



April 21, 2024

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Colossians 1:24-2:5

“All Will Be Well”

SUMMARY

After the opening greeting and thanksgiving (1:1-14), the body of Paul’s letter to the Colossians bursts open with an uplifting statement on the supremacy of Christ (1:15-23). The statement is so marvelous, you wonder where Paul could possibly go from there. Wouldn’t anything after that be a letdown? No. Paul next turns to a question which was likely burning in the imaginations of the Colossian Christians. After being locked up in prison, how are you doing, Paul? Are you OK?

At this point, Paul had been a prisoner for several years and had been moved halfway across the Empire to stand trial in Rome. He was facing extended adversity. How was he holding up? Was he discouraged? Fearful? Hopeful?

Paul answers the unspoken question of the Colossians through the lens of the supremacy of Christ. It was the same lens through which Paul, since his conversion of the road to Damascus, viewed all of life. Because of Jesus, he was well. Note the strong verbs the Apostle uses to describe his state of mind:

- “I rejoice in what I am suffering for you” 1:24.
- Christ “is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom” 1:28.
- “I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me” 1:29.
- “I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea” 2:1.

Paul thought his suffering in prison was purposeful and part of God’s plan. He still had opportunities to encourage friends near and far through writing letters, like this one to the Colossians. Paul hoped the Colossians would find their identity in Christ (1:24-27), would grow to maturity in Christ (1:28-29), and have the familiarity of knowing Christ in a personal way (2:1-5). Also note the way Paul weaves into this section mention of the three theological virtues of faith (2:5), hope (1:27), and love (2:2).

The City of Colossae

Colossae lay about one hundred miles due east of Ephesus in the interior of Asia Minor (the western part of modern Türkiye). Five centuries before the New Testament, it was the largest city in the Lycus River Valley. By the first century AD, it had been overtaken by nearby Laodicea and Hierapolis in both size and importance. Paul neither founded the church in Colossae nor visited it. Instead, he had apparently converted its pastor, Epaphras (1:7-8; 4:12-13), during the two years the Apostle lived and preached in Ephesus. We are told that during that time “all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” (Acts 19:10)

The highest peak of Asia Minor’s Aegean region, Mount Cadmus (8,200 feet in elevation), overlooks Colossae a short distance to the south. The 500-acre ancient site of Colossae has never been excavated.

QUOTES/THOUGHTS FROM THE SERMON:

“All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.”
Julian of Norwich (1342-1416 AD)

“But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” 1 Peter 4:13

“For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1:5

QUESTIONS

- What kinds of adversity have you faced in life?
- What kinds of adversity are you facing now?
- How are you doing? How are you holding up in the face of adversity?
- How is your soul?
- How is being of service to others helping you and helping them?
- What helps you remember that Jesus is in control?
- What is your next step in spiritual growth?
- In what ways have you made progress in following Jesus?
- Who is helping you follow Jesus and whom are you helping?
- How is being of service to others helping you and helping them?
- What or who has been an encouragement to you this past month?
- How could you encourage someone who is far away?
- Name one thing you think would help you follow Jesus in a deeper way.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Consider using Ephesians 1:17-19 as a guide for prayer. “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.”