

Colossians

Chapter 1

- 1- Paul and apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God and brother Timotheus.
- 2- Those in Colosse¹, holy ones² and faithful brethren in Christ grace to you peace from our Father God and our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3- We give thanks to God the Father³ of our Lord Jesus Christ praying always for you.
- 4- Hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love⁴ unto all the holy ones.
- 5- For the confidence⁵ being stored up for you in heaven which you heard before in the word of truth of the gospel.
- 6- That has come unto you as also in all the world and is bringing forth fruit just as in you also from the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth.
- 7- Just as you learned from Epapharas our beloved fellow servant who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf.
- 8- Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit⁶.

¹ Colossae, was a city east of Ephesus and north of Laodicea in Asia Minor. It used to be one of the great cities of Phrygia. This ancient city no longer exist today there is only a village called near to the ancient ruins called Chonos. The Phrygians occupied this city who regarded themselves as the most ancient people of the world. The Egyptians who were boastful about their antiquity regarded themselves as second only to the Phrygians. It was Paul who first preached the gospel in Colossae as he was the one who ministered throughout Phrygia of which, Colossae is a principle city. (Acts 15:40,41; !6:1-3,6; 18:23)

² Paul consistently points out the identity of the believer by using the word ‘hagios’ which may be translated ‘holy one’ or ‘saint’ (Paul refers to the believer as saints 35 times). There is a great defense in the identity that we have been given in Christ Jesus therefore the powers of darkness work desperately to steal this identity from God’s people. Knowing who we are and being confident that we are God’s holy ones is the faith that defeats Satan every time. Satan desires to deceive us and make us believe that he still has power over our lives. When we know who we are in God we come to understand that we have all power and authority over all of the power of our enemy the devil.

³ There is no question that Paul viewed Jesus Christ as God’s Son and as unique and distinct from God the Father. Paul referred to God the Father as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all the saints a total of 34 times. Of these 34 times that Paul makes the distinction between Jesus Christ and the Father God the majority refers to God the Father as being both the Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:6; 1 Co 1:3; 8:6; 15:24; 2 Co 1:2,3; 11:31; Ga 1; 1, 3, 4; Eph 1:2,3,17; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23; Php 1:2; 2:11; 4:20; Col 1:2,3; 2:2; 3:17; 1Th 1:1,3; 3:11,13; 2 Th 1:1,2; 2:16; 1 Ti 1:2; 2 Ti 1:2; Tit 1:4; Phm 3). However, this in no way jeopardizes the fact that Paul also believed that Jesus was also equally the Eternal Almighty God.

⁴ Faith and love are two of the most outstanding testimonies that a person is a child of God. Both faith and love operate by the Holy Spirit. If we are going to walk in faith and love then we must yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit. Human beings are not born with the Jesus kind of faith and love it only comes to us through the new birth. The new man or divine nature only functions by the power and activity of the Holy Spirit governing the life of those who are God’s children.

⁵ The Greek word ‘elpis’ may be translated ‘hope, confidence or expectation’. A similar thought is expressed by John in 1 John 4:17, love that is made perfect results in boldness in the day-of-judgment. In this passage obedience results in confidence being stored up in heaven. Paul gave thanks for their faith and love and for the confidence that was the result of their obedience.

⁶ The love that is given to the New Testament saint far exceeds human love. The love of God that has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit is divine love or Fathers’ love (Romans 5:5; 1John 2:15). This love that we are commanded to have one for another is a love that only functions by the Holy Spirit therefore, to have it one must be “in Spirit.” Being “in the Spirit” begins in our life when we are born of the Spirit (John 3:6; Romans 8:9). However, it is an ongoing act of our will to submit to the inspiration and leading of the Holy Spirit that is prompted by the Word of God. As we ask the Holy Spirit to love through

9- Because of this also from the day we heard ceased not to pray for you also asking that you might be filled with the knowledge⁷ of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding⁸.

us in the face of hate and rejection refusing the human inspiration of self-defense, we find ourselves overwhelmed with the inspiration of divine love pouring out like a river. The Greek phrase that is used here 'en pneumati', literally means "in Spirit" and is found 36 times in the New Testament. The many context in which it is used helps to underscore the dependency that we must have on the Holy Spirit if His fruits or characteristics are going to be revealed in our lives. Jesus said, "If I cast out devils 'en pneumati' then the kingdom of God is come" (Matthew 12:28). When David prophesied and foretold of the coming Messiah he did so, "in Spirit"; "how then did David 'en pneumati' call him Lord" (Matthew 22:43). These are two scriptures out of many examples, which should serve to underscore that 'in pneumati' refers to something that is produced by the Spirit of God and not by any quality or attribute of an individual. Whether it is love, peace, joy, faith, power to cast out devils, miracles, healings or prophecy it only can function in our life as we give ourselves over to the working of the Holy Spirit in us and through us.

⁷ The knowledge of God is more than those things that we know about God it is those things which God knows. The knowledge of God is established in our lives by the Word of God and by the Spirit of God. We have been given the ability to know and understand those things described in the Word of God because we have been born of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-12). However, it is important that we all recognize that the basis for the knowledge of God and spiritual understanding is knowing the Word of God. How are we to know anything about the will of God for our lives without the Word of God? The Word of God is the source from which all faith springs! We would not even realize that God wants to save our soul, unless we heard the word of God (Romans 10:8-17). How would we ever understand how we are to walk with God and be pleasing unto Him, without the Word of God to describe it?

If you desire to go deeper in the anointing and in your relationship with God, then you must understand the central role, which the Word of God plays in this process (1 Peter 1:23,25; James 1:18; 1 Peter 2:2; James 1:21; John 6:63; 1 John 3:9; Hebrews 4:12). Unfortunately too many of God's people sit down to read the Bible as a history book, for entertainment, or out of a religious duty; and miss the glory of the fellowship with God, that otherwise would be present. The word of God is faith-building. It is spirit and life! It is living and powerful, and has the ability to create and strengthen those who would sit in communion with the Holy Spirit as they read. If we will receive the Word of God into an honest and sincere heart, it will spring up and produce the fruits of the nature and power of Christ Jesus; some 30, 60, and 100 times beyond all expectation.

Through the knowledge of the Word, we receive a supernatural supply of the Spirit; in spiritual wisdom and understanding (Ephesians 1:17; 2 Peter 1:3; 2 Peter 1:8-11). The knowledge of God affords us the ability to more perfectly know what God desires us to do, and supplies us with the insight and revelation to know that we have the resources of God to do the impossible. By fully knowing the greatness of His power and authority that has been entrusted to us, we are strengthened by His glorious power to do the exploits of the Kingdom (Ephesians 1:17-23; Daniel 11:32). It is the Word of God that will enlighten you. It is the Word of God that will quicken you! It is the Word of God that will build you up to walk in your spiritual inheritance in Christ Jesus (Acts 20:32; Ephesians 1:18). It is the truth of the Word of God that the Holy Spirit has come to lead us and guide us into.

Peter said that as newborn babes, we should long for the spiritual nourishment provided for us by the spiritual food that has been supplied in the Word of God. The passage in 1 Peter 2:2 literally says: "the pure logic of the milk." Although the Greek word 'logicon' is related to 'logos' (the Greek for "word"), it has a different meaning. This particular word is found only twice on the New Testament: in 1 Peter 2:2 and in Romans 12:1. In Romans 12:1, the meaning is more accurately captured; where it is translated "reasonable." The word refers to how we think, and how we speak. We think and speak based upon the logic by which we reason and come to understand the world and how we are to function within it. The divine logic of the word will cause us to think and speak the word of faith (2 Corinthians 4:13; Romans 10:10; Hebrews 10:23; Philemon 1:6). The divine logic will cause us to believe that we can do all things though Christ who strengthens us. We will have a revelation that nothing will be impossible for those who live by the Word. If we long for the spiritual nourishment supplied to us by the Word of God, then we will be filled with the divine ability to function in the faith of God; and we will have the proofs to back up our claims that Jesus arose from the dead - and is alive today!

10- That you walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God⁹.

⁸ Wisdom and spiritual understanding is Spirit knowledge. God wants us to know the things that He knows. He desires us to see the world for what it really is and not be held under the deceptive influences of Satan. The foundation for Spirit knowledge is the word of God and it is important to realize that the Spirit of God wants to both reveal the word to us and through us [John 14:17; 16:13-15; 17:21-23; 1 John 3:24]. He desires to make Jesus known through our lives in both the demonstration of the kingdom and its power [John 12:14; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:6,8; Galatians 3:6; Matthew 12:28; Mark 16:17]. If we are willing to believe the word of God and move in obedience to the things that God has spoken an ever-increasing maturity will bring us into both a deeper revelation of the word and a greater display of the life of Jesus [Ephesians 1:18; 4:13; Colossians 2:19; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10; Romans 8:27-29; Philippians 2:9]. But if we refuse to fully accept the things that has been revealed in the word of God we will remain as spiritual infants [1 Corinthians 3:1; Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 5:13-15]. The Spirit of God desires to give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we can more perfectly understand God's will for our lives each day. We have been given the awesome privilege of walking in Spirit knowledge so we might know those things that are freely given to us by God [Ephesians 1:18-23; 1 Corinthians 2:12].

Much of what the Bible describes about the realms of the Spirit are hidden from our eyes. The impacts of what we see and hear and the natural way we derive conclusions greatly impair us from moving in the Spirit. However if we are willing to turn to God the Holy Spirit and ask Him to show us what we are to do and what we are to think we will begin to engage in the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom and the discerning of spirits. God desires that we both see and understand the reality of the heavenly realm so that we might properly function in it. The Holy Spirit desires to give us dreams, visions and insights into all the activities of God that are taken place within the world of men [1 Corinthians 12:7-11]. The relationship that Jesus had with the Father has been made available to us if we are willing to access it. Jesus heard the Father speak and saw the Father work and it was through that revelation that He lived.

To take hold of the knowledge of God we must come into agreement with His word. The word of God must be allow to rule us and be the means by which we exist. If we give ourselves to living by the word if God through both believing it and speaking it even when things around us appear to be the opposite we will begin to function in the knowledge of God and discover and ever increasing faith [Proverbs 2:1-5; Romans 10:8,17]. Enoch walked with God in the realm of faith and that walk of faith is made available to us now if we will live by the word of God [Hebrews 11;5-6]. Joseph had Spirit knowledge and was able to understand the future events of his generation. He had Spirit wisdom so that He could prepare the world for disaster [Genesis 41:38]. Jacob's eyes were opened up so that the heavenly realm could be made a living reality to him [Genesis 28:17]. Daniel functions in wisdom and spiritual understanding and the great men of the earth knew that the Spirit of God resided in him [Daniel 4:8; 5:12]. A great opportunity could never have been given than the ability to walk in the knowledge of God. We must realize that many things in life oppose this knowledge therefore we must give ourselves to bringing every thought into captivity so that nothing but the knowledge of God influences us [2 Corinthians 10:4].

One of the reoccurring themes in the Bible is God's demand for increase in our lives. The growth and increase that God demands for our lives is that which is produced by a relationship with Him. Jesus who said that we were called and chosen to bring forth fruit also said that unless we abide in Him we cannot bring forth fruit (John 15:4, 16). The seed of the word of God is sown into our lives for the purpose of bringing forth and abundance of fruit: for some 30 fold others 60 fold and even 100 fold (Mark 4:8,20). The increase and growth opportunity provided for us by God is the ability and privilege of coming into the fullness of the measure of the maturity of the ministry of Jesus (Ephesians 4:13; 3:19). The only reason that God's people would fail to experience increase would be their unwillingness or neglect to walk out a relationship with the Lord Jesus. God has provided all that we have need of to grow. He has supplied us with His grace, which is His divine power given to us to do and to be all that He has purposed for our lives (2 Peter 3:18; 1 Corinthians 15:10). To neglect such and opportunity and pricy provision carries a sever penalty (Hebrews 2:3; Luke 13:6-9; Matthew 21:43; 25:28; Revelation 3:16).

11- Strengthened with all power according to his glorious might unto all enduring patience¹⁰ and forbearance.

12- Giving thanks to the Father who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light¹¹.

We are to be passionate and intense about our eternal purposes in God. We are to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:13). If we recognize that God is One who rewards those who diligently seek Him then we should be willing to give it all in order to realize all that he has purchased and planned for our lives (Hebrews 11:6). If we place Jesus in the proper seat of authority in our lives then we will increase as the manifest presence and glory of God increases in our lives (Colossians 2:19). Through the soul prosperity that comes through obedience to the word of God then every other area of our lives also prospers so that we may experience increase in every dimension of life (3 John 2; Matthew 6:33).

There are several things that we must be willing to do if we are going to have the increase that God has purposed for our lives. We must be willing to dwell in the life that has been provided for us in Christ Jesus (John 15:1-16). We must desire the sincere milk of the word so that we can grow (1 Peter 2:2). There must be a submission to the Holy Spirit who will bring the increase in our lives as we cooperate with the body of Christ in the local church (Ephesians 2:21-22; 4:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 9:10). We must be willing to see that our lives have come to an end and that now the whole meaning of our lives is to reveal the life of Christ Jesus (Colossians 3:3; Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; John 12:24).

¹⁰ There are three attitudes that are named in this verse of scripture: patience, longsuffering and joy. These three attitudes are obviously very important to God and to our spiritual success. Therefore, God has given us His power so that we may be strengthened with His glorious might in order to maintain this disposition. The importance of these characteristics demands a closer look at the actual and practical meaning of these words. The Greek word that is used for patience (*hupomone*) means patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance and expectation (BDAG). One of many things that are being described is a relentless commitment to a course of action no matter what difficulties are presented. When we know that God has already planned our success and that the test is essential to being trained to handle that success then we can look up and see beyond the difficulties that we encounter. God is so devoted to us that He provides us with His own supernatural strength to bear up under these pressures. We are talking about something on the level of a defiant perseverance that holds up under every sort of delayed results of aggressive misfortune. This same word is used in the Septuagint about 25 times to which Psalms 62:5 both captures the true essence of this word. The Psalmist commands his soul as to how it will behave "My soul, you wait upon God; for my expectation (*hupomone*) is from Him". The characteristic that is expressed in the next Greek word which we usually translate longsuffering (*makrothumia*) is somewhat similar. This Greek word is considered a synonym to the Greek word for patience. However, there are some unique qualities to this word that demands our attention. This word not only includes patience, steadfastness, endurance but also forbearance and tolerance or self control in the face of provocation (BDAG). Forbearance is the ability to maintain an emotional quietness in the face of opposing circumstances. Many times it is because of our outburst of self-defense and emotional hurt that we create problems for our selves and the ones that we love. Our Heavenly Father has modeled forbearance for us in the way that He deals with the wickedness of man in the face of His unfailing love. God does not pour out His just wrath upon the transgressors but instead forgives and saves. In Isaiah 57:15 this Greek word is used in such a way as to help us understand both the nature of forbearance and what God will do for those who walk in it "For this is what the High and the Loft One says that inhabits eternity whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble (*makrothumia*) and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

¹¹ It is so wonderful to realize how perfectly we have been redeemed and comforting to know that God calls us the holy ones in light. We should never tire or draw back from the comforting words of the scriptures that identify us as those who are joined to the Lord Jesus and are in His realm of glory and grace (vs. 13). It is vital that we know who we are and whose camp we are in if we are to live the lives of an overcomer. It is our faith that overcomes the world (the power of darkness) and this faith comes by the word of God. As those who have been made the saints in light (because of the gift of salvation and the life that is in Christ Jesus) we must take up our blessed gift and responsibility and walk in the light as He is in the light. We are those who by nature of being the children of light dispel the darkness and bring the revelation of

13-Who has delivered us from the authority of darkness¹² and translated¹³ us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son.

14- In whom we have redemption the forgiveness¹⁴ of sin.

15- Whose image is that of the invisible God, first-born¹⁵ of all creation.

God wherever we go (Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5). We are like a city that cannot be hid and a candlestick placed high to give men the revelation of God and His Kingdom (Matthew 5:14-16; Luke 1:79; Acts 26:18; John 12:36). As we follow Jesus we walk in the glory and splendor of His life and presence and the darkness of this world can no longer hide the will and purpose of God for our lives (John 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4). When the darkness of this world would attempt to impose itself upon us we are able cast it off by being endued with the armor of light (Romans 13:12). The armor of light is the same as the new man and the new creation. If the armor of light is going to be effective then we must be infused with the power of the Holy Spirit who is here to strengthen and empower us with the strength of the Lord and the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10). Come let us abide in the light where there is no occasion of stumbling (1 John 2:10; 2 Peter 1: 9-11).

¹² The whole notion and concept of redemption is revealed to us in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. As certain as Israel was delivered from the rule and authority of Pharaoh we have been delivered from the rule and authority of Satan. Concerning the absolute defeat of Satan and his power over us Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). Paul spoke with such finality in 2 Timothy 1:10 when he said that Jesus had "abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." The death of Jesus on the cross was the means by which Satan's power was destroyed, "through death He (Jesus) destroyed him that had the power of death that is the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

¹³ Paul reveals to us that we have been removed from the realm of Satan's dominion into the realm of the dominion of Jesus Christ. Knowing that we are seated together in the heavenlies in Christ helps us to understand the spiritual dimension to which Paul is referring here. When we were born of the Spirit we entered into the realm of the Kingdom of God, a realm of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This is the realm where Jesus Christ reigns supremely and where we are governed by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word used here is 'methestesen,' it may be translated 'removed, transposed, change, to go over to another party.' It is found 5 times in the New Testament and is primarily translated 'removed' or 'put away.' It occurs 35 times in the Old Testament and is used to translate many different Hebrew words. However, the general meaning of the word is that of being changed from one state to another.

¹⁴ At the heart of the Gospel is the idea of "forgiveness of sin." The Greek word for forgiveness is 'aphesis.' Its meaning comes to light by the many different Hebrew words which it is used to translate in the Septuagint such as, 'shalach,' send away (Ex 18:2; Lev 16:25); 'shamat,' throw down (Exodus 23:12; Deu 15:2,3); 'yuvel,' Jubilee (Lev 25:10,11,12,13,28,30,31,33,40,41,50,52,44; 27:17,18,21,23,24; Nu 36:4); 'shemittah,' canceling debt (Deu 15:1,9); 'hanachah,' release (Ez 2:18); 'deror,' release, liberty (Isa 61:1; Jer 41:8,15,17; Ez 46:17)

¹⁵ To understand the meaning of "firstborn of all creation" it must be understood in light of other doctrines that are clearly established in scripture. Most importantly is that Jesus is the Eternal God who has no beginning and no end (John 1:1; Isa 9:6; John 17:5; Titus 2:13). As God the Word Jesus was the creator who created everything in the Universe a distinction that Paul is careful to make in the next verse (Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). Jesus may be understood as the firstborn in the sense of His priority and superiority over all things. Yet more importantly God the Word became the firstborn and only begotten Son of God when he was incarnated and born of a virgin named Mary (Jn 1:18; 3:16,18; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5; 1 John 4:9). He is the firstborn among many brethren because He was begotten of God as a Son so that now we too may be begotten of God and made sons (John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:1, 2, 9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18; Philipians 2:15; Romans 8:14; James 1:18; Galatians 4: 4-6). Because of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus we are also born of God and become sons of God and brethren to the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:11; Romans 8:29; John 20:17; Matthew 12:50). Paul also calls Jesus the firstborn among many brethren and the firstborn from the dead (Romans 8:20; Col 1:18). Jesus is the firstborn of all creation because it was through Him that all creation was redeemed (Colossians 1:20; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 1:10; Romans 11:36; Galatians 3:20; Hebrews 3:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:5). He is the firstborn from among the dead because He was the first to be raised from the dead and as a result we to shall be raised up in the likeness of His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; Romans 6:5)

16- For by Him everything in the heavens and upon the earth was created the visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities everything was created¹⁶ through him and unto Him.

17- And He is before everything and by Him everything was established.

18- And He is the head of the body the church who is the beginning, first-born from the dead that He may have first place in all things.

19- For it was pleasing that in Him all fullness should dwell.

20- And by Him completely restored everything to Him whether upon the earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of His cross¹⁷.

21- And you were once alienated and enemies in thoughts by your wicked works but now He has changed¹⁸.

¹⁶ Jesus is the one who created everything. Jesus is God in Genesis 1:1 who, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Jesus was the Word who as John points out, was with God and was God also all things were made by Him (John 1:1-2). It was Jesus the Eternal Word who framed the heavens for, "We understand by faith God's Word prepared the ages (Hebrews 11:2). In fact, everywhere you read in the scripture concerning God being the creator there is where you will find Jesus. Jesus as the Eternal Everlasting God was hidden in the Father but revealed in these last days and glorified as our God and Savior (Ephesians 3:9; John 1:18).

¹⁷ The two most powerful forces that we wield are the name of Jesus and the blood of Jesus. When we pray in the name of Jesus and by the blood of Jesus, everything in the universe must respond to God's authority (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23; Philippians 2:9; Ephesians 1:20-22; Acts 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11). We have the authority to apply the blood of Jesus to every situation in which Christ Jesus applied His blood - and expect the same results. When His blood was applied to sin, it was removed; therefore we can be confident that when we apply His blood to sin, then it must go (Revelation 1:5; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:9; Zechariah 13:1; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7). It was the blood of Jesus that broke the power and effect of Satan's dominion over us; and when Satan would attempt to enforce his will upon us, it is the authority of the blood that demands that he take his hands off of the property of God (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; Ephesians 1:13-14). The blood of Jesus destroyed every power of the demonic realm. Through the death of Jesus and the blood of His cross, Satan was destroyed, and all of his host was stripped of their abilities to command the actions of men. Through the blood of Jesus, death was abolished, the law of sin and death was broken, and light and immortality were brought to light. When we apply the blood of Jesus against any work or activity of Satan, it renders every demonic power completely powerless. The blood of Jesus is the boundary between heaven and hell. There is no power of hell that has the right to cross this boundary of God's redemption and protection. When Jesus stripped all principalities and powers of their authority, He did so by His death on the cross (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; John 12:31; 16:11). The blood of the cross is therefore both our reminder and theirs - that they have no right to afflict or torment those who have been redeemed by the blood. We have the double cure for sin and disease; we must have confidence that what God has supplied is remedy enough for all we need, and have faith in His blood (Psalm 103:3; Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24; Matthew 8:16-17; 9:6; 12:15-18). We all must proclaim loudly, "Redeemed, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb!" Satanic powers would attempt to impose their will upon the people of God; and although they have no right to violate the blood barrier, unless the saints of God stand up and take the authority that has been given, they will overrun the absence of such authority and faith in the blood of Jesus.

¹⁸ The miracle of God's salvation is that He takes those who were full of iniquity and evil deeds and changes them into a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 2:1-2; 4:18). The idea that is essential to understanding what Christ has done for us is found in verse 21. Christ Jesus exchanged (Gr-*apokatalasso*) His life for ours. Although many translators have rendered this Greek word 'reconciled,' the meaning is more fully revealed by the word 'exchanged.' Jesus took all of our sin and shame and in exchange gave us His righteousness and glory (1 Peter 2:24; Romans 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:21). By taking all of our sins upon Himself, He destroyed the power and dominion of the devil and in exchange brought us into the power and dominion of the Kingdom of God. Through the blood of Jesus we go from being the enemies of God to those who have peace with Him. We are transformed from those who are full of

22- By the body of His flesh through death that you may be able to stand before Him holy and without blemish and blameless.

23- If you continue on in the faith firm and settled and being not removed from the confidence of the gospel which you have heard which was proclaimed in all of creation under the heaven which I Paul have become a minister.

24- Who now rejoice in these sufferings over you and I fill up that which is lacking of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh for His body which is the church.

25- For which I have become a minister according to the administration of God given me for you to fulfill the Word of God.

26- The mystery which was hid from the ages and from the generations but now made know by His saints.

27- By whom God would make known in the nations what is the riches of the glory which is Christ in you the confidence of Glory.

28- Which we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

29- Unto which I also labor contending according to His working that operates in me by power.

Chapter 2

wickedness to those who are holy and blameless. We pass from death to life and from those who are stained with sin to those who are spotless and without blemish. It is in this transformation that we come to understand the meaning of what God has done for us. We may also understand the meaning of this word as 'restoration.' God has restored us from the chaos of transgression and rebellion to the order of holiness and love (Ephesians 1:4).

God has made us holy, without blemish and blameless now and in the future when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Philippians 2:15; Romans 12:1; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; 4:17; Hebrews 10:19-23; Ephesians 2:10, 13; 5:27; Titus 3:5-7; Romans 6:22; 7:6; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Jude 24; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Hebrews 9:14, etc.). Through His love for us He has taken ownership of our lives and made us His family and personal possessions (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; Ephesians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18). He has appointed us together in Christ Jesus so that we may enjoy union with Him now and rule with Him throughout eternity (John 17:21-23). The most glorious thing about this change and restoration that goes beyond all other blessings and privileges is that we are in Him and He is in us. We have an uninhibited relationship with Him and have access to know Him as fully as we desire (Ephesians 3:19; Colossians 1:10; John 1:16; 1 John 4:13; Colossians 2:9-10). If we are willing to take hold of the blood and life of Jesus and believe that the Father has made us so totally acceptable unto Himself in so much that we are blameless then we can begin to enjoy the full revelation of His presence in our lives. The blood of Jesus and the name of Jesus are the two most powerful things in the universe. The relationship is only hindered when we draw back through unbelief.

The manifestation of God and the revelation of His person to us is in direct proportion to our willingness to accept the cleansing and purity that was provided for us through Jesus. It is through this faith and confidence that we can walk into the realms of His presence, which is the holies of holies, with all boldness. Father wants us to have full assurance of this change that He has provided for us in His Son. He wants us to believe the testimony that He gave to us concerning His Son and the redemption that He has purchased for us. When we accept what Christ Jesus has done for us then we will discover the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). God has not only made us His sons and daughters He has made us His friends through the physical death and resurrection of His Only Son who has brought the transformation to whosoever will believe.

- 1- I would like for you to know I have had a great conflict for your sake and those in Laodicea¹⁹ and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.
- 2 That your hearts might be encouraged joined together in love²⁰ and unto all riches of the full assurance of the understanding unto an exact knowledge of the mystery of God and Father and the Christ.
- 3 In whom are hid all of treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
- 4 This I say that you let no one deceive you with persuasive speech.
- 5 For even if I am absent in the flesh yet in the spirit I am present with you rejoicing and beholding your order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.
- 6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord walk in Him²¹.

¹⁹ It may be that the church in Colossae was experience the same assaults from both Jewish and pagan teachings as was Laodicea and it was causing Paul great distress. Both of these churches were in the near vicinity of each other. It seems that the concern is as much for Jewish philosophies as for those of the Gnostics who were attempting to pervert the Gospel by introducing their own teachings into these churches that Paul took personal responsibility for.

²⁰ There is a key given to us throughout the scripture that allows us to understand how to come into all of the fullness of God. Paul revealed in Ephesians 3 that as a result of knowing the love of Christ we can be filled with the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19). Jesus made loving one another the precursor to fullness of joy (John 15:11). He also made this love one for another the means by which all men would know that we are His disciples (John 13:35). Jesus made it very clear that if we would love Him that both He and the Father would come and make their dwelling with us (John 14:23). The realm of love is the realm where God dwells and so when we dwell in love we dwell in God (1 John 4:16). We learn that love is the greatest and most important thing of all. It is by love that faith works and it is through love that salvation was brought to us (1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:6; John 3:16). With 115 commands and examples given to us of the importance of love we should make it the foremost priority of our lives. Perhaps we spend so much time and effort searching for a model and a hidden key to revival and an increase in the anointing and the manifest presence of God while all of the time we pass over the answer. If we would only give ourselves over to His love continually and completely we would realize all of the things in God that we have desired. I am certain that on the Day of Judgment we are going to be primarily brought into question on how well we loved.

²¹ We are to live the life of Jesus. He gave Himself for us, that we might now live out our life in Him. We have been graced by God to have the identity of Christ. We should no longer live after the manner of men in the authority that we might possess as mere men, but rather in the glorious life and power of Christ (Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:16). Our faith should soar with confidence, knowing that we are commanded by the Father to walk in Christ Jesus. We are to be clothed with His power and glory; we are to be confident that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13; Ephesians 3:16; 6:10; Colossians 1:11). He gives us the strength of His life: a strength and ability that far surpasses that which Samson had when the Spirit of the Lord strengthened Him. We are strengthened to represent God, to live the life of Jesus Christ in this present world.

We have been empowered by the Spirit of the Lord to live in the same glory, splendor, and authority that Jesus revealed as the Son of Man. He was the Son of Man - because He became everything human so that we may be partakers of His divine nature. We may now boldly say that as He is, so are we in this world (1 John 4:17). We are commanded to walk in the Holy Spirit, which is a command to walk in God (Galatians 5:16,25; Romans 8:1,4,14,16). This is the sanctification taught to us by the Holy Spirit: to be consecrated to the life of Christ. To behave ourself after the manner of God is a high calling; it is not an option but a command. We are to be clothed with Christ Jesus with His identity, obedience, consecration, and ability (Romans 13:14). The life of Jesus was imparted to us as a free gift, and the Holy Spirit has come to train us and teach us to walk in every dimension of His glorious life (John 16:13-15). The mystery has been unveiled, and we can all look and see Christ in us (Colossians 1:26-27; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; John 14:20; 17:21-23). This is how we are to walk, and how we are to please God (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

7 Being rooted and build up in Him and established in the faith abounding in thanksgiving as you have been taught.
8 Beware that you are not spoiled by philosophies and vain deceits according to the traditions of men according to principals of the world and not according to Christ.
9 For in Him dwells all of the fullness of the Deity bodily²².
10 And you are complete in Him who is the head of every ruler and authority.
11 In who also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in the removal of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision²³ of Christ.
12 Being buried with him by baptism²⁴ in whom also you are raised up through the activity²⁵ of the faith of God, which raised Him from the dead.
13- And you being dead in the trespasses²⁶ and the uncircumcision of your flesh²⁷, He made you alive together with Him, having pardoned²⁸ all your trespasses.

²² The quintessential doctrine of the New Testament is that Jesus is God. He was God in the eternal past and will continue to be God in the eternal future (John 1:1-2; Hebrews 1:2-3). Many have attempted to make Jesus something less than God but the reality is that God was manifested in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). Everything that God is became completely embodied in Christ Jesus thus Jesus said, "if you have seen me then you have seen the Father" (John 14:9). It is only through Christ Jesus that everything that God is may fully be realized and it is only through Him that man can be born of God and thus brought into His fullness (Colossians 2:10; 1 John 5:11-12, 20).

²³ The act of circumcision was first observed in Genesis 17:10. It was established as a covenant between God and Abraham. The act of circumcision consecrated the recipient unto God. God commanded those of Israel who had been circumcised in their flesh to also circumcise their hearts (Deuteronomy 10:4; Jeremiah 4:4). It would be through the circumcision of their hearts that they would be compliant to his will instead of stubborn, sensitive and obedient instead of hard and disobedient. God promised that he would circumcise their heart and through this act of His grace they would become a willing and obedient people who would do his will and keep His covenant (Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:26). In the New Testament we discover that circumcision of the heart is in fact the act of being born of the Spirit and made a new creation in Christ Jesus (Rom 2:29; Gal 6:15; 5:6; Php 3:3; Acts 7:8).

²⁴ This refers to baptism into the death and identity of Christ and not water baptism. Paul makes it clear that the act of baptism is associated with the burial of Christ (Gal 3:27; Romans 6:4). Therefore, we may regard baptism as descriptive of one's total immersion into the identity of Christ both in crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection; a miracle that takes place by the activity of God's faith (Galatians 2:20; 6:14). The Greek word 'baptismos' is found four times in the New Testament and should be rendered 'baptism' every time. Although, 'baptismos' only occurs 4 times in the New Testament its root word 'baptizo' occurs 80 times. The first time that the word 'baptizo' occurs in the Septuagint is in 2 Kings 5:14 and is translated by the Hebrew word 'tabal'. It is used in 2 Kings 5:14 in the story of Naaman to describe what he was to do in order to be made clean of his leprosy (dip seven times in the Jordan).

²⁵ Paul uses this Greek word 'energeia' eight times in his epistles. The Greek word 'energeia' may be understood as 'operative power' or as the Langenscheidt Pocket Dictionary Classical Greek renders it 'activity', 'efficacy' or 'effect'. Faith is revealed to be the activity of God in this verse of scripture. The faith of God produced the miraculous resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The same faith of God also resulted in our resurrection from spiritual death. The miracle of a spiritual resurrection is another way of describing the new birth that made us a new creation. Through the miracle of God's faith we are baptized into the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ that took place 2000 years ago.

²⁶ Trespasses are actions that are contrary to the morality of God. The Greek word for trespasses is 'paraptoma' which is found 22 times in the Septuagint and is predominately translated by three Hebrew words 'pasha'/'pesha' (rebellion/revolt), 'avel' (wrong/injustice) and 'maal'. These three Hebrew words are translated by several Greek words and are all frequently used to describe the sin and iniquity of man. One of the more complex words is 'maal' which is first used for the trespasses of Israel in Leviticus 5:14. Prior to that it is used as an adverb to describe the position of the window in the ark, of how Isaac was to be laid upon the altar of sacrifice, the position of the cherubim over the mercy seat and of the coverings for the

14- Wiping out²⁹ the certificate of indebtedness³⁰ the degrees that were set against us and took it out of the midst nailing³¹ it to the cross.

15- Having stripped³² the rulers and authorities exposing them by openly triumphing over them in it.

tabernacle furniture during transportation. In the New Testament 'paraptoma' is first observed in Matthew 6:14, where it is used in references to the offences that men commit against one another.

²⁷ The uncircumcision of the flesh describes the spiritually dead state of man dominated by sin. Paul gives a thorough explanation of this spiritual condition in Roman's chapter 5 and 7. Because of the domination of sin over the nature and appetites of man, all unredeemed men are dead in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1,5). Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus the nature of sin is cut away like the foreskin of the flesh at the time of circumcision. Thus the power of sin is excised being permanently removed by the activity of God's faith. Because of God's grace the mark or the new covenant is witnessed in our hearts by the inscription of the nature of God (Romans 8:4; 2 Cor 3:3; 2 Peter 1:5).

²⁸ Another synonym for forgiveness is used in this verse adding yet more meaning to the gift of God's grace that has been given to us through the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. The best way to translate this word here in this passage is either 'pardoned' or 'forgiven' (charizomai). This Greek word is derived from a word, which means 'gift of grace' (charisma). The Lord has given to us generously of His forgiveness having cancelled (charizomai) all of our debt through the death of Jesus Christ (Luke 7:42-43). Our debts were canceled with our former life. The old life laden with sin and guilty of death was crucified with Christ and now new life has been given in Christ Jesus. God has bestowed this new life on us just as Jesus bestowed (charizomai) sight to many who were blind and as God bestowed (charizomai) a name to Jesus that is above every name (Luke 7:21; Philippians 2:9). All of our former deeds have been cut off and nothing of the past can be associated with the life that we now have in Christ Jesus. Faith in Christ Jesus demands that we too let go of the past. Those memories and the things that the enemy of our soul would use to condemn us with must be rejected as a false testimony of a life that no longer exists. Our standing with God now in Christ Jesus is such that He will graciously (charizomai) give us all things (Romans 8:32).

²⁹ The Greek word 'exaleipho' may be translated wiped out or destroyed. It first appears in the Septuagint in Genesis 7:4 when God revealed to Noah that he was going to destroy all of the inhabitants of the earth. It translates the Hebrew word 'machah' which means to erase, wipe out, or destroy. The Hebrew word 'machah' is also one of the words that translates the primary Greek word for 'forgiveness' in the New Testament, 'aphesis'.

³⁰ Certificate of indebtedness is translated from a Greek word that only appears one time in the Greek New Testament. The Greek word 'cheirographon' is defined by the "Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains" as a word relating especially to financial accounts. One may conclude that Paul is either referring to the Law of God or to the record of man's sin that demanded the just penalty of death in order to clear it. Now it is a well established fact that the death of Christ Jesus on the cross was more about removing man's sin and offense than removing the Law of Moses. However, Paul plainly states that Jesus abolished the law at the time of His death as well (Ephesians 2:15). Therefore, we may conclude that Jesus both destroyed the debt of sin and the Law that was the testimony of condemnation against us when He died on the cross. Paul informs us that we are dead to the Law by the body (or crucifixion) of Christ in order that we may come into the New Covenant (Romans 7:4). In fact Paul reveals that the affliction of sin that worked in us were connected to the law. He made the argument that it was through the revelation of the law that sin was revealed. Therefore, if the law was taken away sin would also be taken away. Paul is connecting the law of sin to the law of God. For in fact the law of God not only existed to reveal the law of sin but to bring a testimony of condemnation against it. We know that the consequence of man's sin resulted in death and thus the law of death began to govern mankind (Romans 5:12-15). Yet Paul takes it one step further and reveals that the subsequent Law of Moses was also connected to the law of death. But now through the New Covenant the Law of sin and death has been replaced by the law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:3).

³¹ The certificate of sin and death was destroyed when the sin of all mankind was laid upon Jesus at Calvary. As the sin offering Jesus bore all of our sin in his own body and then paid the just penalty for the debt of sin (1 Peter 2:24). Thus sin and all of the degrees that testified against us were nailed to the cross when Jesus was nailed to the cross.

- 16- Therefore let no one judge you in eating and drinking or participating in festivals or new moons or Sabbaths.
- 17- This is shadow of future things but the body is of Christ.
- 18- Let no one rob you of your prize insisting on a self abasement³³, a cultic practice of angels, stepping into things which he has not seen without cause being puffed up from the mind of his flesh³⁴.
- 19- And not holding the Head³⁵ from whom all the body being supplied and being knit together through the joints and bands increases with the increase of God³⁶.
- 20- If you died together with Christ from the rudiments of the world why do you subject yourself to ordinances as living in the world.
- 21- Do not handle or taste or touch.
- 22- Which all will perish with the using after the religious precepts and teachings of men.
- 23- Which things indeed have a show of wisdom in will worship and humiliating and body abuse not in any honor to the indulgence of the flesh.

³² Paul reveals that not only did the Law of sin and death lose its position to condemn us but also the angelic powers that had gained ruled over man because of disobedience were stripped of their power (Ephesians 2:2). Before Jesus died at Calvary he had all power and authority over all of the powers of darkness and in fact gave the disciples the same authority. However, when Jesus was revealed to John after His resurrection He was the one who had the keys of death and hell. We know that Jesus destroyed the power of the devil and the power of death through His death (Hebrews 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; John 12:31-32). Therefore, we may conclude that it was through His death that He stripped all the host of hell of their power over man. Through His resurrection He openly demonstrated His absolute power over all of the forces of death and hell (Ephesians 1:21; Philippians 2:9-10).

³³ Perhaps 'humility wishing' was some sort of self inflicted abuse or abasement a practice common to pagans and subsequently to the Roman Catholic Church.

³⁴ Those who do not have the mind of the Spirit have only a mind of flesh or the speculative ideas of man and the deceptive suggestions of demon spirit. The man who functions in the natural or sensual cannot not know the things of God nor be subject to them (1 Corinthians 2:14).

³⁵ Jesus Christ is the head of all of those who have been redeemed. Every dimension of our life should be under his instruction and control. Everything we do should be done to bring him glory and honor in the same way the natural body functions in obedience and support of its head. As we give Jesus His proper place in our life and the credit for every dimension of our salvation then we continue to increase and mature into every dimension of those things that he has purposed for our lives (Ephesians 4:16).

³⁶ There is only one way that we can step into all the blessings that the Lord has for us and that is to participate with the Holy Spirit who desires to bring an increase of God's presence and glory into our lives. It is through the increase of God that we will see a direct effect on every other dimension of our lives for we will prosper and be in health in direct proportion to the prosperity of our souls (3 John 2). The blessings of the Kingdom of God come to us not because we seek the blessings but because we seek the Kingdom (Matthew 6:33). Also all of the manifestation of the Spirit and power come to us not because we seek the manifestations but because we seek Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:7; John 16:14).

As we experience the growth and maturity that comes through our obedience to the word of God there is an ever-increasing manifestation of the life of Jesus revealed through our lives (1 Peter 2:2; Ephesians 4:13). The increase has no limits as God has made a provision that allows us to come into all of His fullness. As we allow the Holy Spirit to take control of our lives by giving ourselves over to His ways he leads us into greater encounters with Jesus (John 16:14; 14:21; 2 Corinthians 3:18). It is God's desire the we be conformed to the image of the Son and as we totally surrender to the obedience of Christ the conforming power of the Spirit strengthens and equips us to live the life of Christ (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 4:16; 10:4; Ephesians 3:16; Colossians 1:11). However, if we think that there are other methods and other ways to step into the realms of God's glory other than conforming to the life of Jesus then we have made a tragic mistake and failed to give the Head of the body His rightful place. Therefore determine that from this day forward you will give yourself over to living the life of Jesus (Colossians 3:1-4).

Chapter 3

- 1- If you then be risen³⁷ together with Christ seek those things that are above where Christ is seated on the right hand³⁸ of God.
- 2- Set your affection³⁹ on things that are above not on things of this earth⁴⁰.

³⁷ All those who have accepted Jesus as their savior and thereby received the miracle of the new birth have a statement of faith that was outlined for us by the Apostle Paul: I am crucified together with Christ, I am buried together with Him by baptism into His death, I am raised up together with Him, I am alive together with Him and I am seated together with Him in the heavenlies (Crucified-Romans 6:6,8; Galatians 2:20; Buried- Colossians 2:12; 3:3; Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:27; Raised- Ephesians 2:6; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12; 3:1; Alive-Ephesians 2:1,5; Romans 6:11,13; Colossians 2:13 Seated-Ephesians 2:6). The miracle of the new birth transcends all time inasmuch that even though Jesus was crucified, buried, arose from the dead and ascended into heaven almost 2000 years ago we are still participants today. Being raised up together with Christ does not speak of a process that changes us but a radical transformation that takes place in the instant of the new birth. If we are going to participate in the process of maturation in Christ then we must turn all of our affections towards the realm of the Kingdom of God and gaze upon the author and finisher of our faith, Christ Jesus.

³⁸ This Greek word primarily refers to spatial location so one could say, 'right hand', 'right side', or simply 'right' of God. The first occurrence of this word in the Septuagint is in Genesis 13:9 where it is translated by the Hebrew 'yaman.' The first occurrence of 'dixia' in the New Testament is in Matthew 5:30.

³⁹ When we use the statement born from above we are actually referring to being born from heaven (John 3:3,6). We were raised up from the spiritual death and separation from God by the Spirit to take our place with God in heaven (Ephesians 2:6; 1:3; John 17:21-22). When we were born of the Spirit we were translated from the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of the Dear Son or the Kingdom of Heaven (Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; Romans 5:17; 2 Peter 1:11). Heaven is not only a real place but it is a realm that we now live in. It is here that we have our citizenship and our empowered to exercise the authority that has been given to us through our union with Jesus Christ (John 17:22; Colossians 2:12; Romans 8:30; John 1:12; Matthew 16:19; Luke 10:20). The realm of Heaven has been observed from earth many times. When the heavens are opened men are able to see God, hear his voice and see and angels ascending and descending into the kingdom of this world (Genesis 28:12; John 1:51; Mark 1:11; 2 Peter 1:18; Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:21; John 1:32; Acts 7:55; 9:3; 10:11; 2 Kings 6:17). Jesus is the door into this realm (John 10:9; Ephesians 2:18). When we interact with God we come with the blood of Jesus and find ourselves standing in the Holies of Holies where God dwells (Hebrews 10:19). If our eyes were opened we would discover that as we worship God we have come to Mount Zion the Holy Dwelling place of the Most High and that around us are an innumerable company of angels and Jesus Christ the mediator of the New Covenant and God the Judge of all (Hebrews 12:22- 25). It is the realm of heaven that the Spirit of God communicates to us and it is in the realm of heaven that all of our affections, ambitions and aspirations should be placed (Romans 14:17; Matthew 6:10, 33).

⁴⁰ We need to make God's ambitions our ambitions, His vision our vision, His purpose our purpose. We put so much emphasis on what we can achieve in this life in an earthly realm. We focus our children on academics and are constantly pursuing higher goals of achievement in our own vocations and dreams. All of these things are not necessarily bad but if we do not realize that this is less than one third of our life we are failing miserably on the scale of eternity. Many of us fail to realize that we must not only develop ourselves intellectually but we must also be developed spiritually. I have observed many people who set in church and when it comes to the things of the Spirit and the spiritual realm they are nearly altogether ignorant. They have very little ability to understand what is going on and equally very little ability to participate. For many the most that they can participate, in the realms of the spiritual, is to sing a few songs and pray out some of their heartfelt desires.

If we are going to learn and be developed in the things of the Spirit then we must be willing to place our attention and affections on the things of the Spirit. We have been given the best teacher and mentor that exist, the Holy Spirit. It is His desire to lead us into the deep things of God so that we might know what passes knowledge and see what eyes have not seen and hear what ears have not heard and understand what

3 For you died and your life is hid together with Christ in God⁴¹.

has never entered into the heart of man. Although the things of the heavenly realm are free they are not cheap. We must be willing to grow in all that God has made available as a free gift to everyone. If we will not give ourselves to the things of the Spirit to be developed in all of the gifts and blessings of God then the free gift will never become of any realm value and meaning to our lives. We should give more attention to the opportunities that God has made available to us than we would to the great efforts we put into academics or climbing the corporate ladder. The Lord Jesus desires for us to do His works and greater works. He has called us with a heavenly calling and wants to give us a heavenly vision. He has brought us to a place in Himself that we might be seated together with Him in the heavenly realm. Lets begin today with a deeper commitment to give ourselves to the realms of the Spirit to mind spiritual things and make Gods plan and vision for our lives the most important aspect of our daily goals. Let us give ourselves to truly living by the word (that means being a doer of the word). Lets give ourselves to the kind of ministry that Jesus model for us and called us to follow Him in. If we will then we will be the people that Father desires to represent Him and His kingdom on this earth. We have a greater opportunity today than Joseph or Daniel had. They both were the best at what they did vocationally and academically but they were also developed in the things of the Spirit where they could receive visions, the word of knowledge and move in faith that stopped the mouths of lions.

⁴¹ God has granted us an abundant and glorious life, but our thoughts and affections must be immersed in it or we will spend all of our lives hanging around on the periphery of all that has been given. Living on the border of our inheritance is a terrible existence - while we look across the divide and see the beauty and the splendor of all that has been promised: the spiritual riches that are ours, yet held within the clutches of what seems necessary for daily life. Paul says to set your affections, your cravings, your longings on things above. The remedy for our earth-bound temporal and fearful existence is to be caught away with the realm of the Spirit, and through the activity of faith step in to a heavenly participation with the Holy Ghost. We have been translated from the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of the dear Son to function in the glory realm of heaven (Colossians 1:13). We have been entrusted with access by the Spirit to take our place in the heavenly realm where Christ Jesus is presently seated (Ephesians 2:6). We have been given the authority to function as sons in all the gifts of the Spirit; but unless it is our one desire above all other things, we will never realize these blessed things.

God demands that our cravings for the the things of the heavenly be first and foremost above all other things - that the passion of our souls should be the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). Our greatest need and deepest desire should be to see that power of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives and in our assemblies. Jesus modeled for us what it was like to live out a life of days of heaven upon the earth. He showed us the beauty of our spiritual inheritance: when He was baptized in the Holy Ghost, and went around driving out devils and ministering the blessed and glorious life of the kingdom of God.

We were born of the Holy Spirit that we might take hold of the spiritual life that was lost to mankind through the sin and disobedience of Adam. Now that we have been born of Spirit, we should crave the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5). The spiritual should be the longings of our souls and the covetous desires of our appetites. We should live to see the kingdom and the power of Christ Jesus being manifested by the glorious outworking of the Spirit of the living God in and around our lives. In minding the things of the Spirit, craving and desiring above all other things that which the Holy Ghost desires to lead us into - the things of the earthly, fleshly, and sensual realm will have no lure. If we will be caught up in the things of the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). If we will put on Christ, we will give no recognition to the desires of the flesh (Romans 13:14). If we will allow the communication of those things that are heavenly to be the occupation of our thoughts, then our affections will not be turned to the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this world. It is through being filled with the good things of God that we are empowered to live above those things that are earthly and sensual. There is a realm far superior to what we can see with our eyes and hear with our ears, but our hearts must be trained to discern it. The Holy Spirit has come to open our eyes so that might see those things that are going on all around us which belong to the eternal and spiritual (2 Kings 6:15-17; Ephesians 1:18-23; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

4 When Christ who is your life shall appear then we shall also appear together with him in glory.

5 Therefore put to death your members⁴² which are upon the earth fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, covetousness which is idolatry.

6- Because of these the wrath of God⁴³ comes upon the sons of disobedience.

7- In which you also once walked when you lived in them.

8- And now you shall also lay aside all these; wrath, anger, malice, slander, filthy language from your mouth.

9- Do not lie one to another seeing that the old man is stripped off with his deeds.

10- And being endued with the new which is renewed unto a full knowledge after the image⁴⁴ of the One who created him.

Above all other things we must desire the spiritual, and also that we may prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:1; Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21). We prophesy because it is the revelation that the Spirit of God has filled us with, and we have become those who speak from the throne of God. Our speech and conversation is no longer dictated by the self-interest of man, but filled with the will of the Father will and His divine inspirations. The activities of the heavenly realm should be precious to our souls, and more important than anything else that life can afford. The privilege of representing God in the earth and having the power of the Holy Spirit manifested in our lives to set the captives free from sin, sickness, disease, demon oppression and possession - this should be more important than anything else. The unspeakable gift and the glorious honor of being allowed to walk with God every day as His heir and partner cannot be taken for granted.

⁴² Members (melos) may be used of either the physical parts or the spiritual parts of man. Our members may be yielded to God and used as weapons of righteousness or to sin as weapons of unrighteousness (Romans 6:13; 1 Corinthians 6:15). Mans members may refer to his attitudes, affections, emotions, passions and thoughts. We may also think of our unseen members as the spirit, soul, mind, heart, will, conscious and thought. In this passage earthly members are identified as fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affections, evil desires and covetousness. When the power of sin would attempt to influence us we are to yield our members unto God as weapons of righteousness. By the act of yielding our members to God those evil things that would attempt to work in our members through the power of sin are destroyed. All that is in the world the lust of the flesh the lust of the eye and the pride of life will war against us but as we allow the Holy Spirit to wield our members as weapons of righteousness the power of sin cannot exercise dominion over us (Romans 6:7,12; 1 Peter 2:1). When the physical member the eye looks and beholds that which the realm of sin would turn into adultery or fornication Jesus said it would be better to pluck it out so that such influence would not lead the whole body into eternal destruction (Matthew 5:29). God expect absolute conformity to His ways. Therefore, the members must be put to death that would cause an offense. Not that God would require self-mutilation but a desire to do whatever it takes to be obedient. If our desire to please God would rise to this level we can be certain that we will find the strength of the Lord to resist sin (Hebrews 12:4; 1 Corinthians 10:13). An excellent example of this is given by the Theological Dictionary with regards to the disposition that God's people should have towards the things they speak, "This means that the sinful use of the tongue, being radically condemned to death, can have no more place" (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. S. 4:565). Paul takes us one step further with our members and reveals to us that our members are joined to one another and unto Christ (1 Corinthians 6:15,17; Ephesians 5:30; John 6:56; 14:20,23; 15:5; 17:11,21,22,23,26; Colossians 1:27; 1 John 3:24; 4:13,15-16; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 2 Timothy 1:14; Romans 8:9-11). Keeping in mind that Paul likens our members to slaves and the slave can only do what the master allows (Romans 6:19). As the redeemed of the Lord our Master Christ Jesus rules over us in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-18). God has called us to set all of our affections on things above and not on things of this earth. Sin would like to play its melody (melos) in our members but the people of God are to only yield their members to the influence of the Holy Spirit.

⁴³ Paul makes it certain that God's attitude toward sin has not changed. The wrath of God will be poured out upon all those who are not willing to be obedient to God (Jude 1:14-15; Romans 2:5; 13:4; Ephesians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 5:11).

- 11- Where there cannot be Greek and Jew circumcision and uncircumcision Barbarian, Scythian, slave, free but Christ who is all in all.
- 12- Be endued then as the elect of God holy and beloved⁴⁵ with deepest inward mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, long-suffering.
- 13- Being tolerant with one another and gracious to each other. If anyone has a complaint against anyone just as Christ was gracious to you so should you also be.
- 14- And above all of these love, which is the bond⁴⁶ of perfection⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ God's predetermined plan was that we be conformed to the image of His Son Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18). When we were created in Christ Jesus having been made a new creature God endued us with the ability to walk in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; 2:10; Hebrews 12:14). The most important issue that confronts the believer today is holiness. It is absolutely imperative that those who call themselves the people of God lay hold on the power of godliness. At the end of our church services and devotions there should be the manifestation and witness of the enduing power of God to walk uprightly. There should be the awesome awareness of the presence and purity that causes us to live consecrated to the ways of the Most High. If these fruits do not exist in our lives then there is something terribly wrong for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, who is Holy by name, are the sons of God. If we are not allowing God to lead us into all the ways of His Holiness then we must ask ourselves if we are ready for heaven. It is time for the people of God to rise up in total surrender to the Holy Spirit so that the name of the Lord is no longer polluted in the earth through the unrighteous behavior of His people (2 Timothy 2:19).

⁴⁵ God demands that we be conformed to the image of His Son; and this passage of scripture describes the attributes of that image, and of those who are the elect of God, holy and beloved. This identity is in stark contrast to the identity characterized by the ways of those who are under the influence of the spirit of disobedience (Colossians 3:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 2:2). God expects us to be endued with power from on high, and to be clothed with the splendor of Christ - which is expressed in these divine attributes. These are the characteristics of those who are walking in the light, as He is in the light. Those who are the elect (eklektoi), holy (hagioi) and beloved (hagaphmenoi) of God, are those who have allowed the Holy Spirit to overwhelm their soul with the nature of God; whose light has come and now shines in the midst of a dark and perverse world.

We are endued (enduno) with power by the Holy Spirit because we are willing to be led and guided by Him. We are endued because we recognize that we can do nothing of ourselves, and therefore we are willing to be continually filled with the Spirit (John 15:5; Ephesians 5:18). Unfortunately, if we do not move in the faith that is produced by the word of God, then we will not participate with the will of God. If we fail to believe He has made us holy, and has provided the means for us to live out true holiness - then we will not know how to yield to the Spirit of God for these things that pertain to life and godliness. We must believe that we were begotten of God, so that we can be one with Him, and move and walk in all the ways of God's abundant life! We were chosen of God to bring forth the fruit of His Holy nature; and the One who has chosen us is also the One who has given to us His Holy Spirit, so that we can be supplied with all those things that He has ordained for our lives (John 15:1-5; John 15:16; Luke 11:13; John 7:38-39; John 16:12-14).

The only proper way to define holiness is by the acts of the Almighty God, who is holy in all of His works (Psalm 145:17). Holiness describes the purity and sacredness of those who have been washed in the blood of Jesus, and filled with the Holy Spirit. It has been said that when a sinner sins, he is a creature breaking the laws of the Holy Creator and Judge. But when a Christian sins, he is a child breaking the loving heart of his Father (The Bible Exposition Commentary). God has chosen us for Himself to be those who are called the "elect of God." We are called as those who are holy and beloved, to be "as men to whom Christ has become all in all" (Lightfoot); or as Thayer comments: "to become possessed with the mind of Christ as in thought, feeling, and action to resemble Him and, as it were, reproduce the life He lived."

⁴⁶ Love is first in the list of the fruits of the Spirit and when it is allowed to rule us joy and peace will be ours as well (Galatians 5:22). The Greek word that is used here literally means the middle item that joins two or more things together. Love is the bond that fuses our actions with God's (1 John 4:7-21). It is love that causes our hearts to be knit together with one another which then results in an ever increasing manifestation of the glory and power of God in our lives collectively and individually (Ephesians 4:15-16;

15- And let the peace of God rule⁴⁸ your heart into which you are also called into one body and be thankful.

16- Let the word of Christ⁴⁹ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, in hymns in spiritual songs singing with grace in your heart to the Lord.

Colossians 2:2) Imagine what a blessing God's saints would be if they were clothed with love, allowed the peace of God to rule them and were always giving thanks (John 13:35; Ephesians 5:1-2; Colossians 3:15; 1Thessalonians 5:18). If we are going to walk in love then we need to be clothed with the humility of Jesus. Too often our own selfish interest takes over and all consciousness of responsibility is totally abandoned.

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⁴⁸ The Greek word 'brabeuo' means "to act as an umpire." This gives us insight into the fact that the Holy Spirit communicates to us through the fruits of the Spirit. Peace may be considered one of the ways that the Holy Spirit guides our decisions. God has in no way taken our decision making process away from us but rather acts as an umpire to guide it. If we are willing to be sensitive and obedient, God will teach us to make the kind of decisions that He makes. One important aspect of remaining sensitive to the Holy Spirit is to keep your affections on things above not on things of this world.

⁴⁹ The People of God must come to understand that until they begin to live by the Word of God nothing will change. If we live by the Word then the Word will govern our speech and conduct! If we are going to live by the Word then we must come to know the Word well enough to recall what God has to say in His Word regarding our conduct and reactions to everything we encounter in life.

The phrase "the word of Christ" is only found one time in the New Testament so to understand exactly what Paul meant by the "word of Christ" it will be necessary to consider both how Christ dwells in our hearts and how His word dwells in us. The most obvious meaning of the "word of Christ" is that it is a synonym for "the word of the Lord" or the "word of God" Jesus said that the words that He spoke would never pass away (Matthew 24:35; Luke 21:33). The word of Christ above all else is those things that are written in the word of God, which will always be those things that the Spirit of God speaks. If anyone does not speak according to this word then it is because there is no light in him (Isaiah 8:20; John 5:46-47; Matthew 22:29; 2 Peter 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 3:15-17). If we are going to speak the word of Christ then we must give ourselves to knowing them by heart (John 14:26; 16:13; 17:17).

We can both live under the inspiration of the word of Christ and speak the word of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us. The Spirit of Christ Jesus who dwells in us will speak through us all the words of this life that produces signs wonders, miracles, praise and adoration that belong to God (Colossians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 12:7-10; 1 John 3:24; Acts 5:20). One of the chief aims of the word of Christ dwelling in the saints is to empower us to teach and admonish one another. Paul made it clear that when He spoke it was by the operation of the Holy Spirit speaking through him either by revelation, knowledge, prophecy or teaching (1 Corinthians 14:6). Furthermore, it may be argued that Paul made these expressions a product of the spiritual language. His demand to the church was that they earnestly contend for the spiritual and especially prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:1). Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to govern the church and to lead us and guide us and it is essential that we realize that we are to only speak by the Spirit of truth, which has been given to us (John 15:26; 16:13; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:4,17-18; 10:45-56; 19:6; 1 Corinthians 14:2). Peter said that when we speak we are to do so as the oracles (bearers of the divine word) of God according as God supplies to us (1 Peter 4:11). In Ephesians Paul instructs us to be filled with the Spirit, which is related by context to the word of Christ producing the utterances of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19). There is a message living in our hearts, which can only be expressed by the Spirit of God who dwells in us. Those utterances come forth from our hearts as rivers of living water expressing the majesty and splendor of who Christ Jesus is. The word of Christ is a continual unchanging force in the church as much as His peace is (Colossians 3:15). The result of being filled with the Spirit and having the indwelling word of Christ is the same, it produces thanksgiving from the heart in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he emphasizes the spiritual song in the context of the language of the spirit (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). He also further reveals to them the dynamic of what teaching and admonition is when he said, "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Corinthians 14:26).

- 17- And all that is done in word and in deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to the God and Father through Him.
- 18- Wives be submitted to the husbands as it is proper in the Lord.
- 19- Husbands love your wives and be not bitter towards them.
- 20- Children be obedient to your parents in all things for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
- 21- Fathers do not provoke your children so that they become discouraged.
- 22- Servants be obedient to your masters according to the flesh in everyway not with eye-service as a man-pleaser but with a generous heart fearing the Lord.
- 23- Whatever you may do, work from the soul⁵⁰ as to the Lord and not to men.
- 24- Knowing that from the Lord you shall receive your wages, the reward, the inheritance serving Christ the Lord.
- 25- For the one who does wrong shall bear the wrong and there is no respect of persons.

Chapter 4

Realizing then that the word of Christ is the same as the word of God we have many scriptures that help us to understand this work of grace that placed the word of God in our hearts so that we may remember, do and speak what God has spoken. We have been born of the word of God (1 Peter 1:23). The word of God, has been written in our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16). The word of God is at work with power in those who believe (Acts 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 20:32). The word of God is how faith is produced in us (Romans 10:7) The word of God is the sword of the Spirit that gives us the ability to destroy every work of darkness (Ephesians 6:17). When the word of God dwells on the inside of Gods people then it makes them strong so that they can overcome the wicked one on every front (1 John 2:14).

We are the people of God and as such we are the people of faith who live by every word, which proceeds out of the mouth of God (Romans 10:8; Matthew 4:4). The word of Christ is established in us because we give ourselves to knowing and speaking the word of God that is written in our bibles. Everything that we do must be both judged and governed by the written word of God. It is the written word of God that brought the seed of Gods word into our hearts (Romans 10:14-17; Matthew 13:23). When Christ speaks through us by His Spirit it will be the Word written in our bibles. God's people must refuse to live by their words and speak their own words that are influenced by all sorts of things. We must be willing to make the transition in our lives and speak by the word of God from the Spirit of God rather than out of the realms of our own understanding.

⁵⁰ The soul represents ones whole life; this usage of soul is observed many times in both the Old and New Testaments (Genesis 35:18; 1 Samuel 18:1; 25:6; 1 Kings 1:29; Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:19; Acts 2:41; 14:22; Romans 11:3). The usage of the word soul is stronger than heart, which could speak of something that is done in the right way perhaps only until the task is complete. When the servant was instructed to do it with his soul he is to put his whole life into the service (Ephesians 6:6). In this way it is more than just accomplishing a task with the correct attitude but working with the same kind of commitment that the owner has. In both ancient Hebrew and Greek the words for soul (nephesh and psuche) find there meaning in breath with a special regards to that which leaves the body at the time of death. Nephesh is used as a noun 755 times in the Old Testament denoting 'life' or the 'living creature.' The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament says "nephesh is the usual term for a man's total nature, for what he is and not just what he has." Soul is the one term that is broader than spirit, heart or flesh and can be used to represent all of them combined. Therefore, in Genesis 2:7, man is described in his totality as a living soul (nephesh chayyah). The soul is that which departs from the body and is the visible and identifiable part of a person's life after death (Revelation 6:9; John 12:25; Acts 2:27). There is only one verse of scripture that expresses man as a "triune being" and only two verses that make a division between soul and spirit, in the New Testament (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23). What we can be certain of is that our souls (lives) have been purified and we have received a complete salvation (1 Peter 1:22, 9). We also know that it is God who will keep our spirit, soul and body sound and blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

1- Masters furnish your servants the righteous and the equal knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

2- Devote⁵¹ yourself to prayer⁵² staying alert by it with thanksgiving.

3- Also praying⁵³ for us that God may open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ for which also I am a prisoner.

⁵¹ The word that we translate devote (proskarterein) may be translated "to be continually in" or "to be occupied diligently." There are many different kinds of prayer named in the Bible but we may simplify them by categorizing prayer into three basic categories: prayer of thanksgiving, the prayer of petition and the prayer of adoration. The bible sets down a pattern of seeking God for direction and provision through persistent prayer. Therefore, there is a call to all of the saints to be devoted to prayer. Jesus was our first New Testament example of persistence in prayer being the one who was so devoted to prayer that at times He was raptured in prayer all night (Luke 6:12). The first message ever preached on persistent and devoted prayer was by Jesus in Luke 18:1-8.

Whereas the custom of the Jews was to have fixed hours and patterns of prayer the New Testament model demonstrated by Jesus, was a continual devotion to prayer. The continual devotion to prayer was not a religious activity but a continual fellowship and interaction with the Father. The prayer life that the disciples learned from Jesus was one of the Son talking to His Father. It was a fellowship of union and a conversation set on receiving direction from the Father's so that only His will would be done. Now, because of the example of Jesus the apostles also became constantly devoted to this same kind of prayer (Acts 6:4). They in turn gave us an example and instructions to do as Jesus had taught them (Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:6; Acts 1:14; 2:42). Therefore, in our consecration to only do the will of the Father then we too must devote ourselves to the same kind of prayer if we are going to obey Jesus and continue in His word (John 8:31).

⁵² Prayer is one of the common subjects of the Bible. It is one of the many privileges granted to us by God, which allows us to come to Him and ask whatever we desire (Mark 11:24; John 14:13-14; 15:7; 1 John 3:22; 5:14-15). At the same time prayer is how we yield to the Holy Spirit (Jude 1:20; 1 Corinthians 14:4; Acts 2:4; Romans 8:26-27). Through prayer we are able to stay alert to the spiritual condition of things around us as well as build ourselves up in faith (Ephesians 6:18; 1 Peter 4:7). Prayer is something that we must learn to do in the Spirit and by the Spirit if it is to be effectual. Otherwise we can be lost in a compromise of words and thoughts that really take us nowhere. But if we allow the Spirit of God to pray through us then we will find ourselves praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit rather than caught away in a mental exercise of request and petitions. Prayer must become an act of worship where we interact with God and through this interaction the wellspring of life overwhelms our hearts (Luke 19:46; Matthew 21:13; Isaiah 56:3; John 4:14,23). One of the important dispositions of prayer is the act of thanksgiving. When Jesus multiplied the loaves and the fish He simply gave thanks and one of the great miracles of all time was the result (Matthew 15:36; John 6:23). Paul describes the utterances of the Spirit in the heavenly language as the giving of thanks (1 Corinthians 14:16-17). Of course if prayer is of the Spirit and of faith then thanksgiving will naturally be a consequence of such a realm. Considering that faith has the certainty that those things, which are asked for are supplied thanksgiving overwhelms us with the knowledge that all is well. Through the work of the Holy Spirit we are build up and established in faith and we learn to function in that realm through this act of thanksgiving (Colossians 2:7; Philippians 4:6). We are called to be devoted to the realm of prayer, to be so given to this fellowship with God in the Holy Spirit that at any instant the prayer of the Spirit gushes forth from us as rivers of living water (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18; Romans 12:12). Through this overflow of God in our lives all that we have need of is supplied. Prayer may be viewed as a divine connection that results in the power of God flowing out of us to supply all our needs and the needs of those around us (James 5:14-16; Colossians 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:1; Acts 13:3).

⁵³ Paul seeks prayer from the saints so that there would be an open door for him to make known the mystery of Christ which He also called the mystery of the gospel and the mystery of God (Ephesians 6:19; 1 Corinthians 2:1; Colossians 2:2). If we are going to impact the lives of those around us with the truth and power of the gospel then we too must have supernatural help. Excellency of speech with a kind and sympathetic tone is not good enough (1 Corinthians 2:1). Paul realized that prayer was essential to both the open door of opportunity and the divine ability to reveal Christ Jesus (Ephesians 6:19). We would do well if we would take note of the need to pray in the Spirit for all those who are ministering the gospel so that the effectiveness of ministry would increase (Ephesians 6:18; Romans 5:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2

- 4- That I may reveal it as I ought to speak.
- 5- Walking in wisdom towards them redeeming the time.
- 6- Let your word always be gracious⁵⁴ seasoned with salt that you may know how to answer everyone.
- 7- All my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you a beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow laborer in the Lord.
- 8 Whom I have sent to you for this, that he may know the things concerning you and comfort your heart.
- 9 With Onesimus the faithful and beloved brother who is from you they shall make known to you all things, which are here.
- 10- Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you and Mark the cousin of Barnabas about whom concerning you received orders, if he comes to you receive him.
- 11 And Jesus who is called Justus those being of the circumcision these only are fellow workers unto the Kingdom of God which have been a comfort unto me.
- 12 Epaphras who is from you a servant of Jesus Christ greets you always contending on your behalf in prayer that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.
- 13 For I bear witness of him that he has labored much for you and for those in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis.
- 14- Luke the beloved physician and Demas greets you.
- 15 Greet the brethren in Laodicea and Nymphas and the church in his house.

Thessalonians 3:1). If we did nothing else but take up our part in prayer and behavior to support the effectiveness of the local church meetings great advancements would be made. We should also recognize that we should petition others to pray in agreement with us that each of us would have the open door of opportunity as well as the boldness to make known the gospel in our everyday lives. There are so many people around us that need and desire to be touched by God. If we will consistently ask and consistently make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit then we will discover the power of God flowing through each of our lives touching those who we minister to (Mark 16:17; John 14:12; Acts 1:8).

⁵⁴ This is one of the important principals and rules that we must keep in place in our lives (Proverbs 16:23-24). If we are to walk in wisdom and show out of a good conversation our devotion to the Lord Jesus then we need to find the correct demeanor and appropriate response in every situation (Proverbs 25:11; Psalms 49:3; Proverbs 2:6; Proverbs 31:26; Ecclesiastes 10:12). If we really grasp the magnitude of the effect that our words have on our lives and the lives of those around us then we will say with the Psalmist, "Set a watch O Lord before my mouth, keep the door of my lips" (Psalms 141:3). What we have to say and the way we say it has a profound effect on those who are lost (Psalms 18:4,7; 1 Peter 3:1; Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 10:21). Paul demanded that those in the church have a good report among those who are outside the church and there is nothing that effects our reputations like the things that we say (1 Timothy 3:7). If we speak the truth in love then we may be certain that our words are gracious having been filled with the inspirational speech of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:15; Psalms 37:30; Proverbs 15:4; Psalms 71:15). If we allow God to pour grace into our lips then we will indeed be blessed forever and those who hears us will be convinced that we are not like the rest of the world (Psalms 45:2; 1 John 4:5). So much of our failure comes from the fact that we react out of self-defense, impatience or anger and say things that result in our downfall (Proverbs 6:2; 12:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12' Psalms 34:13; 1 Peter 3:10). If we will only yield our emotions to the Holy Spirit then the wisdom of God will be evident in our lives through the things that we say (Luke 21:15; James 3:13,17; Proverbs 18:4; 10:11; 13:14; Colossians 3:16). Having our words seasoned with salt harkens back to the salt that was added to the sacrifices that were offered to God in the Old Testament. It is the salt of holiness and purity that should season every word that we speak (Leviticus 2:13; Hebrews 13:15; Ephesians 4:29). Our words are so important to God that we will give an account for every ideal word that we speak (Matthew 12:36). They are so powerful that the consequence of what we say today will become our food tomorrow (Proverbs 18:20). It is through our words that we bless God and it is by our words that we should bless men (James 3:9; Hosea 14:2; Hebrews 13:15)

16 And when this epistle is read among you cause that it also be read in the Laodicean church and that you also read the one from Laodicea.

17 And say to Archippus take heed to the ministry, which you have received in the Lord that you fulfill it.

18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds the grace be with you.

Amen