

VILLAGE

CHURCH

Bible Study Notes

Intro Question: How is your life with God feeling currently?

Pray: That we would understand the depth of what Jesus has done for us and for that to shape our lives.

Read: Colossians 1:21-23

Questions about the passage:

- What was the spiritual condition of the Colossians before conversion? v.21
- Why does Paul emphasise Jesus' physical body? v.22
- Does reconciliation automatically perfect believers? v.22
- What does it mean to continue in the faith? v.23
- How does this passage fit within Paul's larger message to the Colossians so far?

Questions for us:

- Paul warns against drifting from our faith. How have you drifted in the past? What might cause you to drift right now?
- If our standing before God is already 'holy, blameless and free from accusation', what would it look like to actually live from that identity this week, rather than just knowing it intellectually?
- Paul says we were enemies of God in our minds before reconciliation. What thought patterns or assumptions about God do you still carry that belong to your old self?
- How does this passage remind us of the importance of bringing people to Jesus?

Pray: that Village would continue to grow into full Christian maturity

Homework: Memorise v. 22

Remind: Invite someone to check out the Life Series

Praying to see 10% of the northern suburbs in gospel-centred churches & 250 by 2030 at Village Church who grow, gather, give & go, in love & joy to the glory of God

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Overview:

Paul's letter to the Christians of Colosse in Asia Minor is one of his shortest letters. Paul is writing to a young church that's just starting to figure out what it means to believe in Jesus and follow him. He urges them to dig into the riches of the gospel and let it shape the way they live.

This week, Paul assures the Colossians of their place in Jesus' victory over death and God's reconciliation to Himself, making them holy and blameless. He encourages them to remain steadfast in this truth and not drift away from the Good News.

Paul's aim:

Paul writes to a church he's never visited to establish his apostolic authority and relationship with them. His core aim is to ground them deeply in the gospel so they grow to maturity in Christ. Urgently underlying everything is a warning - don't drift toward the alternative teachings circulating in Colosse.

Asia Minor Map:



Asia Minor in the time of Paul

Source: N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 12, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 18.

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Questions about the passage:

What was the spiritual condition of the Colossians before their conversion? v.21

The Colossians were once alienated from God. Rather than simply lacking knowledge of God, they actively resisted him and were enemies in their minds because of their evil behaviour. Wrong thinking leads to wrong action. It wasn't just a lack of intellectual knowledge, it was a fundamental orientation of their thinking and conduct away from God's will.

Why does Paul emphasise Jesus' physical body? v.22

Jesus' physicality matters because genuine reconciliation requires him to truly enter the human condition he redeems. He shares their fleshly existence so that though himself without sin, he takes sin's consequences on himself, becoming subject to death.

Does reconciliation automatically perfect believers? v.22

Reconciliation is God's completed work, but believers must respond by living out their new status. God's action in Christ and the Colossians' acceptance of the gospel have not automatically and instantly made them perfect. Having been given a new life, they must now live and act in accordance with it.

What does it mean to continue in the faith? v.23

Paul calls believers to remain grounded in the gospel they received. Having been given a new life, they must now behave in accordance with it. This they can do only because of the reconciliation which was achieved on the cross. Perseverance flows from understanding and relying on what Christ has accomplished.

How does this passage fit within Paul's larger message to the Colossians so far?

Paul tells the church that he thanks God for founding it, that he wants them to thank God for his great plan of salvation and to appreciate where they fit into it as well as the role of his own ministry within it. Verses 21-23 locate the Colossians within God's redemptive purposes, preparing them to embrace the maturity Paul calls them toward in the rest of the letter.

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Questions for us:

Paul warns against drifting from our faith. What does drift look like in your life? Not dramatic collapse, but slow movement away?

Reflect on your personal circumstances in seasons of feeling like you're drifting. Factors like isolation, preoccupation with the everyday things of life, difficult seasons are examples. Notice what anchors you to God, and notice what takes you away. How can we rearrange our days and weeks to tether ourselves more firmly to God?

If our standing before God is already 'holy, blameless and free from accusation', what would it look like to actually live from that identity this week, rather than just knowing it intellectually?

Our true identity in Christ is received, rather than constructed. Before we act in the world, we are first beloved by God. By contrast, we typically act in the world to gain our false identity. What would it look like for you to first receive from God, and then act from that place of true identity? What habits might support this?

Paul says we were enemies of God in our minds before reconciliation. What thought patterns or assumptions about God do you still carry that belong to your old self?

Our thoughts are upstream of our behaviours. What we think about God dictates how we will act towards Him. Paul encourages us in Romans 12:2 to '...be transformed by the renewing of your mind'. We are shaped what we give our attention to. Where can your attention be directed to rethink your thinking?

How does this passage remind us of the importance of bringing people to Jesus?

Our unbelieving friends, neighbours, co-workers and family are currently enemies of God. That's a terrible place to be in.