

The Iron Men of Fellowship of Champions

Colossians 1:3-4

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18-Feb-2023

Opening Prayer

Colossians 1:3 (NOTES)

- "We give thanks to God" - Paul attributes the virtues and graces of the church at Colossae to God, something denied by the Gnostics, who leaned more toward the deist view that God was not actively participating in the world.
 - Deism holds that God created and left the creation to its own devices.
 - God's non-moral attribute, "immanence," refers to His presence within and active participation in the universe. God not only spoke it into being, He also, by the word of His power, causes the universe to hold together and to continue to exist moment by moment. And He is utterly active in the universe at all times.
 - Immanence stands in contradistinction to "transcendence" - that God is wholly separate, distinct from, and outside of the time/space domain of the universe).
 - Heb 1:3 "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power."
 - Col 1:17 "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."
- Discussion:
 - What are some examples of God's immanence, beyond His holding the universe together? His responses to prayer, conversion of the elect, activity and ministrations of angels, etc.
 - What are some examples of His transcendence? Prophecy, Scripture, Creator vs. creature, etc.
- "God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" - Paul, in one phrase clarifies three important points for the Gnostic ear:
 - The God to whom they pray is also the Father of Jesus.
 - Jesus is the Christ.
 - Christ is deity.
- God the Father, God the Son (Christ) are inextricable as one godhead. There is no possibility of the reality of the Gnostic doctrine of aeons. Jesus was not a lower demigod that emanated from pure deity.

- Joh 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.
- Col 2:9 "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form."
- John 10:30 "I and the Father are one."
- "praying always for you [vs. 5 - since we heard of your faith in Christ]" Paul, never having visited Colossae, but having heard of their faith in Christ (their conversions), has added them to his prayer burden.
- Is praying for spiritual lives of others a regular part of your prayer life? Do you pray for the spiritual growth of new converts, or the spiritual maturity of the believers in your life? We are commanded to do so.
 - Eph 6:18 With all prayer and petition always pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.
- Is there anyone for whom you are devoting yourself to prayer for conversion?
- Perhaps a fair application might be for us as individual members of Fellowship to pray for the children of the Honduran orphanage we support. We ought to be praying for those kids, by name - for their salvation, their spiritual maturity and growth in Christ, their service in the body, etc. There are just over a dozen. Paul sensed a spiritual burden for the church at Colossae. Shouldn't we sense a similar burden for those over whom we have accepted some spiritual responsibility? After all, my first pastor once said, "Winning a person to Christ is just the mop up operation after a successful prayer campaign." If we love those kids, we ought to pray for their salvation and growth, just like we do for our own.

Colossians 1:4 (NOTES)

- "since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus" - Their conversions.
- "the love which you have for all the saints" - Love (agape - the unmerited love of choice with which God loves us) for the body of Christ is both a commandment and a mark of true salvation. Conversely, the absence of agape love reveals an unregenerate heart. This does not regard "Storge" (familial), "Eros" (romantic), or "Phileo" (brotherly) forms of love (Gr.).
 - Joh 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
 - 1Jo 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

- 1Jo 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 1Jo 4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- 1Jo 4:16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
- 1Jo 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.
- Moreover, hatred for the body of Christ is proof of hatred of Christ.
 - John 15:18-23 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before [it hated] you. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. "He who hates Me hates My Father also.
 - 1Jo 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.
- "faith ... love" - And "hope" in the next verse (vs. 5). We often see these three grouped and juxtaposed in the epistles (1Co 13:13, Heb 10:23-25). Paul declared the greatest of them to be "love."
- **Discussion:**
 - Why do you suppose love is superior to hope in God, and even faith in God? God isn't hope or faith, but He is love. Love is an attribute of God's ontology (nature of His being). The greatest commandment is not faith or hope, but to love God and our neighbors. Faith and hope are gifts from God. Love is volitional. De 6:5, Lev 19:18, Matt 22:34-40
 - Who is referred to as "all the saints"? All born-again believers; those that make up the Church; the Body of Christ. Saints are not super Christians, ones who performed miracles, or experienced stigmata. Just ordinary believers. Greek word, *hagios* - saint, holy, sanctify.

Application Discussion

Closing Prayer

Small Groups

- Discuss current Scripture reading assignment.
- Prayer:
 - Anything praiseworthy.
 - Areas of accountability.
 - Other prayer requests.