Colossians 1

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Date: 15 November 2026

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[0:00] Good morning. Today we're going to look at Colossians chapter 1.! But to save time, I'm not going to read the chapter first, as I intend to work through the 29 verses as we go through the message.

! The main emphasis in this first chapter is Christ first in everything. Today we begin a journey through one of the most remarkable little books in the New Testament, Paul's letter to the Colossians.
It is only four chapters long, but it is packed with some of the biggest truths in the whole Bible. If I had to choose one phrase to describe Colossians, I think it would be, put Christ first in everything. Because that is really what Paul is doing. He wants these Christians and us to understand who Jesus really is. Not simply Jesus the teacher or the miracle worker, not Jesus who died upon the cross, or simply Jesus who rose again, but Jesus Christ as Lord of all creation, Head of the Church, Saviour, Redeemer, and the One in Whom everything finds its proper place.
This is a message we all need to learn and remember from time to time. Because it is possible to be a Christian and yet allow other things to gradually move towards the centre of our lives.
[1:16] Like family and work, money, health, our personal problems and even church activities can move us towards the centre. And before long, without necessarily intending it, Christ can become something we fit around everything else.

Paul's message to the Colossians is effectively saying, don't let that happen. Remember who Jesus is. Remember what he has done. Remember what you have received in him and make sure he remains first.
So, number one, a little background to Colossians. Paul is the author, writing from prison around AD 60 to the church in Colossae, a city in the Lycus River Valley in Asia Minor, now known as modern day Turkey.
Also to believers everywhere. The purpose of the letter was to combat errors in the church and to show that believers have everything they need in Christ. So let's set the scene.
Paul had never visited Colossae. Evidently, Epaphras and other converts from Paul's missionary travels had founded the church. The church, however, had been infiltrated by religious relativism and with some believers attempting to combine elements of paganism and secular philosophy along with Christian doctrine.
[2:36] The resulting heresy later became known as Gnosticism, which emphasised special knowledge. Gnosis is Greek for knowledge. And it involves denying Christ as God and Saviour.

Verses 1 and 2. To Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God and Timothy our brother. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae.
Grace to you and peace from God our Father. An interesting point is that Paul is writing to people he may never personally have met. And yet notice how much he cares about them.
And that tells us something very important. Christian fellowship isn't dependent on having met everybody personally. The church is bigger than the people sitting in this building.
We belong to something much bigger than our own congregation. We are part of God's worldwide family. There are Christians in Africa, Asia, America, Australia, Europe and all over the world whom we will never meet in this life.
[3:41] And yet we have something fundamental in common. And that is Jesus Christ. That is what unites us. It isn't our age or our background. It isn't our nationality nor our personality.

It isn't whether we prefer hymns or modern worship songs. It is Jesus Christ. And that is important because one of the dangers of church life is that we can become focused on our little corner of Christianity.

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Paul starts Colossians by lifting their eyes. He wants them to see the bigger picture. There is a worldwide church. There is one gospel. There is one Lord and there is one Savior.
Number two. Paul follows with thanksgiving. Look at verses three to five. Paul says, We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love which you have for all the saints, because of the hope reserved for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel.
There is something lovely about that. Paul has heard about these Christians. And what has he heard? Three things stand out. Their faith, their love, their hope. Those three words are enormously important in the Christian life.
[5:01] Faith looks to Christ. Love reaches towards others. Hope looks towards the future. And faith says, I trust Jesus. Love says, I care about other people.

And hope says, My future is secure in Christ. Notice how they are connected. Real faith produces love. Real faith produces hope.
Real hope affects the way we live today. Sometimes we think of faith as something private. My faith is my own business. My biblical faith is never intended to remain locked inside us.
If Christ has genuinely changed us, something should begin to happen in our lives. Our attitudes, priorities, and relationships begin to change. Even the way we react to other people's changes.
We may not become perfect overnight. And none of us should pretend that we do. But something is happening. There is a new direction. A new desire. And a new hope.
[6:01] Number three. The gospel is producing fruit. Verse 6. The gospel which has come to you, just as in all the world also, it is bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also, since the day you heard it, and understood the grace of God in truth.

And that is a wonderful picture. The gospel is not meant to be something you simply hear. It is something that should produce fruit. Imagine planting an apple tree. You don't plant it simply to admire the leaves.
Eventually, you expect apples. In the same way, God doesn't save us simply so that we can sit in church, listen to sermons, sing hymns, and go home. He intends the gospel to produce something in our lives.
Paul talks about fruit. What kind of fruit? Well, Galatians 5 gives us that familiar list. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.
Now, perhaps we should occasionally ask ourselves, what fruit is the gospel producing in me? Not how long have I been a Christian?
[7:22] Not how many sermons I have heard? Not even how many times I've read the Bible. But what difference is Christ actually making in my life?

That's a searching question. Because it is possible to know a great deal about Christianity without allowing Christianity to transform us.
We can know the Bible but still be impatient. We can know about forgiveness and still hold grudges. We can talk about love and still be difficult to live with.
We can sing about trusting God and then spend all night worrying. Paul's point is that the gospel should bear fruit.
Number four, Epaphras, a faithful servant. Verse 7 introduces us to Epaphras and says, Just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bondservant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf.
[8:26] Paul calls him our dear bondservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ. I love that description.

He wasn't one of the apostles. He didn't write a book of the Bible or have a large platform. But he was faithful. And sometimes we need to remind ourselves that God measures things differently than the world does.
The world asks, How many people know your name? God asks, Have you been faithful? The world asks, How successful have you been?
God asks, Have you been obedient? The world celebrates the person on the platform. God sees the person who quietly serves in the background.
The world notices the microphone. God notices the heart. Epaphras was a faithful servant. And that is a wonderful description for any Christian.

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[9:28] If one day somebody could describe us as a faithful servant to Christ, that would be a good epitaph. Not that he was successful, important, wealthy, or well-known, but he was faithful.

Number five, Paul's prayer for them. We come to verses 9 to 14. In verse 9 we read, For this reason we also, since the day we heard about it, have not ceased praying for you, and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.
This is one of the great prayers in Paul's letters. Paul says that since hearing about them, he has not stopped praying for them. What does he pray?
This is important. Paul doesn't pray, Lord, make them wealthy. He doesn't pray, Lord, make their lives easy. And he doesn't even pray, Lord, remove every difficulty.
Instead, he prays that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in spiritual wisdom and understanding. Verse 10 gives the reason, Knowing God's will and walking God's way are connected.
[10:55] Christianity is not simply about knowing the right things, but living the right way. We sometimes hear the expression, knowledge is power.

Knowledge is supposed to lead us in obedience. We don't learn God's word merely to win Bible quizzes. We learn God's word so that it changes how we live.
Imagine having a road map, but never traveling the road. You can study every junction and road number and even explain the route to somebody else. But eventually, somebody has to get in the car and drive.
The Bible is not merely a map to study. It is a guide for life. Paul says, Walk worthy of the Lord.
In other words, let the way you live match the one you say you follow. Number six, walk worthy. As we have seen in verse 10, that phrase deserves some attention.
[11:58] What does it mean to walk worthy? Well, it doesn't mean that we somehow earn salvation by being good enough. Paul has already made clear that salvation comes through Christ.

Walking worthy means that our lives should reflect the salvation we have received. Paul is saying, You've been saved. You've been forgiven. You've been brought into God's family.
You've been given hope. Now live in a way that reflects that. So perhaps the question for us is, Does my Monday morning life match my Sunday morning faith?
It's relatively easy to be a Christian on a Sunday morning, isn't it? We've sung the hymns, listened to the sermon, shaken hands and told everybody how lovely it is to see them.
Then we get into the car to go home. Somebody pulls out in front of us at the roundabout. Suddenly the fruit of the Spirit is being severely tested.
[13:01] And we haven't even reached the main road. You see, it's not just what we believe on Sunday that matters. It's how we behave on Monday and even on the journey home.

That is where our Christianity becomes visible and where Christ wants to work in us. Number seven, strengthened with God's power. Verse 11 says, Paul doesn't simply pray that they will have strength.
He prays that they will have God's strength. Some things in life we cannot handle in our own strength. We may be strong physically, emotionally or mentally.
But sooner or later, life brings something bigger than our own resources. A difficult diagnosis, bereavement, broken relationships, or a burden we cannot seem to lift.
And Paul says that God's power is available. Notice something else. He connects strength with patience and long-suffering. That's interesting.
[14:13] As we might have expected, Lord give them power so they can perform miracles. But Paul says, Lord give them power so they can endure. Sometimes the greatest evidence of God's power isn't what happens around us.

It is what God enables us to endure within us. Some Christians have gone through tremendous sufferings and yet retain their faith.
They couldn't change their circumstances, but God changed them in the circumstance. And that is strength. Number eight, giving thanks to the Father.
Verse 12 says, joyously, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Paul keeps bringing them back to thanksgiving.
Why? Because gratitude changes our perspective. When we spend all our time looking at what we haven't got, we can become miserable. But when we begin counting what God has given us, our perspective changes.

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[15:18] Think about what Paul has already reminded them of. They have faith, love, hope. They have the gospel, God's knowledge and his strength.

Also, they have an inheritance and have been delivered from darkness and they've been brought into the kingdom of Christ. Then Paul gets to the heart of the matter. Number nine, who have delivered us from the power of darkness.
Verse 13, for he rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son. What a verse.
Think about that word, rescued. Christianity isn't simply about becoming a slightly better version of yourself. It's about being rescued.
There was darkness. God brought us into the light. There was bondage. God brought freedom. There was separation. God brought reconciliation.
[16:19] There was guilt. God brought forgiveness. There was hopelessness. And God brought hope. And notice that Paul says, God has translated or transferred us into the kingdom of his son.

We've changed kingdoms. We belong to Christ. And that is why the Christian life is not simply about improving our behavior. It's about belonging to somebody.
We don't obey Jesus merely because he gives us rules. We obey him because he is our Lord and King. Number 10, in whom we have redemption.
Verse 14, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. So here's the heart of the gospel. Redemption, forgiveness, blood, cross, and grace.
We need to remember that Christianity ultimately rests not on what we do for God, but on what God has done for us through Christ.
[17:23] We didn't rescue ourselves. Christ rescued us. We didn't purchase our forgiveness. Christ purchased it. We didn't climb our way up to God.

God came down to us. Number 11, now Paul puts Jesus center stage. Verses 15 through 20 contain one of the most magnificent descriptions of Jesus in the whole New Testament.
Paul begins in verse 15, who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. Think about that.
The image of the invisible God. God is invisible. So, how can we know what God is really like? Look at Jesus.
His compassion, his holiness, his love, and his willingness to forgive all reveal the very heart of God. Jesus is not simply somebody who tells us about God.
[18:24] He reveals God. And that is a wonderful truth. We don't have to guess what God is like. We can look at Jesus. Number 12, the firstborn of every creature.

Now this phrase has sometimes been misunderstood. Paul is not saying that Jesus was the first thing God created. The very next verse tells us that all things were created through him so that Christ cannot himself be part of that creation.
The word firstborn here speaks of supremacy, position, and authority. Jesus is supreme over all creation. And I wonder, do we sometimes forget just who he is?
We are very happy to call upon him when we have a problem. We want his help, his comfort, and his guidance. And of course, he does give us those things. But he is infinitely more than someone we call upon when life gets difficult.
He is Lord over all creation. And if he is Lord over all creation, surely he deserves to be Lord over our lives. Number 13, by him were all things created.
[19:43] Verse 16 says, for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth visible and invisible. Paul leaves absolutely nothing out.

Heaven and earth visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, all things.
And then comes a remarkable statement. it says, all things were created by him and for him.
Notice those two words, by him and for him. We often think about what God can do for us, but have you ever stopped to consider that we were created for him?
You were not simply created to work, eat, sleep, pay bills, retire and eventually die. Your life has a far greater purpose than that.
You were created for Christ. And that changes the question we should be asking. Instead of constantly asking, what do I want? What will make me happy?
[20:49] What will give me security? Perhaps we should be asking, Lord, what do you want from my life? Because the one who created us is also the one for whom we were created.

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Number 14, he is before all things. Verse 17 says, he is before all things and in him all things hold together.
Everything is held together in him. Think about the universe, the stars, the planets, the oceans, the seasons, the human body, life itself.
Paul says that Christ is at the center of it all. So this is not a small Jesus, this is not a Jesus who is simply useful for Sunday mornings, this is a cosmic Jesus Christ, Lord of creation, Lord of history, Lord of the church, Lord of our lives and that should affect the way we worship.
Sometimes we come to church carrying our problems and that's understandable but perhaps we should occasionally reverse the emphasis and instead of beginning with, Lord, look at my problems, we begin with, Lord, I'm looking at you because when we see how great Christ is, our problems don't necessarily disappear but they get put into perspective.
[22:18] Number 15, he is the head of the body, the church. So verse 18 takes us from creation to church. He is before all things and in him all things hold together.

This is tremendously important because the church belongs to Christ, not to the pastor, the elders or deacons, not to any individual or denomination or even the congregation.
It belongs to Jesus. We are his people and he is the head. That means we need to be careful about our attitude within church life because if Christ is the head then we are not the head.
Now that sounds obvious but sometimes Christians can behave as though their opinion is the final authority on everything. Some people say like, well, we've always done it this way.
I don't like that hymn. I prefer this. I think we should do that. And suddenly our personal preferences become very important. But Colossians reminds us Christ is the head.
[23:28] The question is not what do I prefer? The question is what honors Christ? And that is a very different question. Number 16 says that in all things he might have the preeminence.

So here is perhaps the great theme of the whole chapter. Paul says in verse 18, he is also the head of the body, the church, and he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself will come to have first place in everything.
Or as another translation puts it, that in everything he might have the supremacy. In everything, not some things, or Sunday things, or religious things, not the things we think he should be involved in, everything.
Our families, finances, relationships, work, our leisure, our decisions, our ambitions, our conversations, our attitudes, along with our private lives and public lives.
In fact, everything. We sometimes treat Jesus a little like the spare wheel in the boot of the car. We're very glad it's there, but when something goes wrong, most of us we hope won't need it, Jesus doesn't want to be our spare wheel.
[24:50] He wants to be in the driving seat, and that means letting him choose the direction even when we'd rather take a different road. Jesus doesn't want to be an addition to our lives.

He wants to be Lord of our lives. And perhaps that gives us a question to take away. What area of my life have I not fully surrendered to Christ?
Again, that's a searching question. There may be something we keep back, perhaps an attitude, a relationship, or perhaps a habit, maybe pride, money, unforgiveness, our plans for the future, or perhaps our fear.
We say, Lord, you can have this part of my life, but this part is mine. Colossians says, Christ is to have the preeminence in all things.
Number 17, for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. So verse 19 is another enormous statement, for it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in him.
[25:55] The fullness of God dwells in Christ. Paul says we don't need to look somewhere else to find God. We don't need another spiritual mediator. We don't need some secret knowledge.

We don't need some additional spiritual experience that makes Christ insufficient. Christ is enough. That is going to become increasingly important as we move through Colossians.
However, there were influences around the Colossians that threatened to take their eyes away from the sufficiency of Christ. And Paul's answer is not, add something to Jesus.
His answer is, get to know Jesus. And that is still relevant for us today. We live in a world full of spiritual alternatives. People say you need another experience, another philosophy, another revelation, something beyond Christ.

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Paul's answer is wonderfully simple. Look at Christ. Understand who he is. Understand what he has done. Understand what you already have in him.
[27:01] number 18, have him made peace through the blood of his cross. So Paul comes to the cross, verse 20, and through him to reconcile all things to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, have him made peace through the blood of his cross.

Think about the contrast. The one who created everything, the one who holds everything together, the one who is head of the church, the one in whom all fullness dwells, that same Christ went to the cross.
The majesty of Christ is connected to the humility of Christ. The creator becomes the crucified saviour. The Lord of glory bears our sin. Why?
To make peace. Sin had separated us from God and the cross deals with that separation. We sometimes talk about Christianity as though the cross was simply a tragic event.
Well, it wasn't. It was God's plan of redemption. The cross wasn't Jesus losing. The cross was Jesus accomplishing. And that brings us to a personal question.
[28:17] Have you made peace with God through Jesus Christ? You may know about Jesus. You may have attended church for years. But have you personally trusted him as your saviour?

The Bible tells us that our sins separate us from God. We cannot put that right by our own efforts. Jesus died upon the cross to bear our sin and bring us back to God.
He rose again and he offers forgiveness and new life to those who turn to him in repentance and faith. So, I doubt if this is true, but if there's someone here that hasn't done that, don't put it off. Come to Christ, ask him to forgive you and trust in what he has done for you. The question is not simply do I know about Jesus, but do I know him as my saviour?
Number 19, you were sometimes alienated. Verses 21 and 22 make it personal. Paul says, Paul here has moved from Christ created everything to Christ reconciled you.
[29:44] And that's the gospel. The great Christ of creation cares about individual people. Sometimes we can feel insignificant. There are billions of people in the world.

Why would God care for me? Colossians gives us the answer. The Christ who created the universe is the Christ who died to reconcile sinners to God. You matter to him.
Your soul matters. Your eternity matters. And your relationship with God matters. Number 20, to present you holy. Verse 22 says, Christ's purpose is to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.
What a future. Think about how God sees us through Christ. We know our failures, mistakes, weaknesses, the things we wish we could undo.
And yet the gospel says, Christ is at work to present us holy before God. Now that doesn't excuse us from continuing to sin, quite the opposite.
[30:50] It gives us motivation to live differently. Grace doesn't say sin doesn't matter. Grace says, Christ has paid for your sin, so now live for him.

Number 21, if you continue in the faith, Paul says if you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, there is an encouragement here to remain firm. Christianity is not simply about making a decision and then forgetting about it.
We are called to continue, to persevere, to remain grounded, to stay settled. Now there will be pressures, doubts and disappointments.
There will be times when God seems silent, when prayers appear unanswered and when we wonder why has he allowed something to happen. But Paul says, stay grounded.
Don't allow every new idea to knock you off course or every difficulty make you question everything. Don't let every disappointment pull you away from Christ.
[31:57] Stay grounded. Number 22, Paul's own suffering. We get to verse 24 onwards, verses 24 and 25. Now I rejoice in my suffering for your sake, and in my flesh I am supplementing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions in behalf of his body, which is the church.

I was made a minister of this church according to the commission from God granted to me for your benefit so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God.
Paul begins talking about his own suffering. He says he rejoices in his sufferings for them. Now that's a difficult passage. Paul is not saying that Christ's death on the cross was insufficient.
The work of Christ on the cross is complete. Paul is talking about the suffering involved in taking the gospel to the world. Paul is not saying that Christ's death on the cross was insufficient.

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The work of Christ on the cross is complete. Paul is talking about the suffering involved in taking the gospel to the world. In other words, following Christ can cost us something.
[33:06] We live in a culture that often teaches, choose the easiest route. Avoid discomfort, protect yourself, make life as comfortable as possible. But Christianity has never promised an easy road. Jesus never said, follow me and nothing difficult will happen. What he did say was, take up your cross and follow me. Paul knew what that meant. He had suffered, he'd been imprisoned, he'd endured beatings and he had been rejected. He experienced hardship and yet he still considered Christ worth it. And that's a challenge to us. Is Christ worth the cost? If following Jesus cost us popularity requires us to forgive somebody or means standing for truth when it's unpopular, is he worth it? Paul's answer was, yes. My question is, how would you answer that question?

Personally, I say Christ is worth everything. 23, the mystery which have been hid. Verse 26 talks about the mystery which had been hidden from the past ages and generations, but now has been revealed to his saints. The mystery is not something like a secret society. It means something previously hidden that God has now revealed. And verse 27 tells us what it is. To whom God willed to make known what the wealth of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles is. The mystery that is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Christ in you, the hope of glory. What a wonderful phrase. Christ in you.
That is the Christian hope. Not simply Christ somewhere in heaven. Not simply Christ was alive 2,000 years ago. But Christ in you. The risen Christ living in his people. That means Christianity is not simply about trying harder. It is about Christ working in us. When we struggle with patience or forgiveness, Christ can work in us. When we are afraid, he can strengthen us. When we feel weak, he can sustain us. Number 24, whom we preach. Verse 28 says, we proclaim him, admonishing every person and teaching every person with all wisdom so that we may present every person complete in Christ.
Notice the simplicity. We proclaim him. Paul doesn't say what we proclaim or preach. He says whom we proclaim. Christianity is fundamentally about a person and that person is Jesus. We don't simply preach a system of morality. We don't simply preach principles or preach church membership. We preach and proclaim Christ. Of course, the gospel changes how we live, but the center is always Christ.
Our sermons can contain illustrations, stories, humor, practical advice and interesting facts. But underneath there, everything must be about Christ. Because people don't ultimately need more information.
[36:33] They need Jesus, like we all need Jesus. Number 25, Paul's aim, every person. Paul repeats the word every. Warning every person. Warning every person. Teaching every person. And that reminds us of the value of every individual. God is interested in people. The person sitting quietly at the back matters.

The person who has become for 50 years matters. So does the one who's been coming for five weeks. Whether they know the Bible well or only beginning to understand it, every person matters. And perhaps that should affect how we treat people. Sometimes we can be focused on programs and organizations that we forget the people. But Jesus died for the people. Paul preached to the people. The church exists to reach people. Number 26, laboring according to his working. Verse 29, for this purpose I also labor, striving according to his power, which works mightily within me. And I love the balance in this verse.
Paul says, I labor. But he also says, his working. We pray, study, preach and serve. But God answers prayer, gives understanding, changes hearts and supplies the strength. And that's not an excuse for laziness. We don't say God would do it, so I don't need to do anything. Paul worked, sacrificed, traveled, preached and suffered. But he knew that ultimately it was God's power working through him.
And that is a wonderful principle for Christian service. Do your best and trust God with the results. We are responsible for faithfulness. God is responsible for the fruit. And that takes a lot of pressure off us. Sometimes we think everything depends upon us. It doesn't. We are servants. Christ is the Lord. 27. So what does Colossians 1 say to us today? As we come towards the end of the first chapter, perhaps we should bring it right into our own lives. What is Paul saying to us? And I would suggest just six things. One, put Christ first. This is the big one. Verse 18, that in all things he might have the preeminence. Ask yourself, is Jesus genuinely first in my life? Not simply first in my beliefs, but first in my life, first in my decisions, first in my relationships. Number two, remember

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what Christ has done. We have redemption, forgiveness. We've been reconciled. We have hope. We have an inheritance.
Sometimes we need to stop looking at what we don't have and start thanking God for what we do have. Number three, let the gospel produce fruit. Don't simply hear God's word. Allow it to change you.
[39:26] Let it produce patience, kindness, forgiveness. Let it produce love and holiness. The question is, what fruit is growing in my life? Number four, stay grounded. There will always be new ideas, new philosophies, but Christ doesn't change. The gospel doesn't need improving. Stay grounded, stay settled, stay close to Christ. Number five, remember that suffering does not mean God has left you.

Paul suffered, yet God was using him. Sometimes we think, if God loved me, I wouldn't be going through this. Paul would say, not necessarily. God can work through suffering. Sometimes God changes the circumstances.
Sometimes he changes us within the circumstances, but he never abandons his people. Number six, remember that Christ is enough. And this may be the great message of Colossians. Christ is enough.
He's enough when you're afraid. He's enough when you're lonely. When you're uncertain, have failed, when life doesn't make sense, when you face suffering, Christ is enough. When you face death, Christ is enough. Because he is not simply part of the answer, he is the answer. Just some questions to take away with you. Who is really first in my life? Is my faith producing fruit? Does my Monday morning life match my Sunday morning faith? Am I grounded in Christ and trust in his strength?
And perhaps the biggest question, is Christ really, if Christ is really Lord of all, is he Lord of me? And that's not just a question for unbelievers. It is a question for Christians too.
[41:09] And in closing, we've only traveled through one chapter, but Paul has taken us a long way. He has reminded us of faith, love and hope, of redemption, forgiveness and the fruit of the gospel that should produce in our lives. But above all, he has lifted our eyes to Jesus, the image of the invisible God, the creator who holds all things together, the savior who shed his blood to reconcile us to God. And Paul says that he should have the preeminence. Not second place, not an occasional place, first place. So perhaps as we begin our journey through Colossians, that is the thought we should carry with us. Lord Jesus, help me to put you first. First in my thinking, decisions, relationships, priorities, and home, first place in everything. Because when Christ is in his rightful place, everything else begins to find its rightful place too. Let's just pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for bringing us together today and for the wonderful truths we have been reminded of in your word. Thank you for Jesus Christ, who is above all things, who created all things, and through whom all things hold together. Thank you for his sacrifice upon the cross, through which we can receive forgiveness, redemption, and peace with you.
Lord, help us not simply to hear these words, but to put them into practice in our daily lives. Help us to grow in faith, to show love towards one another, and to bear fruit that brings glory to your name. When life becomes difficult, strengthen us. When we feel weak, encourage us. When we are uncertain, remind us that Christ is always sufficient. And above all, Father, help us to give Jesus the rightful place in our lives. May he be first in our thoughts, first in our decisions, first in our homes, and first in our hearts. And we ask all these things in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour, Father, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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