

Colossians 1:1-14

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[0 : 00] As we stand together and we read the Word of God in Colossians chapter 1, we'll be reading verses 1 through 14, and then we will pray. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God and Timothy, our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae, grace to you and peace from God our Father.

We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bondservant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

For he rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day.

Lord, what a blessing it is, together, together as your people. And Lord, what a greater blessing it is to open up your word. We pray as we have opened it up and we have read it together. Lord, that by the power and presence of your Holy Spirit, that you would help us to understand it.

[1 : 57] Lord, may it be more than words on a page of paper. Lord, may it be the very living and active word of God, which penetrates our very heart, that goes to the very depth of our soul and being. And Lord, that its purpose would be carried out in each one of us personally.

Lord, that it would be lived out in us corporately. And may it be for your glory and honor. And we ask it all in Jesus Christ's holy and precious name. Amen. You may be seated. Paul opens the book of Colossians in a very typical Pauline form.

And that is, he opens with a very lengthy greeting. Paul has a habit. I don't know if you've studied much of the Pauline writings or you have studied much of what he has written. And he wrote a number of books, though he is not the writer of the most of the New Testament.

Many of us think that Paul wrote most of the New Testament. The reality is, is that the apostle John wrote more verses in the New Testament than any other writer. But Paul wrote more books. So we've seen a lot of his letters.

But Paul, in the majority of his letters and the majority of his writings, introduces himself and whoever it is who is with him. And then he kind of gets carried away with himself a little bit. He's kind of known for these very long run-on sentences.

[3 : 07] And you probably have seen that when you read it. And you probably saw it here, how much of the sentence just keeps going on and on and on. And Paul, like many pastors and many preachers, kind of gets carried away by his theme.

But in his introductions, he is not only introducing himself. He also introduces who it is he is writing to. But he always introduces the reason for his writing. And it is here that we see in these first 14 verses where Paul begins to speak of his reasoning.

And we'll have to understand some of the historical setting of the church at Colossae as well. And we'll get to that. But I want you to see this morning, as we're studying the sufficiency and the supremacy of Christ, I want you to see from these first 14 verses the unity of the gospel.

The unity of the gospel because Christ is sufficient and he is supreme. And we see this in the first 14 verses when we understand that Paul is introducing himself, who it is that is with him, and his reasoning for writing.

So in this unity of the gospel, first of all, we are met with the people we are introduced to. I've always said that when you study scripture and when you're reading the Bible, you want to read it in context.

[4 : 12] You need to know who is writing it, when they're writing it, and who they are writing it to, and for what reason they're writing it. And when we study the book of Colossians, it is exactly the same way. And we need to understand, and I hope that you understand this, that when you open up the word of God, you are reading God's interaction in dealing with people, not just settings, right?

Not just places. It is his word to people. God is moving the apostle Paul, or the man Paul, and moving the hand of Paul, as is said in scripture, by the power of the presence of the Spirit, to pen a letter to people.

So we don't ever want to separate people from the word, because it is here that we begin to see application. So we first see the people that are introduced for us. It says, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother.

I always love how Paul refers to himself, because how we refer to ourselves is how we see ourselves. Paul is writing as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.

He understands that he is one apostle is to be sent forth, right? It is one that is sent out. He is one that has been sent out by Jesus Christ solely based upon the will of God.

[5 : 26] He is not one who is claiming the office of an apostle, or his apostleship by his own desire, by his own purposes. It is Paul who is an apostle because of the will of God, and Timothy, our brother.

Now that word, our, there literally just means the. I love that. Timothy, the brother. He is Timothy, the brother. And look at this. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae. Here are the people. We have Paul and Timothy and the saints who are at Colossae. And the reason this is important is because we are reading a letter that is addressed to a group of believers which Paul never met.

Paul was not the one who planted the church at Colossae. Paul had never seen these believers. We will see that later on as we read the book of Colossians. Paul was not one of intimate fellowship with these believers.

He would not have recognized them if he had walked upon them. They were not those who would have recognized him unless they had been really, he had been explained to them. But these were people who were really unknown to Paul.

[6 : 24] But look at how he refers to himself, to Timothy, and to those that he is writing to. He refers to himself as one who is an apostle by the will of God. He refers to Timothy as the brother or our brother, his brother and their brother.

And he refers to these believers as saints who are the brethren at Colossae. So Paul, all of a sudden, is uniting himself with believers which he did not know personally.

And he is uniting himself with people who have come to faith in Jesus Christ who he did not know. Now this is an application point for us. Because, friends, because of the sufficiency and the supremacy of Jesus Christ, we are united to a lot more people than just the people we see around us.

Those who are referred to as the church in scripture are a lot bigger than the people you know personally. That matters. Okay?

Because that matters. Because we are intimately and really very closely connected to believers from all around the world whom we may never know. We are connected to people who have claimed the name of Jesus Christ.

[7 : 28] They go much further than our own sphere of influence. Now Paul would have had some influence on their faith because he introduces to us by a gentleman named Epaphras. They had responded to the gospel message based upon the preaching and teaching of Epaphras.

Now many believe, and I think rightfully so, that Epaphras probably came to faith by hearing Paul preach. It would have been when Paul was in his first missionary travel. And if you remember one of the regions in which Paul stopped at, it says that all of Asia was being influenced.

Remember some of the local leaders got mad because they said that Paul was stirring up all of Asia and that all of Asia had come to hear the gospel. It's because the sinner, Paul dealt in major cities. Okay? He would go to a major city. He would preach in that city and people would come from all around the world because it's this great thing. In the fullness of time, Jesus Christ was born of a virgin and came to dwell among men. You know, these things matter in scripture because at the right time, Jesus was born.

And at the right time, Paul was commissioned because Rome had built all of these roads. It connected the major cities to all the outlying cities. So Paul could go to a major city and based upon the Roman roads, people would have come into that city, heard the preaching from Paul and taken it back to their local cities or their local towns.

[8 : 40] Okay? Epaphras probably went into one of these major metropolitan areas, heard Paul preach the gospel, believed the gospel and did something astounding. Because he thought he had found something so good in Jesus Christ, he went back home and told other people about it.

And when he told other people about it, they responded to what Epaphras was telling them. And all of a sudden, a church was born. Friend, do you see what I'm saying here? The church at Colossae was founded upon the testimony of a layman who said, Jesus Christ is sufficient and supreme. I need to tell somebody else about this. And all of a sudden, people began to respond. It didn't take Paul. It didn't take Timothy. It didn't take Peter. It didn't take James. It didn't take John. It took a man named Epaphras who really believed that Jesus Christ saved and redeemed him, who went back home and told other people about it.

And all of a sudden, a church was formed. This is one of the glorious truths about our Savior. He uses common men to do extraordinary things. I just want to go ahead and tell you, the ministry is not a profession, right?

God calls some men, the Bible tells us in Ephesians chapter 4, to be preachers and to be pastors and to be teachers, but he calls those men to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry.

[9 : 54] Ministry is a saint's business. And Epaphras is a saint based upon his faith in Jesus Christ. And he is more than likely a very new believer when he goes back home and says, I've got to tell you what I learned when I went to the city.

I need to tell you about Jesus Christ. Well, all of a sudden, this church is born. And we know later, it was probably gathering in the house of Philemon because this is the letter.

Paul wrote this little letter, Philemon, right? You remember Philemon? Philemon or Philemon, however you want to pronounce it. I know my name pronunciation is very bad. I'm sorry. I kind of have that southern tongue and I put syllables in there that aren't supposed to be in there.

And a lot of times my wife's like, I don't even know how you pronounce that name that way. But Ophiel, who is there in the New Testament, it's a very short letter. It is one chapter, right? So he writes to Phil because Phil had a slave who left.

You remember the slave Onesimus. Onesimus had left and run away from Philemon's house and he came to Paul. He found Paul at Rome. Well, Paul led Onesimus to Christ and sent Onesimus back home.

[10 : 59] Why? Because you need to be reconciled, right? So that's one of the things that Paul said, well, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you're a brother, you need to go back home and be reconciled. Well, so Paul sent a letter to Philemon to the church that was meeting in his house.

You know where Philemon lived or Philemon or Phil. Let's just call him. You know where Phil lived. Phil lived in Colossae. So all of a sudden now we have some just normal people who are obeying the gospel, who really believe in Jesus Christ and a church is formed there.

And it's an amazing thing. What we see here is that these people were united. Paul didn't know them. Paul really had nothing to do other than preaching the gospel.

And Epaphras heard the gospel, but look at the uniting factor of their faith. They were saints. They were faithful brethren in Christ who were at Colossae. Grace to you and peace from our Father. Listen, there is this united bond of who they are. We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you. You see this intimate connection. Why? Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints.

[12 : 02] And then he goes in this very long run-on sentence, which I don't always have the breath to read it all in one sitting as it should be. But look at what he says. Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel which has come to you just as in all the world also.

And it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth just as he learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bondservant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf.

And he also informed us of your love in the Spirit. So, wow, that was very fast, Pastor. But that's kind of what Paul is saying. Paul says, we are united. You are my brethren because you believe the same gospel I believe.

And the hope you have is the same hope I have. That there's a hope of a future and there's a hope of a peace. And it's because the gospel, the word of truth, by the way, if you want a word of truth, it is Paul says the word of truth, which is the gospel.

It's giving you that hope. Friend, I want to tell you something. Whoever that individual is around the world, and this is something, this is where we need to get, I think, even as believers.

[13:09] Whoever names the name of Jesus Christ based upon the hope of the gospel is our brother and sister and we are intimately united with them no matter where they live.

Because Christ is sufficient for us here in War Trace. He's also sufficient for the people around the world. He is supreme in War Trace and he is supreme all over the world.

And the same gospel we believe is the same gospel they believe. And the reality is, friend, though we may struggle here and though they may struggle there, we are all intimately connected through the hope of the gospel.

And it is about people. It's not just about places. Now, it is not to say we should not be connected to a local church because I always say this, every promise that we find in the New Testament and every encouragement and every edification or every building up we find in the New Testament is always written to a local body of believers called the church.

But they understand that as local body of believers called a local church, they are connected to something much larger than them because Christ is sufficient and supreme over all the world. So here we see the people.

[14:18] The second thing that we need to understand is the problem addressed. Now, we get the problem not necessarily in the introduction here. We will get to that in just a moment. But the problem we have to understand is the historical problem of what was happening at the church of Colossae.

And if we don't understand this, really, it really kind of skews how we interpret the rest of the book of Colossians. Because Paul always writes for a purpose, right?

The Word of God was written for a purpose. There was a very specific audience. There was a very specific purpose. We'll get to the purpose in just a moment. But those purposes were normally to address a problem.

I believe there is only one writing, and that is the book of Ephesians of Paul that did not address a specific problem. But the Word of God is there to edify, that is to build up, to correct and to reprove, right?

To correct our problems and to reprove, that is to rebuke us. And it is to correct what we are doing wrong. And the problems that we see being addressed in Scripture were problems that were taking place at specific locations, but also problems that really span all of history and span all of Christianity.

[15:25] And the major problem which Paul is seeking to address at the church of Colossae when writing the book of Colossians is this thing called syncretism. Syncretism is the joining together of two things, two or more things.

And I know that's kind of a big word there, but what they were trying to do was to blend faith in Jesus Christ with other things. Now, at Colossae, you're looking at a Gentile church.

You're looking at a non-Jewish church who had very large Greek influence, very large Roman influence, and that there was also a very prominent and probably very prosperous Jewish community in Colossae.

So when people began to pronounce faith in Jesus Christ, well, we just need to kind of understand this. Let's just wait just a minute. Let's back up just a little bit. Set the historical scene because it matters. One of the reasons Christianity was able to spread freely in the Roman Empire is because many saw it as following under the umbrella of Judaism or Jewish faith.

Now, God used that. The reason God used that is because the Romans believed in the Pax Romana. Now, this shouldn't take you by surprise because you live in a country that really accepts Pax Romana.

[16 : 37] And Pax Romana is the peace of Rome, which means you can believe whatever you believe. I'll believe whatever I believe as long as we all get along, right? And as long as we're just this big melting pot and your faith is okay and everybody's faith is all right as long as everybody gets along and you don't tread on my problems and I won't tread on your problems.

If you never tell me I'm wrong, I'll never tell you you're wrong. So it should sound very familiar to us because it is something that we see being played out in the majority of the world today. But because of the Pax Romana, the peace of Rome, one thing that Rome did is when they conquered a land, they did not remove the worship or the gods, lowercase g, of that land.

You could keep worshipping the gods you always worshipped as long as you really surrendered to the reign and rule of Caesar and you proclaimed that Caesar was Lord.

So when Rome conquered the Jewish territories, Judaism was continued to exist, could continue to exist, which means that it could have its practice all over the Roman Empire. You say, why does this matter? Stay with me, okay? I'm going to connect it all together for you.

So Judaism could continue to have its synagogues, it had its temple in Jerusalem, and they could continue to practice the Jewish faith in the Roman Empire undisturbed.

[17 : 49] Well, when Christianity came along, Rome saw it as being under the umbrella of Judaism, which is why we see so much preaching in the synagogues or the houses of Jewish worship.

This is why Paul would first go to the Jews and proclaim the gospel. Because if Rome had saw it as a new faith that was birthed while under Roman rule, they would have shut it down completely.

They would have said that won't happen. Because one thing you could not do in Rome was to start something new. That was seen as a threat to the Roman Empire. So God, in his omnipotence and in all his omniscience, allowed this umbrella of Judaism, as Paul would later say, to be that which opened a way to Jesus Christ.

So you had very prominent Jewish societies all through the Roman Empire. Colossae would have been a place of one of those. Well, when Epaphras comes back and he preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ, immediately the Romans or the Jewish people want to step in and give their opinion. Now, this is the danger. Stay with me. I'm going to show you the problem. The problem was, is you're in a city of Colossae that Epaphras has brought the news of Jesus Christ back to. But they are influenced by Greek culture and all of the Greek gods.

[19 : 01] There is a very prominent Jewish culture with its Jewish practices. There is the Roman culture which says that Caesar is Lord. And now all of a sudden there's these believers who say, well, if I pronounce that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior, I'm forgiven.

Well, then the Jews in that area say, well, yeah, but you also need to be circumcised and you need to keep these festivals. We'll see that as we say in the book of Colossians. You need to do all this. You don't need to eat this food. You don't need to do that.

You do need to do this. I mean, Jesus is good, but be sure you do this. And then the Greeks would say, yeah, but you need to do this. And then there was this thing called Gnosticism. The Gnostics, G-N-O-S-T-I-C-S.

The Gnostics arose. And the Gnostics, this is pretty good, right? Because we see this today. They said, we're part of a secret group of people who have secret special revelation.

We alone know the real truth. And we'll help you. Jesus is part of the way, but we'll help you. You know why this was so important? Because the Gnostics taught this. The Gnostics taught that your flesh is desperately wicked.

[20 : 01] There's no redeeming of your flesh. Okay, it's bad. It's inherently bad. So it really doesn't matter what you do in the flesh because it's bad. It's going to be destroyed. So do whatever you want to, right?

Live however you want to live. Practice whatever you want to practice because your flesh is wicked. But it is the soul of man that needs to be redeemed. So as long as you believe what you should on the inside, it doesn't really matter what you do on the outside.

Because your body is going to be annihilated anyway as long as you're right on the inside. So these believers were hearing all of this. By the way, Gnosticism is still around today. We still hear that today.

Don't do whatever you want to in the flesh as long as you're right on the inside, right? Well, when Paul preaches Jesus Christ in the book of Colossians, he speaks of Jesus in the flesh, living out a

redeemed flesh.

Because he's addressing the problem. Here's the problem at the church of Colossae. Jesus wasn't enough. They needed Jesus plus something.

[21 : 01] It was Jesus plus ritual laws. Jesus plus doing this. Jesus plus abstaining from this food. Jesus plus obedience. Jesus plus the secret revelation.

And friend, listen to me. If it's ever Jesus plus anything, then it is completely false and from the pits of hell. Because he is sufficient and he is supreme.

There is no special secret revelation that Jesus Christ is not over. And there is nothing that needs to be added to the finished work of Jesus Christ. When on that cross, Jesus says, it is finished, then it was absolutely finished.

What we need to understand while reading the book of Colossians and what the church. And by the way, let's not discount them too much because Paul refers to them as brethren, right? And saints. So they're believers. What they needed to understand is that when they accepted Jesus Christ, that was enough. It wasn't Jesus plus obedience over here or Jesus plus doing this over here or Jesus plus this belief.

[22 : 04] Jesus is enough. The reason so many believers get bogged down in their faith is because they think that it's Jesus and this or Jesus and that.

Friend, listen. He is sufficient. He is all we need. And he is supreme. He is above everything else we can ever find. And they needed to understand the sufficiency and the supremacy of Jesus Christ for their salvation.

That's the problem he's addressing. So we see now the third thing, the purpose that he states. Because if that's the problem, how is he going to address it? Because here's the danger. And this is a danger which so many pastors see.

And this is a danger that so many well-intentioned believers today see. Well, if Jesus is all we need and if Jesus is sufficient, and this is why the Jewish individuals, by the way, I mean, and I don't want to say that they were misguided, but I don't want to say that they were really being intentional, intentionally trying to be wrong or kind of here trying to disrupt it.

Because the honest evaluation is, well, if Jesus is sufficient and if Jesus is supreme, then what does it matter how I live? As long as I believe in him, then I'm good, right? So here's the problem.

[23 : 15] The problem is they're trying to add to Jesus. But here's how he's going to address it. Here's the purpose that he states. And he states it in his prayer. He says, For this reason, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Just stop right there. First question we need to ask ourself before we get to the purpose, he states. First question is, do we sincerely, as believers at War Trace Baptist Church, pray for believers we do not know?

That's just a convicting question as a pastor that I had to answer. Are we praying for those we do not know personally? Because he says, I have not ceased to pray for you since the day I heard. Because here's a convicting thing. I heard recently of a church plant. Some of you guys know him, so I'll go ahead and tell you, and we're going to pray for him. In just a moment, Kirk and Kathy Shull, who are planning Art City Community Church in Utah, he shared news with me.

And I have failed to pray for him. I'm just confessing that as a pastor. Very early this year, sometime in the early months of this year, they're about to celebrate their first baptismal service. That's awesome. That's a believer who has left the faith that is prominent in that Utah area, who has come to true salvific faith in Jesus Christ, who is now our brother, who we ought to be praying for as he goes through his baptismal service and as he grows in his faith at that church.

[24 : 38] Because now we are connected to that individual, right? So we ought to be, and as a pastor, I knew that, and I should be praying for that, but I'm just answering it honestly. He says, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask.

Here's the first purpose for his writing, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding. The first thing he wanted was for them to have knowledge of the will of God and to have the spiritual understanding of the work and the purpose of Jesus Christ. It's that they may know. And the reason this was an intended purpose is because the Gnostics were trying to tell them we have secret information. What Paul is going to say is there's no secret information because based on what Hebrews 1 tells us, that God has spoke to us in these last days

by his son.

That is, Jesus is the final word from God. We're not looking for any secret revelation. I don't need anyone to go find any secret tablets. I don't need anyone to go find any secret scrolls in a cave anywhere.

I don't need anyone to find any secret revelation of God because what we have here is the fullness of the revelation of God directed towards man. And the final word of God is found in his son who is Jesus Christ.

[25 : 47] And what Paul is saying is we need to know these things. So the first purpose, he is writing that they may have an understanding. We understand this, before we can be who we should be, we must know what we believe.

Right? This is a very new church full of fresh believers at Colossae who was born on the excitement of a very new believer, Epaphras.

And by the way, let me tell you, I don't care how long you've been in the faith. If you want to go birth to church after coming to faith in Jesus Christ a week after, then that's fine. We'll come up behind you and we'll disciple that church.

Right? That's what Paul is doing. Paul is like, Epaphras didn't know everything, but he knew the one thing. And based on the one thing he knew, a church was born, so now we're going to come behind Epaphras and help build on that foundation, which is Jesus Christ, which he has laid.

So we don't need to have to tell them, well, take your time and you need to make sure you go through all the Bible colleges. I'm not rebuking them, okay? I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that sometimes in all of our formal education, we fan down the flames which God has put into the heart to begin with.

[26 : 51] So sometimes just take that heart and run with it and we'll come behind you as the church and help disciple behind you because he says, I want you to know what it is you believe. He says the first purpose I'm writing is that you will be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

We need to understand what we believe. That's essential. The reason I encourage every year individuals to go through the Bible and to read the Bible is because only through getting into the word will we really know what we believe according to the word.

It is one thing to believe something according to someone else's opinion. It's a whole other thing to live your life according to what you believe based on the word of God. Because I have, I'm just speaking for me personally.

For a long time, I would live out my faith based on what others had told me about Jesus Christ. And that's fine. But when I began to live out my faith based on what the word of God proclaimed of Jesus Christ, that makes a big difference.

I'm a lot more willing to take risk based on what the word teaches me based on what anybody else has ever told me. I can encourage you and I can lead you and I can encourage you to take risk and do all these things and that's fine.

[27 : 57] Some of you would take them, some of you won't. But when you feel the prompting and the pushing and the prodding of the word of God telling you to do it, then you will do it because you'll know that your understanding, your wisdom is no longer based on the wisdom of man, but it's based on the wisdom of God.

So the first purpose of his writing was to fill them with knowledge. Verse 10 tells us of the second purpose. And we'll stop right there.

We'll get to joyously in just a minute. So here's the second purpose. He wants them, first of all, to know, but he also wants them to do. It is not enough just to have a proper understanding. We need to have a proper understanding with an appropriate living.

This is the application of it, right? He says, I'm going to take the first couple of chapters and teach you what it is you should know. And then we'll take the last two chapters and I will tell you what it is you should do. Because based on what you understand, you should have a life transformation in how you live so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

You know why doctrine is so important? You know why what you believe about Jesus Christ and what you believe the Bible teaches you is so important? It's because if you do not know the right thing, you will never live the right way.

[29 : 16] Let's go ahead and say that if we do not know the truth, we will never live truthfully. And all it takes is a very little deviation from the truth to get the trajectory of our life, of how we live and

how we behave completely off course.

He says, I want you to know accurately so that you can walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects. Bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. We ought to be fruit bearers. As a matter of fact, Jesus says that if we don't bear fruit, then the Father is going to come along and cut us off. Right? That if we abide in Him and He abides in us, then we will bear much fruit.

So we need to know accurately so that we can live properly. So Paul writes that they may have an understanding, but Paul also writes that they may have a life application of living. How it is that they should live.

And this is how we should approach the Bible. Lord, what is it that we should know? And then what is it that we should do? I hope that every time we sit under the ministry of the Word, whether that be as individuals listening to it, or as it coming together as a corporate body, listening to it in the sermon format, or if you're surrounding yourself through, if you read devotionals, or if you're reading the Word, or if you're listening to other sermons outside of this, I hope that every time we come to it, it's not, Lord, just give me a bunch of information.

[30 : 38] But Lord, it is give me some information so that I can go do something based on that information. Anybody that's ever been connected to sports knows this, that if you as a coach would instruct, I'll give this real quick story one time.

Thanks to a gentleman in our congregation, I'm not going to point any fingers, and his daughter, I'm back into coaching junior pro basketball. And since I've got this glorious group of little boys now, the last time I used to coach was little girls, and boys are so different than girls.

I used to coach K-League girls and the young girls when Kali was growing up. And boys, they kind of want to run through walls all the time. Girls are very easily distracted. And I'll never forget one of the first years I was coaching, if not the first year I was coaching, I had this little group of girls, and we were kindergarten through third grade, and we were in this game.

And we had an opportunity to win this game at the end. And I might have told you this before. And we were playing a team that was never beaten. I thought, we may win, right? I mean, I was still pretty competitive at this time. I thought that, you know, we really could do something.

So I called a timeout, and we were taking the ball inbounds under our goal. And we were down by, like, one. I'm like, we're going to win this game. So I had a girl that I was going to have take the shot.

[31 : 48] Everybody knew, everybody in the gym knew who was going to take my shot. If you don't know, at that time I had Brooke Sutterth on my ball game, okay, in the ball team. She was, I got that inherited. That was pretty good.

She was a pretty good player even at that age. So I was like, all right, so here we go. Brooke's not going to take the shot. The girl throwing the ball inbounds is going to step inbounds and take the shot, because everybody's going to go to Brooke. So I was like, Brooke, you catch the ball, give it right back to her.

She'll be right under the goal. As I'm drawing up this plan, I realize that the one that I'm depending on taking the last shot was sitting there with her hand in my pocket. She was going, Coach, what is this in your pocket? And I was like, I'm not going to win.

She's not paying any attention. I was like, those are my keys. Leave them alone. So I said, forget it. Y'all just get out there. Sure enough, she threw the ball in, just stood there, never went inbounds, because I don't care how much instruction I gave, she wasn't paying attention.

And I'm not going to tell her name, because some of you would know her name, but she had no idea whatsoever. Because, see, this is one thing we know, that if all we do is put out information and we never see it lived out in practice, it really doesn't matter.

[32 : 48] And Paul says, I want you to know things so that you can do the right things. And this is what his purpose in writing is. Now, let's go to this fourth and final thing, and we'll get to it very quickly, because this is the good news, because Paul is putting them here.

He's not only correcting a problem, and he's not only writing to them for a purpose. He wants to remind them of the position that they enjoy. Look at the position we enjoy in Christ. Christ is sufficient, and he is supreme.

And look at the position as believers we enjoy. And we need this word. I needed this word today, and we need this word, because this is who we are in Christ. This is the position we stand in, even

in the midst of our problems, even in the midst of our failures, even in the midst of the messed up society which we live in.

Here is the position, because he says at the end of verse 11, joyously, joyously goes into verse 12, joyously giving thanks. This is why we should rejoice in Jesus Christ, no matter our circumstances. We rejoice because of the position he has put us in. And look at the position, joyously giving thanks to the Father. First of all, who has qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light?

[33 : 54] We are first and foremost qualified. Listen, in Jesus Christ, I am qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. And that light is a capital L, right? Because he is the light, which means in Jesus Christ, I am now qualified to share in his inheritance.

And much like our sister shared earlier, I've read the back of the book, and he inherits everything. And based upon Jesus Christ, I have been qualified to share in that inheritance. And if you remember the book of Revelations, we were going through the letters of seven churches. He says that we get to sit with him on his throne, and he is sitting on the throne of God. What a privilege that is. So first of all, we have the position of being qualified. For he rescued us from the domain of darkness.

We have been rescued. In Jesus Christ, we are rescued from the domain of darkness. I don't know if you understand it or not, But apart from Jesus Christ, you are living in the domain of darkness. His is the realm of light. But apart from him, you are in the domain of Satan, which is darkness. You are either of the dark or of the light. You cannot be anywhere in between. Jesus says you have either one of two masters.

[34 : 58] Either he is your master or Satan is your master. And in Jesus Christ, we have been rescued. Because no one leaves the domain of darkness on their own. So we rejoice and give thanks because of the rescue that has come to us from the domain of darkness.

And we have not only been rescued. Sunday night crowd, you know this. In the book of Exodus, right? God had a purpose. He was going to take them out of Egypt. He was going to rescue them from the domain of darkness.

To do what? To bring them into the promised land. God never delivers you from something just to deliver you. He delivers you to bring you to something. Understand that. He didn't just set you free so that you could be free.

He sets you free to bring you somewhere else. And you have been rescued from the domain of darkness. And you have been transferred into the kingdom of his beloved son. He has taken you out of the realm of Satan.

And he has put you into the realm of Jesus Christ. In Christ, we have the position of being transferred. Not all transfers are good, but that transfer is great. Right? We have been promoted.

[35 : 57] We have been rescued and called out of Satan's realm. And placed into Jesus' realm. In whom we have the redemption. Here is the position of being redeemed. We have been blood bought, my friend.

We have been put on the auction block of sin. And in Jesus Christ, we have been redeemed. I hope you notice that all of these positions, none of them have anything to do with what we have done. It is Jesus Christ who is sufficient and supreme and who has done all of it for us.

We have been redeemed. And look at how it is. And the forgiveness of sins. Friend, we have been forgiven. In Jesus Christ, we have been qualified.

We have been rescued. We have been transferred. We have been redeemed. And we have been forgiven. What else do we need? Paul's answer to that is nothing.

Nothing. So we don't need to add anything to Jesus. And we don't need to wonder if there's anything greater than Jesus. Because He is sufficient.

[37 : 00] And He is supreme. And the position we enjoy because of Him is a greater position than anything this world could ever offer us. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you so much for this day.

God, what a privilege it is to have the opportunity to come together and to open up the Word of God at the beginning of a new year. Lord, I pray as we have done so and we have read it and studied it, Lord, that it would begin to grasp our hearts and minds.

Lord, that it would motivate us to live lives of perfect and complete obedience. Lord, that this would be a year of doing. Lord, for your glory and for yours alone. Lord, we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

[39 : 06] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 36] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[44 : 06] Thank you.

Thank you.