

PALOMINO VALLEY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Sunday, November 26, 2023

The Preeminence Of Christ Part 1

A Prayer For Spiritual Wisdom and Understanding

Colossians 1:9-14

ORDER OF SERVICE

Welcome:

Opening Prayer:

Worship: **My Jesus I love Thee – Hymn 380**

The Secret Place – Hymn 51

Scripture Reading: **Proverbs 3:5-7**

Message:

Closing Prayer:

Worship: **Glorious Day – Hymn 212**

Benediction: **Numbers 6:24-26**

Doxology

SCRIPTURE READING and COMMENT:

Our scripture reading for this Lord's Day is from the book of Proverbs. The book of Proverbs is a book of life's most profound truths. It is a book of simple moral statements about the realities of life.

Proverbs 3:5-7 – ⁵ *Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.* ⁶ *In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.* ⁷ *Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.*

5 - This proverb admonishes us to fully trust in the Lord with all our heart. To have full reliance and confidence in the Lord and full renunciation of reliance on self. This does not mean that we are to never use our own understanding in forming plans with discretion and employing legitimate means to achieve an outcome in our everyday lives, but that when we use it, we are to depend on God and his direction and providence to achieve those outcomes.

6 - In everything we do we must ascertain whether or not the action we are about to undertake is in accordance with God's precepts and then look for this guidance and direction and then we must acknowledge Him with thankfulness and praise. He will make our paths straight if we listen.

7 – This proverb is a protest to self-sufficiency, self-conceit and self-reliance. Wisdom is to trust in the Lord and unwisdom is to trust in ourselves. Trusting in ourselves instead of the Lord leads to self-dependency with all the baggage that that carries such as pride, an overinflated and fragile ego and arrogance which is in direct conflict with the "fear of the Lord". *The great hinderance to true wisdom is the thought that we already have it.* (Pulpit Commentary)

From the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 5:21 - *"Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"*

The fear of the Lord is true wisdom – **Job 28:28 and Proverbs 1:7**

Fear of the Lord is the best corrective for relying on one's own wisdom!!!

Review:

When I last had the honor of coming before this fellowship of followers of Christ teaching from the book of Colossians (it's been a few months), we learned that the Apostle Paul wrote this epistle while he was imprisoned in Rome in about A.D. 60-62. This was one of four of what are known as his prison epistles along with Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon. Paul wrote this letter to the church at Colosse in response to a request from a saint that Paul had preached the Gospel to, saw converted, and trained in Ephesus named Ephaphris (epa-fris). Ephaphris planted the church in Colosse and was its pastor bringing up many believers in that city. Paul had never visited Colosse or the Colossian church

Early on in the life of the Colossian church a great heresy began to take hold that from all accounts was most likely an early form of Gnosticism.

Gnosticism is a collection of religious ideas and systems which originated in the late 1st century AD among Jewish and early Christian sects. These various groups emphasized personal spiritual knowledge above the orthodox teachings, traditions, and authority of traditional religious institutions.

Gnosticism became a prominent heretical movement of the 2nd-century Christian Church, partly of pre-Christian origin. Gnostic doctrine taught that the world was created and ruled by a lesser divinity, the demiurge, and that Christ was an emissary of the remote supreme divine being, esoteric knowledge (gnosis) of whom enabled the redemption of the human spirit.

This was not the full blown version of Gnosticism the church battled in the 2nd century and most likely contained doctrines of the Essens branch of Judaic Mysticism and Greek Asceticism. This heresy which came to be known as the Colossian Heresy relied heavily on denial of self, mysticism, salvation by works, laws, visions etc ... and was considered to be the first heresy of the early Christian church.

Please note – The oldest heresies are also the newest. This will be addressed later in the message.

So, Epaphris (epa-fris), acknowledging the heresy and it's danger to the church, traveled from Colosse to Rome and alerted Paul. Paul immediately saw this as the danger to the church it was and under great concern wrote the letter to the church at Colosse which we know as the book of Colossians. This letter addresses the repudiation of the spreading heresy in Colosse and focuses on the sufficiency of Christ alone for justification and salvation. And, in my opinion, is one of the most Christ centered epistles in all of the New Testament.

Message:

Open your Bibles to the book of Colossians chapter 1 and verses 9-14 and let us read God's Word:

⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard about it, have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the [a]knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, [b]to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every

good work and [c]increasing in the [d]knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to [e]His glorious might, [f]for the attaining of all perseverance and [g]patience; joyously ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us [h]to share in the inheritance of the [i]saints in light. ¹³ [j]For He rescued us from the [k]domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of [l]His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:9-14 is a prayer from the Apostle Paul for the Colossians' spiritual knowledge and growth. It connects with verses 3-8 where the Paul applauds the Colossians and Epaphris (epa-fris) for all they have done under the headship of Christ. In the NASB 1995, these verses are under the heading of the "Preeminence of Christ".

Preeminence is defined as the quality of being superior. It's a type of high status or distinction for anything considered to be the best at something, surpassing all others.

Let's unpack these verses.

9 - For this reason we also, since the day we heard about it, have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the [a]knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Paul, having been made aware of the struggles the Colossian church was having, started interceding on behalf of the Colossian church asking that God would strengthen them with knowledge, spiritual wisdom and understanding. Helping them to grow in spiritual maturing and walking in a way that was glorifying of God and pleasing him.

In this verse the Greek word for knowledge is the usual one **gnosis** and it intensified by the use of the Greek word **epignosis** which means full discernment; complete comprehension after the 1st knowledge of a matter. This is not superficial knowledge. It is a deep and thorough knowledge of the will of God fully and completely revealed in the Word of God.

Ephesians 4:13-14 - ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the [a]knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature [b]which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ [c]As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of people, by craftiness [d]in deceitful scheming;

10 - that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Paul desires that the Colossians walk worthy of the Lord, wanting them to live in a manner that reflected the works God had done and is doing in their lives.

Walking worthy of the Lord is a key NT concept calling the believer to live in a way that is consistent with his identification with the Lord who saved him.

Ephesians 4:1-3 – ¹ *Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Philippians 1:27 - ²⁷ *Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one [a]mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;*

One of the byproducts of a righteous life is spiritual fruit. The bible identifies spiritual fruit as (1) leading people to Christ (**1 Cor. 16-15**); (2) praising God (**Heb. 13:15**); (3) giving money (**Rom. 15:26-28**); (4) living a godly life (**Heb. 12:11**); and (5) displaying holy attitudes (**Gal. 5:22-23**).

Let's read **Galatians 5:22-23** - ²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

And, spiritual growth will not happen apart from the knowledge of God.

1 Peter 2:2 - ² *and like newborn babies, long for the [a]pure [b]milk of the word, so that by it you may grow [c]in respect to salvation,*

Increasing knowledge is where spiritual growth takes place, and the means of spiritual growth is present. It is where we *“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* (**2 Peter 3:18**)

11 - strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Believers are empowered not their need but according to God's strength. Paul desired to see the power of God Himself at work in the Colossian believers.

Paul addresses being *“strengthened with all might”* as leading to patience and longsuffering. These terms refer to the attitude we have during trials. Patience looks more at enduring difficult circumstances while longsuffering looks at enduring difficult people.

Eph. 3:16 20 - ¹⁶*that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,*

Strength through the Holy Spirit in the inner man with spiritual power is possessed by every Christian who submits to God's Word and Spirit.

12 - giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

Being qualified means to be able or authorized to perform a task. We, as believers, can never be qualified on our own merit, instead God makes us sufficient through Jesus Christ. The tense of this verb points to "qualifying" as an act that happened in the past rather than a process being executed in the present.

We are totally unable to qualify ourselves, through any act or work we can perform to have eternal life with God. The father "qualifies" us for eternal life with Him, and the Son will reward us at the end of the race (**Rev. 22:12**).

The term saints as used by Paul describes the believers at Colossae and encourages them to recognize that their heavenly Father has decisively rescued them from the powers of darkness. (**vv. 12-14**) They can, therefore, be thankful for the redemption they enjoy (**Col. 2:7; 3:17; 4:2**).

Colossians 3:17 - ¹⁷ *Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.*

13 - He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

God has liberated believers from the dominion of darkness (Satan's kingdom) through spiritual liberation by God which is in contrast to the realm of light with truth and purity. (John 1:4-9; Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:5).

1 Peter 2:9 - ⁹ *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

14 - in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Redemption points naturally to the payment of a price or ransom for the release of a slave. The slavery from which believers are released is not physical but spiritual. They are freed from bondage to sin by forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ

Let's read **Ephesians 1:7** - ⁷*In [a]Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our wrongdoings, according to the riches of His grace.*

Let's read **Romans 8:1-2** - *Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life [a]in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.*

So through Christ and His atoning works on that cross at Calvary, our sins and the sins of all those who believe and have believed and will believe are forgiven – and – not only forgiven but forgotten. This is what is called expiation where our sins have been removed and are as far from us the East is from the West (Psalm 103:12) This is explained in the Book of Ezekiel, chapter 18 and verses 21-22.

Let's read **Ezekiel 18:21-22** - ²¹ *“But if the wicked person turns from all his sins which he has committed and keeps all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall certainly live; he shall not die. ²² All his offenses which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live*

And of course we know that we do not gain our righteousness through our efforts but by Christ!!!

I believe that Ezekiel 18 is one of the most thorough and concise treatises on sin in the Bible.

Throughout the letter to the church at Colosse, the Apostle Paul emphasizes what believers (then and now) have already experienced in Christ as a way of counteracting the false teachers who are undermining the complete sufficiency of Christ for salvation. This is the purpose of his letter to the church at Colosse which was ending the Colossian heresy, stopping its spread and reversing its impact on the church. This was so critical, that Paul stopped writing the other letters he was working on to address this heresy at Colosse and have it delivered ASAP.

So, what about today? What about the false teachers and heretics that are currently undermining the Word of God in the professing church and spreading their heresies by way of the traditional media, the Internet and so called social media? How do we as Bible believing Christians address this subject, or should we? The answer to the question ... or should we ... of course is yes.

Remember at the beginning of this message when reviewing the first 8 verses of Colossians 1, I made this comment:

The oldest heresies are also the newest.

This is so true. I believe that there is nothing new under the sun that Satan has used to infiltrate and undermine the teaching of God's word to the unconverted both at and away from the pulpit. Satan hates God and hates God's holy Word of Scripture and I believe that he would love to see it disappear... go away ... cease to exist. This, of course, is not going to happen. So Satan doing as Satan does, sows seeds of doubt and lies about the veracity of God's Word and entices people away from God's Word and into ... what ... relying on their own understanding. Remember our earlier reading of **Proverbs 3:5-7**?

Here's a reminder of Proverbs 3:5 – ⁵ *Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.*

I see, hear and read about so many false teachers actively misleading tens of thousands even hundreds of thousands of souls who think they are okay and living their best life ever and have no idea they are hell bound sinners. The heresies being taught today are really not that much different from the heresies at Colosse.

- The fall in the garden did not have that big of effect on humanity. We are not dead in or sins and trespasses because of it, we are just mostly sick.
- Christ was not divine and was not fully God and fully man.
- Salvation is based on works and faith
- Mysticism
- New-age occultism
- God is only love and there is no retribution for sin.
- Everybody goes to heaven
- God wants you to be rich and never get sick (prosperity gospel)
- Etc ... etc ... etc ...

These heresies are not only in the charismatic/word faith/NAR (wave 3 Pentecostalism) “churches” and are now finding their way into the evangelical branch of the professing church.

What these “churches” have done and the “pastors” who lead them is to preach a different gospel and a different christ. They have in essence, created a god in their image that suits them either emotionally or provides a way to monetary wealth and power or both. These “pastors” are leading hundreds of thousands straight to the lake of fire and eternal damnation. And, the people being misled have a responsibility as well.

Let's read **2 Timothy 4:3** - ³ For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires,

So what do we do? How do we prevent ourselves from falling to these false teachers and heresies? Well, the answer to that question is by knowing the Word of God through His holy book of Scripture. Nothing else. Sola Scriptura!!! Test everything through the light of Scripture.

1 John 4:1-3 - ¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now it is already in the world.

How do we respond to friends, family, and people we may or may not know? Do we tell them they are wrong and headed to the lake of fire ... well yea ... and do it always with love in our hearts and deep sense of caring for them. So, we should go to Scripture on how to handle this.

Colossians 3:12-17 - ¹² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and [a]patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so must you do also. ¹⁴ In addition to all these things put on love, which is [b]the perfect bond of unity. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ, to which you were [c]indeed called in one body, [d]rule in your hearts; and [e]be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of [f]Christ richly dwell within you, [g]with all wisdom teaching and admonishing [h]one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

And we always present the Gospel

We have a responsibility as Christians to respond to false teaching and heresy. Our primary weapon for this is the Word of God. Read it, love it and live it all to the glory of God alone.

Amen

Worship:

BENEDICTION: Num. 6:24-26 - ²⁴“The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; ²⁶The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.” Amen

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen