Colossians 4 Study October 4th 2026

Today ends the series on Colossians.

Colossians is like ascending, summiting and then descending from a high peak.

- Ascending – we grapple with the stature, the sufficiency and the supremacy of Christ – against heresies.
- The summit – 3:1-4 ***'Therefore, since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above…'***
- Descending – The implications – put off, put on and live out – letting the Christ life shine from us

Part 1. 4:2-6. Talking to God about people and talking to people about God

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Prayer is qualified in this passage:

- Watchful (4:2)
  - Why should prayer be 'watchful'? What could this mean?
  - One commentator states ***'"watchfulness" here alludes to the salvation-historical situation of believers, "raised with Christ" already, yet awaiting the day when we will "appear with him in glory." (Douglas J. Moo, The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon, p 321.)***
- Thankful (4:2)
  - Are we characterised by thankfulness and gratitude? Why / why not?
  - What might 3:1-4 have to do with gratitude and thankfulness?
  - Gratitude is possessed by what sorts of people?
- Gospel and evangelism focused (4:3-4). Are we praying for Alpha? Could we pray for Alpha?
- Accompanied by action (4:5). Why do God's people find it easier to talk to God about people than to talk to people about God? Who struggled to invite somebody to Alpha?

Conversation is also qualified in this passage (4:6):

- Full of grace – what does 'grace' mean?
- Seasoned with salt – what effect did/does salt have on food?
- When is it appropriate to initiate a faith-conversation?
- When is it appropriate to wait for an opportunity to respond rather than initiate?
- How might our conversations with each other point people towards (or away from) Jesus? (John 13:35
- Informed and appropriate to provide answers

Guide for positive conversations

Always ask:	We could easily add:
● Is it true? ● Is it kind and honouring? ● Is it necessary and helpful? ● Will my comment de-escalate tensions?	● Is it about their good or about my need? ● Might it be better expressed as a question? ● Is it the right setting? ● Will my comment further the gospel?

Part 2. 4:7-9. Confronting Cultural Conventions

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant[a] in the Lord. 8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our[b] circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 9 He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

- Onesimus was a slave who had run away. This was punishable by imprisonment or maybe death.
- Paul wrote another letter to Philemon that made its way into the Bible. In this letter Paul basically says 'Roman law says he is your property, but God says he is your brother. Which way are you going to land with this? And by the way I have an opinion on this and you owe me big time!'
- Does Paul actually take a stand against slavery at a political level?
- How does Paul go about confronting the norms of culture?
- The gospel confronts the conventions of culture. Beware of assuming cultural norms are biblically approved.
- An inconvenient truth might be that ***we struggle to share our faith meaningfully with unbelievers because our outlook on life is essentially the same as theirs, we have little that makes us distinctive and so we find we have nothing of value to say.***
- Consider the hypothetical situation below.

Illustration from Glowing Souls Baptist Church

- **There were two people who attended Glowing Souls Baptist Church. One was caught in an immoral sexual relationship. The second was a wealthy person who had accumulated way more money and possessions than were required.**

- How would the church deal with each situation?
- Would the immorality of one be treated as less serious or more serious than the greed of the other?

Part 3. 4:10-18. A tale of two trajectories

[10] My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) ….. [14] Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. [15] Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

Mark and Demas - a tale of two trajectories

- Read about mark's performance on mission in Acts 15
- What does Colossians 4 suggest about Mark's standing?
- Now look at Paul's letter to Timothy later on in his life. ***2 Timothy 4:9-11. 'Do your best to come to me quickly, [10] for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. [11] Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.'***
- Not only so but mark goes on to write the first gospel and become a martyr.
- Discuss how two people can have such different trajectories in their discipleship? What might cause these different outcomes?

The overall trajectory of each life is not the result of a few big decisions but of millions or micro-moments where every thought is brought into subjection to obedience to Christ, or not.

Summary of Colossians

Colossians is like a mountain climb. The ascent involves a growing appreciation for who God is, who Christ is, what it means to be in Christ, and an awareness of the various wrong routes that would lead us astray, off track. The summit is 3:1-4.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [2] Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. [3] For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

The questions for us to ponder. How might our time in Colossians influence:

- Our prayer life?

- Our conversations?
- Our micro-moment decisions?
- What we put off, put on, and live out?
- Our overall trajectory as individuals?
- Our overall trajectory as Taupo Baptist?