

JESUS + NOTHING = EVERYTHING

Week 1: Christ Alone

Key Text: Colossians 1:1-14

OPEN

Paul a minister of the gospel is bound in chains while he writes this letter to the Colossians believers, a people he has never met, whose church he has never visited, to commend them on their faith in Jesus. Paul may be bound in chains but the gospel is breaking free and spreading beyond and independently of Paul himself. Paul does not need to have met these believers to have a relationship. He address them as fellow believers who like him are "In Christ." Paul's relationship with the gospel is also shared with this community. He understands that it is a gospel that flows *from* Christ, is accomplished *through* Christ, and is *for the sake of Christ* and his mission.

REFLECT

- Paul introduces his title as an apostle of Christ Jesus. This is not a statement of pride but of humility. He is a *servant* of Christ by the will of God (1:1) who addresses fellow brothers and sisters (1:2). How important is humility in our witness of the gospel? When has pride become a barrier in sharing God's love with others?
- Paul opens his letter commending these believers for their faith (1:3-8). How would you describe this church based on Paul's encouragement? What stands out the most to you?
- Next Paul pray for the church (1:9-14). What does he pray for? How does being filled with spiritual gifts from God enable us to "live a life worthy of the Lord" (1:10)?

DISCUSS

- Unlike other churches that Paul planted or visited, Colossae was not one of them. The ministry of the gospel has moved beyond Paul. When you are not directly involved, how are you at equipping and encouraging others in their life and ministry? How could you be more intentional in this?
- Paul understands that the gospel does not depend on him but Christ alone. It flows *from* Christ, is accomplished *through* Christ and is for the *sake of Christ*! How is this both humbling and encouraging to you?

"Ministry, then, is not so much asking Christ to join us in our ministry as we offer him to others; ministry is participating with Christ in his ongoing ministry as he offers himself to others through us." - Stephen Seamands

- What do you think of this quote? How has Jesus worked through you reach others? How could you become more available for Jesus to reach others through you?

APPLY

- How can you pray more intentionally and effectively for the needs of believers around the world whose location may be different but whose position is still *in Christ*?
- As we live out the gospel how can we avoid the trap of *trying* to live holy lives (behaviour modification) instead of allowing the one who is holy, Jesus Christ, to live his life in and through us?
- What areas of your life do you need to allow Jesus to be more present in so that others see Christ in you?

PRAY

- Pray for more opportunities to partner with the gospel of Jesus in your community, workplace, school, or home.
- Pray for fellow brothers and sisters in Christ around the world to be filled with knowledge, wisdom, understanding, strength and endurance from the Spirit (1:9-11).