

# JESUS IS ENOUGH!!!

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

### *Praying for Others*

***Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)*** <sup>12</sup> *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

When we hear of the distress of friends, loved ones and even people we have never met, we often wonder ‘what can I do?’ The most wonderful gift we can give is the gift of our prayers. Last week, a former inmate called Shack that we have never personally met, sent this text: How can I pray for you? I don’t recall anyone ever asking me that before and the question touched my heart. How can I pray for you?

Although Paul had not founded the church at Colossae or the church of Laodicea, he entered into a great prayer struggle for both church families. Laodicea was a neighbor city and sister church to Colossae. Paul’s heart desire was for both to become mature in Christ realizing that Jesus is enough. They did not need to be adding anything to the gospel of Christ.

We do know that the Laodiceans as a whole eventually lost sight of Jesus because of what Jesus said in ***Revelation 3:16 (ESV)*** <sup>16</sup> *So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.* Scripture does not reveal how the Colossians responded.

***Read Colossians 2:1-3 (ESV)*** <sup>1</sup> *For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face,* <sup>2</sup> *that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ,* <sup>3</sup> *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

As we consider Paul struggling in prayer, I do not want to lead you to believe that Paul was wrestling in prayer for the purpose of changing God’s mind. He was not trying to wear God down for the answer he wanted. Paul struggled spiritually to discern the mind of Christ for the purpose of praying as God wanted him to pray. Consider how the Holy Spirit was working beyond current events as Paul struggled in prayer. Paul’s prayer survived for 2,000 years serving as an example of how we are to pray for others still today. Let’s consider what Paul prayed for others.

**PRAYED hearts may be encouraged.** Paul’s mention of their hearts was a reference to their inner being. Hurting people need more than just shallow words. It may take more than just a casual ‘I’ll pray for you’ quickly spoken. There are times when we need to stop and pray immediately with a person that their discouraged heart will feel God’s encouragement through the power of the Holy Spirit. Maybe we need to take the time to ask ‘How can I pray for you?’ and then pray accordingly.

PRAYED for others to be *knit together in love*. Paul knew that love is the cement that holds Christians together. Petty disagreements can tear a church family or a family a part. How many times have families been fractured after a loved one dies and relatives quit speaking because someone got ‘something of Mama’s’ they wanted. Family treasures do not last but *love never fails*. Let’s remember to pray for churches – families – friends to be knit together in love.

PRAYED others will *reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding*. McGee says that *full assurance* literally means ‘to be under full sail’ meaning Paul prayed that the Colossians would move forward in their spiritual growth. People are hungry for knowledge and information. I am told that every second there are 40,000 searches on Google for information. When it comes to spiritual matters, fully knowing Jesus is more satisfying and rewarding than any Google search will ever be.

PRAYED others will have *the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ*. The Colossians needed enlightenment because their faith in Christ was being threatened by the insidious beliefs of those around them. Encouragement, love, and understanding are the conditions our hearts need to come to a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself. Blogger Stephen Nielson says, “If we are not united in love with other believers, if we have not prayed for others in need, and if we don’t deal with offenses, thereby letting bitterness take root, we spoil our chances of really getting to know God, and Christ, the mystery of God.”

***Read Colossians 2:4-5 (ESV)*** <sup>4</sup> *I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.* <sup>5</sup>  
*For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.*

Paul’s prayer struggle came about because he did not want the Colossians to be deluded with *plausible arguments* or persuasive talk. It is important to remember that no amount of intellectualism or ‘higher’ education can take the place of divine revelation. This is why a simple not seminary educated person can sometimes have a closer walk with Jesus than someone with a bunch of religious degrees behind their name.

Plausible arguments can sound good and tug at emotions and yet be false! Remember, in Colossae, there were various false teachers who gave the appearance of having ‘Christian values’. And yet, they were ‘twisting’ the gospel. These little twists to the doctrine of salvation were promoting the devil’s lies.

The story is told of a pastor who was concerned about some unsavory businesses that had opened near a school. His protests finally led to a court case, and the defense attorney did all he could to embarrass the minister. “Are you not a pastor?” the lawyer asked. “And doesn't the word *pastor* mean 'shepherd?’” To this definition the minister agreed. “Well, if you are a shepherd, why aren't you out taking care of the sheep?” “Because today I'm fighting the wolves!” was the pastor's quick reply. Paul was fighting the wolves dressed in the Gnostics’ clothing.

Paul’s words, *For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit*, remind me of a scripture notation that I found in the back of one of my mother’s Bibles on the day she died. ***Genesis 31:49 (KJV)*** ...*The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another*. This passage has become known

as The Mizpah which is Hebrew for watchtower. When Jacob and Laban separated from one another they set up a pile of stones to mark an agreement between them with God as their watching witness. Since that time, The Mizpah has come to indicate the emotional bond between people who are separated either physically or by death. Paul though separated physically from the Colossians was connected to the family of God there by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul spoke of seeing the Colossians' *good order*. Order is a military term, and it means 'to stand shoulder to shoulder'. This is what God's children ought to be doing -- standing shoulder to shoulder -- standing firm for Christ. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV)** <sup>58</sup> *Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.* I have often quoted the words of Herschel Hobbs, "we do best what we do together." Today, I will rephrase and say, "we do best when we stand shoulder to shoulder for the kingdom of God."

**Read Colossians 2:6-7 (ESV)** <sup>6</sup> *Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,* <sup>7</sup> *rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*

I love GPS – they have revolutionized travel in many ways. However, there are those times when the GPS gets confused and that is very frustrating when it leads you around in some crazy loop. Not so, with following Christ – when we walk in Him being led by His Spirit, we will be *rooted and built up in him and established in the faith*.

Paul wanted the Colossians to realize if someone taught differently from what Christ taught it was wrong. It is the same for us today. We need to be saturated with the truths of the Bible. Let's begin with one essential element of being rooted in the Word.

**Read Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,* <sup>9</sup> *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

We receive Christ by faith and that is how we must continue to live in Him. We will not grow spiritually if we do not learn the Word of God. There are many who masquerade among us pretending to share the same gospel when they do not. For example: Jehovah Witnesses use what they call the New World Translation of the Bible. The following verse (**John 1:1**) is copied directly from the Jehovah Witness website. It reads: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.* They teach that Jesus is the Son of God but not God the Son. They lessen Christ similar to how the Gnostics of Paul's day did. Jehovah Witnesses teach that Jesus Christ is St. Michael the archangel.

The Mormons aka Latter Day Saints present wonderful pictures of family life. But, did you know, they teach that Christ will return and reign in Missouri? They believe a person's destiny is determined by right choices and good works, not Christ's sacrifice. The Bible says in **Romans 3:20 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup> *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*

The attacks against God are continuous but some are not quite as obvious. For example, feminists have demanded that masculine pronouns and names for God be replaced with female or gender-neutral terms. But

to change the name of God is to redefine the God we reference. Changing the name of God is no small matter. Others like to say that God and Allah are the same. But, they are not. I will give you just one little point. Muslim say that Allah has no son. This represents a head-on collision between the God of the Bible and Allah.

Don't worry about spending a great amount of time learning what **others** believe. Spend time with the Bible and learn what God's Word teaches and then you will be able to detect false teachings for yourself. Believing **John 3:16** is enough to secure your salvation. It is that easy and that is all you have to do. But, to be a strong, growing Christian you must send your roots deeper into Christ's foundation. The Bible is filled with treasures, but you will never find the treasures if you do not open the Book and search the Word.

**Read Colossians 2:8-10 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> *See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.* <sup>9</sup> *For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,* <sup>10</sup> *and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.*

When men are taken captive in war, they are forced to go where their captors lead them. They may only be permitted to see and hear certain things, or to eat and sleep at certain times. In short, captives are under the *control* of their captors. This is what Paul is warning the Colossians about. He's urging them to not let their beliefs and attitudes be *controlled* by an alien, non-Christian philosophy. You can take a philosophy course just beware that philosophical lies do not overtake you!

What are the elemental spirits of this world? We actually began with an explanation of them found in **Ephesians 6:12**. The elemental spirits of this world are the cosmic powers over this present darkness, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. These powers move in quietly and subtly as spiritual terrorism overtakes the church by stealth. The church today is being infiltrated and distorted, as deceiving spirits give false teaching and deceptive new age practices credibility. Do not make the mistake of failing to 'test the spirits' to discern whether these 'spiritual' manifestations or techniques are of God or not. For example, did you know that Yoga teaches to focus on one's self rather than the one true God. It encourages its participants to seek the answers to life's difficult questions within their own consciousness instead of in the Word of God. I know that a Yoga class can be just a method of exercise. I am just saying, 'guard your heart.'

The powers of darkness want us to deny the deity of Christ. We see it time after time in false teachings. Paul warns us to remember: *in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily*. Then Paul goes on to say as the KJV puts it: *we are complete in Him*. Never buy into the devil's lie that Jesus is not enough. God's Word tells us that we are complete in Him and one day we will be like Him.