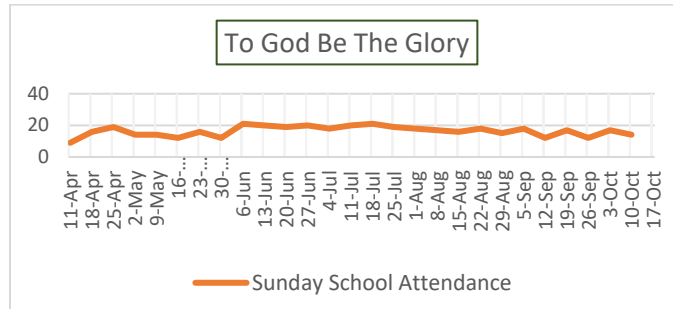


Last week's Sunday School attendance = 14



Introduction

This week we begin a new series of lessons from the book of Colossians with the lesson titled “The Gospel’s Power.” Like Philipians we just studied, Paul also wrote this letter to the church at Colossae while he was in prison. Paul addresses false teaching, syncretism (a blending of a variety of religious ideas) and an early form of Gnosticism, that had entered the church which he called “*philosophy and vain (empty) deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*” (2:8) having “*a show (appearance) of wisdom*” (2:23). Paul emphasizes the supreme deity and sufficiency of Jesus Christ, “*the image of the invisible God*” (1:15) and what He did for our salvation in forgiving our sins and reconciling us to God, “*having made peace through the blood of his cross*” (1:20). After covering what Jesus has done for us (1:1 – 2:23) Paul turns his attention to what Christians should do (3:1 – 4:18).

Colossae

Colossae was a city in the territory of Phrygia in Asia Minor (southwestern Turkey) located in the Lycus River Valley. Nearby were the cities of Hierapolis and Laodicea which were more prominent. It was about 100 miles due east of Ephesus, where Paul ministered more than two years “*so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 19:10), although the Bible does not record that Paul actually visited Colossae. The church likely came to Jesus through the leadership of Paul’s friends such as Epaphras (Col 1:7, 4:12), Archippus (Col 4:17, Philemon 2), Philemon and Onesimus (Col 4:9) who were converts from Paul’s missionary travels.

Opening Greetings and Thanksgiving – Colossians 1:1-8

¹*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus (Timothy) our brother,*
This letter is from Paul, chosen by God to be an apostle of Jesus, and Timothy his close companion.

²*To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Sent to the church at Colossae, opening with the greeting/blessing of God’s grace and peace.

³*We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*

Paul lets them know they are always in his prayers with thanksgiving to God for what was done through Jesus, and for what He is accomplishing in the lives of these believers.

⁴Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, Because he had heard of their faith in Jesus and the evidence of love within the church.

⁵For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

Verses 4 and 5 list the three primary graces in our Christian lives: faith, hope, and love. Upon accepting the gospel, the word of truth, Christians from the churches of the 1st century until today look forward to the eternal, blessed hope (Titus 2:13) and joys of heaven.

⁶Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

As the Good News of the gospel of Jesus Christ goes forth and people understand God's great gift of grace and forgiveness, it continues to change lives and result in fruit for the Kingdom of God. God's word should lead to transformed lives; no longer serving self, but serving God.

⁷As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

Epaphras was a preacher who helped spread the gospel to his fellow Colossian citizens. He visited Paul in prison and gave him a generally favorable report about the church in Colossae, but also told him about the false teachings which motivated Paul to write this letter.

⁸Who also declared unto us (told us of) your love in the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit enables us to show true Christian love as “we are taught of God to love one another” (1 Thessalonians 4:9).

Conclusion

In our world today false teachers inject elements of popular culture, other religions, and secular philosophy into the church, generally blending in ideas of their own liking and ignoring God's truth found in the Bible. This book reminds us that Jesus alone is sufficient for our salvation and every need “*for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power*” (2:9-10). Salvation is only available through faith in Jesus, only through Him can we find power to live and grow spiritually, and only through Him will it be possible for us to live forever in the presence of God.

*⁶As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk (live your life) ye in him: ⁷Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding (overflowing) therein with thanksgiving. **Colossians 2:6-7***

Please join us in-person for 10:00 am Sunday School this week as we study God's word together from Colossians 1:9–23.