

Colossians 1:1-14

Discuss: One of the biggest themes of Paul's letter to the Colossians is how one continues in the Christian life. Can you identify the pressures today's church is under to grow in our society?

Introduction to the letter:

- Read 4:18. What are Paul's circumstances from which he writes? How does that challenge us as western Christians?
- Read 1:7 + 4:12-13. Who founded this church? Does that affect the way we may read it compared to 1 Corinthians for example?
- Another big theme of the letter is Paul confirming and encouraging the faith of the church in Colosse. Do you have stories of how this has been done to you or through you?

Hear from God: Read Colossians 1:1-8

1. What is Paul's authority for writing? What does that mean for how we respond to this letter?
2. Why is Paul praying in thanksgiving in this section?
 - a. How have the Colossians come to faith?
 - b. What was going on with the gospel message in the world according to v6?
3. Is the worldwide spread of the gospel something that encourages you or something you think about?

Hear from God: Read Colossians 1:9-14

4. What is Paul praying for in this section? Can you identify a common theme to his prayer?
5. How do the elements of his prayer relate to one another?
6. Have you ever associated having good theology with Christian living and enduring suffering before? Why/why not?
7. How is Paul's prayer helpful for us as we think about how we want our parish to grow?

Apply these things to your life

1. Are you a thankful Christian?
 - a. Do you give thanks for what God has done in you in Christ, in the past, present and future?
 - b. Are you thankful for the freedom we have, that Paul did not?
 - c. Are we gladdened that the Christian faith is not restricted to one nation?
2. Are you a prayerful Christian?
 - a. Have you ever prayed along Paul's lines in these verses? How is this an encouragement and a challenge?
3. Are you a fruitful Christian?
 - a. Does Christ influence the way you go about your day? At home, at work, when dealing with difficulties?
4. When might you be tempted to move away from the basics of Christianity in order to make it seem more attractive?

PRAYERS

- With Paul, thank God for the gospel's impact on our lives and the lives of our church family.
- With Paul, pray for our growth in Christ: knowledge, fruitfulness and holiness
- With Paul, thank God that the gospel is going out across the world. Pray for Rob McLaren, Joe Hadfield and Ann McClelland travelling to Argentina in October to strengthen our partnership.