

- a) You must continue to cling to Christ by faith.

**Walter Marshall, *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*:** *“True saving faith, by its very nature, is especially designed to receive Christ and His salvation, and to unite your soul to Him. Faith also is designed to give your soul a new, holy nature, which results in a holy life as you live in union with Christ. God has made the parts of your body, such as your hands and feet, to fulfill specific functions. When you look at them, you can tell what they are designed to do. In the same way, God has made faith for a very specific purpose: to receive Christ, and to walk in Him for sanctification. You must understand what a precious gift faith is! I want you to see with your “eyes” how faith has been given to you by God to enable you to walk in union with Christ, and thus live a holy life.”*

- b) So while you must cling to Christ by faith, even this is made complete by Him.

### LIVE THE STORY

*We must not only love the Gospel Story, we must begin to live the Gospel Story, indeed, to have the Central Character live in us.*

- Is it hard to imagine that after a decade of the Christian life for the Colossians, there was a temptation to find something to add to the Gospel in order to make life full and rich? Why or why not?
- What is Paul's medicine for the Christian needing more “fullness” in life?
- “Our lives are to revolve around Jesus Christ and this should transform people who were once dead, once complainers, once greedy, once covetous, once immoral, once angry, once slanderous, once engaging in crude jokes, even now tempted to be dissatisfied with Christ alone, are to be overflowing with gratitude in our hearts to God.” Does this describe you? Has it in the past? How does it speak to where the Gospel needs to be applied in your life?
- When Paul writes to “the holy and faithful brothers in Christ ,“ does that include you? Explain.

## Colossians: Introduction

### *Spiritual Medicine for Spiritual Health*

Jerry Cisar—October 25, 2009

Text: Colossians 1:1-2

### I. Diagnosis: Why is Paul writing this Letter?

#### A. Background

#### B. Concerns

- i. false teaching
  - a) a sense of dissatisfaction

- b) a move toward the law from the Gospel.

Stephen Neill: *“The false teachers came in with the claim that they would complete and perfect the simple and elementary faith to which the Colossians had been introduced by Paul and his friends. This is what false teachers always do. What you have is quite all right, and a good foundation for faith. Now let us just finish it off for you, and you really will be Christians.”*

- ii. Subtly drawing away from Jesus.

- a) While it claimed Christianity, it was “Christ absent.”

- b) A blending of culture with Christianity.

#### C. Paul's prescription is clear.

## II. Prescription: What is this letter about?

### A. *The Gospel*

- i. *the word of the truth, the gospel*
- ii. *the word of God*
- iii. *the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints*
- iv. *“Proclaiming Him”*
- v. *God's mystery, which is Christ.*
- vi. *The mystery of Christ...*
- vii. *The word about Christ...*

### B. What is this letter saying about the Gospel?

#### i. ***It reminds them of the sufficiency of the Gospel.***

- a) 1:19
- b) 2:9-10

#### ii. ***It points to the goal of the Gospel:*** the Central character formed in us...Christ in you. (1:27)

#### iii. ***It aims to make the Gospel operative in the life of the church.*** (3:16)

##### a) Operative in the broader mission:

- 1:29
- 1:27-28

##### b) Operative in the local mission:

- 3:16

### c) Operative in our disposition:

- 3:15
- 3:16
- 3:17

## III. Patients: Who is this letter to?

### A. “To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae!”

### B. Holy Brothers (1:21-22)

- i. *“Once you were estranged [from God], and enemies [to God] with your minds [and] with your evil deeds....”*
- ii. *“But now **he has reconciled you** by Christ's physical body through death to present you **holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation**”*

#### a) **Holy has to do with what He has done.**

#### b) **3-fold description of what He has done:**

- holy in His sight
- without blemish
- free from accusation... or, without blame.

#### b) How? By Christ's physical body through death...

### C. Faithful Brothers (1:23)

- i. There is indeed something you must do: