



FULLNESS OF LIFE

Living in Jesus Every Day

Kew Baptist Church
January 2020

STUDY BOOKLET

*A journey through the Letter to the Colossians,
engaging with the supremacy of Jesus in everything
pertaining to our lives.*

Background

Colossians was most likely written in about 60 AD from the apostle Paul to a church in the small town of Colossae.

This town was relatively unimportant in the Roman world; a dot on the map in the Roman province of Asia (modern-day Turkey). However, through faithful servants, the gospel of Jesus Christ had come to this town, and God had grown a small church of believers. Paul had never visited this town or its fledging church, but knew of it through his friend and Colossae local Epaphras, who likely met Paul and first heard of Jesus when visiting Ephesus in about 52-55 AD (see Acts 19). After Epaphras returned home to Colossae and started the church, Paul kept an interest in it, and so wrote this letter as an encouragement to its members while in prison, probably in Rome.

In this letter, Paul describes his joy at all he has heard about this small church. At the same time, he writes a number of warnings to them about the dangers of various false teachings that threatened to derail their faith. Partly to build a defence against these teachings, Paul significantly emphasises the glory and completeness and all-sufficiency of faith in Jesus. To any teaching that suggested mature believers needed Jesus *and* something else, be it Jewish rituals, an ascetic life-style, or additional worship practices, Paul responds with a resounding No! Jesus Christ is enough, and to add to Jesus is to take away from his sufficiency, for both eternal salvation and life with Jesus today.

This guide has been prepared in parallel to our January 2020 sermon series. It's designed for personal reflection each week, and can be used for group discussion as well. We encourage you to use this guide in your own devotional time as together we consider Paul's remarkable and incredible relevant words from almost two thousand years ago.

Location and Archaeology

Colossae was a city in the province of Phrygia located in the Lycus Valley within Anatolia, or Asia Minor, about 120 miles east of the major port city of Ephesus. Today this is part of southwestern Turkey. In the first century AD, Colossae was a small agrarian town. However, in the 5th century BC, Colossae was a thriving economy, known especially for its unique textiles and wool.

The first known reference to Colossae can be found in the writings of the Greek historian Herodotus, who mentions that Xerxes stopped briefly at the great city of Colossae during the Persian wars.



Yet, the eventual demise of Colossae was linked to the construction of a trade route in the third century that went west of Colossae to Laodicea. Eventually Laodicea became a prominent city, and Colossae turned into a rural community. Thus, in the first century Colossae was a rather insignificant city in the Roman world. Colossae remains an unexcavated tell (or mound), although a few stone steps from a small theater are visible on the eastern side.

The Supremacy of Christ in All Things

Colossians 1:1-23

What three Christian characteristics does the Colossian church have? (1:3-8)

Consider 1 Corinthians 13:13 if stuck.

Where can you see those three characteristics in yourself, your friends and family, and your church?

What is Paul's main prayer for this church? (1:9-14)

Identify all the practical outcomes of this knowledge of God for the church. (1:10-12)

Consider something you know about God, perhaps something recently learnt.

What could be the practical outcomes of this knowledge in your life?

Does Jesus seem as supreme as he is described in 1:15-20 today?

Where in your daily life do you need to be reminded of Jesus' supremacy?

Consider where around you the world operates with the presumption that Jesus is not the ultimate king.

Contrast this glorious picture (1:15-19) with the horror of Jesus death (1:20).

Give thanks to God for not withholding his beloved Son for our sake.

What image of the gospel does Paul use in 1:21-22?

Once and, now

Is this an image that resonates with you?

Time with God

Praise God for the supremacy of Jesus in all things

Use the words of 1:15-20 if that helps

Confess to God those times we lack in Faith, Hope and Love

Pray that we would exalt Jesus as king at all times

Thank God for sending his Son for our sake to reconcile us to God

Spiritual Fullness in Christ

Colossians 2:6-23

What does Paul seem to be concerned about for this church? (2:8)

What are your concerns for the church today?

What does 2:9-12 say about

The greatness and sufficiency of Jesus?

The greatness and sufficiency of our salvation through Jesus?

Do you ever wonder if you're missing out on something?

Consider the outline of the gospel in 2:13-15.

Does it sound like believers in Jesus are missing anything?

Does the image of the gospel here resonate with you?

You were, God made you

About what did some people judge the Colossians in Paul's time? (2:16, 18, 20)

About what do some Christians judge others today?

Are you ever at risk of judging other Christians like this?

What is the limitation of setting rules to follow? (2:20-23)

Consider also Jesus in Mark 7:6-8: What do rules fail to change?

Are there any rules you might look to for maintaining holiness?

Time with God

Praise God that everything we need has been done by Jesus

Confess those things about which we might judge other Christians, and for those times we rely on rules rather than changing our hearts

Pray that God's people that you know would remain strong in faith in Jesus

Thank God for sending his Son for our sake to make us alive!

Daily Living in Christ

Colossians 3:1-17

What does Paul say in 3:1-4 about:

Our present life in Jesus?

What the future holds for us?

In this section, Paul urges believers to “put to death” and “rid yourselves” of certain practices. He also speaks about these as ways “you used to walk in” (3:5-10)

In doing this, how does Paul balance

Our present transformation in Jesus?

Our need for ongoing change and transformation?

Are you personally able to celebrate the transformation already achieved *and* long for the future God has for you?

What is Paul’s main source of motivation for holy living? (3:9-12)

Which of the five characteristics Paul lists in 3:12 do you need to grow in today?

Almost all of Paul’s directions relate to our life together as believers.

How do you find it bearing with each other, forgiving each other, being at peace with each other and encouraging each other with God’s word?

Time with God

Praise God for his promise of total renewal of all things when Jesus returns

Confess those ways of life (esp. 3:5, 8) that are still challenges for you today

Pray that God would continue to grow in you a love towards his people

Thank God for the new transformed identity we have in Jesus today!

Working for Christ Every Day

Colossians 3:23-4:6

Given a number of early Christians were slaves, how radical were Paul's words to work *as working for the Lord*? (3:23-24)

How is Paul's corresponding direction to slave-masters similarly radical? (4:1)

Are you able to have this perspective on your own work today?

What might you expect Paul to pray for, given that he is in prison? (4:3-4)

What does he encourage prayer for instead?

How does this challenge your own priorities in prayer?

Consider Paul's call to make the most of every opportunity with outsiders.

(3:5)

What opportunities has God given you to be bold with the gospel in your life?

How might you make the most of these? (consider 3:6)

Time with God

Praise God for Paul's letter to Colossians, and its encouragements and challenges for our life with Jesus today

Confess any tendency to apathy in work, or harshness towards colleagues

Pray for boldness for yourself and others in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus

Thank God for the opportunities he has given you to share your faith

Personal Notes and Reflections