

# Our Place at His Place

## *Under Attack*

April 5, 2020

*Welcome to where we're learning to be sweet and salty!*



**Would people buy our faith, based on your free sample?**

Once upon a time (c. 62<sup>BC</sup>), there was a small city in ancient Turkey, with a textile industry producing a popular scarlet wool called “**Colossinium**”, made from a purple dye called “**Colossinus**”. So, they named the little city, **Colossae**, and it became very wealthy – attracting a diverse mix of cultures and spiritual beliefs.



It's people were known as **Colossians**; and many became Christians. *But*, they were bombarded with an onslaught of spiritual ideologies, and began to buy into the notion of combining religions views. Their Christian ranks were quickly shot down, picked off, and driven back by a barrage of high sounding nonsense and self-centered beliefs.



And then they were gone. The rich little textile city was destroyed by an earthquake about 62<sup>AD</sup>. And, from 60-62<sup>AD</sup>, as you might recall, the Apostle Paul was confined to his house in Rome. That's where, **just before the quake, a faithful minister, named Epaphras, (Col 1:7) came to Paul from Colossae** to report the spiritual warfare, and to send back some reinforcement for their faith.



Thus, **Paul's letter to the embattled believers in Colossae**, whose ranks were being blown away by every wind of doctrine.



To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful ... we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people ... You learned [the true Gospel and God's grace] from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant ... We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will ... so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord – Colossians 1:2-10 NIV

This letter made its way to Colossae in its final days. And Paul's main point is this:

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy ... – Colossians 2:8a NIV

There were too many distortions to debate or debunk each one individually; so, Paul emphasizes the one common denominator: **All heresies diminish the supremacy of Christ.**

And, since the best defense is a good offense; Paul arms the Colossians with increased understanding of *what Jesus is*.

He is the image of the invisible God ... all things were created by him and for him. ... God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him ... For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form ... – Colossians 1:15, 16, 19; 2:9 NIV

The only way to stand firm and stay true, and not be taken captive by talk-show philosophies, pseudo spirituality, and secular self-helpers, is to know exactly who Jesus is and what *only He* can offer.

... redemption, **[and]** the forgiveness of sins. – Colossians 1:14 NIV

There's a simple test to discern what Paul calls "high sounding nonsense": (Col 2:8 TLB)

**Does it affirm God's fullness in Jesus, *and* redemption and forgiveness by His blood?**

**It's an all-or-nothing deal.**

Not much middle ground.

**Take it or leave it. But, *don't* mix and match it.**

**If Christ isn't everything, He's nothing.**

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed **[It's a process, like the faith-muscle that we talked about last week, that we work out so He can work in (Phil 2:12-13)]** in knowledge in the image of its Creator. – Colossians 3:8-10 NIV



Imagine soldiers changing into clean uniforms; but, **instead of removing their muddy clothes, they just try to force their new ones over the old.** This is what we do when we try to "walk in faith" without letting Jesus strip away our *unsuitables*.



Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and ... Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love ... Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, – Colossians 3:12-15 NIV

This is the appealing apparel we'll naturally begin donning when the supremacy of Christ begins *dawning on* us and *ruling in* us.

When my son was small he was playing in the backyard with a stick. We took it away and warned him of the danger. A little later, he came in the house with a bleeding scrape on his neck. He'd found another stick. Went down the slide with it. The stick stuck and stopped, while he flew forward!

Some believers fear that God wants us to give up all our fun stuff; when, **He just wants to keep us from wounding ourselves.**

**True faith isn't a series of "giving ups"; it's a sequence of "growing ups".**

Maturing. Conquering. Taking ground.

Paul wants us grounded in Christ and growing in our convictions.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted **[grounded]** and built up **[growing]** in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. – Colossians 2:6-7 NIV

**And, this grounding and growing comes from knowing His Word.** And we finally have the time! And no excuse. So we can't deceive ourselves, thinking: "If I had more time." 'Cause, you *do!*

So, if you're a pretend Christian – a mix-and-match of whatever from wherever – stop pretending. You're only fooling yourself.

**Accept it, embrace it, and live according to it ... or don't.**

**Either is far better than buying a lie and deceiving yourself.**

The closer we come to Jesus, the more we lose interest in playing with things that can only end in pain for *us* and *others*.



Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; **[How?]** make the most of every opportunity. **[How?]** Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, **[If the world is a bar, think of yourself as the pretzels]** so that you may know how to answer everyone. – Colossians 4:5-6 NIV



Because no one refuses perfectly salted grace; it's gluten free!

**Is your speech full of grace?** "Usually ... except when I'm upset or angry." ***That's the only time it's actually grace.***



**Grace is only grace when you don't want to give it.**

And, *that* requires a selfless compassion; and *that* requires the supremacy of Christ firmly ruling from deep within.



Now, salt is famous for four things that it does really well:

**It makes things tastier.**

**It makes folks thirstier.**

**It melts what's frozen.**



**And it preserves pickles.** And olives, and meat, and everything.

In order for our faith to have the same effect, especially while we're confined in close quarters with others, keep in mind:

**A little salt goes a long way.**

**And, a little of *you* does *too*.**

Faith isn't meant to be pushed on, or shoved down, anyone.

**Salt can also raise blood pressure.**

It's meant to be set out for people to sample as they consider their options for quenching their deepest, driest, thirst. We don't tell others what's wrong with *them*; we share what's up with *us*, and how Jesus quenches our *thirst* and causes us to *grow*.

**A balanced believer is sweet *and* salty.**

Everyone you know has a sweet tooth for grace and a profound craving for the salt of truth.



And, you have your own unique blend. Like Chex Mix. Ever notice how everyone's Chex Mix tastes a little different, even though we follow the same basic recipe on the box?

**Don't compare yourself to someone else's bowl.**

**Put your own mix out there with conviction and confidence.**

Epaphras stayed in Rome to assist Paul, but his heart remained back home with his fellow Christian soldiers marching onward, in God's Word, while under attack and being bombarded.

In Paul's closing, he says:

Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that **you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.** – Colossians 4:12 NIV

And, that's *my* prayer for *you* as well.