



JESUS IS GREATER

January 19, 2025
Sermon Study Guide
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Jesus is Better-*Jesus is Greater*

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

²To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷ just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf⁸ and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. (Colossians 1:1-12)

COMMENTARY

d. Who are in Colosse: The city of Colosse was probably the smallest and least important city that Paul ever wrote to. It might surprise us that Paul would turn his attention to the Christians in Colosse at a time when he had so many other concerns. Yet he apparently thought the situation in Colosse was important enough for apostolic attention.

i. Paul wrote because there were problems among the Christians in Colosse, but the doctrinal problem – sometimes described as “The Colossian Heresy” – is difficult to precisely describe. It probably was a corruption of Christianity with elements of mystical and legalistic Judaism perhaps combined with early Gnosticism.

ii. The first century religious environment was much like our own. It was a time of religious mixing, with people borrowing a little from this religion and a little from that religion. The only difference was that in the first century, one joined a group who did the borrowing. In our modern culture one does the borrowing one’s self.

iii. Whatever the problem was precisely, Paul dwelt on the solution: a better understanding of Jesus. Knowing the real Jesus helps us to stay away from the counterfeit, no matter how it comes packaged.

e. In Colosse: The city of Colosse is not even mentioned in the Book of Acts. All our Biblical information about the church there comes from this letter and a few allusions in the letter to Philemon.

i. From these sources we learn that Epaphras was responsible for bringing the gospel to the Colossians (Colossians 1:6-7). He was a native of the city Colossians 4:12, and also got the message out to neighboring towns in the Lycus Valley like Hierapolis and Laodicea Colossians 4:13.

ii. Perhaps Epaphras heard the gospel himself when Paul was in Ephesus. As Paul taught in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord ([Acts 19:10](#)). It would not be surprising if some people from Colosse heard the gospel at that time. D. Guzik

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God’s word.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. We live in a culture that bombards us with philosophies and ways of life that run contrary to the truth about Jesus and His greatness.

- What are some of the ideas and “isms”, that compete for dominance in your life?

- What position does Jesus hold in your life and how has this position changed over time?

- Where or when have you found yourself growing weary, allowing Jesus to be pushed to the side? How or why do you think this happened?

2. Paul is writing to the Colossians to commend them for their faith and to encourage them that the truth of the Gospel has not diminished or weakened over time, despite the prevailing culture.

- Why do you think Paul thought this message was important enough to write a letter from prison to a people he hadn't met?

- What effects of the Gospel have you seen grow larger and stronger in the world around you?

- What about in your own life? Where are you hungry for more?

3. Paul not only praises and encourages the Colossians; he also prays for them!

- Why would Paul need to pray for the Colossians after he just commended and encouraged them?

- Why is it important to be filled with the knowledge of God's will? How would you describe the difference between knowledge and understanding?

- How might your actions be affected by knowing Jesus in a more intimate way?

4. In the Christian life, knowledge and obedience go together. Paul reminds the Colossian people of the true power and strength God has given them.

- What do you think it means to “*walk worthy*” of the Lord?

- In what life events or circumstances have you asked the Holy Spirit to: empower you, to help you endure, to give you patience or to allow you to experience joy?

- Today we are facing the same challenges faced by the saints and faithful brothers that Paul wrote to in Colosse, will we keep Jesus first in our life no matter what?

- What one action will you begin with today to carry out that mission?

WALKING IT OUT

- Eugene Peterson the author of the Message paraphrased Bible said, “*as we learn more and more of how God works, we will learn more of how to do our own work, and our lives will produce every kind of good fruit.* “

We pray that you'll have the strength to stick it out over the long haul—not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory-strength God gives. It is strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy, thanking the Father who makes us strong enough to take part in everything bright and beautiful that he has for us. (Colossians 1:11-12 from The Message)

- In what areas of your life will you ask the Lord for greater wisdom and understanding as a way of allowing the truth of God's word to transform you?