

Colossians -January Class

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Well, let me express my appreciation for your being here this morning and starting off a new year right for our January class, and we are going to begin a new study.

I guess that's a good way to begin a new year, and we're going to continue. With consideration of Pauline Epistles, having taken Philippians, we're going to look now at Colossians.

And you've got a sheet that contains copies of the 26th translation. And the main reason that I do this is because I recognize that in just about every group, there are numerous translations involved, and sometimes it gets a little complicated trying to figure out exactly what a verse is saying.

So in an effort to help remedy that, we've provided photocopies of the pages from the 26th translation New Testament. And I would just remind you once again that each verse begins in bold print, and the bold print represents the traditional King James translation.

And all of the others that follow are an abbreviation of the translation they represent, like the ASV is the American Standard Version. And there's the Knox translation.

[1 : 20] The NAB is the New English Bible. And the TAY is Taylor's translation. And that's, of course, from the Living Bible. So each of these presents the text at hand in just a little bit different way, sometimes using a different word but is synonymous, perhaps, with other words.

And my experience has been in the 40-plus years that I've been using the 26th translation New Testament, it has proved invaluable to me in just the illumination of the text in general.

And sometimes when you read it in one translation, it really doesn't grab you. And read it in another, and it just comes out like it's all lit up, and it makes a huge difference. So that's why we're trying to utilize these and make the most of it that we possibly can.

So join with me in a word of prayer, and we'll commit the study to the Lord. Gracious Father, we once again want to express our appreciation to you for life itself, for the privilege of living in a world that you have made, even though we have remade it in man's image, and in its fallenness and in all its flaws, it is still representative of a life that is really worth living.

And we thank you that we have this privilege, even in a fallen world as fallen creatures. And we look forward to the time when our redemption, which has begun with the redemption of our spirit, will be completed with the redemption of these bodies as well.

[2 : 52] And then things will be restored and be as they ought to be, and you will once again be able to look upon creation and pronounce it very good. And in the meanwhile, you have equipped us as believers to be able to not only survive, but to thrive even in the midst of a fallen world.

And we do that on the basis of the grace that you have provided, for which we are so thankful. So as we commit our study to you, we do so mindful of the fact that we live and move and have our being in you.

We serve it your pleasure. There is no other way we would want it. Thank you for that. In Christ's name. Amen. I suppose that any of you who have been reading the Bible for a number of years have noted that there are some real similarities between some of the letters that the Apostle Paul was written.

And I suspect that there are probably no greater similarity than what exists between Paul's letter to the Colossians and his letter to the Ephesians.

There's a lot of similarities between those. And in some of my research, I just came across an excellent paragraph that was offered by Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas, a scholar of a previous generation.

[4 : 12] And he's written a number of commentaries. And in this particular one, on his studies in Colossians and Philemon, he makes this observation. And I think it's worth noting.

He says, In further consideration of the Apostle's purpose in writing, it is especially interesting to notice the relation of this epistle, that is Colossians, to that address to the Ephesian Christians, because the likeness between them is so striking.

As one writer puts it, Out of 95 verses in Colossians, 78 have a marked resemblance to Ephesians, while out of the 155 verses in Ephesians, 78 resemble Colossians.

But the particular character of this resemblance is even more striking. The same topics are treated in each, though with a very significant difference in application.

In Colossians, we are shown Christ in the church, while in Ephesians, the church is seen to be in Christ. So the emphasis is a little different.

[5 : 31] One writer has thus stated this comparison. In the Ephesians, the church is the primary object, and the thought passes upward to Christ as the head of the church.

In Colossians, Christ is the primary object, and the thought passes downward to the church as the body of Christ. The more this contrast is studied, the more remarkable it will appear.

In Colossians, the apostle gives a careful and thorough statement concerning the person and work of Christ, while in Ephesians, the main topic is our Lord's relation to the church.

In Colossians, there is no such emphasis on the church and its privileges, but only on the great realities concerning its head, since nothing can be allowed for one moment to come between the soul and God.

Further, the same obligations are emphasized in each epistle, but with this different bearing. Our life, as stated in Colossians, is to be lived in relation to Christ, while many of the moral applications in Ephesians are related to the church and to the duties of one member of it to another.

[6 : 51] Doubtless, because of this very emphasis on the divine person and work of Christ, Colossians was intended for reading by other churches as well. And Paul makes reference to that in chapter 4 and verse 16.

The secret of purity, whether of doctrine or of life, and the assurance of protection against error, are both found in the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world.

So, we offer that as some preliminary background material to our engaging Paul's letter to the Colossians. And if you think there are similarities between this and Ephesians, and you read one and read the other, and you say, I think I remember reading something real close to that.

Well, you did. And really, it's understandable because Paul needed to address some of the same issues with the same solutions to both churches.

And it is no different from a preacher who is moving from one congregation to another, or an evangelist or a Bible teacher who goes from one community to another.

[8 : 02] It is not at all unusual for him to repeat his messages, especially if he is convinced that the needs of each congregation are very similar, and the message would be as appropriate for one as it would be for the other.

So, I think at least every preacher can easily understand that, because that is often the case. So, this is another of Paul's epistles, and it is commonly referred to as a prison epistle, and that is mildly incorrect, although it is true that Paul was confined.

He was under house arrest. We've made that observation before, and it is true with Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, all of which were written in the same time frame, probably within the same year to year and a half.

And they were written by Paul when he was occupying his own rented apartment, if you will, as a citizen of Rome, and he was in Rome at the time, awaiting his day in court, when he would appear before Caesar himself, a privilege afforded to Roman citizens, and there he would plead his case. As best as we can understand, from this house arrest, Paul will apparently be found not guilty by the Caesar, and he will be set at liberty.

[9 : 32] He will enjoy, perhaps, another two years of freedom, then he will be rearrested during a severe time of persecution of Christians throughout the Roman land, and then he will be placed in prison in the Mamertine dungeon in Rome, and from that he will not be released.

There he will be sentenced to death, and he will be executed. Tradition says he was beheaded in the midst of a grove of trees just a short distance outside the city of Rome, and thus Paul met his end as a servant to Jesus Christ.

But in this epistle, he begins by identifying himself, which is characteristic of all of his epistles, because contrary to the way we do it today, we write a letter, and then we sign our name at the end.

But in the New Testament times, because these writings were in a scroll that was rolled up, the only way that you could determine who wrote the letter would be to unwind, unroll the whole scroll, and see whose signature was at the end.

So in order to eliminate that necessity, it became common practice to open the letter with the use of the name of the individual who was writing it.

[10:54] So this isn't an indication that Paul had a big ego and thought of himself as very important, so he starts off the epistle Paul. That was a common way of doing it in that day.

And he also identifies himself as an apostle. And the word apostle, apostolon, simply means one who is sent with the authority of the one sending him.

And it's very important to make that distinction, because it isn't simply one who is sent. Because an angel is one who is sent, and the word angel, of course, means messenger, but no angel ever came with the full authority of the one sending him.

Yet in the case of the apostle Paul, he could say that he was an apostle. Angels are not called apostles. They are called messengers. An apostle is one who is sent with the authority of the one who sent him.

And that's very important. He is not only an apostle, but he is an apostle of Jesus Christ. That's the one sending. So he comes with the authority of Christ.

[12:01] And Christians, sadly, do not often understand this, and they tend to relegate Paul to no more than that of a human stature.

But once you understand what apostleship is, what this means is, Paul is sent by Jesus Christ with and under the authority of Jesus Christ.

So when Paul speaks, Christ is speaking through him. I wish more people understood that. If they did, they would not talk about, well, Paul, you know, Paul said thus and so, but we really need to go by what Jesus said.

And it is a terrible misunderstanding to relegate Paul to a lower status than another writer of Scripture, whether it's Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.

because inspiration means that the message originated from God himself. That's what inspiration means. It's theonoustos in the original, and it means simply breathed of God, as is indicated in 2 Timothy 3.

[13:13] So, when Paul speaks, it is Christ speaking through him, and Christ is his authority. Paul is not the authority. John is not the authority.

Matthew is not the authority. Isaiah is not the authority. Christ is the authority. And that makes all the difference in the world. And when you understand that, you will see the futility and the folly of competing or making different writers compete with their or for their positions.

And seeing what one says and pit that against another, that's a completely wrong approach. all of Scripture is inspired of God, and it all comes with equal authority. So, he is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.

And Timotheus, sometimes just rendered Timothy, Timothy, our brother, this is, of course, a spiritual brother in Christ, and then he identifies the audience to whom it is directed, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colossae.

A saint, of course, is a hagian, that is a holy one. And that which makes us saints is not because someone canonized us, as is the case with our friends in the Roman Catholic Church when the Pope canonizes them, they elevate them to sainthood, etc.

[14:38] Scripturally, there is no such process that exists when someone places their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. It is as if God reaches down and takes that person and picks them up and moves them over and sets them down in a whole new sphere.

He lifts them, literally, spiritually, out of the world, out of the darkness of this world, out of the mass of humanity.

He lifts them out of that and moves them over and sets them down in a whole new entity. and that new entity is the spiritual body of Christ.

That's what it means to be a saint. It means to be holy. Literally, it means to be separated, a separated one. What are we separated from? We are separated from the world and from those who live in the world.

We no longer belong to that. We still live in it, but we are not of it. We are now in a completely different sphere. And later on in this same chapter, Paul is going to talk about God who has

delivered us, rescued us from the domain of darkness, that is spiritual darkness, and has transferred us into the kingdom of his dear son.

[16:08] So that again is a reflection of the concept of sainthood. It means delivered from one thing and placed in another. And we are placed, Paul says, in Christ, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ.

This is a formula that Paul uses time and time again. And it is perhaps the most striking thing that can be said about the believer's position.

When you are in Christ, that means Christ is in you, you are in him, you are inseparable from him. His forgiveness is your forgiveness, his righteousness is your righteousness, his destiny is your destiny, his love is your love, his future is your future.

That's what it means to be in Christ. It means to be one with him. It means literally to be amalgamated into the person of Christ spiritually, so that we are in a spiritual sense, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh.

We are members of his body, and members one with another. And it's a beautiful, beautiful concept. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colossae, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[17:31] These are two delightful ladies that we are well acquainted with. They are found all throughout Scripture. and the first one is a girl by the name of Karen.

That's the name from which the word charis comes, and it is translated grace in the English. And for just the Greek itself, we all know of ladies who are named grace, and that's a beautiful name.

For a woman to be called grace, taken from the New Testament, or the Old Testament for that matter, peace.

In the Hebrew, I don't know what it is in the Hebrew. Yes, I do, too. It is shalom. Shalom is peace in Hebrew. But in Greek, it's Irene. Irene.

And we get that other delightful lady's name, Irene. It comes from the Greek word Irene. And many of you know Irene.

[18:33] She's the girl that we used to sing the songs about. When we told her good night, didn't we? Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you'll never find in this formula, this is the standard way of greeting, by the way, but you'll never find peace and grace unto you. Because there is no peace until grace comes first.

Grace is the outset. Grace is that position into which you enter when you become a believer in Christ.

You are saved by grace. You are placed into union with Christ on the basis of grace. It has nothing to do with your being a nice person or a religious person.

It has everything to do with being in Christ. And if you are in Christ, you are a recipient of the grace of God. for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves, etc.

[19:37] And then as a result of being in grace and being in the sphere of grace, that's the basis for peace. Then you have peace.

But you don't have peace without grace. And this peace is a wonderful thing because in the heart of every person, someone has said there is a God-shaped vacuum and only God can fill it.

And there is unrest in the human soul and spirit until it is at rest with God. And then we have peace. Therefore, being justified by faith, Paul said, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a wonderful, wonderful companion, these two words, grace and peace. And note from whom these grace and peace qualities come. from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, it does not appear to be so significant there as you read it in the English, but it is very significant as you read it in the Greek because what we have here is actually a single preposition, a singular preposition, which is from, from, the word from, is single or singular, and it is from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[21:08] And what Paul is doing here in the Greek is he is equating these two. And he is saying this grace and peace which comes from one comes from the other.

And they cannot be separated in this. And it is very significant in Greek to note that Paul does not say, grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Does not say that. And it is very important that it doesn't. Because he intends them to be packaged together. What is coming from one is coming from the other. They are inseparable.

They are in this together. And they both send this grace and peace. And then we give thanks to God. this is of course always in order.

Paul I suspect that next to Jesus Christ himself Paul the apostle was probably the most thankful person who ever lived.

[22 : 07] And I'll tell you what will make you more thankful than anything else. More than anything else. It will give you a spirit and an attitude of thanksgiving.

And that is to really understand what you were and what you are now in Christ. It means to have a perspective to have an appreciation.

It means to know what true reality is. And once you get a handle on that once you get a handle on who you really are what you really deserve what you enjoy in grace and what God has done through Christ to make that available to you if you are not overwhelmed with the sense of thanksgiving you just don't understand.

I wish there were some way of communicating this to more of God's people because if there were there would be less complaining less griping less belly aching less feuding less fighting less majoring on minors and minoring on majors there would be a whole lot more contentment if people only understood that it is an amazing thing but and you see you can't be thankful if you don't know what you have to be thankful for nobody just automatically gives thanksgiving for no good reason there's always a connection with a rationale for thanksgiving and once you understand the rationale for thanksgiving you can't be anything but thankful regardless of what's happening in your life and I'm talking about severe losses we all have them or we will have them the loss of health the loss of wealth the loss of a mate the loss of privilege the loss of status all kinds of losses we can endure and will endure and can we maintain a thankful spirit despite those losses you can if you have the right perspective if you don't you'll just grumble and complain and why me and what did

I do to deserve this and have yourself one great big pity party but if you understand the perspective of who and what you are in Christ that is amazing and Paul says we give thanks here's a man who suffered stoning he suffered deprivation he went without food he was shipwrecked twice he was beaten once and left for dead he was thrashed he was stoned he endured all of these things and all of those things most of them most of them he experienced before he wrote this and he comes out of those things talking about being thankful now the guy the guy either really knows something or he's nuts there's no middle ground and I submit that when you know what Paul knew he couldn't be anything but thankful no matter what happened because he knew who he was in

[25 : 35] Christ we give thanks to God and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ praying always for you you people there at Colossae since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus now that's a great expression because it indicates to us at least on the surface that Paul got his information about what was going on at Colossae second handed this is one of few congregations to which Paul addressed an epistle that he had not visited and the church at Colossae was one that he had not founded apparently epiphra did epiphra was a dear brother in the Lord and he no doubt and this is speculation on my part but I think it's not unreasonable to say that epiphra in all likelihood had known Paul in Ephesus and Paul spent quite a bit of time in

Ephesus if I'm not mistaken I think about two or three years in Ephesus alone and it was incredible visiting the ruins of ancient Ephesus there on the coast of Turkey not too long ago the ruins even the ruins are magnificent I can't imagine what the original thing must have looked like just breathtaking and so large there Paul had his most extensive and perhaps effective ministry and we know that he later wrote the letter to the Ephesians as a result of that and we may I think safely speculate that Epiphra as well as a number of other people had come into contact with Paul during that lengthy stay that he had at Ephesus and perhaps had even been evangelized by him and led to Christ by him and his life was completely changed by him and if this is the case then

Epiphra went on to Colossae and there at the church there in Colossae in the city of Colossae he proclaimed the gospel and won a number of people to faith in Christ all of whom were coming out of paganism and polytheism the worship of many gods under the Roman and Greek concept of multiple gods and he had won these people to Christ and it established the church there and then either one way or another probably by word of mouth or by his own person got back to Paul and informed him about what was going on at Colossae so this is what we're talking about in verse 4 when Paul says we give thanks to God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven and you who have been with us for some time know that the word hope means absolute certainty or certainty for the certainty which

is laid up for you in heaven and

Paul is not in any way shape or form saying well there may be a hope laid up for you in heaven and then again there may not be we can't be sure but we hope there is no no no he never uses the word that way he's talking about for the absolute certainty for the confidence which is laid up for you in heaven it is a sure thing whereof you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel the truth of the gospel and as regards the gospel which of course means good news there is only one thing about it that is really really terribly important and that is this this gospel this good news and it's reduced simply to this one issue is it true or not everything hinges on that if it is true the implications of it are incredible because it means responding to that good news and placing your faith in the origin of that good news the sacrifice for your sin placing committing yourself into that the ramifications are incredible and it has eternal consequences and if it is not true then the implications of that are incredible as well but you cannot have it both ways in other words the gospel of Jesus Christ is not true sort of kind of it either is or isn't there is no middle ground this is called the law of the excluded middle it either is or it isn't and the idea that is so pervasive today is well this gospel of Jesus Christ might be true for you and to you but it isn't my truth I have a different truth well reality and logic will not allow for that kind of argument it either is or it isn't and we've talked about that before but we can expand on it if anybody wants to and by the way feel free to interrupt me at any point in time if you have a question or comment to inject just indicate such just stick up your hand and we'll stop right there and pause because many times suggestions or questions that the audience has may be more enlightening than what

[31 : 32] I'm saying and wouldn't be the first time that happen the truth of this gospel which is come unto you as it is in all the world now what does that mean had the gospel in the first century reached Canada North America South America no but in keeping with the usage of language in the Bible which is referred to as phenomenal languages language which simply means that it addresses issues as they are or as they seem to be or it means to address issues that speak to you from their appearance and all Paul is saying is that this gospel this good news has permeated throughout what they considered and knew as the world at that time and principally it had to do with the Mediterranean world and its surroundings because this was the heartbeat of population throughout the world and this was their world at that time of course dominated by Rome and the language by Greek and so on and this is what he's talking about as it is in all the world and brings forth fruit that means produces results it is unthinkable it is unthinkable that embracing the gospel of Jesus

Christ would not bring results or change lives or have an effect or make an impact that's an impossibility because as I've often said no one can have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and never be the same there has to be the change just because of the additional ingredient of the person of Christ it brings forth fruit as it does also in you since the day you heard of it and knew the grace of God in truth and there's that expression again knew in an experimental way you knew personally you knew because you experienced it you knew firsthand it is the grace of God in truth you know after after 2,000 years existence of the New Testament approximately and another couple thousand years or 3,000 years existence of the

Old Testament we don't have a great deal of information in the Old Testament about grace we've got a lot of examples but we don't have a whole lot of straightforward teaching about grace in the Old Testament like we do in the New but don't think for a moment that it isn't there because Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord way back in Genesis 6 and there were others of course throughout the Old Testament Abraham and Jeremiah and the prophets and Abraham Isaac and Jacob and so on they all partook of God's grace and yet it is safe to say brethren after these thousands of years of the availability and the propagation of the grace of God there is probably no single doctrine or truth regarding Christianity that is less understood and more confusing and more misunderstood than the subject of grace and I am convinced that the reason is due to spiritual blindness and when

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in that second chapter he said if our gospel be hid if our gospel be hid if there's somebody who's not getting our gospel not able to hear it or make sense of it if our gospel be hid it is hid to them whose minds are blinded by the God of this age now think of that that's a pretty powerful thing it means that we are born in our fallenness we are born with a marred warped intellect it will not allow us to think in terms of pure reality with our fallen intellect we have a skewed intellect it causes perverted reasoning and logic so we do not see issues clearly and not seeing issues clearly prevents us from drawing conclusions clearly and making decisions clearly and this is

why the world isn't thronging to the gospel the minds are blinded by the God of this age and not only by the God of this age but by our own fallenness and you know in that regard isn't it utterly remarkable that anybody comes to faith that anybody understands and yet the grace of God follow me now the grace of God is not hard to understand it's not difficult maybe it is so simple it is difficult the grace of God simply means not by your merit not by anything you do have done or will do are you brought into a right standing with God but only on the basis of grace grace means it is gratuitous it is a gift it is a free gift it cost you nothing because it cost Jesus Christ everything it is amazing how hard that is for people to get their minds around we just can't let go of our own merit of our own desserts but you have to if you're going to partake of the grace of God it's an amazing thing here we are in the 20th century churches on every corner religious radio and television have been broadcasting this stuff for decades and look at how many people still don't get it do you know

[38 : 05] Christ are you a Christian well I've been in church since thus and so well I always do the best I can well I try to be a good person they don't get it and they don't know that they don't get it that's spiritual blindness is so powerful and so pervasive only God himself could clarify that is amazing that is just well it's grace is amazing isn't it in every way the grace of God in truth as you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant who is for you excuse me who is for you a faithful minister of Christ this Epaphras I have to rank right up there with Timothy and Silas and Barnabas and some of those others who had such an impact on their generation and most of them were protégés of the

Apostle Paul if not all of them and this is this faithful simply means reliable dependable someone said I don't know who said this but it was it was just a statement that they made that really stuck with me and I found occasion to repeat it over the years you talk about dependability reliability faithfulness and whoever this party was to whom I cannot give credit because I don't recall who it was that said it but I remember at the time it hit me like a thunderbolt and he said 75% of ministry is just showing up yeah 75% of ministry is just showing up just being there and ministry of course encompasses the whole nine yards and it isn't just preaching and praying it is giving of yourself in ways of encouragement and enlightenment and blessing and friendliness and friendship and interaction and that's ministry and every believer

I don't care who they are or how ungifted they may think they are every believer can enter into that we can all put an arm around someone and encourage them and strengthen them and they us that's Epaphras was a faithful minister of Christ someone has said you know one of the glorious things about being a minister is that God has not demanded our success he has demanded our faithfulness he has demanded our reliability and the success we leave with him it's a beautiful thing if you enter into it that way there are no Christian flops not when you understand what this is all about and he has declared unto us your love in the spirit I can just see Epaphras talking to Paul here he is Paul is under house arrest he's in this little apartment in somewhere near

Rome maybe just in the outskirts of Rome maybe right in town and we know from the book of Acts that he was able to receive guests even though he was under constant surveillance by a Roman guard he was able to receive guests and the last couple of chapters of the book of Acts makes it clear that he had a whole delegation of local Jews who lived there in Rome came to him and they had an all day long Bible conference so Paul was able to receive guests and they would come and go and I can just see Epaphras showing up in Paul's villa and they embrace and have a big hug and thank the Lord for their presence and well what have he been doing fill me in and he Epaphras says Paul I gotta tell tales of preaching the gospel and how it went and how the brethren have responded and I'm telling you those people are wonderful they're incredible

I can't get over how generous they are how teachable they are their spirit and everything and he just goes on and I can see the apostle Paul just beaming over that kind of news and that kind of information because you know every preacher really loves it when they are able to lead someone to faith in Christ but let me tell you about something that is equally rewarding and in some ways even more rewarding and that is when the one you lead to Christ leads others to Christ we're talking about spiritual grandchildren you know so that second and third and fourth generation goes on that way and I cannot help but think of my own situation where in Seattle Washington in the 1940s a woman who was a believer in

[43 : 40] Christ that everyone would consider just an ordinary average everyday Christian she was hanging out her wash in the backyard this was back in the days ladies when there were no dryers

you know and everybody took their clothes out and hung them on the clothes line with the clothes pole and the pins and all that good stuff and she had a neighbor next door and they tatted over the backyard fence many a time on wash days they would just talk and this neighbor started witnessing to her and communicating Christ to her and one day she came to faith in the Lord Jesus and she was so excited and when you come to faith in someone like Christ first thing you want to do is tell somebody else that you really care about because you want them to know what you've come to enjoy and she did that she told her younger sister all about salvation and how to receive Christ as her Savior and her younger sister did and then her younger sister had a daughter who was about 12 years of age and of course she communicated that gospel to her daughter and her daughter was my first wife

Barbara and Barbara was instrumental in sharing that gospel with me and I embraced Christ as my Savior and we came back to Springfield and I was so excited and I told my mom and dad who were good solid upstanding American citizens honest loyal truthful tax paying moral and all the rest but they didn't know Christ and they didn't even know they didn't know Christ and they came to faith in him as did my sister and as they say the beat goes on that's the way the gospel is someone says it's better felt than tell so just that's the way the gospel works it's a beautiful thing for this cause we also since the day we heard of it do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding there isn't anything that you could know that's more important than that I don't care what it is doesn't have to do with your job your family your status in life but this to be filled with the knowledge of his will because if you are filled with the knowledge of his will then you have your agenda you have your game plan you know what you're supposed to be and what you're supposed to do and that is what will enable you or verse 10 so that this is a purpose clause in the Greek the reason that we are to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding is so that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing that's the end result living of life that is well pleasing to the Lord and when you use that word pleasing it's related to the word of course pleasure and I'd never thought of it before until one day

I was working with this in the Greek and exactly what it meant the pleasing and the pleasure and etc and it hit me like a thunderclap does this mean does this mean that that I a mere mortal am in a position to bring pleasure unto God is God looking to me for pleasure how can that be but that is exactly what it means when you are well pleasing you cause that one whom you are pleasing to take pleasure in you and every parent understands that there isn't a parent anywhere who doesn't derive great pleasure out of seeing their children at whatever age walking and living in obedience to scriptural dictates nothing pleases us more or should and this is the end game this is why we are to be what we are to be and not only that of course not only so that we can give and provide pleasure for God but guess who guess who derives a greater benefit from that we do we do it is in our best interests to serve and please

God if you really want to look out for yourself and make sure you take good care of yourself make certain you are smack dab in the center of God's will and live joyfully in that state that's as first class as you can get and it has nothing to do with the size of your home or your bank account or anything else it's a beautiful thing beautiful thing walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing being fruitful in every good work bearing fruit 20th century new testament says your lives will be fruitful in every kind of good action William says by perennially bearing fruit in every good enterprise what might that fruit be I'd like your input on that if we are to bear fruit what would that fruit be like what would consist of this fruit any ideas if we are to bear fruit we ought to know what it is we're cranking out what is it you have to work hard all right work hard provides productivity accomplishment what else what what might the fruit be bringing others to

Christ could be evangelistic fruit absolutely gospel sharing fruit anything else importantes oh I don't know of anything more fruit bearing than that than to rear your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord now that is bearing fruit with a capital F that is absolutely fruit has to do with any and every consequence or productivity that comes from living for Christ and it covers the whole spectrum of anything and everything so that every Christian I don't care who they are or as I said before how ungifted they may consider themselves to be they're in a position to bear fruit just amazing amazing God has put us all on that plane of commonality and everybody everybody can and should bear fruit any other thoughts about that we have to study hard so we can do all these things know how to do all these things it doesn't come easily we don't we don't know it automatically

we don't know it intuitively it has to be learned yeah and the only way that you can learn it is by applying yourself to these principles studying them understanding what is involved because you can't do what you don't know and that puts knowledge at a premium but at the same time [51 : 52] I want to inject this because this was one of the fallacies that existed in the church at Colossae and Paul is going to address these two things because they provide largely the basis for his writing in addition to encouraging the people at Colossae but they had two big problems that were going on and we'll see the correctives that he offers to both of them as we get further into the epistle the first was Gnosticism and Gnosticism is spelled with a with a silent G G-N-O-S-T-I-C-I-S-M Gnostic comes from the Greek word which means to know and the thing that they were struggling with at Colossae is referred to as incipient Gnosticism incipient means that it was there in its beginning stages and it had not become full-blown but there were whispers of it around and it was in the mix and it was growing and gaining in popularity and Gnosticism is nothing more than the love of knowledge it comes from the word gnosis in the Greek and it means knowledge or to know and epinosis means to know in a more full and intimate way and the thing that they were struggling with and if you understand

Greek philosophy and Greek culture this shouldn't be a stretch for you the thing they were struggling with was a kind of intellectualism that was pervading the Mediterranean world at the time and a great premium was placed upon intellect IQ brilliance this kind of thing I suspect that they are the same kind of people in Colossae that Paul was dealing with on Mars Hill the Athenian philosophers who hung out there all day long on Mars Hill arguing philosophy and talking about things that a lot of people couldn't even understand and there are people who are gifted with a real intellect and they may not have anything to do with spiritual things I mean there are a lot of there are a lot of intellectual pagans people who are really bright from a human standpoint and we look at some of the renowned atheists today

Charles Richard Dawkins and those of his ilk these are not stupid people they are spiritually blinded people but intellectually they are very intelligent and they write books and they express themselves very well and they are capable of deep thoughts and of gifted expression etc but well when Paul wrote to the Corinthians he warned them about this and he's he talked about the true source of knowledge and the true source of wisdom and he said knowledge puffs up and the word that is used there for puffs up is expressive of a toad or a frog being bloated you know and what Paul is saying is that knowledge just for the sake of pure knowledge just knowing stuff knowing facts being what the world calls smart the only thing it results in is a big head we call these people fat heads and not that there is anything wrong with acquiring knowledge it's something that we're supposed to gain but knowledge that is purely human knowledge is worthless because it is only the judicious application of knowledge that stands one in good stead and what that is called is wisdom that's the difference between knowledge and wisdom you can have a head full of facts you can understand a whole lot of things and you can be what the world would call an intellectual but if it isn't a sanctified wisdom it just puffs up it just results in arrogance superiority we have a lot of this today in academia we have a lot of people who are very well educated brilliant with their PhDs who really just look down their noses at all the commoners these are modern day

Gnostics they elevate their brilliance and their intelligence and they put down everybody who doesn't have it and we are the intellectual commoners they are the elite and you can see the arrogance and the fat head goes along with it I have a friend who had two PhDs and somebody was complimenting him on wow it's very rare that somebody gets one PhD and you got two PhDs and he says yes but you got to be careful how you approach this PhD thing he said sometimes PhD means nothing more than piled higher and deeper and you know but that was a man that was a man who had a handle on his own intelligence and he knew and understood what it really was and thank God for gifted brilliant intellectuals especially if they are sanctified with common sense and a biblical mindset because these people really have something to contribute and I would put in their frame men like Francis Schaeffer and Ravi Zacharias and and I hold these men in esteem as really true godly intellectuals brilliant type people who serve the cause of Christ very well well we are just we're not just about out of time we are out of time but I want to give you opportunity for any comments or closing remarks that you might want to make or any questions that you might have we'll take just a moment anybody you made a comment about and you said this before we're all born in a knowledge of God but then you made a comment earlier about we're also born with that sin nature

I don't know how you said it now but the thought came to my head that some are then come to know God well does that have anything to do with predestination or some people are predestined to know and some are blinded I can understand how that question could surface and there are plenty who think that way but in my estimation in my understanding of this when one hears the gospel it often takes repeated hearings of the gospel rather than just one hearing but when one hears the gospel it is processed in the mind of this one with the warped intellect and this is very often the principal thing that causes them to reject it is that they are processing the material from their base of reasoning and understanding and intelligence and it doesn't compute and they say oh I don't buy that

[59 : 25] I don't buy that I talked with a fellow one time he says we were talking about a Billy Graham crusade and the response and when Billy Graham gave the invitation there were hundreds of people that got up and went forward and indicated that they were spiritually interested and wanted to make a decision for Christ and he said you can't tell me he said you can't tell me that getting up out of one of those bleachers and walking forward like that and in front of all those people and doing that that's going to make you a Christian I don't buy that that's just not reasonable well he was reasoning with that fallen intellect again he didn't understand what those people were doing or why they were doing it and I tried to explain it to him and I don't know that I got across but I was able to sow a little more seed but all I'm saying is that spiritual blindness is so powerful and so pervasive in the human spirit that only the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ is successful in combating it and it often takes repeated applications before it gets through very few of us myself included realize how deep and pervasive and powerful spiritual blindness really is all I mean by spiritual blindness is it is an impediment that keeps people from seeing and understanding the truth of the gospel it's like it's like they are wearing blinders they just cannot see they cannot grasp it and

I think this is one reason why it takes repeated hearings of the gospel I think spiritual blindness and spiritual death is so powerful that only the gospel of Christ can penetrate it and even then it will not penetrate if they don't want it to and if they are not open to it I am convinced the longer I live and the more I proclaim the gospel I am convinced that the greatest reason that people reject the gospel is not because they find it unappealing or unbelievable it's because they don't want to because they know the implications there is an impediment in their spirit and they know that if they embrace that things are going to really be different things are really going to change and the concept is that men love darkness rather than light lest their evil deeds be reproved it's a sad commentary on the state of humanity but it's a truthful one other comments or questions

John did Paul did Paul write any other letters that aren't in the bible well we're pretty sure of at least one in fact he may have written a number that are not in the bible but there is one that we can be 99% certain of and that is in his first corinthian letter he mentions I don't know exactly where that is but in first corinthians he mentions about having written to you earlier now we could easily understand that if it appeared in second corinthians because he would have been referring to first corinthians but it's found in first corinthians he wrote in an epistle earlier and we have no idea what he said how long it was or what happened to it and I think it is safe to say from the standpoint of inspiration that there were a lot of things that Paul wrote that are not in the new testament that does not mean they got left out it means they were never supposed to be in so they weren't inspired right they were not inspired and I suspect he wrote a lot of things that were not inspired and I think probably

Matthew Mark Luke and John may have written other things as well and we do know that there are a whole lot of religious writings in fact if you talk about the first two centuries of Christendom there were scores and scores of writings that had religious themes and contained religious personalities and new testament personalities that were never inspired in fact what we have in the new testament is a minority of all of the stuff that was written I mean there were hundreds you ever hear of the gospel of Thomas or the gospel of Barnabas the epistle of Barnabas and there's a whole lot of others like that and when you read them and these are available for your reading you can find them in the library you can get them online and when you read them it leaves you with saying who wrote this stuff I mean you can just tell that it's just not on the plane of scripture at all it's just kind of ridiculous well he wrote one to Peter too

Paul wrote to Peter that wasn't published I don't know Peter Peter said in his second epistle that our beloved brother Paul wrote some things that are hard to be understood now that doesn't necessarily mean he wrote them to Peter it may just mean that Peter read some of Paul's epistles

and had a real struggle with him and I can understand that I can easily understand that because Peter simply was not clued in to what Paul was clued into because his time was earlier and Paul's time was later and he had updated information that apparently Peter didn't have but there's another reference I can't put my hand on it where it says that Paul had written to them written to Peter yeah okay well I may well I may very well stand corrected on that but mentally I can't put my hands on it at the immediate time but we'll ferret that out

[65 : 35] I'll defer to my research assistant here what do you have Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written forth unto you unto you yeah Peter Peter is speaking but then who is the you to whom he's referring 2 Peter 3 15 and I got the impression that he had written a letter to him did he say that he had written a letter to me or written a letter to you and account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things maybe it's not called an epistle then well I get the impression that what Peter is saying is that the people he is addressing the people that Peter is addressing he is reminding them that Paul wrote some things to them and I think Peter also read those things but it doesn't say they were written to

Peter does it it just says that Peter written unto you well who was the you well probably was to the people people to whom Peter was writing yeah yeah it was probably a common common epistle it may have been one of Paul's epistles that we have it could very well have been we don't know which one he was referring to exactly 2 Corinthians chapter 12 2 Corinthians 12 and what does that say it doesn't pick out a verse it just means the whole chapter that's where he was talking about having a vision and it was thrown in the flesh oh ok ok ok alright well I really appreciate you all being here and the Lord willing and the creek don't rise we'll be here for the first Tuesday in February