

Advancing the Gospel into Your Neighborhood

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I. The background of my interest in Colossians is interesting.

A. When I first joined Navigator staff and began getting opportunities to speak I decided to let my speaking be directed by the Scriptures.

1. When you listen to preachers you can tell whether they are teaching in the power of the Spirit or in their own strength.
2. I try to tap into the power of the spirit.
3. We don't need to hear another man's ideas.
4. I had mentors that helped me in this regard.

B. I often ask the Lord what passage of Scripture best speaks to a topic.

1. My message for the next year of so is to focus on helping Christians see what God expects of them in regard to the Gospel.
 - a. The Lord led me to Colossians to achieve this purpose.
 - b. Colossians is a book of case studies.
 - c. It records what was happening as the Gospel began to grow in the first century.
 - d. It is also instructive for us today.

II. Let's read the first chapter of Colossians.

A. How did the Gospel first come to Colosse?

1. Paul had never been there but Epaphras brought it to them.
2. Paul's ministry in Ephesus indicates that the Gospel had go into Asia. (Acts 19:8-10)
 - a. Epaphras heard what Paul taught and took it to Colosse.
 - b. He may have been traveling for business and took the Gospel with him.
 - c. Some people heard, understood, and believed the Gospel.
 - d. For Navigators this is exciting because it's close to our ministry.
 - e. We impact people from surrounding areas all the time who will take the Gospel with them to impact others.

f. Through spiritual generation we desire to see the Gospel spread all over the world. (Colossians 1:6)

B. What was the result of people hearing the Gospel?

1. Hope, love, faith. (Colossians 1:3-6)
2. These same results continue rippling through the world today.
3. Life without these qualities characterizes people without the Gospel.
4. Most people experience love in marriage which can be selfish.
5. The unselfish love of God is a miracle of the Spirit.
6. I want to be involved in giving people this knowledge and I want to encourage others to do the same.

III. What is Paul's main message in Colossians?

A. A need in Navigators (and Paul) is how to sustain others to continue impacting society?

1. Who Christ is and what he has done is what changes people. (Colossians 1:15-21)
2. This caused Paul to be a servant of the Gospel. (Colossians 1:22-29)
3. Paul's struggle is that his disciple might know the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are in Christ. (Colossians 2:1-5)
 - a. What is Paul's big concern here?
 - b. Let's take a few minutes to discuss it quietly.
 1. Paul has not met these people and he struggles to help them.
 2. Maybe these people prayed for Paul.
 3. Yet he struggled to see them have complete understanding of Christ.
 4. He desired that they would be encouraged in heart and united in love.
 5. He also warned them of persuasive argument that could delude them.
4. I've just returned from the Middle East and asked myself what they need to continue laboring for Christ.
 - a. Encouraged in heart.
 - b. United in love.
 - c. Growing in understanding who Jesus is and what he's done for them.

d. If I can see this in people I can be assured that they will continue ministering.

5. In the rest of the book Paul unpacks these concerns.

a. He warns in verses 5, 8, 16, 18 against many dangers.

b. We need to watch that we don't get off on tangents rather than focusing on Christ.

c. In verse 6 we are to grow up in Christ.

d. In Christ all the fullness of deity dwells, in whom we have been circumcised and buried and made alive. (Colossians 2:9).

e. Our growth needs to be a conscious effort to remain in Christ.

f. Paul deals with the outworking of this knowledge in Colossians 3.

1. Character and repentance.

2. The Gospel transforms our behavior. (Colossians 3:1-10)

3. The Gospel impacts our relationships. (Colossians 3:11-4:1)

4. Philemon dovetails with this idea by applying the principle of master slave relations.

i. When Onesimus returned the word must have gotten out.

ii. This must have generated conversations.

B. Now we will watch a video unpacking Colossians 4:2-18)

1. The power of prayer allows us to contribute to others around the world.

2. Much of what happens in our lives happens as a result of the prayers of others.

3. Jesus often withdrew to pray. (Luke 5:16)

a. Watch for how God answers our prayers.

b. Watch with thankfulness.

c. Our conversations need to be seasoned with salt.

d. Jesus wants to express his love through us.

4. Paul ends this chapter by imploring believers to fulfill the ministry they have received from the Lord.