

Lesson Two
Colossians 1:12-18
Evidence of a Growing Church

The Bible instructs us to give thanks with a grateful heart, but too often, it's only said when saying grace at a meal. Paul understood the temptation to go about life with a forgetful attitude. His reminder to the Colossian church to offer thanksgiving rests upon the same eternal truths that should cause every believer's heart to sing. Although Paul began this chapter with prayer for the Colossians in verses 15-18, he now breaks out in praise for the supremacy of Jesus Christ, His superiority over creation and His authority over the church. May we be quick to emulate Paul as a thankful people and to recognize Jesus for Who He is.

Day One — A Growing Church is Thankful
Read Colossians 1:12-13

1. One of the marks of a growing church is thanksgiving. There are three great realities listed in verses 12-13 that should cause each of us to rejoice. What are they?

2. Use Galatians 4:4-7 to explain how we are qualified to receive an inheritance from God.

3. How does 1 Peter 1:4 describe the characteristics of our heavenly inheritance?

a. In what ways is this different from an inheritance that you might receive in this life?

5. How does the assurance of a heavenly inheritance encourage you today?

*"It is good to give thanks to the LORD and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High."
Psalm 92:1*

Day 2 — A Growing Church's Inheritance

Read Colossians 1:12-14

1. Paul defines our inheritance as that of being saints in the light and delivered from the power of darkness. What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 say about this fact?

a. How has this reality affected your life?

2. How are we to put this into practice?

Ephesians 5:8-11

1 Thessalonians 5:5-8

1 John 2:9-10

3. Before moving in on in your study, take a few moments and pray Psalm 26:2, *“Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my mind and my heart.”* What areas of habit or thought do you need to surrender to walk in the light? Journal your thoughts below.

4. Colossians 1:14 gives another reason for thanksgiving. Write out the phrases that tell us what the He (Son of His love) has accomplished for us.

5. At what cost do the saints receive this?

Hebrews 9:11-12

1 Peter 1:18-19

6. Why was blood necessary?

Leviticus 17:11

Hebrews 9:22

7. We have learned in Colossians 1:12-14 that “Jesus paid it all, all to Him we owe.” An unknown author once said, “Thanksgiving is a good thing, thanks-living is better.” List some simple ways you can practice both this week – to the glory of God!

I will practice thanksgiving by:

I will practice thanks-living by:

Day Three — A Growing Church Reflects Jesus

Read Colossians 1:15-18

What we, as Christians, believe about Jesus is central to our faith. As we move into one of scripture's most exalted portrayals of who Christ is, you can almost feel the power of God in each word. This portion of scripture is "a Christological statement which has scarcely an equal."

1. What do you learn in verses 15-18 about Christ's relationship to:

God—

Creation—

The Church—

2. Why do you think Paul chose to give this glorious picture of Jesus at the beginning of his letter to the Colossians?

3. Children can look nearly identical to their parents but be opposite in every other respect; with Jesus, this was not so. What do you learn in John 1:1-3, 14 and Hebrews 1:2-4 about Jesus and His Father?

4. How did Jesus explain His relationship with His Father in John 14:7-10?

a. How does this elevate the claims of Jesus above those of any other religious figure?

5. Meditate for a moment on the truth found in Colossians 1:16-17 that Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. What kind of power does this mean He possesses?

a. Do you believe that He has the power to meet the needs and concerns that face you now? Journal your thoughts and prayers below.

Day Four — A Growing Church's "Head"

Read Colossians 1:15-18

1. Colossians 1:18 states, *"He is the head of the body, the church."* Describe the importance that a physical head has to the rest of its body.

a. How does this help you to understand the significance of Christ being the head of the church?

Paul concludes this portrait of Jesus Christ by declaring that He is the firstborn from the dead. Simply put, this means that He was the first one to die, resurrect, and never die again. This phrase reminds us of the importance of His resurrection.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-17 and explain in your own words why Jesus' physical resurrection is essential to what we believe as Christians.

3. Jesus Christ is incomparable and because there is none like Him, Paul declares that He is preeminent, surpassing all others. In what ways has your view of Jesus enlarged this week?

a. Is He preeminent in your life? Does it show? How will you personally let others know that Jesus is number one?

“Anything that one imagines of God apart from Christ
is only useless thinking and vain idolatry.”

Martin Luther

