

THE CHURCH AND ITS CALLING

WHAT KIND OF CHURCH WILL WE BE?

WILL YOU LIVE A LIFE WORTHY OF THE LORD?

THE TALE OF TWO CITIES

- ▶ Colossae – Once important, but now a small, second rate town in decline, bypassed by the Roman “interstate” highway, and eclipsed by it’s larger, more prosperous neighbor, Laodicea.
- ▶ Laodicea – Located 11 miles west of Colossae and situated at the crossroads of the north-south and east-west Roman highways, Laodicea was cosmopolitan, ethnically diverse, and prosperous; the home of a renown medical school, and an exporter of expensive, high fashion fabric.

THE TALE OF TWO CHURCHES

- ▶ Colossae – A small, ethnically diverse church that met in the house of Philemon, yet important enough that the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write a letter to “the holy and faithful brothers at Colossae.” In his letter, the Holy Spirit commended the believers at Colossae for their faith in Christ, their love for other believers, their orderly and consistent spiritual growth, their priority on the teaching of God’s Word and their pursuit of being perfect in Christ.

- ▶ Just a few years after receiving their letter, Colossae would be destroyed by an earthquake and the church there would disappear from existence; however, the letter written to it would endure as the most significant presentation of Christ found in the entire New Testament.
- ▶ Laodicea also received a letter from the Apostle Paul—one that he wanted read to the church at Colossae, while his letter to the church at Colossae was also to be read to the church at Laodicea. The letter to the church at Laodicea disappeared from existence.

- ▶ Thirty years later, the Laodicean church would receive another letter—this one, a personal letter from Christ himself, the Head of the Church.
- ▶ In his letter, Christ told them that despite being successful, they were useless to him; their prosperity made them blind to their spiritual need and so, instead of having lived lives worthy of the Lord, they were utterly worthless to him.
- ▶ In failing to strive to be perfect in Christ, they had, instead, become puke to Christ: *“You’re stale. You’re stagnant. You make me want to vomit.”* (Revelation 3.16 MSG)

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

- ▶ He is God's mystery, the *“Word of God in its fullness,”* the *“hope of glory,”* and the One *“in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*
- ▶ In all his infinite fullness, Christ resides within the church; he is her past, present, and future—her hope and wealth. She is his visible representation on earth and he can only be known as she makes him known. She is his glory, revealed and known on earth.
- ▶ For this reason, the sole agenda of every church, every pastor, and every believer must be *“to be perfect in Christ”* (Colossians 1.28-2.7).

CHARACTERISTICS OF A LIFE THAT WILL NOT BE WORTHLESS

- ▶ I must be filled with the spiritual knowledge of God's will (1.9).
- ▶ I should be bearing fruit in every good work (1.10).
- ▶ I must be growing in the knowledge of God (1.10).
- ▶ I must be strengthened with Christ's power (1.11).
- ▶ I must be joyfully and thankfully conscious of Christ's qualifying work in my life and the position I have been called to in him (1.12).

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.