

Biblical Knowledge is Power

Colossians Overview

(preached Pine Grove 6/26/16; Sunday PM)

Introduction

Mobile phones have changed a lot of things in the world..

You can now be reached almost anywhere on the planet when you once had to be at home to get a call...

You can even see the people that you are talking to now, so you have to make sure your hair is combed and house is clean to answer the phone.

One thing that mobile phones have also changed is our ability to remember phone numbers...

Now, you simply store a number with a name and just find that name to call...

Very rarely do you have to remember an actual number to call someone...

I do know Tonya's number and my dad's number, but there aren't many other phone numbers that I know by heart...

In the days of landlines, a study concluded that a phone number could be committed to memory if you used it at least 10 times a week for 4 weeks...

And once you reached that point, the number was etched in your brain for life.

I still remember both of my grandparents numbers from when I was a kid. 803 694 2170 and 803 694 3878 as well as my home phone number. 803 694 2510.

Well, our memories are interesting things...

And it seems that the short cut to remembering things is simply repetition.

The more you hear and see, the better the chances to remember...

That is certainly going to be the case tonight as we do an overview of the book of Colossians.

It seems as if the Lord wants some truth from that book to sink in our hearts because that is the book that we are due to look at tonight in our overview of the Bible series....

Well as the Lord would have it, we just finished a verse by verse study of it on Sunday mornings, but tonight we are going to get an overview of it as well..

For 1 1/2 years on Sunday nights, we have gotten a bird's eye view of each of the books of the Bible.

We began in Genesis on the first Sunday night of 2015, and though we have taken some breaks for various things, we are now due to look at the book of Colossians in June of 2016.

IF the Lord doesn't intervene, we should finish the entire Bible by October at the latest but maybe a touch earlier...

So, what we have tonight is simply a repetition of some things that we have already heard about the book of Colossians...

And repetition is the key to learning....

So, let's hit the repeat button in our minds and do a big overview of Colossians tonight....

My prayer is that the Lord would use this time to let some of these recent truths revisit our minds and hearts in hopes that they would sink into the way we live....

Let's begin with a simple outline of this book...

In chapters 1-2, the book of Colossians deals with truth....

I. Know That Jesus Christ is Supreme and Sufficient (1-2)

And in chapters 3-4, we are told to use that knowledge to guide our behavior....

II. Live Like Jesus Christ is Supreme and Sufficient (3-4)

To begin our overview, let's refresh our minds about the city of Colossae and the people who received this letter from Paul....

IF you look at the maps on the screen, you will see that Colossae was a city in what was called Asia minor, which is modern day Turkey...

It was an inland city over 100 miles from the Mediterranean or Aegean sea, but it was situated on a main east west road in the region...

So even though it didn't have the traffic of a port city, it was a well traveled through city and stopping place for many people..

The church was founded by a man named Epaphras, who most likely heard Paul preach in Ephesus, and then carried the gospel of Jesus Christ back to Colossae and started a church there...

The city was home to much false religion, and the true gospel that Jesus Christ saves came under attack shortly after it started there..

Now the main attack on the gospel of Jesus Christ had two parts...

The first part of the attack centered on the person of Jesus Christ, and whether or not he was enough to save people from their sin...

You hear that attack even today when people refuse to believe that his death 2000 years ago could pay the price for the sins of all who would believe in him for all time...

And then the second attack was this...

Jesus is fine, but you need more to be truly saved...

You need to follow the Jewish law, the Jewish customs and observe the Jewish festivals as well...

In other words, salvation is Jesus + acting like a Jew...

And so the attacks came in those forms and they got worse over time...

So Epaphras set out for the 1000 mile trip to Rome to see Paul and learn how to answer the attacks on Jesus Christ...

And Paul sat down under the inspiration of God and wrote a letter to the Colossians church, where he told them that Jesus was enough to save and was enough to change their lives...

And that letter became known as the book of Colossians...

It has two main parts as we have seen before...

The first two chapters are the truth that the Colossians needed to hear and believe.....

The final two chapters are instruction on how they should live as a result of what they now know...

So, let's take a quick review tour through the book of Colossians to remind ourselves of some key truths in this incredible book...

I. Know That Jesus Christ is Supreme and Sufficient (1-2)

Once Paul starts out the letter to the Colossians with a normal greetings, he then compliments the Colossians on the fruit of true salvation that they are showing...

But then starting in verse 9, he offers a prayer for them.

And this prayer really frames the teaching of the entire book of Colossians...

Look with me at Col 1:9-10

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the [k]nowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, [l]to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and [m]increasing in the [n]knowledge of God;

Do you see what God wants for the church at Colossae?

Number 1 is to be filled with knowledge of His will...

And be filled with understanding and wisdom...

And where do knowledge, wisdom and understanding come from?

IT comes from the Word of God...

You cannot know God in a saving way apart from his Word...

And knowledge of the Word helps you fight off the attacks of false teachers and false religion and error and all sorts of spiritually destructive teaching...

Do you remember what Jesus used in the attacks launched on him by Satan?

He quoted the word of God.

Nothing more and nothing less...

And the Colossians needed that knowledge as they tried to fight off the attacks of the false teachers who were trying to lessen Jesus Christ's supremacy...

And then notice in verse 10 what follows knowledge?

When you have knowledge, you can walk worthy of the Lord...

In other words, you can't please God until you KNOW what He says pleases Him....

Ill never forget the first time I remember going fishing with my dad....

We went to Lake Murray and the new got to our place, he grabbed a rod and reel and starting throwing...

So, I grabbed one of his reels, pushed the button and drew back as hard as I could and let it go...

That reel had the biggest tangle of line that you have ever seen...

My dad looked and me and boy, "You don't throw a reel like that. You have to put your thumb on the line so it wont tangle as it comes off the spool."

You can guess what I said?

"Why didn't you tell me?"

To which he replied, "You didn't ask."

Look, we need the knowledge of God to stop attacks against what we believe....

But we also need the knowledge of God to know how to lie to please God...

Biblical knowledge is power when it comes to being and then living like a Christian in the world...

After Paul prays for them to grow in knowledge and to live accordingly, Paul wrote one the most complete descriptions on the supremacy of Christ in all the Bible..

In verses 15-20 of Colossians 1, Paul describes how Jesus is supreme in every way...

He is the image of God.

He is the creator of all things.

He is the reason that all things were created.

He rules over all kingdoms, kings, and governments of the world.

In fact, he rules it all.

He is Lord of the church.

He is fully God.

And He is the One that all salvation from sin will come...

In other words, the false teachers who were saying wasn't enough to completely save didn't understand who Jesus really was...

The bottom line is this....

If Jesus is powerful enough to create, rule, and have authority over everything in the universe, he is enough to save people completely from their sin...

Paul then finished of chapter 1 talking about the incredible privilege that he has to be able to tell the world that Jesus is supreme...

In chapter 2, Paul continues to describe his ministry, but he makes this important statement to start off Colossians 2...

Verse 1...

2 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not [a]personally seen my face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth [b]that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. 5 For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing [c]to see [d]your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

Two important truths to get here...

One is that all wisdom is found in Christ...

Though you may think that some people are wise, there is no wisdom in this world apart from knowing Christ...

People may think others are wise, but the one who rejects Christ is a fool and you shouldn't listen to a word of their wisdom...

All wisdom is in Christ, and only those who are saved have access to his wisdom...

But two, I want you to see something that may help you..

I mentioned this in this text the new went through it on Sunday morning, but I want to revisit here for just a second...

People struggle with assurance of salvation...

"Am I really saved" is a question that can nag a person to death?

But here who'll be response to it?

First, and most importantly, deal with it honestly?

Are you saved?

And the simple way to know that is this?

Have you repented of your sin?

Have you trusted in Jesus Christ alone to save you?

Are you bearing the fruit of salvation?

Is there a clear change in your life since you have claimed to be saved?

And once you do that, which is a good thing to do, you will either see a need to be saved or you will see that you are saved...

To be clear, saved people can still struggle with assurance...

But there is help for that...

You don't have to and you don't need to struggle with assurance...

The remedy is right here in verse 2...

Assurance comes from understanding and knowledge of God...

Simply put, the more you know about God and the more you grow, the less you struggle with assurance...

And the reverse is true as well..

The less you know and the less you grow, the more you will struggle with issues of assurance...

The best medicine for assurance is grow in your knowledge of God through his Word..

I battled assurance as a new believer for some time, but here is a great truth....

The more you mature in your knowledge of God, the more sure you are that you are saved...

And that is exactly why God wanted the Colossians to grow in knowledge....

It would increase their assurance and it would give them confidence to hold fast under the attacks of the false teachers who were trying to attack their assurance...

You need the Bible in your life, and you need to grow in your knowledge of it...

IT is the best way to fight off the fears of knowing that you are in fact saved...

Paul then goes on to tell the Colossians in verse 10 of chapter 2 that they are complete in Christ...

And that is such an important truth in our Christian faith...

We are a finished work if we are in Christ...

Though we have maturing to do as we grow...

Though we have learning to do as we grow...

Though we have sin to put off as we grow....

When we are saved, we are completely saved.

There is nothing you will after salvation to add one ounce of completeness to it once you truly repent and trust Christ...

Now, our works after salvation are important for two reasons...

One, they prove that our faith is real and genuine, and....

Two, they may lead to greater rewards in heaven...

But good works don't add anything to the completeness of salvation that comes through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ..

You are complete in Christ.

And then you may remember that Paul goes on the attack against people who try to take away from the completed work of Jesus by telling the Colossians that they needed more....

In verse 16 of chapter 2 and following, Paul says that food and drink restrictions add nothing to your salvation...

He adds that observing Jewish festivals and Sabbath days should not be added as requirements of salvation...

He then adds that mystic experiences like visions and worshipping angels are not to be added to salvation in Christ...

And then he finishes chapter 2 by adding that no man made rules should be added as requirements of salvation...

So, what you have in chapter 1 is Jesus is Supreme to Save, and in chapter 2 you have Jesus is Sufficient to Save...

That takes us to the final 2 chapters of this letter, where Paul tells us to...

II. Live Like Jesus Christ is Supreme and Sufficient **(3-4)**

Much of this section will be fresh in your mind, but let's do a quick review of chapters 3-4 to refresh our mind....

Now remember, here is the principle....

Increase in knowledge, so that you can increase in obedience to the Lord...

And now that Paul has given the Colossians two chapters on the knowledge of who Jesus is,....

He now seeks to give them instruction on how to live in light of who Jesus is...

In short, we are new men and women if we are in Christ, and the world should notice the change....

And these two chapters describe what the new man and woman should do...

This is really the how-to section of Colossians....

And the first how-to of Christian is that our minds change as a result of our repentance and faith in Christ...

In chapter 3, the first 4 verses are commands to change the way we think now that we are believers in Christ...

The days of concentrating about how to get ahead in world are over...

Our minds are now focused on our Savior in heaven and how we can bring Him glory in the world....

And the reason for that new way of thinking is found in verse 3 of chapter 3...

3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

In other words, your mind has new things to concentrate on now that you are saved...

You have died to your old way of life and so you must now think about your new way of life.

Your thoughts go from yourself to Your God.

And you begin to fill your minds with how you can please Him and obey Him and worship Him.

The new man has a new mind..

The second aspect of our lives to change as we grow in knowledge is our behavior...

Our thoughts change and our behavior follows...

You can see those changes in chapter 3 verse 5 all the way to verse 17..

I will hit all these very quickly, but listen to how our behavior must change as a result of knowing Jesus Christ...

Verse 5....

Our old way of immorality dies to our new life....

Greed, evil desires, lust and impure thoughts are resisted by this new man and new woman...

Verse 8....

Our old way of talking also dies...

We don't slander others...

We don't lash out with our tongue in anger at others...

We don't say malicious things about others...

We don't abuse others with our speech...

And we don't lie to others with our tongue...

The new man has a new mind, a new way of life, and a new way of talking...

But Paul isn't finished just yet...

In verse 12, we get the positives of what the new man and woman should look like....

He or she should put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness....

These are all the marks of the new man and woman....

On top of that, all these traits are founded on a heart of love for others...

And then Paul tells us how to increase the love in our hearts in verses 15, 16, and 17 of chapter 3...

By telling us that love increases in our lives when we remind ourselves that we are now at peace with God....

Love also increases as we let the Word of God dwell in us consistently...

And love also increases in our hearts as we go about our daily lives trying to glorify our Lord and Savior in all we do...

Paul then ends chapter 3 with one more way that the Christian life changes...

Not only does the new man and woman have new minds and new behavior and new speech....

And not only is his life filled with patience and love and forgiveness,.....

The New man and woman also have new homes and relationships....

And Paul describes these new relationships from verses 3:18 to 4:1....

By addressing wives, husbands, children, and parents....

And then finishing with the new relationships that should now exist between Christian employees and employers...

HE then finishes the book of Colossians with two final sections....

The first in verses 4:2-4:6 give instruction on the new speech of the new man....

It is not enough to know what not to do with your mouth, the believer also needs positive instruction as well....

And Paul simply says that the new way to use our speech is to devote ourselves to talking to God...

And to make sure that when we speak to the world, we speak with kindness but also with the salt of truth....

And then last Sunday morning, we looked at Paul's ending to the book of Colossians where he simply describes all the people who were with him as he wrote the letter...

Conclusion

And so that letter was sent to the Colossians in 60-62 AD...

And its primary purpose was be an encouragement to that church to help them bear under the weight of those who were attacking Jesus and the Colossians simple belief in Him....

So, how does this letter impact us?

I would say in two ways.....

First, it reminds of us the superiority of Jesus Christ...

This is why false religions anger me...

Anyone who seeks to add to Christ is a false teacher that must be confronted in the strongest way possible...

Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, the Roman Catholic Church, and other religions that lower Jesus Christ....

Or add to him must be rejected at all costs, regardless of how "good" the people in those religions appear to be.

To add to Christ is to reject Him because he is complete to save and to transform the lives of those who rest completely and only in Him.

If you find out where a religion stands, ask them if Christ alone is enough to save them...

If they add to him, they add to their punishment to eternity....

Christ is supreme and sufficient....

He needs nothing added to him....

But second, this letter helps because it gives the blueprint of how our lives should be different if we claim to be saved...

Chapters 3 and 4 are the measuring rod for the lives of believers....

Those chapters are not optional in the Christian life...

Believers should think different and act different, and if that fruit isn't there, salvation isn't there either...

But finally, a great value of Colossians to your life is this...

Don't underestimate the importance of knowledge in defending your faith against attacks...

There are people in this world energized by satanic influence who seek to trip you in your walk..

And one of their greatest weapons in a person's ignorance of the knowledge of the word...

Christians are sitting ducks when they don't have the knowledge of the Scriptures to answer the false teaching of these people...

And there are churches full of people under false teachers who call themselves Christian pastors...

Yet, what can you expect when the people in the pews don't know the Word of God...

The simple truth is that a blind man will follow anyone, and there are churches filled with blind people...

Following some horrible teachers of the Bible and even some men who aren't Christians at all...

Grow in knowledge.

Not in order to poke your chest out and swell your head...

Grow in knowledge so that you can tell the difference between a man of God and false teacher...

And you can tell the difference between a biblical church and an unbiblical one...

Biblical knowledge is power.

Make sure you are plugged in....

Let us pray.