



Sermon Notes

Term – Summer 2020

Series – Full, Free, Alive (Studies in Colossians)

Gathering & Date – livestream, 7 June

Title – Colossians (Overview)

Preacher – Paul Langham

Reading – Colossians 1:1-12 (Please read Colossians through in one sitting if possible)

You can listen to this sermon here: <https://www.ccweb.org.uk/Media/AllMedia.aspx>

Full, Free, Alive

- I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10
- if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:36

In Christ, in Colossae

The major challenge to living a life which is full, free and truly alive is to live both in Christ and in Culture

Colossians offers 4 approaches to this challenge

Chapter 1 – the uniqueness of Christ in a world of pluralism

We need to proclaim the supremacy of Jesus Christ

Chapter 2 – the unchanging character, nature and activity of God in a world of change

Chapter 3 – the community of believers in a world of individualism

- learn to live like Jesus – nurture the qualities which build / crucify the vices which destroy community
- learn to live under Jesus – he is Sovereign
- learn to live for Jesus

Chapter 4 – the calling to be people of grace in a world of darkness 4:2-6

¹³ God has plucked us from the grip of this world's darkness and placed us safely under the sovereign rule of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ who paid the ransom to set us free from sin, dying to secure our forgiveness.

¹⁵ If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. Eternally existing before the cosmos, ¹⁶ he created everything: everything in heaven and on earth, everything you can see and everything you can't. All authority and power, every throne and rule owes its existence to him. Everything bears his mark and owes him allegiance. ¹⁷ Before anything, Jesus simply was, and everything from the farthest star to your every breath depends on his sustaining power.

¹⁸ He's also our sovereign, head of the Church; he's the origin of life beyond death, the first to be raised to new life, leaving him without equal in any realm or world or time. ¹⁹ God was delighted to be fully present in Jesus ²⁰ and through his own blood make a unilateral declaration of peace, turning his former enemies into sons and daughters. ²¹ We were all once God's enemies, every thought hostile towards him, because we wanted to carry on living as we pleased. ²² God's generosity is breathtaking! In the body of Jesus, he allowed himself to be broken in order to put you back together again, to restore you to his original design so that you can stand in his presence without shame or remorse, and without so much as a stain on your character or accusation against you. No matter who you are or what you've done, Jesus has dealt with it all and you're free to live forever. ²³ So keep going, keep trusting, anchored in the hope you found in the good news, so that nothing can dislodge you or pull you away. The good news is not just for individuals but for the entire creation – what a privilege to give my life to this work! Colossians 1

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Questions

1 The problem in the church at Colossae was 'syncretism' (where people combine all sorts of philosophical and religious ideas in a mish-mash of confused beliefs). Why is this a problem? What ingredients of today's 'spirituality mix' can you identify?

Are we, today, in any danger of dethroning Christ, by giving Him a place, but not the **supreme** place?

2 For Paul, God is identified specifically as 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1. 3). How do you respond to friends when they talk vaguely of their belief in 'God'? What do they mean? How can you find out? How can we move people from that vague sense of 'God' to an understanding that the one, true God is only known through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? (John 14:6)

3 *live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work (1:10)*

- How important is it that our lives should 'line up' to the standard of what we proclaim with our mouths?
- In what ways is your life growing in and bearing fruit for the Lord?

4 Paul is clearly passionate about prayer, seeing it as not only the primary but also the ongoing ('continual') response to any situation and need. Epaphras' experience of prayer is of 'wrestling' (4:12). Compare this passion with your own experience of prayer....

5 *the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven (1:5)*

What is your HOPE as a Christian? Are you yearning for the reality of eternity? You may wish to read Matthew 6:19,20; John 14:1-4; Romans 8:18; Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 1:3,4; Hebrews 11:13.

6 ¹² *and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.* ¹³ *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,* ¹⁴ *in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Why is it so important that God took the initiative in salvation? Which of the images Paul uses in Colossians (Rescue; Qualification; Transfer from darkness to light; Redemption; Forgiveness of sins) means most to you, and why? Read Romans 5:8; & 1 John 4:19.

7 Note how often in 1:5-10 Paul appeals to the mind of his readers:

- the word of truth (1:5)
- you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth (1:6)
- you learned it (1:7)
- asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding (1:9) growing in the knowledge of God (1:10)

How strong a knowledge do you feel you have of God and His Word?

8 ¹¹ *being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,* ¹² *and giving joyful thanks to the Father ...*

To what extent is your life marked by an increasing strength in the power of the Lord, by a spirit of endurance and patience, and by joyful thanksgiving?