

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all God's holy people, the faith and love that spring from the hope that is kept safe for you in the heavenly places. You heard about this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. You learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and it was he who informed us of your love in the Spirit.

For this reason, since the day we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all the strength that comes from His glorious power to have perseverance and patience in all things, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation;
for in Him all things in heaven and on earth were created,
things visible and invisible,

whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—
all things have been created through Him and for Him.
He himself is before all things,
and in Him all things hold together.
He is the head of the body, the church;
He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
so that He might come to have first place in everything.
For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through Him God was pleased
to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of His cross.

And you, who were once alienated from God and opposing God in your mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before God—if indeed you continue in the faith, securely established and steadfast, without shifting away from the hope promised by the good news that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven and of which, I, Paul, have become a servant.

Now I am rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body—that is, the church—of which I became a minister by God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations but has now been revealed to those he has consecrated. To them God chose to make known among the Gentiles how great are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is He whom we proclaim, warning all people and teaching all people in all wisdom, so that we may present all people mature in Christ. For this purpose I labor, striving with all the energy with which He powerfully energizes me.

Indeed, I want you to know how hard I am contending for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. I want their hearts to be encouraged, being knit together in love, so that they may have all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding and thus, have the knowledge of God's mystery—that is, Christ Himself—in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you with fine-sounding arguments. Even though I am absent from you in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your discipline and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in Him, having been rooted and now being built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to human tradition, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him the fullness of divinity dwells bodily, and in Him you have been brought to fullness. He is the head of every ruler and authority. In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands—the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead.

And you, who were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands; setting it aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in Christ.

Therefore, do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or in the observance of a festival, a new moon, or a sabbath. These are only a shadow

of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Do not let anyone defraud you of your prize, insisting on self-abasement and the worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

If with Christ you died to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you still belonged to the world, do you submit to regulations—"Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with human commands and teachings? Such regulations have, to be sure, an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed piety, their false humility, and their severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in restraining fleshly indulgence.

If then you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are willfully disobedient, and in them you also once walked, when you were living that life. But now you must put them all aside—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have laid aside the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all, and is in all!

Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, Kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And over all these virtues, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey your earthly masters in all things, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as done for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; it is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving, praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should. Walk in wisdom around outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me; he is a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow-servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts; he is coming with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions. If he comes to you, welcome him. And Jesus, who is called Justus, greets you. These are the only ones of the circumcision among my co-workers for the Kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills. For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.

Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, 'See that you complete the task that you have received in the Lord.'

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.
Remember my chains. Grace be with you.