

Colossians

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colos'sae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of

5 your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing--so among yourselves, from the day you heard and understood the grace of God in

10 truth, as you learned it from Ep'aphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the

15 Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness

20 and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have

redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. He is before
5 all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you,
10 who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven, and of
15 which I, Paul, became a minister. Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the divine office which was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but
20 now made manifest to his saints. To them God chose to make known how

great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which
is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning every man
and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man
mature in Christ. For this I toil, striving with all the energy which he
5 mightily inspires within me. For I want you to know how greatly I strive for
you, and for those at La-odice'a, and for all who have not seen my face,
that their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have
all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery,
of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say
10 this in order that no one may delude you with beguiling speech. For though
I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good
order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. As therefore you received
Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him, rooted and built up in him and
established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
15 See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit,
according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the
universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fulness of deity
dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head
of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a
20 circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the

circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which
you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who
raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in trespasses and the
uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having
5 forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against
us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He
disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them,
triumphing over them in him. Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in
questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a
10 sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance
belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and
worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by
his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole
body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows
15 with a growth that is from God. If with Christ you died to the elemental
spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the
world? Why do you submit to regulations, "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do
not touch" (referring to things which all perish as they are used), according
to human precepts and doctrines? These have indeed an appearance of
20 wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the

body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh. If
then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where
Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are
above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is
5 hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also
will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:
fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you once walked,
when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice,
10 slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing
that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the
new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its
creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised,
barbarian, Scyth'ian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all. Put on
15 then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness,
lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a
complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you,
so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds
everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in
20 your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be

thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the

5 Father through him. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not with eyeservice, as men-

10 pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing

15 that you also have a Master in heaven. Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving; and pray for us also, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison, that I may make it clear, as I ought to speak.

Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let

20 your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know

how you ought to answer every one. Tych'icus will tell you all about my
affairs; he is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the
Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how
we are and that he may encourage your hearts, and with him Ones'imus, the
5 faithful and beloved brother, who is one of yourselves. They will tell you of
everything that has taken place here. Aristar'chus my fellow prisoner greets
you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received
instructions--if he comes to you, receive him), and Jesus who is called Justus.
These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for
10 the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. Ep'aphras, who is
one of yourselves, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always remembering
you earnestly in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in
all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you
and for those in La-odice'a and in Hi-erap'olis. Luke the beloved physician
15 and Demas greet you. Give my greetings to the brethren at La-odice'a, and
to Nympha and the church in her house. And when this letter has been read
among you, have it read also in the church of the La-odice'ans; and see that
you read also the letter from La-odice'a. And say to Archip'pus, "See that
you fulfil the ministry which you have received in the Lord." I, Paul, write
20 this greeting with my own hand. Remember my fetters. Grace be with you. *

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