HARVEST SPRINGS
COMMUNITY CHURCH

SUNDAY | October 25, 2026

JESUS FIRST: A STUDY OF COLOSSIANS | WEEK 01

Rescued & Transferred

Primary Text: Colossians 1:1-14 | Michael Stambaugh

> *Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead.* ***So he is first in everything****.*
>
> *Colossians 1:18*

Colossians is one of the shortest letters in the New Testament, with only four chapters. You could read the whole thing out loud in about fifteen minutes. But this little letter carries one of the biggest visions of Jesus anywhere in the Bible. New Testament scholar Scot McKnight describes Colossians as "a comprehensive vision for life under King Jesus."

The City (1:2)

- Colossae was a small town in the Lycus River valley (modern-day Turkey), about 120 miles east of Ephesus, near Laodicea and Hierapolis.
- Once prosperous and known for its red-dyed wool, it had faded by Paul's day. An earthquake struck the valley around AD 61-64, most likely after Paul wrote this letter.
- The town was mostly Gentile, with a Jewish community whose ancestors had been resettled in the region about 200 years earlier.
- The most exalted words ever written about Jesus were sent to a small, overlooked town. God pays attention to forgotten places and people.

The Church (1:1-8)

- Paul and Timothy wrote to a church Paul had never visited. Epaphras, a Colossian, planted it by leading lost people to center their lives on Jesus (1:7).
- Paul calls them:
  - Holy people (1:2): set apart by God, before they had done anything to earn it
  - Faithful brothers and sisters (1:2): a family that keeps believing
  - In Christ (1:2): every believer has two addresses, their town and in Christ
- They were known for faith in Christ, love for God's people, and a confident hope stored up in heaven (1:4-5). Faith and love grow from hope.
- Throughout the letter, Paul addresses them as “you,” which is plural for everyone in the church, including men, women, children, and slaves.
- The gospel is "bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives" (1:6). It is for everyone, everywhere.

The Prayer (1:3-12)

- Paul prays continually for the Colossian church, but in this letter he specifically prays that they have "complete knowledge of his will" and "spiritual wisdom and understanding" (1:9).
- Knowledge has a purpose: "Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord" (1:10), literally “life worthy of the Lord,” which has four marks
    1. Fruitful: producing "every kind of good fruit" (1:10)
    2. Growing: learning "to know God better and better" (1:10)
    3. Strengthened: with God's power for "endurance and patience" and joy (1:11)
    4. Thankful: "always thanking the Father" (1:12)
- God has "enabled" (qualified) you to share in the inheritance of his people (1:12). You don't earn your place. He gives it.

The King

> *For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.*
>
> *Colossianss 1:13-14*

- Verse 13 holds two actions: God **rescued** us, and God **transferred** us.
    1. **Rescued.** This is Exodus language. God promised Israel, "I will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt" (Exodus 6:6). Salvation is not self-improvement. It is a rescue by a God who acts for people who cannot free themselves. **From the kingdom of darkness**. Literally, "the authority of darkness." On the night of his arrest, Jesus said now is time “when the power of darkness reigns" (Luke 22:53). Darkness is a real power that holds people captive, and Jesus walked straight into it to win us back.
    2. **Transferred.** The word was used for moving a whole population to a new land. Being transferred means a new homeland, a new King, and a new citizenship.
        - Already done. Paul doesn't say God *will* rescue and transfer us. He says he *has*. You're not trying to get into the kingdom. You're learning to live in the kingdom you're already in.
        - **His dear Son**. Literally "the Son of his love." The old master used you and enslaved you. This King gave himself for you. Jesus **purchased your freedom**, buying a slave or prisoner out of captivity by paying a ransom, and **forgave** your sin, canceling your debt.
- Forgiveness opens the way into a whole new life through Jesus.

Bible Engagement

- Read the whole letter of Colossians (ch. 1-4) each day. This should take about 15-20 minutes.
- Memorize Colossians 1:13-14.
- Watch the BibleProject summary of Colossians.

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