From Paul to the Church at Colossea

STUDY 1 Welcome to Colossians! – The Gospel is Spreading

\*1 read Colossians 1:1-14

\*2 what does Paul mean by ‘holy & faithful’ (v2)? Can all Christian people be described in this way?

\*3 how do God’s ‘grace & peace’ (v2) affect you; your priorities & lifestyle?

\*4 what is Christian ‘hope’ (v5)? Look at Hebrews 11:1 & 1 Peter 1:3-5. How do they inform our understanding of ‘hope’?

\*5 do we show a ‘love for all the saints’ (v4)....at St Paul’s Tervuren; within the Church in Belgium; amongst different denominations; with the World-wide Church; with our persecuted brothers & sisters in Christ?

\*6 what do we know about Epaphras (v7-8)? See also Colossians 4:11b-13 & Philemon 23.

\*7 why does Paul write ‘for this reason’ (v9)?

\*8 what is Paul praying for the Christ-followers at Colossea?

\*9 do you find the dominion-kingdom images in v12-13 helpful? If so, why? If not, what questions do you have about it?

STUDY 2 In Praise of Jesus Christ

\*1 read Colossians 1:15-23

\*2 what does it mean to be ‘the image of the invisible God’ (v15)?

\*3 why does Paul describe him as the ‘firstborn of all creation’ (v15)? What does this mean?

\*4 ‘all things were created by him and for him’ (v16b). Does this mean that God also made *bad things* – machine guns; IS; persecution; illness & depression?

\*5 Paul tells us that Christ ‘is the head of his body, the church’ (v18a)...what does that mean for us today? Read Ephesians 2:19-22. Does this add to our understanding of what this means?

\*6 what does Paul mean by ‘the firstborn from the dead’ (v18b)?

\*7 try and explain v19-20 in your own words.

\*8 what response are we called to give?

\*9 have you noticed that Paul writes that the Gospel is proclaimed to ‘every creature under heaven’ (v23)? Does this mean more than just to human beings? So, what is Paul’s meaning in using this phrase?

STUDY 3 Perfect in Christ

\*1 read Colossians 1:24-2:5

\*2 why does Paul ‘rejoice’ in suffering (v24)? What type of ‘suffering’ does he refer to?

\*3 is all suffering something to rejoice in because it makes us ‘better people’? Being honest, would you write about ‘rejoicing’ in suffering for Christ?

\*4 in v26 what is the ‘mystery that has now been disclosed to the saints’?

\*5 is ‘glory’ v27 only about our heavenly life and being?

\*6 what concrete example can you give of maturing (becoming perfect, NIV) in Christ (v28) in the past couple of years? How do you expect to mature as a Christ-follower over the next couple of years?

\*7 how can we help the church to ‘be encouraged in heart and united in love’ (v2)?

\*8 is ‘orderly’ a Christian virtue (v5)? Isn’t it just conforming to what everyone else does?

\*9 what question would you ask St Paul about this passage if you could?

STUDY 4 Fulness in Christ

\*1 read Colossians 2:6-19

\*2 read it through again and choose your ‘favourite’ verse!

\*3 go round the group sharing the verse that you have chosen.....why did you go for this one? Did you like it? Did you understand it? Did it leave you with questions? Are you looking for explanations?

\*4 try and discuss the importance and nature of philosophy; human tradition; power & authority; circumcision. To whom are these important in our world today? As a Christ-follower do you view these as important? If so, why?

\*5 if ‘the reality, however, is found in Christ’ (v17) why do we cling so much to the things of this world?

\*6 following on from v16........why do Christians spend so much time judging other Christians?

STUDY 5 Dying & Rising with Christ

\*1 read Colossians 2:20-3:11

\*2 what does v20 mean about ‘dying with Christ to the basic principles of this world’?

\*3 would you agree that the best way to avoid ‘sensual indulgence’ v23 is by not ‘handling, tasting or touching’ v21? Can you give some examples that have affected you or other people?

\*4 what does v1 mean about being ‘raised with Christ’?

\*5 how is this (dying & rising) reflected in the act of Christian baptism?

\*6 do you feel your ‘earthly nature’ v5 affects how you live for Christ? If so, how does it manifest itself in your daily life?

\*7 do you find v7 & 8 easy or hard to put into practise? If so, why?

\*8 what link can you see between v10 & v11? Why does Paul now use this terminology? What is the connection with what he has just written?

STUDY 6 Love, Peace & Thanksgiving

\*1 read Colossians 3:12-17

\*2 what a lovely piece of Scripture! What does it mean to you personally that you are ‘chosen & dearly loved’ 3:12? Do you (truly) believe this? What prevents you living as one who is ‘chosen & dearly loved’?

\*3 why do we find it so hard to ‘bear with each other’ 3:13? What do you find hard about your brothers & sisters in Christ at St Pauls? (DON’T NAME NAMES!!!! JUST SUGGEST SOME TYPICAL/ANONYMOUS THINGS THAT WE DO/DON’T DO!)

\*4 who do you need to forgive 3:13? Why don’t you? Why won’t you?

\*5 does love mean ‘never having to say you are sorry’ (1970 advert for the film ‘Love Story’)?

\*6 how can we enable the ‘word of Christ’ to ‘dwell in us richly’ 3:16? What practically can you do to make sure this happens? Please be realistic!

\*7 do you watch television, cook, go to work, come to church, engage in your hobbies, deal with your family...’all in the name of the Lord Jesus’ 3:17? How does it affect how you approach these things (& others) in your daily life?

STUDY 7 The Christian Household

\*1 read Colossians 3:18-4:1, Ephesians 5:21 & Galatians 3:28

\*2 in 2015, what does the word ‘submit’ (v18) bring to mind for you? In what contexts do you usually make use of it?

\*3 in your daily life how would you define the words ‘love’ (v19) and ‘obey’ (v20 & 22)? What does it mean not ‘to embitter’ (v21)? Do you find it easy or hard to live by these words/principles?

\*4 what do you understand as providing ‘with what is right and fair’ (v1)? Was that for 2,000 years ago only or how does it work out today?

\*5 now, read Colossians 3:15-4:6

\*6 what difference does it make to the context of 3:18-4:1 within this wider passage of Scripture?

\*7 where does the ‘Lord’ (‘a Master’ v1)) fit in all this? What difference does it make in our relationships if we believe God is there with us in it – ie the 3rd party in our dealing with our spouse, child or work-colleague?

\*8 verses 3:17 & 3:23 are very similar. What do they tell us about submitting to one another and to God?

\*9 how do you think we could help this passage to ‘come alive’ and ‘be more real’ for us today at St Paul’s Tervuren?

STUDY 8 Fellowship & Prayer

\*1 read Colossians 4:2-18

\*2 in v2-6 how often does Paul mention prayer? Why are Christians today so poor at heeding these words? Why do we find prayer so difficult?

\*3 how could you ‘make your conversation be always full of grace’ (v6)? Does it matter that we do?

\*4 Paul mentions various people by name in v7-17. What do you know about them? How important are our names and therefore the names we choose for our children?

\*5 are you surprised that there are others called Jesus (here, Justus)....not just The Christ?

\*6 from this passage, what impression do you have of Paul’s mission and the life of the church in Colossea? What can we learn for our church today from it?

\*7 as we come to the end of our study on Colossians, what is your most significant ‘take-home’, the main thing you will try to put into practice?

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