

## *Colossians*

**1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Timothy the brother, **2**to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ in Colosse: grace to you and peace from God our Father.

**3**We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying for you, **4**having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have for all the saints, **5**because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which hope you have previously heard in the message of the truth of the gospel. **6**It has come to you, even as it has in all the world, bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has also in you, from the day you heard and truly understood God's grace, **7**even as you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow slave, who is a faithful servant of Christ for your sake. **8**He has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

**9**Because of this, we also, from the day we heard, have not stopped asking and praying for you: that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding; **10**that you may walk worthily of the Lord, to please him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11**being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, in all endurance and patience; joyfully **12**thanking the Father who has qualified you to share the inheritance of the saints in the light.

**13**He rescued us from the power of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. **15**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, **16**because all things were created by him, heavenly and earthly, seen and unseen, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through him and for him, **17**and he himself is before all things, and all things hold together in him. **18**He is the head of the body, the called-out people; who is the beginning, the

firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might have first place; <sup>19</sup>because it pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup>and by him to reconcile all things – whether earthly or heavenly – to himself, having made peace by the blood of his cross.

<sup>21</sup>Though you were then strangers and enemies in your mind in your evil deeds, <sup>22</sup>yet now he has reconciled you by the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in his sight, <sup>23</sup>if indeed, you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast and unmoved from the hope of the gospel, which you heard, and which was preached in the whole creation under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a servant.

<sup>24</sup>I now rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and I complete in my flesh the things lacking of Christ's afflictions for his body's sake, which is the called-out people. <sup>25</sup>For them I became a servant, according to the divine office which has been granted to me for you, to fulfill God's message, <sup>26</sup>even the mystery which has been hidden for ages and generations, but now has been revealed to his saints. <sup>27</sup>God wanted to make known to them the riches of this glorious mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, <sup>28</sup>whom we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we might present every man full-grown in Christ. <sup>29</sup>I labor for this, striving according to the manifestation of his power which works mightily in me.

**2** I want you to know how greatly I have agonized for you, and for those of Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; <sup>2</sup>that their hearts may be encouraged, united in love, in a rich and full understanding of God's mystery in Christ. <sup>3</sup>All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored in him. <sup>4</sup>I say this so that no one may mislead you by persuasive talk. <sup>5</sup>If I am away from you in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, rejoicing and observing your orderliness and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

<sup>6</sup>As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and

built up in him, established in the faith, even as you were taught, overflowing in thanksgiving. <sup>8</sup>Be on guard for fear that someone may ensnare you through philosophy and empty deceit, after human tradition, after worldly elements, and not after Christ. <sup>9</sup>In him dwells all the fullness of the deity bodily, <sup>10</sup>and you are complete in him, who is the head of all rulers and authority.

<sup>11</sup>You were circumcised by him without hands, in stripping off the flesh by Christ's circumcision. <sup>12</sup>You were buried with him in immersion, in which, also, you were raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>He has made you (who were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh) alive by him, forgiving all our trespasses. <sup>14</sup>He erased the handwriting (with its decrees) that was against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>He stripped rulers and authorities, boldly exposing them in his triumph.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore, let no one judge you in food and in drink, or with regard to a feast or a new moon or of sabbaths, <sup>17</sup>which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ's. <sup>18</sup>Let no one rob you of the prize, delighting in self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, emptily puffed up by his fleshly mind, <sup>19</sup>and not holding on to the head, from whom all the body, supported and held together by sinews and ligaments, grows with a God-given increase.

<sup>20</sup>If you died with Christ from worldly elements, why, as though living in the world, are you submitting to decrees, <sup>21</sup>"Neither touch, nor taste, nor handle," <sup>22</sup>all of which things perish with use, according to human commandments and teachings? <sup>23</sup>These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom, in self-made worship, and abasement and severity to the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

**3** If, therefore, you were raised up with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is sitting at God's right hand. <sup>2</sup>Focus your mind on things above, not on the things of the earth, <sup>3</sup>for you died, and your life

is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be gloriously revealed with him.

<sup>5</sup>Put to death, therefore, your earthly members: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>God's anger comes upon disobedient children because of these things. <sup>7</sup>You once walked in these things, when you were living in them; <sup>8</sup>but now you also put them all away: anger, wrath, ill-will, abusive speech, and obscene language from your mouth. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie one to another, since you have stripped off the old man with his deeds, <sup>10</sup>and since you have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the One who created him, <sup>11</sup>where there is no Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, pagan, slave, free, but Christ is everything, and in everyone.

<sup>12</sup>Put on, therefore, as God's chosen ones, dedicated and beloved, tender affection, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, <sup>13</sup>bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if anyone has a complaint against another, as the Lord also forgave you, you also forgive in the same way. <sup>14</sup>And above all these things, put on love, which is the bond that unites everything in complete harmony. <sup>15</sup>Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, into which you were called in one body, and be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let Christ's message dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, thanking God the Father through him.

<sup>18</sup>Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. <sup>19</sup>Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter with them. <sup>20</sup>Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Fathers, do not provoke your children, that they be not down-hearted.

<sup>22</sup>Slaves, obey in everything your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as pleasing men, but with a sincere heart fearing the

Lord. <sup>23</sup>Whatever you do, do heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men, <sup>24</sup>knowing that you will receive from the Lord the recompense of the inheritance. You are enslaved to Christ the Lord. <sup>25</sup>He who does wrong will receive again for the wrong which he has done, and there is no partiality. **4** Masters, be just and fair with your slaves, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>Continue in prayer, and be watchful in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup>At the same time, also pray for us, that God may open to us a door for the message, to speak Christ's mystery (for which I am bound), <sup>4</sup>So that I may make it clear, as I ought to speak. <sup>5</sup>Walk in wisdom with the ones outside, making good use of the time. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, learning how you ought to reply to each one.

<sup>7</sup>Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow slave in the Lord, will let you know how things are going with me. <sup>8</sup>I have sent him to you for this very purpose that you may know our affairs, and that he may encourage your hearts, <sup>9</sup>along with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your own. They will make all things that are happening here known to you.

<sup>10</sup>Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received commandments, that if he comes, receive him), <sup>11</sup>and Jesus (the one called Justus). These only, who are of the circumcision, are fellow workers in God's kingdom who have been a comfort to me.

<sup>12</sup>Epaphras, a slave of Christ Jesus, one of your own, greets you, always striving for you in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all of God's will. <sup>13</sup>I testify of him that he has worked hard for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for those in Hierapolis.

<sup>14</sup>Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, and Demas. <sup>15</sup>Greet the brothers in Laodicea, and Nympha, and the congregation in her house. <sup>16</sup>And when the letter has been read by you, see that it is also read in the Laodicean congregation, and that you also read the letter from Laodicea.

<sup>17</sup>Say to Archippus: see to the service which you received in the Lord, that you fulfill it. <sup>18</sup>The salutation of Paul with my hand. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you.