

Day 167, Colossians 1

by David Servant

David Servant's sermon on Colossians 1 emphasizes the importance of sound doctrine, the preeminence of Christ, and the necessity of continuing in faith for salvation.

Scripture: Colossians 4:7

Topics: "Christ's Supremacy", "Eternal Security"

Description

David Servant preaches on Paul's letter to the Colossians, which was written around the same time as his letter to the Ephesians, addressing false teachings that infiltrated the church. The letter emphasizes that Jesus made peace through the blood of His cross and fully paid the penalty for our sins on Calvary. It also debunks modern errors such as unconditional eternal security and emphasizes the importance of continuing in faith to remain blameless before God. Paul highlights the preeminence and all-sufficiency of Jesus, contrasting the true Jesus with the distorted versions often portrayed today.

Transcript

This letter is very much like Paul's letter to the Ephesians---who lived just 100 miles from the Colossians in modern western Turkey. In fact, Paul wrote this letter around the same time that he wrote his Ephesian letter, during his house arrest in Rome. Both letters were carried to their intended recipients by the same man, Tychicus (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7), who also carried Paul's letter to Philemon, which is next on our reading list.

This letter was intended to have a limited circulation among the Gentile saints in Colossae and nearby Laodicea (4:16), to whom Paul had also written a letter at the same time, and of which we have no copy. It primarily was intended to counteract false teachings that had infiltrated the Colossian church in the first century, yet it contains truth that can also counteract more modern doctrinal errors.

One of those modern errors is the idea that Jesus suffered for our sins in hell, and thus purchased our redemption after three days of burning in flames. Paul writes, however, that Jesus "made peace through the blood of His cross" (1:20) and "reconciled you in His fleshly body through death" (1:22). When Jesus cried out from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30), He meant it. The full penalty for our sins was paid on Calvary.

Another modern doctrinal error debunked in today's reading is what is often referred to as unconditional eternal security, or once-saved-always-saved. Paul wrote to the Colossians:

He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach---if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard (1:22-23).

Notice the very conditional "if" in what we just read. We must "continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast" if we expect Christ to present us before God "holy and blameless and beyond reproach." This makes perfect sense, because we are saved through faith. The one who abandons faith in Jesus Christ forfeits his or her salvation, not meeting God's conditions.

Yet another modern doctrinal error that is exposed in today's reading is the dethroning of the Lord Jesus Christ to make Him something less than He is. It seems that within many circles of professing Christians, Jesus is little more than a cosmic vending machine or self-help guru. Bible Jesus' preeminence and all-sufficiency are highlighted by Paul in 1:15-20. Jesus "is the image of the invisible God" (1:15), the one who created the material and spiritual worlds for Himself. He existed before everything, and is the supreme head of the church who reconciled us to God. That is an entirely different Jesus than the one so popular today, epitomized in a song sung by the Doobie Brothers in the 1970s hit, "Jesus is Just Alright (with Me)." A speck of dust approves of the Creator of all things! How comforting that must be to God! The real issue is, "Are you just alright with Jesus?"

Amazingly, all-supreme Jesus lives in everyone who believes in Him (by the Holy Spirit), and His indwelling is our "hope of glory" (1:27). That is, because of His glorious presence within us, we have hope of living eternally in His glorious kingdom.

What is the goal of spiritual wisdom and understanding? To enable us to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work" (1:10). Spiritual knowledge that does not result in godly behavior is worthless at best and spiritually damaging at worst if it fosters pride. Paul's goal in teaching was to "present every man complete in Christ" (1:28).

Paul wrote that he was doing his share of filling up that which was lacking in Christ's afflictions (1:24). He was certainly not implying that he was personally finishing the work of Christ's atonement, but simply that the church, Christ's body, always suffers persecution, just as Christ did. When we read of what Paul actually did endure for the sake of the gospel, our sufferings generally pale by comparison. Consequently, so will our rewards.

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