



A Life Worth Living

Colossians

Home Group Discussion Guide

**First Evangelical Church
Vancouver, Washington**

A Life Worth Living

Sermons

10/1	God is on the Move
10/8	A Life Worth Living
10/15	Jesus, First in My Heart
10/22	Living Life on Purpose
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11/12	Living Your New Life
11/19	Living a Life of Love
11/26	Embracing New Relationships

Resources

Video: Colossians - Read Scripture - by the Bible Project

Playlists: We've created a playlist of songs that go along with the themes in the book of Colossians. The playlists are through YouTube or Spotify. You will find that reading and discussing the Scriptures AND Listening to music will help encourage you as you walk with Jesus – your passion for him will grow deeper and deeper.

Links to the videos and playlists are available on the church website at www.firste.org

Click on the "Media" tab and then click the link for "A Life Worth Living Playlist". The page includes links to our YouTube channel (FirstE Church) which includes just the videos from the playlist and no other YouTube distractions.

The page also includes a link to our Spotify playlist which you can follow if you use spotify.

A Life Worth Living

Colossians 1:1-14

Background

Paul, the apostle of Jesus, has been arrested for preaching the Gospel, the “Good News” about Jesus. He is writing a letter to the church in Colosse to help them with some of their struggles. Colosse is part of a “Tri-Cities” area: Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colosse. These towns are all within 10 miles of each other, much like Vancouver, Battleground and Camas.

One of the challenges facing this church was a push by some to move Jesus away from being central to faith. Some were teaching that Jesus had shared some wisdom that could be added to the wisdom of other teachers who were just as important as Jesus was. Some were emphasizing the importance of religious rituals like circumcision or keeping Sabbath and the festivals. Others were using philosophy to create a spiritual life that emphasized either the denial of pleasures (stoicism) or the total enjoyment of pleasure (Epicureanism). This was a response to the belief that all matter was evil, so you should avoid pleasure (since matter is evil) or jump right in (since it doesn’t really “matter”).

This mixed-up way of believing (Jesus+Philosophy, Jesus+Jewish Ritual, Jesus+Long List of “Don’ts”, Jesus+Long List of “Party-on Dude!”) also mixed-up their way of living. So Paul talks about what being a passionate follower of Jesus really looks like!

Characters

Paul – the author, in prison for sharing his faith in Jesus.

Timothy – Paul’s right-hand man in church planting / leadership

Epaphras – the man who brought the Gospel to the “Tri-City” Area. He has gone to see Paul and is helping him out.

Tychicus – the man who will carry this letter and the letter to Philemon back to the Tri-Cities.

Onesimus – a run-away slave of Philemon’s, who is traveling back to his master with Tychicus (and the two letters)

The Ministry Team – including John-Mark who let Paul down On a mission trip but is now on fire for Jesus and Luke, The author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

Bible Project Video

You will want to watch this video at least twice during your Home Group time. You can find the “Bible Project Colossians” on YouTube or at www.thebibleproject.com

Songs

We have developed a play list of songs that go with the themes In the letter. You can follow us on Spotify or go to the songs though the links. Find both on our website, www.firste.org

You will find that reading and discussing the Scriptures AND Listening to music will help encourage you as you walk with Jesus – your passion for him will grow deeper and deeper. If you have song suggestions please let us know!

Discussion Questions

Read Colossians 1:1-2

Paul says that he was an apostle “by the will of God” (“chosen”). In what way do you think the will of God is at work in your life?

Colosse was not a large city. The church here was probably small. Do you think people from small towns can really make a difference? In what way are small churches important?

Read Colossians 1:3-5

Paul says that their faith and love come out of their hope. What is so great about hope? What kind of hope do believers have?

Can you explain the Gospel, the Good News about Jesus, in under twenty words?

Read Colossians 1:6

How has knowing Jesus changed your life?

How are you helping to get the message out to the world?

Read Colossians 1:7-8

Who was it in your life that brought the Good News about Jesus?

What positive things would they say about you today?

Read Colossians 1:9-10

Paul prays for their growth. What things help us grow in our faith?

Read Colossians 1:11-14

Paul prays for their strength. What makes the world a hard place to live out our faith?

Jesus, First in My Heart

Colossians 1:15-23

Background

Epaphras is the man who first shared the Gospel, the Good News about Jesus, with the people of the “Tri-Cities” area (Laodicea, Colosse and Hierapolis). God used him to found these churches. Paul had actually never been there. There was a church meeting in someone’s home in each of these three towns.

Philemon & Apphia’s home (Philemon 1:2)

Nympha’s home (Colossians 4:15)

Epaphras’ home? (Colossians 1:7 and 4:12)

Epaphras had most likely informed Paul of the spiritual teachings going around his community that were threatening the health of the believer’s faith. These pastors were especially concerned that the churches might start putting Jesus off to the side. Some of the ideas were that:

Jesus was just one of many prophets.

Jesus was not as important as our religious traditions.

Jesus taught part of the truth we need.

Jesus is not God, but one of many angels sent by God.

Jesus is not human, since flesh is evil.

Discussion Guide

Read Colossians 1:15-20

What do we learn about God by looking at creation?

What do we learn about God the Father by watching how Jesus **related** to people?

What do we learn about God the Father by listening to what Jesus **said** to people?

What kind of authority does Jesus have?

How important to the church should Jesus be?

What do we learn about God's love for us by paying attention to what Jesus did?

Read Colossians 1:21

Was there a time I felt far away from God? Is it today?

Read Colossians 1:22

Have I experienced reconciliation with anyone? What was the process like for me? How committed is God to reconciling my relationship with him?

Read Colossians 1:23

What kind of messages in this world, even spiritual ones, can push and pull me away from having Jesus "first in my heart"?

Living Life on Purpose

Colossians 1:24 – 2:5

Background

Paul speaks about the responsibility given to him to tell people about Jesus and to serve the church. This man took these responsibilities with utmost seriousness. He was committed! Understanding his personal story will help you understand his level of dedication.

Paul approves of Stephen's death (Stephen was telling People about Jesus) – Acts 7:54 – 8:1

Paul persecutes the church – Acts 8:1-3

Paul meets Jesus on the way to persecuting the Church located in Syria – Acts 9:1-20

Paul describes his calling – Romans 15:14-22

The “secret” or “mystery” that Paul mentions is this: that the Gentiles (non-Jews) are fully welcomed into the faith as the people of God. There is no longer any difference of standing before God between Jew and Gentile, a plan that God has had from the first. This plan is now revealed fully through Jesus.

Discussion

Read Colossians 1:24

What do you think Jesus meant when he told Paul, on the road to Damascus, the Paul was “persecuting him”?

How does Paul now participate in these kinds of sufferings?

Read Colossians 1:25-27

What kinds of responsibilities do you feel God has given you?

What kinds of differences can divide believers even today?

Read Colossians 1:28-29

What are the most important things for a person to learn in order to grow to maturity in their faith?

Read Colossians 2:1

How can we pray for believers we have never met? Is this even very important? How can I get to know people in my own church that I don't know? Should I pray for them? Why does that even matter if God already knows all about it?

Read Colossians 2:2-3

We all agree that strong ties of love are important. How do I experience this with fellow-believers? Is it lacking? Why?

Read Colossians 2:4-5

Pray for someone who is “far away” from you.

Living Life in Freedom

Colossians 2:6-23

Background

If you ask people if they are interested in spiritual things, they will usually answer “Yes!”. If you ask a Christian if they believe in Jesus, they will say, “Of course!”. Here in America we have so many ideas and opinions swirling around that it can get confusing for people determined to follow Jesus. Things can get added in that don’t belong. Believers can be unaware of their own ignorance. This was also a problem in the first century church. Here are some things being mixed in to their faith:

Popular Spiritual Movements – a new way of thinking about the spiritual life was developing called “Gnosticism”. It emphasized that God was spirit (and good) and the world was material (and bad). God didn’t make the world, but did it through a series of angelic powers. Only a few special people would be able to experience this special, spiritual knowledge (gnosis = “know”).

Jewish Faith – God instituted circumcision and the Sabbath and the Feasts. Understandably, some Jews had a hard time accepting that Gentile believers didn’t have to do these things. And other people just thought some of these traditions were “cool” and emphasized them.

Philosophy

Stoics – your flesh is evil, so deny yourself pleasures.

Epicureans – your flesh is evil, but doesn’t really “matter” (lol). So party on!

Discussion

Read Colossians 2:6-7

How do you practically work out these phrases in your faith?

Jesus is Lord

Follow Him

Roots Grow Deep

Lives Built on Him

Faith Grow Strong

Overflow with Thankfulness

Read Colossians 2:8-10

What kind of great sounding ideas capture people's attention?

Read Philippians 2:5-11 and Hebrews 1:1-4

Why is it "enough" to put your faith in Jesus?

Read Colossians 2:11-15

Jewish men were circumcised. Many Gentile men were not. Does anyone know how the church dealt with this issue in sharing the Good News about Jesus with Gentiles? (Acts 15:1-21)

Baptism is the new symbolic entry into being part of God's family. What reality does baptism symbolize? Tell us your baptism story.

Read Colossians 2:16-23

Here is a long list of Jewish, Stoic, Epicurean, Gnostic "stuff" that can get added on to Jesus. What does it mean to live FREE in Jesus?

Living a New Life

Colossians 3:1-11

Background

Chapter 3 begins by stating that believers have been “raised to new life with Christ”. If we look back to chapter 2 we see Paul saying, “For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead”.

Baptism is a declaration to the world that I have decided to put my faith in Jesus and to follow him. I am “buried” with him (Jesus placed in the tomb) and then “raised” with him to new life (Jesus rose from the dead on the third day). This is a powerful symbol and statement of my new life in Jesus.

You will also see another image in this section, that of stripping off filthy clothing and putting on clean clothing. The prophet Isaiah had said, “We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags.” (Isaiah 64:6) The Bible is very clear that we need the help of God to change our ways and to live new lives that please him.

Discussion

Read Colossians 3:1-4

What do you find compelling about Jesus?

How would you describe your journey of faith so far?

Read Colossians 3:5-6

Which of these sins is the biggest threat to a marriage? To holding a position of trust (like a teacher)? To real happiness? To a life well-lived? To following Jesus?

Read Colossians 3:7

Is there something you were able to leave behind when you started following Jesus? Is there something you need help with in over-coming right now?

Read Colossians 3:8-10

In what way does Paul challenge us to change our attitudes and outlook on life?

Why is it so hard to “change clothes” from filthy to clean motivations and actions? How have you had victory?

Read Colossians 3:11

How does knowing Jesus change our attitudes and actions towards those of different race, culture, education, economic status or background?

Living a Life of Love

Colossians 3:12-17

Background

Last week we talked about stripping off the old, filthy clothing of our lives and putting on new, clean clothes. The old clothing was described as sexual immorality, lust, greed, idolatry, anger, rage, malice, dirty language and lying. This week we will focus on the new clothing, the new life we have in Jesus.

This new way of living is summed up by the word “LOVE”. When Moses met with God, the LORD revealed himself:

Yahweh! The LORD!

The God of compassion and mercy!

I am slow to anger

And filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

(Exodus 34:6)

When asked what was most important, Jesus answered:

You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:37-39)

Discussion

Read Colossians 3:12

This list of what love looks like is very challenging. What do these qualities look like when lived out in real life?

Read Colossians 3:13

We all have “Pet Peeves”. Mine is when people block the entire aisle in a store with a side-ways cart and their body. What are your pet peeves?

The Lord’s Prayer asks us to pray, “Father forgive my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me”. How has this worked itself out in your life? Are there times that this is just impossible to do?

Read Colossians 3:14

How would you describe the harmony or closeness that comes with true love?

Read Colossians 3:15

Romans 12:18 encourages us to be at peace with others, at least to do our part. Just what is “our part”? How can we be at peace with people we disagree with?

Read Colossians 3:16-17

Are there any songs that have really spoken to you lately?

How do you represent Christ to those around you?

Embracing New Relationships

Colossians 3:18 – 4:18

Discussion

Read Colossians 3:18-19

How would you describe a healthy relationship between a husband and wife? How do the traditional wedding vows say what we need to hear about marriage? (“...for richer, for poorer...for better, for worse...”)

Read Colossians 3:20-21

Have you ever seen a parent/child interaction at a restaurant, store or theme park that really bothered you?

How would you describe a healthy relationship between parents and their children? How can a parent get way off track? How can a child make life harder for themselves?

Read Colossians 3:22 – 4:1

Why do you think the church didn’t focus on abolishing slavery at this time?

How do these verses apply in our work situations? Who was your best boss ever, and why?

Read Colossians 4:2-4

Have you found a way to remember to pray for others?

Read Colossians 4:5-6

What kind of speech could we have that would offend people for all the wrong reasons? How should believers present themselves online?

Read Colossians 4:7-18

Look at all these relationships Paul has because of his faith! He has only become friends and family with these people because they all follow Jesus. Have you found solid relationships in God's family yet?

Tychicus – a fellow servant, delivering Paul's letters

Onesimus – a man Paul led to Jesus. Paul is helping him reconcile with Philemon.

Aristarchus, Mark, Justus – fellow Jews. John-Mark is the young man that let Paul down but now is on fire.

Epaphras – a fellow church-planter, just like Paul

Luke, Demas – Gentile brothers. Travel companions.

Nympha – Paul may have never met her or most of the people in the church. But they are connected!

Archippus – encourages him in front of everyone to do what God has gifted him to do.