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Colossians

1 Greetings from Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

Greetings also from Timothy, our brother in Christ.

2To the holy* and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ that live in Colossae. Grace (*kindness*) and peace from God our Father.

3In our prayers we always thank God for you. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4We thank God because we have heard about the faith you have in Christ Jesus and the love you have for all of God's people. **5**You have faith in Christ and love God's people because of the hope you have. You know that the things you hope for are saved for you in heaven. You learned about this hope when you heard the true teaching, the Good News* **6**that was told to you. Everywhere in the world that Good News is bringing blessings and growing. This same thing has happened with you since the time you heard that Good News and understood the truth about the grace (*kindness*) of God. **7**You learned about the grace of God from Epaphras. Epaphras works together with us, and we love him. He is a faithful servant of Christ for us.

8Epaphras also told us about the love you have from the Holy Spirit.*

9Since the day we heard these things about you, we have continued praying for you. We pray these things for you:

that you will know fully the things that God wants;

that with your knowledge you will also have great wisdom and understanding in spiritual things;

10 that you will use these things to live in a way that brings honor to the Lord and pleases him in every way;

that you will do all kinds of good things and grow in the knowledge of God;

11 that God will strengthen you with his own great power;

that God will strengthen you, so that you will be patient and not quit when troubles come.

Then you will be happy **12**and give thanks to the Father. He has made you able to have the things he prepared for you. He has prepared these things for all his people who live in the light (*good*). **13**God made us free from the power of darkness (*evil*). And he brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son (*Jesus*). **14**The Son paid the price to make us free. In him we have forgiveness of our sins.

When We Look at Christ, We See God

15No person can see God. But Jesus is exactly like God. Jesus is ruler over all the things that have been made. **16**Through his power all things were made—things in heaven and on earth, things seen and not seen, all spiritual powers, authorities, lords, and rulers. All things were made through Christ and for Christ. **17**Christ was there before anything was made. And all things continue because of him. **18**Christ is the head of the body. (The body is the church.) Everything comes from him. And

apostle A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

holy God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

he is the Lord* who was raised from death. So in all things Jesus is most important. ¹⁹God was pleased for all of himself to live in Christ. ²⁰And through Christ, God was happy to bring all things back to himself again—things on earth and things in heaven. God made peace by using Christ’s blood (*death*) on the cross.

²¹At one time you were separated from God. You were God’s enemies in your minds, because the evil things you did were against God. ²²But now Christ has made you God’s friends again. Christ did this by his death while he was in his body. Christ did this so that he could bring you before God. He brings you before God as people who are holy,* with no wrong in you, and with nothing that God can judge you guilty of. ²³Christ will do this if you continue to believe in the Good News* you heard. You must continue strong and sure in your faith. You must not be moved away from the hope that Good News gave you. That same Good News has been told to all people in the world. I, Paul, help in telling that Good News.

Paul’s Work for the Church

²⁴I am happy in my sufferings for you. There are many things that Christ must still suffer through his body, the church. I am accepting my part of these things that must be suffered. I accept these sufferings in my body. ²⁵I became a servant of the church because God gave me a special work to do. This work helps you. My work is to tell fully the teaching of God. ²⁶This teaching is the secret truth that was hidden since the beginning of time. This truth was hidden from all people. But now that secret truth is made known to God’s holy people.* ²⁷God decided to let his people know that rich and glorious truth. That great truth is for all people. That truth is Christ himself, who is in you. He is our only hope for glory. ²⁸So we continue to tell people about Christ. We use all wisdom to counsel every person

Lord Literally, “firstborn.”

holy Holy people are pure and belong only to God.

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

holy people Literally, “saints” or “holy ones.” God’s people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

and teach every person. We are trying to bring all people before God as people who have grown to be spiritually mature (*perfect*) in Christ. ²⁹To do this, I work and struggle using the great strength that Christ gives me. That strength is working in my life.

2 I want you to know that I am trying very hard to help you. And I am trying to help the people in Laodicea and other people who have never seen me. ²I want them to be strengthened and joined together with love. I want them to have the full confidence that comes from understanding. I mean I want them to know fully the secret truth that God has made known. That truth is Christ himself. ³In Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are safely kept.

⁴I tell you these things so that no person can fool you by telling you ideas that seem good, but are false. ⁵I am not there with you, but my heart is with you. I am happy to see your good lives and your strong faith in Christ.

Continue to Live in Christ

⁶You received Christ Jesus the Lord. So continue to live following him without changing anything. ⁷You must depend on Christ only. Life and strength come from him. You were taught the truth. You must continue to be sure of that true teaching. And always be thankful.

⁸Be sure that no person leads you away with false ideas and words that mean nothing. Those ideas come from people, not Christ. Those ideas are the worthless ideas of people in the world. ⁹All of God lives in Christ fully (even in Christ’s life on earth). ¹⁰And in Christ you are full. You need nothing else. Christ is ruler over all rulers and powers.

¹¹In Christ you had a different kind of circumcision.* That circumcision was not done by the hands of any person. I mean you were made free from the power of your sinful self. That is the kind of circumcision Christ does. ¹²When you were baptized,* your old

circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

baptized, baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

self died and you were buried with Christ. And in that baptism* you were raised up with Christ because of your faith in God's power. God's power was shown when he raised Christ from death. ¹³You were spiritually dead because of your sins and because you were not free from the power of your sinful self. But God made you alive with Christ. And God forgave all our sins. ¹⁴We owed a debt because we broke God's laws. That debt listed all the rules we failed to follow. But God forgave us of that debt. God took away that debt and nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵God defeated the spiritual rulers and powers. With the cross God won the victory and defeated those rulers and powers. God showed the world that they were powerless.

Don't Follow Rules That People Make

¹⁶So don't let any person make rules for you about eating and drinking or about Jewish customs (festivals, New Moon celebrations,* or Sabbath days*). ¹⁷In the past, these things were like a shadow that showed what was coming. But the new things that were coming are found in Christ. ¹⁸Some people enjoy acting like they are humble and love to worship angels. Those people always talk about the visions* they have seen. Don't let those people say, "You don't do these things, so you are wrong." Those people are full of foolish pride because they think only the thoughts of people, not the thoughts of God. ¹⁹Those people don't keep themselves under the control of the head (*Christ*). The whole body depends on Christ. Because of Christ all the parts of the body care for each other and help each other. This strengthens the body and holds it together. And so the body grows in the way God wants.

²⁰You died with Christ and were made free from the worthless rules of the world. So why do you act like you still belong to this world?

baptized, baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

New Moon celebrations Holy days for the Jewish people on the first day of each Jewish month.

Sabbath days The Sabbath day (seventh day of the week) was a special religious day for the Jews.

vision(s) A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

I mean, why do you follow rules like these: ²¹"Don't eat this," "Don't taste that," "Don't touch that thing"? ²²These rules are talking about earthly things that are gone after they are used. These rules are only commands and teachings from people, not God. ²³These rules seem to be wise. But these rules are only part of a man-made religion that makes people pretend to be humble and makes them punish their bodies. But these rules don't help people to stop doing the evil things their sinful selves want to do.

Your New Life in Christ

3 You were raised from death with Christ. So try to get the things in heaven. I mean the things where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Think only about the things in heaven, not the things on earth. ³Your old sinful self has died, and your new life is kept with Christ in God. ⁴Christ is your life. When he comes again, you will share in his glory.

⁵So put all evil things out of your life: sexual sinning, doing evil, letting evil thoughts control you, wanting things that are evil, and selfishly wanting more and more. This wanting really means to live serving a false god. ⁶These things make God angry.* ⁷In your evil life in the past, you also did these things.

⁸But now put these things out of your life: anger, being very mad, doing or saying things to hurt other people, and using evil words when you talk. ⁹Don't lie to each other. Why? Because you have left your old sinful life and the things you did before. ¹⁰You have begun to live the new life. In your new life you are being made new. You are becoming like the One who made you. This new life brings you the true knowledge of God. ¹¹In the new life there is no difference between Greeks and Jews. There is no difference between people that are circumcised* and people that are not circumcised, or people that are from some foreign country, or Scythians.* There is no

Verse 6 Some Greek copies add: "against the people who don't obey God."

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

Scythians Known as wild and uncivilized people.

difference between slaves and free people. But Christ is in all those believers. And Christ is all that is important.

¹²God has chosen you and made you his holy people.* He loves you. So always do these things: Show mercy to people; be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. ¹³Don't be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If another person does something wrong against you, then forgive that person. Forgive other people because the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴Do all these things; but most important, love each other. Love is the thing that holds you all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. You were all called together in one body* to have peace. Always be thankful. ¹⁶Let the teaching of Christ live inside you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷Everything you say and everything you do should all be done for Jesus your Lord (*Master*). And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.

Your New Life with Other People

¹⁸Wives, be willing to serve your husbands. This is the right thing to do in following the Lord.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and be gentle to them.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in all things. This pleases the Lord.

²¹Fathers, don't frustrate your children. If you are too hard to please, they might want to quit trying.

²²Servants, obey your masters in all things. Obey all the time, even when your masters can't see you. But it is not people you are really trying to please—you are trying to please the Lord. So serve your masters honestly because you respect the Lord. ²³In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work like you are working for the Lord, not for people.

²⁴Remember that you will receive your reward

holy people Literally, "saints" or "holy ones." God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

body Christ's spiritual body, meaning the church—his people.

from the Lord. He will give you what he promised his people. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵Remember that any person who does wrong will be punished for that wrong. And the Lord treats every person the same.

4 Masters, give the things that are good and fair to your servants. Remember that you have a Master in heaven.

Paul Tells Christians Some Things to Do

²Continue praying. And when you pray, always thank God. ³Also pray for us. Pray that God will give us an opportunity to tell people his message.* I am in prison for doing this. But pray that we can continue to tell people the secret truth that God has made known about Christ. ⁴Pray that I can make this truth clear to people. That is what I must do.

⁵Be wise in the way you act with those people who are not believers. Use your time in the best way you can. ⁶When you talk, you should always be kind and wise. Then you will be able to answer every person in the way you should.

News About the People with Paul

⁷Tychicus is my dear brother in Christ. He is a faithful helper and he serves the Lord with me. He will tell you all the things that are happening to me. ⁸That is why I am sending him. I want you to know how we are. And I am sending him to encourage you. ⁹I am sending him with Onesimus. Onesimus is a faithful and dear brother in Christ. He is from your group. Tychicus and Onesimus will tell you all that has happened here.

¹⁰Aristarchus says hello. He is a prisoner with me. And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, also says hello. (I have already told you what to do about Mark. If he comes, welcome him.)

¹¹Jesus (the one that is also called Justus) also says hello. These are the only Jewish believers who work with me for the kingdom of God. They have been a comfort to me.

¹²Epaphras also says hello. He is a servant of Jesus Christ. And he is from your group. He

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

always prays for you. He prays that you will grow to be spiritually mature (*perfect*) and have everything that God wants for you. ¹³I know that he has worked hard for you and the people in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴Demas and our dear friend Luke, the doctor, say hello.

¹⁵Say hello to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea. And say hello to Nympha and to the

church that meets in her house. ¹⁶After this letter is read to you, be sure that it is also read to the church in Laodicea. And you read the letter that I wrote to Laodicea. ¹⁷Tell Archippus, “Be sure to do the work the Lord gave you.”

¹⁸I say hello and write this with my own hand—Paul. Remember me in prison. God’s grace (*kindness*) be with you.