

Colossians

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

2 To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters^{at} in Christ:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.^{at}

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4** because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— **5** the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel **6** that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. **7** You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,^{at} who is a faithful minister of Christ on our^{at} behalf, **8** and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,^{at} **10** so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11** being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, **12** and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^{at} to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. **13** For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Supremacy of the Son of God

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. **17** He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19** For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of^{at} your evil behavior. **22** But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23** if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Paul's Labor for the Church

²⁴ Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. ²⁵ I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— ²⁶ the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. ²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

²⁸ He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. ²⁹ To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

January 5, 2026

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, Colossians 1:1

Paul's identity is not wrapped in academic achievements, in religious affiliation, nor in ancestry. Paul's identity is determined by God. If nothing else, Paul knows that he is an apostle by the will of God. Certainty in one's calling is the baseline for ministry. Why am I here? What am I doing? Who do I serve?

When uncertainty arises and adversity comes, who you are, your identity, will determine how you respond to the circumstances, situations, and context you find yourself in. The assurance of being certain that it is God's will that has placed you here provides stability and hope during prosperity, adversity, and change.

January 12, 2026

and Timothy our brother, Colossians 1:1

Timothy is identified as our brother. Paul could have called him, "my brother" but Timothy has become our brother not by Paul's will or action but as a gift from God. Timothy belongs to the whole family as do you and I in Christ. In the same way in which God is never my Father when in the gathered community, so we are our brother and sister every time we gather. What a difference it would make when talking to someone in the congregation as "our brother or our sister" rather than mine. It calls the congregation to see that person as a gift to the community and reminds the individual that they belong to us and we to them.

January 19, 2025

To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters¹² in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father. Colossians 1:2¹

Paul's audience is God's holy people in Colossae. How the faithful in Colossae saw themselves is not the point of the greeting. We all need to be reminded that we belong to God and therefore, are being made one with Him. God's characteristics are becoming ours. Chief among God's characteristics is faithfulness. Paul readily acknowledges the image of God among them. There is no other image of God that is allowed other than our brother and sister. If you want to see God, look at them. There you will find the image of God. Grace and peace are reflected in our brother and sister.

January 26, 2025

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people. Colossians 1:3-4

Is there anything more precious to the ear than to know that you are being prayed for as a thanksgiving offering to God? When was the last time you felt offered up as a thanksgiving offering? When was the last time you offered up our brother or sister as a thanksgiving offering to God?

The basis of the thanks being offered to God lies in Paul and Timothy's hearing about the Colossians' faith and love for God's people. If you are known for anything, are you known for your faithfulness and love for God's people? How valued is that attribution?

February 2, 2026

— ⁵the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel ⁶that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world— just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. ⁷You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, ⁸who is a faithful minister of Christ on our ⁹behalf, ⁸and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. Colossians 1:5-8

The source of love and faithfulness is hope. Hope is treasured in places where it can never be taken from us. Christ is our hope. He loved us and gave himself for us. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Every time we gather as a people of faith and love we do so centering in Christ, our hope. This is the good news we celebrate and share. Paul calls it the true message of the Gospel. I confess that I don't celebrate and share good news enough. Good news is a contagion that should be shared early and often. Hope produces hope in ever increasing measure. Who caught hope from you?

February 9, 2026

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.^[e] ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^[f] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:9-14

What have people heard about you? What do they know about your faith? Are you somebody's reason for thanksgiving to God in prayer? What Paul has heard about the Church in Colosse certainly prompts Paul's prayer. There are dear churches that I serve that prompt me to give thanks to God for them. There is a sweetness associated with God's people that lingers long after the meeting is over.

In a church I pastored, the historic minutes of every meeting ended with the phrase, "they departed in love". Somewhere in the record, they stopped that practice. Maybe it stopped because the church was in strife? My hunch is that someone felt the phrase to be "old-fashioned" or simply "unimportant" and so it was dropped. How unfortunate.

February 16, 2025

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.^[e] ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^[f] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:9-14

I find myself praying Paul's prayer for the Colossians for myself. I want to know by intimate experience God's will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit provides so that I may live a life "worthy" of the Lord. Without an intimate knowledge of God's will, how am I supposed to know what "pleases Him in every way"? Will my efforts bear good fruit in every good work or will my labor be pointless and fruitless? A life wasted is not a life lived abundantly. If nothing else, knowing by experience God's will through His Spirit's provision is the key to abundant life.

February 23, 2026

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ^[e] ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you ^[f] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:9-14

Endurance in ministry is a necessary component. Pouring yourself out day after day will exhaust you. How do you revive after the daily grind? Paul recognizes the need to have a daily inpouring of the resurrection power of Christ, the secret to great endurance and patience. This is the inheritance of God's people, the power of God at work in us moving us from darkness into the kingdom of the Son He loves. This is the difference made by faith. A stark contrast between dark and light, so the contrast between what we were and what we are becoming. We have been brought into the kingdom life borne by the One who loves, forgives, and redeems.

March 1, 2026 St. David's Day

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Colossians 1:9-14

In Christ, all things were created through Him and for Him. He is the firstborn over all creation. The intimate connection between the created and the eternal is Christ. He is the bridge between what can be seen and that which is unseen. All things are held together in Him. It is hard to fathom the depth of Paul's insight into Christ. Such enormity is not often brought into my prayer life because I want to speak with Christ, person to person. How do you talk to the One who is before all things and in whom all things hold together? Are words enough? Do words matter? They must because it was through the spoken word that creation came forth. Then, it must be enough for me to utter words, trusting that my Savior will hear. In prayer, I imitate the One who spoke me into existence.

March 8, 2026

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones

or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.
Colossians 1:15-19

Christ is the firstborn from among the dead. Creation, God's hovering, bringing into being life, is in the Head of the Body, the Church. Here is the beginning again, Christ Creator, Christ Re-Creator for the purpose of supremacy. There is none like Him. Christ, the fullness of God reconciling to Himself all things, transforming all things into His image and likeness made through peace, the shedding of His blood on the cross. The death of the old creation on the cross explodes in life through His resurrection.

O Christ, what are we that you are mindful of us?

March 15, 2026

²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of ^{your} evil behavior. ²²But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. Colossians 1:21-23

Whenever I think that I can tell God how to run the world, I find that we are at odds. Whenever I demand God to do what I want and how I want it, God laughs and I become angry. God, at times, just doesn't understand what I need or want. He doesn't "get me".

Alienation and estrangement happens in relationships. Appeasement is never the answer; reconciliation is. Reconciliation is relational. It brings two divergent groups together to find a way to be or remain in relationship. Reconciliation is where both sides are willing to give, to submit, to that which restores the relationship. Reconciliation acknowledges that the relationship is of greater value than self.

Paul reminds us that God values relationship and gave His Son to restore our relationship. Paul reminds us that reconciliation is always a two-way street. Therefore, I must give if I want to be reconciled to God. To hold on to, to cling to the hope held out in the Gospel calls us to give ourselves in service to God. Reconciliation is part of the divine design which orders our relationship with each other. What are you willing to give to remain in relationship?

March 22, 2026

²⁴Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. ²⁵I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in

its fullness—²⁶ the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. ²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:24-27

Reconciliation is the on-going work of the body. Finding ways to deepen relationships while continually adding divergent people is filling up in our own fellowship, our own selves that which is lacking regarding Christ's affliction. "To err is human, to forgive is divine". This is the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now disclosed – God's design to reconcile the world to Himself is worked out in the gathered community of faith. This is the great mission of the church – to bring together in Christ every nation, language group and people. This is our work, our suffering, our calling, our joy; Christ in you, the hope of glory.

March 29, 2026

²⁸ He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. ²⁹ To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. Colossians 1:28-29

Christ is proclaimed. He is Lord. We teach, correct, and counsel the gathered community with wisdom – God is a God of reconciliation. We disciple others so that they grow up and take on the responsibility of reconciliation. Anyone who has raised children will wonder, "when are they going to grow up?" or stand amazed at their maturity which is beyond the years, sometimes all in the same day. This is the calling of ministry – to strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me to bring others to maturity in Christ, to be a people known for reconciliation. This has been a distinctive of American Baptist life and thought. We work at reconciliation because God is at work in us.