

# Christ Is All

*Colossians 4:2-18*

- I have some good news for you: we have done it! We are wrapping up our study of the book of Colossians this morning.
- Over the last 14 weeks, we have pulled this book apart and examine as much of it as possible.
- Open up to **Colossians 4:2** this morning.
- If these verses look or sound familiar, it is because we actually looked at them about 4 months ago.
- We used **verses 2-6** as we looked at our core values.
- These verses help us think about how to love our community well.
- It is a tremendous passage that is worth reviewing, especially in light of the world around us.
- God has not moved in a sweeping revival that I have seen, so the statistics are still true that say that only 2 out of 5 adults in America even claim to have professed Christ.<sup>1</sup>
- We still are surrounded by people who don't know Jesus, and we as a church still have a long way to go in our efforts to reach people for Christ.
- Here's how we are going to approach this passage this morning:
  - The points we draw out will largely be the same as what we saw in May.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/culture/714-what-do-americans-believe-about-jesus-5-popular-beliefs#.V0CmMJErLIU>.

Accessed 21 May 2016.

- However, we are going to try to summarize some of the key themes in Colossians and see how they help us understand and live out these commands.
- By doing that, I hope to challenge you to live out these words in a new way.
- Why?
- Because, as we have seen, Christ Is All!

## 1) Because of who Christ is, we enjoy the privilege of prayer.

- Look again at **verse 2**...
- Have you stopped recently and thought about the incredible reality of prayer?
- The God who ordained that the universe exist and spin and be all it is; the God who is perfectly righteous and holy; that God allows you into His presence whenever you want to come.
- You can't do that with any earthly authority, so why do we have the right to do that with the God of the universe?
- We gain access to God because Jesus has us covered.
- Go back to **Colossians 1:15-17** and let's be reminded of who Jesus is.
- Jesus, who is God, has unhindered access to God the Father because He exists as part of the Trinity.
- You and I have the authority to come to God the Father in prayer because Jesus has said so!
- When God draws us to Himself, He covers us with Christ's righteousness, which means you and I can come into the Father's presence just like Jesus does!
- That's at least part of what it means to pray "in Jesus' name".

- To put it in a terribly weak example, it is as though Jesus is touring with the band, and all we have to do to get back stage is mention His name.
- He can get us in where we cannot, which is why prayer is such an incredible privilege.
- It only makes sense that, because the Son of God has given us free access into the presence of God, you and I should spend as much time as we can in prayer.
- That's why we are commanded (not suggested) to *devote ourselves to prayer*: Because Jesus has granted us access to the Father based off who He is.
- We may not be talking to God every second of the day and night, but we speak with Him often, and when we are not speaking, we are listening with our hearts open to what He is doing around us.
- The picture is ongoing, life-altering talks with God about who He is and who we are and what is wrong in our world and how He wants to use us to reconcile the world to Himself.
- That's why the ESV translates it, "Continue steadfastly in prayer."
- We have to keep praying, and keep praying, and keep praying.
- Since we are coming into the presence of the Father in the name of the Son, we also need to keep alert as we pray, watching and expecting that God will answer those requests just like a loving father gives his children what they need.
- Not only that, but we need to pray with thanksgiving, which keeps us humbly recognizing that every good gift we have comes from the Father.
- Christ is all, which is why we must devote ourselves to prayer.

- **Not only does Christ impact our prayer life, He also impacts the way we talk with others:**

## **2) Because of what Christ has done, we look for opportunities to talk about Him.**

- Read **verses 3-4** again.
- Did you notice what Paul was asking them to pray? He made two requests.
- First, he asked the Colossians to join him in praying that God would give him an open opportunity to proclaim the Gospel.
- We looked in depth at “the mystery of Christ”, which we find back in **Colossians 1:27**.
- Remember, the mystery wasn’t some secret, special knowledge only given to a select few.
- Instead, it was the mystery that was hidden from those who lived before Christ, and it was the incredible message that both Jews and those who weren’t Jews would be equally a part of the kingdom of God.
- Jesus’ death clearly opened the way for everyone to be saved, which is why we see what is probably the most well-known verse in all the Bible:  
*“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16, NASB95)*
- That is the life-changing message of the Gospel we saw in chapter 1, with all the implications of knowing Christ that came in chapters 2-4.
- Never lose sight of the beautiful message that you were once lost and now you are found; you were blind and now you see!

- Paul was asking the church at Colossae to pray for God to give him an opportunity to proclaim that great message to anyone and everyone He could.
- Remember, he was under house arrest at the time, but as you read through the other letters he wrote from prison, you see that he led guards, slaves, and even members of Caesar's own household to Christ while in prison.
- You and I desperately need God to give us that open door to proclaim the mystery of Christ. Our world is growing increasingly hostile to the things of God, and yet we need the truth that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the grave to show that He had overcome death itself more than ever!
- We need more than ever for God to answer the rest of the request, which is found in **verse 4**...
- There was a time when most people knew who Jesus is and what He did for us, but now, that message is lost to many.
- We need clear, creative ways to explain to those around us today that they need Jesus.
- We know that we are not the ones who save anyone:
  - *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:44, NASB95)*
- However, we need to ask God to give us wisdom on how to present the Gospel in a clear, straightforward way.
- Every situation is different, and a presentation that worked well once may not work well another time.
- That's why we need God to give us wisdom in how to talk about Jesus.
- The world around Paul was lost, and the world around us is lost as well, but there is a God in heaven who sent His Son to die our death and give us His life, and they need to know!

- What are we doing about it, church? How are we going to let the world around us know that Jesus truly cares for them?
- Remember, Paul said in **Colossians 1:24** that he was bearing the reproach of Christ, continuing to be ridiculed and hated by many because of Jesus—are we willing to do the same?
- Do those you work with and see regularly know that Jesus is the Lord and Leader of your life? Why not? How are you going to change that?
- Pray for God to open doors wide for us to share Christ, and then let's do it!
- If Christ really is all, then we should tell the world.
- **You see, what we have seen in Colossians shows us that...**

### **3) Because Christ has removed our old life, we live differently than those who don't know Christ.**

- Read **verse 5** again.
- The word "*conduct*" is actually the word "walk".
- We have seen throughout this book that our lives should be different because of Christ.
- In **chapter 2:11**, we saw that Christ removed our old way of life. In **3:5-11**, we saw that means we don't talk or act the way we used to.
- Because of that, your life should look different than the lives of those around you who don't know Christ.
- Your reactions to bad news or poor service or even good things that happen won't be the same.
- You won't be known for your temper or your bitterness; Christ has taken those things away.
- That then opens up opportunities for you to demonstrate and talk about Christ.

- Every shopping trip, every doctor's visit, every trip to the Farmer's Market, every day at work, every service call by a repairman, every interaction with a neighbor, every haircut and every meal out is an opportunity to engage with someone who may not have a genuine relationship with Christ.
- Think about it: you may be the only genuine Christian they know.
- If 3/5 of the population doesn't know Jesus, then there is a high likelihood there aren't other believers on your street, at your job, or in your club.
- God has put you there for a reason!
- Cultivate every opportunity, because we don't know how many we have!
- You have no clue what God may do through a passing word, a simple "I'll pray for you," or a, "God bless you."

*Just this week, I was convicted of this. I found myself in a public restroom in a store, and there was another gentleman there who was washing his hands.*

*We struck up a conversation over the lack of paper towels and our mutual disdain for air hand dryers, and as we turned to go our separate ways, I said, "God bless you".*

*As those words were leaving my mouth, he was already in the process of asking me if I went to church anywhere.*

*Standing in the Men's room, this man invited me to his church.*

*I would typically have passed on an opportunity like that, and yet this gentleman was a lay leader in his church, but he was making the most of that opportunity.*

- Christ has delivered me from so much sin in my own life and kept me from so much more sin; I should be as bold as this man was in telling others about Christ.
- If Christ is all, then I must live differently.
- **Returning to our words, we wrap up with this final admonition:**

#### **4) Because Christ has given us new life, we can respond appropriately.**

- Go over **verse 6** again.
- Remember, this is the rest of what we spent the last few weeks looking at out of **Colossians 3:12-17**.
- We have a long list of attitudes and actions that Christ has called us to put on, and they enable us to respond correctly when we are in difficult situations.
- Our old life is gone, and Jesus is giving us new life and we have put Him in charge, so He can then season our words with grace.
- The message of the Gospel will always be offensive, because we are telling proud people that you are wrong, you aren't good enough to save yourselves, and that the only way you can be saved is to surrender.
- However, because we have new life in Christ, we can give that message with compassion, kindness, humility, and gentleness, so that whatever we do in word or deed, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- If Christ is all, then I should respond with words that match His character.
- Christ is all, as we have seen.
- Because of who Christ is, we can have access to God through prayer. Because of what He has done, we should have a



desire to tell the world about Him. Because He has removed our old way of life, we should capitalize on every difficult circumstance as a place to tell others about Him, and because we have new life, we can respond appropriately in those moments.

- Do you see now that Christ really is all?
- Let's live like it.
  
- One other closing thought: We aren't going to spend a lot of time on **verses 7-18**. They were largely personal notes, although there are some great principles to draw from them.
- For this morning, though, I want you to recognize something: Paul ministered in the context of relationships. He had men and women around him who encouraged, challenged, and supported him.
- God has given you a church family that will walk alongside you and do the same.
- Don't try to go at your Christian life without the church. You need to be a part of the lives of others, and you need them as a part of your life.
- Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, Demas, Nympha, and Archippus are all strange names to us, but they were people Paul shared his life and ministry with.
- That's why we are starting small groups in a handful of weeks: so you can develop and deepen relationships with your Tychicus, Ephaphras, and Luke.