

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

OCTOBER 5 - 9, 2020

## Above All

8.30 - 11.22

BOOK OF COLOSSIANS



# MONDAY

## Colossians 2:16-23

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### Truth in Traction

It may be a simplistic way to view the letter of Paul to the church of Colossae as a hinge between truth and traction. First, Paul gives his readers a boatload of **truth** (Colossians 1-2:15) followed by the application (**traction**) of those truths to daily living (Colossians 3-4). In between (Colossians 2:16-23) is an admonition (the **hinge**) to not waste this incredible gift of eternal life by not living it out in our lives. The application (traction) comes in telling us how to open the eternal life gift and how to live it out.

I see this pattern in the Bible—in the parable of the prodigal son. He knew the truth of his father's love, but took his inheritance in an early withdrawal. Then he squandered all that wealth (**truth**) in wasteful living. Finally, in a pig sty, the young man "came to his senses," realizing that his father's servants were better off than he. He decided to return home hoping to become one of his father's servants. In short, the truth began to gain traction in his life. Imagine his surprise at his father's lavish welcome upon his return.

The father was delighted to welcome home a son ready to apply the truth of the love that was always there. Ironically, the older son in the story, who never left home, still needed to learn how to put the truth of his father's love into practice.

I see a similar experience in my own life. I was raised in church and learned many truths from the Bible about Jesus and the gospel. But there was little or no traction. My life was a disappointment to myself and others. My mother said, "I don't think you're a Christian because you don't act like one." What to do? The following day I went to my youth pastor, who said I wouldn't find peace until I did what God told me to do. I felt God say, "Go forward at the Billy Graham meeting, and I will settle your questions." So I did, and He did,

The point of Paul's letters to the churches was not only to give them the truth of Jesus and the gospel, but also to teach them how to apply the truth to daily living.

## QUESTIONS

Is there a place in your life where God's truth is not getting any traction? What might God be telling you to do to get traction on the truth of His desire for you?

## PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

As Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and has limited medical support infrastructure, pray for God's safety during the pandemic: Our God, Great Healer and Comforter, please protect the people of Haiti during these challenging times of COVID-19. Please keep them safe and turn wayward hearts toward you for comfort, shelter and salvation.

# TUESDAY

**Matthew 6:34; Mark 1:3; Luke 9:62; Philippians 3:12-14**

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## Jesus Our Now

Now that the Colossian church was headed in the right direction, Paul did not want them to revert to their old ways. He wanted them to forget *“what had gone before and press on to the high calling of Jesus, that they may realize the purpose for which He made them and saved them”* (Philippians 3:13-14).

The wisdom of not looking back is underscored throughout the Bible. Lot’s wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt. The Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt and left their bones in the wilderness. Only their children along with Caleb and Joshua inherited the Promised Land.

John the Baptist had a similar message. He was the *“voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him’”* (Mark 1:3). By being immersed in water with the baptism of repentance and the forgiveness of sins, the people were leaving the past behind and preparing for the One who was coming next—Jesus. *“Clear the decks”* of the old; make space for the new.

Jesus told His disciples, *“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God”* (Luke 9:62 NKJV).

In Colossians 2:16-23 Paul is telling us to leave behind the old legalistic ways and live in the freedom Jesus has won for us at the Cross—the

freedom to follow Jesus and be in fellowship with Him. Paul warned other churches with the same message (See especially Galatians 1:6-7). Paul cautions us to not go back to the former ways of legalism, human traditions, apocalyptic conjecturing, or believing conspiracy theories. The Holy Spirit comes alongside us to help us live the new life God has given in Jesus.

Not only are we tempted to look back, but we are also tempted to figure out what the future holds. Jesus has given us hints, but says, *“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own”* (Matthew 6:34 NIV). Many are tempted to use the apocalyptic literature of the book of Revelation as a crystal ball, instead of the discipleship manual that it is (Darrell W. Johnson). Let us rather live in the present as Jesus’ followers in His presence.

## QUESTIONS

Recall when you were looking back at past troubles too much or worrying too much about what might happen in the future. How can you live in the present as Jesus’ follower?

## PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

This is an election year also in Haiti, traditionally a time of unrest given the country’s continuing, challenging circumstances and political history. Father God, please bring Your peace to Haiti. Guide the people and the country’s leaders to do Your will to make godly decisions, to love neighbors, and to seek Your face at all times.

# WEDNESDAY

## Colossians 2:16-23; Hebrews 12:1-2

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### Jesus Our Focus

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.” (Hebrews 12:1-2a)*

Jesus is laser focused in His submission to our Father in heaven. And He wants us to be very focused as well. There are things that get in the way. It has always been true of His people, and Paul, in Colossians 2:16-23, wants to clear away the clutter and the fuzziness. He wants us to keep what is important. He wants us to “major on the majors, and minor on the minors.” One way to do this might be to assume the truth of Scripture as true, instead of defending it through argumentation.

The story of Billy Graham includes a point in his life in the chapel at Forest Home Conference Center. It is said that he left the chapel a changed man having decided he would accept the Bible as accurate and true. It is the place where he stopped struggling with certain issues. His ministry reflected this from that moment forward, as he began to preach with a new authority.

Jesus also lived and spoke as if He assumed that the Scriptures were true (see John 10:35). His references to the Scriptures were natural and unforced.

Apologetics were in evidence in the church where I grew up. However, rather than argue I began to assume the Scriptures to be true. Then I could devote my energies to relating to Jesus as the Person He is and to exhibiting His life in me as I obeyed His voice. For me, it made a positive difference.

If Jesus is so focused on us, ought we not be focused on Him? Surely this is what He wants, and that is exactly the purpose of the Holy Spirit. God is leading us on a path to maturity in Him.

## QUESTIONS

Today imagine the truth of Jesus and the Holy Spirit at work in your life to bring Him into focus.

## PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

International agencies have exerted more influence in international adoptions, making it increasingly hard to place the orphaned children in the care of Three Angels into Christian homes: God of all peace, please care for these beautiful children whom You have made in Your image. Please see to it that they find loving homes where Your name is lifted up at all times.

# THURSDAY

**Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Rom. 12:4-17; 1 Cor. 12:4-27; 1 Peter 4:10**

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## Jesus Our Head

*“They have lost connection to the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.” (Colossians 2:19)*

Jesus is building His Church even now. Jesus is the Head of His Church and we are His Body—the Church. From Him come all the signals to His Body for functioning properly. Jesus makes the necessary connections to and between the various members of His Body. There is a reason why we are placed here in this place next to each other. We are different. We serve different functions. We have different gifts. So we need each other.

John and Elizabeth Sherrill (co-authors of Christian classics, such as *The Cross and the Switchblade*, *The Hiding Place* and *God’s Smuggler*) were looking for a church. They were shy but gifted folks. They did not like a church that would ask visitors to stand and be greeted by the members. Together they asked God to help them in their predicament. The nearest church was an Episcopal church called Saint Mark’s. They decided to try it and hoped they would not be called out. They sat near the back and were hardly noticed. At last they found their kind of church. They ended up attending services and became an integral part of that church. When my wife read this story, she said these were her kind of people and her kind of church.



For me, the lesson of this story is that Jesus has all kinds of people with all kinds of giftings and sensibilities. And as the Lord of His Church, He can put us exactly where we fit perfectly.

Epaphras was the right person to plant a church in the town of Colossae. Paul was the right person to write a letter to encourage them and give them pointers on how to live their lives in the kingdom of God. His letter was chosen (or recognized) to be a part of the New Testament canon. And, as a result, God's Spirit has ministered edification to countless people through the centuries. We do well to pay attention to what these words are saying to us and to apply them in our lives.

## QUESTIONS

How are you relating to other members of Christ's Body where He has placed you?

## PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

Three Angels offers a K-6th grade Christian school, as well as sponsored support for Haitian children as they graduate from Three Angels Academy and beyond. Lord Almighty, bless our students as they continue in their education, helping them to walk in Your ways and seek You all of their days.

# FRIDAY

**Matthew 11:28; Mark 2:23-28; Hebrews 4:1-11**

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## **Jesus Our Sabbath**

*“Therefore do not let anyone judge you ... with regard to ... a Sabbath day.”*  
(Colossians 2:16)

But what does it mean to honor the Sabbath? And what does it mean for us to enter into Jesus’ Sabbath-rest?

The Pharisees sought to honor the Sabbath and thought that Jesus, by healing people on that day, was dishonoring the Sabbath. Jesus made at least three statements on the subject: (1) He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17); (2) He is the Lord of the Sabbath, which was made for people, not people for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27); (3) He gives rest to those who come to Him (Matthew 11:28).

Jesus declares the Good News of the gospel which Paul summarizes in Philippians 3:8-9: *“... that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”*

And the writer of Hebrews amplifies this in chapter 4. *“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from His. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest”* (vv. 9-11a). Jesus urges us to make every effort to enter into our rest in Him.

Once I worked almost every Sunday in a church-owned bookstore that served the members and guests of that church. The subject of working on Sundays came up in conversations from time to time. How did I respond to these questions? I found my answer in the Scriptures.

The larger question for the writer of Hebrews is: Have we entered into our rest in Jesus? That is, are we resting and trusting in what Jesus has done and is doing for us? In Matthew, Jesus invites us to receive the rest He gives those who come to Him (11:28).

For the Christian, every day is a day of rest—a Sabbath day. We can come to Jesus and find rest every day. We can enter into His rest by obeying His voice and following His lead. This is good news.

## QUESTIONS

Today how is God asking you to rest in Him? May God grant you the courage to do it.

## PRAYERS FOR THREE ANGELS HAITI

Three Angels employs a staff of about 60 local Haitian people, who care for the children in its orphanage, teach and feed the students in the Academy, provide medical and dental care, and support other key Three Angels programs and activities: True and living God, please care for the staff of Three Angels. Comfort and encourage them, bless them and equip them to glorify Jesus Christ in all that they do and say.

## Sources:

- Darrell W. Johnson, *Discipleship on the Edge: An Expository Journey Through the Book of Revelation* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004), p. 130.
- Elizabeth Sherrill, *All the Way to Heaven: A Surprising Faith Journey* (Grand Rapids: Revell, Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2002), p. 93-94.

