteous. The mystery of the cross is to be made known throughout the whole world.

Dealing With False Doctrine (2:4-23)

The Colossians were beset with false teachers who were trying to mix the teachings of Christ with human philosophy, Judaism and paganism. Because of the all-sufficiency of Christ, this could not and must not be done. Therefore, Paul exhorted them to be firmly rooted in Christ, built up in Him, established in the faith, and to remember what they had been taught (v.7). What did Paul remind them?

1. He told them to *beware of human philosophy* (v.8). Man, almost from the beginning of time, has had a fascination with human wisdom. He thinks he can improve upon the plan of God. Yet, God does not need any help from intellectual snobs. Long after the last philosopher is dead, God's Word will still be Truth.

2. He told them to *beware of Judaism* (v. 14). Just as Christ blotted out the old covenant, no longer should God's people seek to abide by it. Christ was the superior sacrifice Who

brought into being a superior covenant. Judaism mingled with Christianity creates apostasy (Gal. 5:4). Therefore, have nothing to do with it.

3. He told them to *beware of Paganism* (v. 18). Superstition has no place in the heart of the Christian. Those guilty of abusing themselves with ascetic practices in order to “purify or punish the flesh” as atonement for sin do not understand that through Christ complete access to the Father is available (Heb. 4:14-16).

TOP TEN SIGNS YOU'RE NOT READING YOUR BIBLE ENOUGH

10. The preacher announces that the sermon is from Genesis and you check the table of contents.
9. You think Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had a few hits in the '60's but never really amounted to much.
8. You turn to Psalms and a WWII savings bond falls out.
7. When someone asks you your favorite Old Testament character, you say Hercules.
6. Your favorite Bible verse is “Cleanliness is next to godliness.”
5. You get mad because you can't find Charleton Heston in the concordance nor in the table of contents.
4. Catching the kids reading the Song of Solomon, you demand: “Who gave you this?”
3. You think the minor prophets worked in the quarries.
2. You fall for it when the Preacher tells you to turn to 2nd Hezekiah.
1. You think that Job rhymes with Bob.

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