**The Letter to the Colossians**

**The Gospel in Heathen & Multi-Religious Society - #13**

**The Letter to Colossians**

**Some Hard Questions**

***Join us for our class dinner May 3***

*We are down to our final two classes on Colossians, this week and next, and then the following Wednesday, May 3, we will have our End of Class carry-in dinner at E91 in the Friendship Room, 6:30 p.m. Sign up in class to bring a dish or give Bob a call and let him know you are coming. All are welcome, and it is always great to see old friends.*

With just two sessions to go, this week we will look at various passages from Colossians and ask some hard questions.

**First: Being in the Kingdom of the Son of His Love (1:12-14)**

*… Giving thanksto the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son of his love [or his beloved Son], in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

1. If this was done by the Father’s grace, and we did not even ask for such a position, how do we apply this to our personal life?

2. As for “*the kingdom of the Son of his love*,” if this means that it is a gift of love, is love the ground of our being?

**Second: We are in the Son the Co-Creator and remain as such having peace with the blood of his cross (1:17-20)**

*And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness 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.*

1. If we (as part of “all things” *“hold together in the Son,”* how do we understand the problem of evil and suffering?

2. If the Son reconciled everything on earth and in heaven by the blood of his cross, how we does one review the non-believers?

**Third: Is this Paul’s attitude to Philosophy? (2:6-10)**

*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.*

1. What are the basic differences between Philosophy and the Gospel?

2. What are the great promises of each and which one can deliver?

**Fourth: What is the source of Christian freedom? (2:11-23)**

*In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by 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 Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about 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 with a growth that is from God.*

*If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.”*

1. What is the real source of freedom in Christ?

2. What are the two great vices involved in asceticism?

**Fifth: We have been raised with Christ (3:1-11)**

*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 hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian.*

1. Did the death of Christ change our death?

2. In what way we apply the death of Christ to our own life?

3. How do we celebrate our resurrection?

***Pope’s Notes***

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