

Soaring Oaks Presbyterian Church: Adult Bible Study Questions for 12/10/2006
Colossians 1:1-14

- 1. Read Colossians 1:1-2. Who were the senders of this letter and to whom did they send it? If you have access to Bible maps, find the city of Colosse. Take a quick look at the way Paul opens his other letters to churches; do you think that the “saints” and the “faithful brothers” at Colosse indicate different people or the same people?**

Paul and Timothy are the senders.

The saints and faithful brothers at Colosse were the recipients.

Colosse is west of the center of present-day Turkey. It is just east of Laodicea which is between Ephesus and Pisidian Antioch. This area was called Phrygia or Galatia in Paul’s day. When Paul wrote “Galatians” it was to the churches in the area. This letter was to the Colossians directly.

Rom 1:7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ — their Lord and ours:

2 Cor 1:1 To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia:

Gal 1:2 To the churches in Galatia:

Eph 1:1 To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Phil 1:1 To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

The “saints and faithful brothers” refers at least to the body of believers, “the saints,” at Colosse. The “faithful brothers” may be simply the Hebrew writing style we see in the O.T., such as the Psalms, in which a point is made in two ways, one after the other. Or, the reference could be to those serving in leadership roles in the church there.

- 2. Read Colossians 1:3-8: Paul gives thanks for the fruit of gospel ministry in Colosse.**
(a) To whom does Paul give the glory for the establishment and growth of faith among the colossians?

Col 1:3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,

In all things, we should be praising God first, not men. For God is the architect of all. Apart, from God, of course, there would be no believers in Colosse to whom Paul could write.

(b) In verses 4-5, what three things characterized the Colossians now that were not theirs before the gospel came to them?

Faith in Christ Jesus – not just “your faith” but the proper object or focus of that faith

Love for all the saints – there is a special kinship among believers.

Hope stored up for them in Heaven – Paul says in Romans 2:5 that unbelievers are storing up wrath for themselves not hope.

These are theirs now because of the work of Christ which Paul preached to them through the gospel of which he was an apostle (by the will of God).

All believers have these – faith, love, and hope – in greater or lesser strength.

For which – faith, love, or hope – are you most grateful right now?

(c) When ministers of the gospel came to Colosse (or anywhere else) , what had to happen before the truth of the gospel began to benefit the people?

Col 1:6 All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.

When people hear and understand the gospel it can begin to bear fruit to God which also is the great benefit to themselves and others.

How ready are you to help others hear and understand the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Are you ready to share it? Is your own understanding such that you can help others understand/

(d) Who brought the gospel to Colosse, and how does Paul describe him?

Col 1:7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,

The Pettingills are going out as faithful ministers of Christ on our behalf. As fellow servants, I pray we will be encouragers and helpers to them where they serve in Honduras.

3. Read Colossians 1:9-12: Paul shares his prayers to God on behalf of the Colossians.

(a) For each verse, summarize the blessings for which Paul prays.

Col 1:9 knowledge of his will; all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Col 1:10 worthy life, pleasing to God, doing good works, growing in knowledge of God

Col 1:11 strength through God's power; great endurance and patience

Col 1:12 joy in thanksgiving to the Father, inheritance of a saint in the kingdom of light.

Praying God's word back to Him can be great training, aligning our thoughts with God's mind.

This prayer of Paul's for the Colossians can be your prayer for others. Try it, and report back, so we can rejoice and praise our God together.

(b) Although we all need every one of the blessings described in these verses, which verse speaks most strongly to you today? Why? How would you apply the blessings noted there in your life today?

Col 1:11 strength through God's power; great endurance and patience

4. Read Colossians 1:12-14

(a) What three things does Paul say have happened to the Colossians – to all believers?

(1) qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

John 1:12-13 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

(2) rescued us from the dominion of darkness and placed us in the kingdom of the Son he loves

Rom 8:1-2 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

The law of sin and death is the dominion of darkness.

The law of the Spirit of life is the dominion of Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit in us.

(3) redeemed us, forgiven our sins [through Jesus' atoning blood]

(b) Ponder these verses for at least five minutes (it may seem like a long time), then describe your role and God's role in making these things true of you.

My part is the believing and the receiving.

God's part is the authorizing and the giving.

The reason for pondering these verses for 5 minutes is this: we often read superficially without meaning to do so. We are satisfied by the first measure of understanding, what we are able to grasp through our human resources alone. By spending more time, we wait in the place of blessing, where the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and makes them known to us beyond what we would gather on our own. Then we may see the grandeur, the glory, the blessedness, the truth of these astonishing words of our Lord.

Col 1:12-14 .. the Father has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.