

# Paul's Letter to the COLOSSIANS

*My Dear Friends in Colosse:*

**T**his is from Paul, sent out by God's will and decree as a messenger of Jesus Christ, and from our brother Timothy.

<sup>2</sup>Greetings to all of you dear ones there in Colosse in Asia Minor,<sup>a</sup> who are dedicated to Christ and faithful to Him. May God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord give you peace of mind and heart and literally shower you with undeserved blessings.

<sup>3</sup>We are constantly praying and thanking the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for you,

<sup>4</sup>after hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus, and how you have shown such love toward all who are dedicated to Him.

<sup>5</sup>And your faith and love are inspired by the irrefutable hope<sup>a</sup> you have of what God is planning and keeping safe for you in Heaven, which you heard about when the truth of the Great News was first made plain to you.

<sup>6</sup>That Great News is now going out thruout the whole world, in the same way that it came to you. With great success, it's changing lives, just as it's been doing among you from the first day you heard the full truth and understood the true nature of the rich favor God has granted us.

<sup>7</sup>Our dear fellow servant, Epaphras, thru whom you learned these truths, is so faithfully working for Christ for your good.

<sup>8</sup>It was Epaphras who told us how the Holy Spirit had filled your hearts with such love.

<sup>9</sup>That's why we haven't stopped praying for you since the day we heard his good report about you. We're asking God to fill you with all the wisdom and spiritual understanding you need, so that you will know exactly how He wants you to live, and

what He wants you to do in serving Him.

<sup>10</sup>We pray this so that each of you may live a life that will be an honor to the Lord, pleasing Him in every way as you do what is right and honorable, and that you will constantly grow in an ever fuller knowledge of God.

<sup>11</sup>Then you will continually be strengthened with unlimited power, because you will be connected to God's glorious power, enabling you to patiently endure every test and trial with joy,<sup>a</sup> and to be long-suffering toward those who oppose you.

<sup>12</sup>Likewise, continually thank the Father with joy, as you think of the fact that He has made us eligible to share in the inheritance of all the marvelous things He has prepared in His Kingdom of Light for those who are truly dedicated to Him!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>13</sup>He rescued us from the gloom and darkness of Satan's power over us, and transported us into the Kingdom of the Son whom He loves so dearly.

<sup>14</sup>By means of His suffering, bleeding, and dying for us, we have been rescued from sin and its terrifying consequences. By His sacrifice, He made it possible for God to offer us forgiveness for our sins.

## *The Incomparable Christ*

<sup>15</sup>As we look at Him, we see what God is really like,<sup>a</sup> because He is like God in every way, except that God is invisible. He is God's firstborn Son, whom God has placed in authority over all creation.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>16</sup>God created all things by Him—everything in the heavens and everything on earth. This includes everything that can be seen and also everything that's invisible, such as the spirit world with its kingdoms, powers, rulers, and authorities. God created all things thru His Son and for Him.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Yes, God's Son existed before anything was cre-

---

**1:2a** Presently western Turkey.

**1:5a** The Old Testament prophesied (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 53:1-12; Micah 5:2; Psalm 22:1-21) that the Son of God would come to earth and live and die as He did, would lead a perfect and miraculous life on earth, and would rise from the dead and ascend to Heaven. All of these facts are irrefutable proofs that we can—without a doubt—depend on all that Christ has promised us.

**1:11a** Matthew 5:11-12.

**1:12a** 1 Corinthians 2:9.

**1:15a** John 14:8-10.

**1:15b** Or *He is the firstborn of all creation*. The Inspired Letters translation translates this: *Christ was born before anything was created*.

**1:16a** Referring to the Son of God, whom we know as Jesus. John 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:1-2. He is the one Lord who is Lord over all of God's creation. 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 1:10; 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16.

ated, and all things are now held together by Him.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>18</sup>He is also the Head of the vast throngs who are His followers, the Church. And just as He has seniority and superiority in time and in power, He was also the first to rise from the dead,<sup>a</sup> so that He might be first in all things.

<sup>19</sup>Because the Father took great delight in having all the fullness that He Himself is, to also be present in His Son.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>20</sup>And God chose to reconcile all things to Himself by means of His Son. This included things on earth and things in Heaven. He made peace possible by means of the blood that Christ Jesus shed in His death on the cross.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>21</sup>There was a time when you had no interest at all, nor any desire, to please God. You were actually enemies of God because of your evil thoughts

and behavior.

<sup>22</sup>But now you have been restored to friendship with Him by means of the suffering and death of Christ in His physical body. Now you can stand before God as pure and blameless in His sight as if you had never sinned—

<sup>23</sup>if you are indeed continuing in the faith, deeply rooted, unflinching, fixed in your direction, and are not allowing yourselves to be seduced<sup>a</sup> and led away from the hope<sup>b</sup> that came to you when you heard and accepted the Great News. This Great News of which I was made a messenger has now been proclaimed to everyone thruout the whole world.

***How Paul Served the Church***

<sup>24</sup>And even right now,<sup>a</sup> I'm rejoicing that it's my privilege to suffer for you. Because I am merely

**1:17a** By all known scientific laws the electrical forces in each atom should cause them to explode, but Jesus, the Creator, in some unknown way holds them together.

**1:18a** ... *to live forever*, ... Lazarus and others rose before Him, but they no doubt died again.

**1:19a** "That is, that in Him should be such dignity, authority, power, and moral excellence as to be fitted for the work of creating the world, redeeming His people, and supplying everything needful for their salvation ... This is to us a most precious truth.

"We have a Savior who is in no respect deficient in wisdom, power, and grace to redeem and save us. There is nothing necessary to be done in our salvation that He is not qualified to do; there is nothing we need to enable us to perform our duties, to meet temptation, and to bear trial, which He is not able to impart ... We may go to Him with all our troubles, weaknesses, temptations, and needs, and may be supplied from his fullness—just as, if we were thirsty, we might go to an ocean of pure water and drink."—*Barnes' Notes*.

**1:20a** "This does not mean that He had actually brought about peace by His death, but that He had laid the foundation for it; He had done that which would now make it possible for God to forgive our sins and thereby restore us to friendship with Himself." Adapted from *Barnes' Notes*.

**1:23a** ... *by false teachers teaching a false hope, by promoting an easy, soft way to Heaven; and by your own selfishness and sinful desires* ...

**1:23b** Here's another case where the condition is laid down as to what is necessary to be ultimately saved. We must *continue* believing the Great News that we have God's forgiveness and eternal life thru Jesus, and *continue* believing what He taught and

commanded. And we believe what He commanded only if we obey Him. We must persevere and give continued proof that we are indeed born again. If we do, we will be presented to God as being pure and blameless; if we don't, we won't be. See John 8:31; 10:27-29; 15:1-11; Acts 14:22; 1 John 2:24.

\* \* \*

A pastor in a large Protestant denomination was having trouble with some of his young people. They kept coming to him with such remarks as, "Pastor, it doesn't seem from this Scripture, or from this one here, that we're so eternally secure that there's no possibility that we could finally be lost."

The pastor, Rev. Shank, didn't know of anything he could give them that would fully convince them that they were indeed unconditionally, eternally secure, so he finally decided to make a thorough study of the subject and write a paper he could give his young people that would answer their questions.

In making the study, he was amazed at how many Scriptures warned of the possibility of falling from the faith and being finally lost. He finally wrote a book on the subject, entitled, *Life In The Son*. You should read that book.

Some Christian bookstores refuse to carry it, but they can order it if you insist on having it. Some ministers and others wish the book would go away and become out of print, so they give it the silent treatment and won't even tell their people about it. Many people who oppose it haven't even read it, so they don't know what they are opposing. Pastor Shank's denomination strongly opposed it when it was first published, but at this writing, at least 50 percent of their seminaries now recommend that their students read it.

\* \* \*

No book has been published refuting the infor-

doing what is still needful when I suffer for Christ in my body, for the sake of His body, which is the Church.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>25</sup> God, in carrying out His plan to use various people for various purposes, appointed me to be a servant of His to the Church. He appointed me to reveal to you His complete message.

<sup>26</sup> He appointed me to reveal the secret that's been hidden from all generations in past centuries, but which has now been revealed to those who are dedicated to Him.

<sup>27</sup> God took great pleasure in making known to you and to everyone else, that which was previously unknown—that the great magnitude of His glory can now be shared by the Gentiles too! And their hope of sharing in that glory can be received when they too invite Jesus to live within them.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>28</sup> So it's about Jesus that we preach. We warn everyone and teach everyone with all the wisdom

given us, with the aim of being able to present everyone possible to God as persons who are altogether dedicated to Christ Jesus.

<sup>29</sup> So that's my aim and goal when I work for God. And the energy I put forth is energy given me by Christ, which is working in and thru me in a powerful way.<sup>a</sup>

**2** I want you to know how much I am battling for you in prayer, and for those in Laodicea, and for the many others who haven't seen me personally.

<sup>2</sup> I'm earnestly praying that all of you will be encouraged in heart, and knit together in love. May all of you also attain the great wealth of having full assurance that you understand the mystery of what we may know about God and His plans, and what the real relationship is between the Father and Christ.

mation set forth in *Life In The Son*, for the simple reason that *the truth* is presented here, and its enemies are unable to prove it wrong. A second reason no book has been published against it is because those who oppose it don't want to give the book any publicity.

One man was so opposed to the book that he had letterheads printed with the name of the publisher of the book, and wrote a letter as if from the publisher. He sent this letter to Christian bookstores thruout the country, stating that Mr. Shank was now dead and that the book was no longer in print, and that before he died Mr. Shank had said how sorry he was that he had ever written the book. But the truth is, Mr. Shank is still very much alive at this writing, and the book is available in unlimited quantities. And he is glad, not sorry, that he wrote the book.

Any bookstore can get a copy for you, even the book department of your department store, because it's listed in *Books In Print*. Ask for *Life In the Son*, by *Robert Shank*, published by Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN 55438.

\* \* \*

The first three chapters of the book are an introduction, so you may wish to begin with Chapter four and get right into the heart of the matter. But be sure to read the introduction by Dr. William Adams of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY. It's a masterpiece.

Rev. Shank is a brave man. Like many brave men of the past and present, he was willing to put his career on the line and teach the full truth as he saw it, and leave the results with God. The same was true of Dr. Adams, who wrote the introduction. God grant that He will be able to say the same of you in that Great Day, for according to Revelation 21:8,

none who are cowardly about taking a stand for the Lord and His truth will even be there. See also Romans 11:22.

\* \* \*

Two ministers discussing the subject of eternal security were in disagreement. Finally one asked the other, "Have you read the book *Life In The Son* by *Robert Shank*?" "No," was the reply. The first minister then said, "Until you read *Life In The Son* you are not qualified to discuss the subject of eternal security." We agree.

If you are sincere about wanting the truth, be sure to get a copy of that book. But of course, if you are one who is determined to believe only what you want to believe, or are not willing to have your conclusions tested, you must be classed with all others who refuse to read anything that might turn the light on and dispel the darkness. But we want to believe better things about you. Read the book and ask God to reveal to you whether or not Rev. Shank's conclusions are true.

\* \* \*

Someone has so truly stated, "The vast majority of people have no real interest in searching for the truth. But they are searching. Their search, however, is for someone who can convince them that *what they want to believe* is the truth." And sad to say, this is also true of a great many attending church, as well as those outside of it. Are you willing to search—in all honesty? Are you willing to accept the truth, whatever it turns out to be?

**1:24a** ... *in jail here in Rome* ...

**1:24b** Not the church building, but all who are a part of the assembly of God's people.

**1:27a** ... *as their Lord and Savior*.

**1:29a** Luke 11:13; 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-21.

<sup>3</sup>Because all the wisdom and knowledge about God's plans are hidden treasures that are in the treasure house that is Christ.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup>I say this in order to keep you from being deceived and led away from the truth by someone coming to you with smooth, logical-sounding, false arguments.

<sup>5</sup>Because even though I'm not with you in person, I so often think about you. And I'm so glad to hear that you are living as you should, and that your faith in Christ is so resolute and strong.

***Real Life Is to be Found in Christ!***

<sup>6</sup>Always remember that in the same way that you earnestly accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must now continue to live as Christ would have you live.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>7</sup>With your roots deeply and firmly rooted in Christ, allow Him now to build you up by continuing to strengthen and establish you in the faith you were taught.<sup>a</sup> Then, as you think about all that God has done for you and promised you,<sup>b</sup> joyfully overflow in your thanksgiving to Him.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Make sure you don't allow anyone to rob and plunder you of your pure faith and hope thru the ideas and conclusions of their hollow and deceptive reasonings. Their arguments may sound ever so reasonable, but they are based on man's feeble and worldly-wise conclusions, not on the teachings of truth that Christ brought us from God.

<sup>9</sup>Because in Christ the totality of all that God is in the fullness of His divine nature<sup>a</sup> exists in a body that can be seen.

<sup>10</sup>Thru Him you have been purified and forgiven, and have no need of help from any other spiritual

powers, because He is the Head over every power and authority.

<sup>11</sup>At the time you acknowledged Christ to be your Lord and Savior, you were also circumcised—not by human hands, but by Christ, when He cut away the chains and freed you from sin's power of rule over your life.

<sup>12</sup>By the picture that baptism portrays, you were symbolically buried with Christ. Then, in that same baptism, you were raised again, showing that by your faith in the fact that Christ was raised from the dead by God's power, you too have now been raised up by God to live a new life.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>13</sup>So when you were morally and spiritually dead in your sins, (still stupefied by the sinful cravings of your flesh), God reached down and made you alive, and gave you a new life together with Christ.

<sup>14</sup>After forgiving our sins, He blotted out the charges against us for not obeying the handwritten Laws and regulations He had formerly given Moses, which had been oppressive and burdensome, and actually a real hindrance to us. He also totally revoked those Laws, declaring them null and void, by nailing them to Christ's cross.

<sup>15</sup>By His suffering on the cross, and dying, Christ disarmed and stripped away the rightful authority and power that the Jewish religious leaders formerly had.<sup>a</sup> He made a public spectacle of their power, publicly crushing all their rules and authority, and leading those rules and regulations along, as it were, tied up as captives on display in the victory parade.

<sup>16</sup>So don't let anyone point to the Law of Moses and tell you what you may eat or drink, or that you must attend some religious festival or a celebra-

**2:3a** ... and are to be found only in Him.

**2:6a** In other words, when you were converted to Christ you gave up your life to Him to obey Him as Lord, as well as receiving Him as Savior. Only those who do this are born again. And you must continue to do so. See 1:23, and note.

**2:7a** We are strengthened and established by reading and studying God's word and by meditating on the truths there, and by sharing them with others. To grow spiritually, we must obey Christ's commands, believe and act upon His promises, and live in a state of constant praise and thanksgiving to God. True worship is not to fear God, nor even to love Him, but to love Him with such total surrender that we thoroughly and extremely delight in Him to the utmost limits, by giving Him our all.

**2:7b** ... both for now and forever ...

**2:7c** ... because the potential for your brief future here, and for your eternal future, is so

great!

**2:9a** It appears evident thruout Scripture that when the Father begat the Son in eternity past, He endowed Him with all the attributes that He Himself possessed—all knowledge, wisdom, power, etc.

**2:12a** Romans 6:1-14.

**2:15a** This certainly refers to the rulers and authorities in the Sanhedrin (the Jewish council of supreme authority) and to the rulers in the synagogues. Christ's sacrifice on the cross put an end to the rightful authority these men previously had, to make certain that the Law of Moses was conformed to. The next two verses verify this conclusion.

**2:22a** There is nothing wrong with the use of material things, unless by the use of them you bring harm to yourself or to others. Then their use is indeed wrong.

**2:23a** "The radical error of those who practice self-punishment is in their belief that evil resides in

tion of the new moon, or that you must observe the various Jewish Sabbath days.

<sup>17</sup> Because these were only temporary rules that ended when Messiah died as our sacrifice on the cross. They were a mere outline, a lifeless shadow of what was to come. The real and the permanent rules were given to us when Messiah came.

<sup>18</sup> Don't let anyone fool you, and rob you of your prize of eternal life with God by pretending to be so humble while encouraging you to worship angels. They're intruding into areas they know nothing about! They're puffed up by their own ideas of how great they are, and by their own imaginations.

<sup>19</sup> Such a person is not continuing to hold to the true teaching about Christ, the Head of the Church. But it's from Him that the whole Church body receives its nourishment, resulting in the muscles, joints, and ligaments being knit together, and growing as God causes it to grow.

<sup>20</sup> So if you died with Christ to the temporary things of this world, why do you act as though you still belong to it, by giving in to its religious rules, such as,

<sup>21</sup> "Don't handle that! Don't taste this! Don't touch that!?"

<sup>22</sup> All these prohibited things affect only our physical self, and they are worn out or consumed as they are used.<sup>a</sup> And besides, any of these religious rules that are merely man-made have no real spiritual value anyway.

<sup>23</sup> These rites and ceremonies and prohibitions indeed make one appear to have a deep knowledge about divine things, along with their show of sorrow, their false humility, and severe treatment of

the body. But these are of no value at all in restraining physical passions.<sup>a</sup>

### *Rules for Christians to Live by*

**3** So if you have been raised up to new life with Christ from among those who are dead,<sup>a</sup> you must now continue to be thoroughly ambitious for, and set your heart on, those positions and pleasures which are in Heaven, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Be so filled with intense desire to live to please God and faithfully serve Him,<sup>a</sup> that your mind will be totally centered on the eternal rich inheritance that can be yours forever in Heaven. No longer love the trivial, temporary, unsatisfactory, and breakable things of this life, which can be forever taken from us tomorrow.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Because you died,<sup>a</sup> and the treasure that your new life is, and the treasured dividends from serving God in the new life, have all been safely and securely hidden away in the treasure vault that is Christ, in God.

<sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is our very life, appears on earth to judge and to reign, then you too will appear with Him in the glory that has been promised you.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>5</sup> That's why you need to ruthlessly kill every last one of those evil inclinations of your earthly nature that relentlessly plague you, such as: sexual immorality,<sup>a</sup> all kinds of uncleanness,<sup>b</sup> various evil passions, evil desires, and the greedy desire of always wanting more of the things of this world, which is the same as worshiping idols.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Because of just such sinning, God's judgments are continuing to fall<sup>a</sup> on those who continue in

matter. Not the body, but the soul, is the source of sin. The body is sinful because the soul is sinful. Sin exists as a thought and concept of the heart before it exists as an act of the flesh."—*The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary*.

The attempt to be virtuous by punishing and saying "no" to the body is like battering the outer defensive walls of the castle but leaving the castle untouched.

The only solution is to bring the soul into a right relationship with God, thru Jesus Christ. Then, with God's help, the soul will control what the body does. Philippians 2:13.

**3:1a** Though alive physically, they are dead spiritually, and under God's condemnation and judgment.

**3:1b** Matthew 20:20-23; Luke 16:1-9 (see v 9 note). Regarding pleasures in Heaven see Psalm 16:11; 36:8.

**3:2a** Serve Him by prayer, by helping those in need, by witnessing to others, by giving so that others may go forth and witness. Serve Him with true love for all whom God loves.

**3:2b** James 4:14.

**3:3a** You died ... *to your former life of ignoring and disobeying God, and selfishly living for all you could be and experience and obtain for your own pleasure, advancement, and glory in this present brief and uncertain life.*

**3:4a** Romans 5:2; 8:17-18,30; 1 Corinthians 15:43; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; Hebrews 2:10; 1 Peter 5:1.

**3:5a** See Ephesians 5:3 note.

**3:5b** Such as impure thoughts, and all forms of unclean sexual acts, etc.

**3:5c** ... *the worship of money and things instead of God.*

**3:6a** This is present tense in the Greek, showing

their disobedience toward Him.

<sup>7</sup>And all of you at one time went right along with people who live like that. You thought very little about how evil your lives were when you were living the same way yourselves.

<sup>8</sup>But now you must also put all these things out of your lives: violent outbursts of anger, bitter hatred, and cursing. And you must stop using your lips to say anything that is filthy or insulting and humiliating.

<sup>9</sup>And stop lying to each other. You have turned away from your old life and all the wrong things you once did.

<sup>10</sup>You are now living an altogether new life,<sup>a</sup> that is constantly receiving new knowledge so that you can become altogether like the One who created you.

<sup>11</sup>So it's of no importance at all whether we are Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian or Scythian, slave or free. Our only concern must be that Christ has become our everything in all of life.

<sup>12</sup>So as God's chosen people who are dedicated to Him and loved by Him, conduct yourselves with great concern for the welfare of others, showing compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

<sup>13</sup>Always be considerate of others, especially if you have a grievance against someone who has done you wrong. Always be ready and willing to forgive. Forgive them in the same wholehearted way that Christ has forgiven you.

<sup>14</sup>But to all these things add an overflowing love for one another. Love is what binds all of these other virtues together in perfect harmony.

<sup>15</sup>Then you must also allow yourselves to be governed and controlled by the profound peace that God gives, because God has called us to be united in one body,<sup>a</sup> in peace. And always be thankful in every situation.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>16</sup>And you simply must allow the truths of Christ's words to continually take full possession of your hearts and minds.<sup>a</sup> Then use all possible wisdom in teaching, correcting, and challenging one another in regard to those same truths. Also, sing out those truths in psalms and hymns and other kinds of spiritual songs, doing so with joy that comes from deep within your hearts in sincere adoration and thanksgiving to the Lord.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>17</sup>And whatever you say or do, make sure it will please and honor the Lord Jesus. And continue to thank God our Father thru Jesus for whatever you're able to say and do for Him.

<sup>18</sup>Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands,<sup>a</sup> as this is definitely proper for a woman who is trusting in the Lord.

<sup>19</sup>Husbands, you must always be loving and kind toward your wives. Never be harsh with them.

<sup>20</sup>Children, obey your parents in everything,<sup>a</sup> You make the Lord very happy when you do.

<sup>21</sup>Parents, never drive your children to anger by expecting too much from them, or they may get discouraged and give up.

<sup>22</sup>Employees, always obey the instructions of

present, continuous action—punishments being received now by those who live in sin. This is not the future judgment, as some translations read, although this will also be true for those who refuse to turn from their sinning to obeying God. The sinner does not receive all of his hell in this life—far from it. Nor does the true Christian receive all of his blessings in this life. The greatest of both are yet to come.

**3:10a** 2 Corinthians 5:17.

**3:15a** Ephesians 4:4-6.

**3:15b** 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Romans 8:28.

**3:16a** There are various ways to receive the teachings of Christ—thru other Christians, by listening to Bible teaching, preaching, and singing, and by reading it for yourself.

Before the modern era of prepared food for babies, mothers would chew the food, then take it from their mouth with a spoon and feed it to the baby. That's the way most people still wish to receive their spiritual food. They want the Bible teacher or preacher to do all the studying, and then

spoon-feed it to them.

But you need to grow up spiritually as quickly as possible and read and study the Bible for yourself. For one thing, you need to make sure you are being given the full truth. And you need to dig for the truth so you can share it with others. In a true Bible-believing church, you are encouraged to bring your Bibles, and you are encouraged to read and study them thruout the week.

**3:16b** Some believe the teaching here includes teaching by songs. Yes, there is much great need for more songs that teach deep spiritual truth. Most modern songs and choruses are songs of worship and praise, and that's fine. But we also need songs and choruses and choir anthems that challenge us to obedience to God and to witness for Him. There is a real need here for someone, or for several, to fill. Let us challenge one another, and our own hearts, in song.

A theologian of the past said, "If I were allowed to write the songs of a nation, I wouldn't care who wrote its laws." Our songs are indeed that impor-

your human employer.<sup>a</sup> Don't obey only when the boss is watching, as those who are only concerned about pleasing men, but enter into your work with superabounding sincerity, knowing that God is watching,<sup>b</sup> and that you are accountable to Him for everything you do and the way you do it.

<sup>23</sup>Whatever you may be doing, do it with all your heart, with enthusiasm, as if you were working for the Lord instead of for men.

<sup>24</sup>In fact, always keep in mind that even when working for others, you really are working for Christ the Lord, and that it's from the Lord that you will receive the reward of the inheritance that will be yours forever.

<sup>25</sup>But those who cheat their employers of time and effort (and in other ways), will also be rewarded for the wrong they have done.<sup>a</sup> And God judges everyone by the same standard.<sup>b</sup> He doesn't play favorites with anyone.

**4** Employers, always give your employees wages and other benefits and treatment that are just and fair. Remember, you also have an Overseer, in Heaven.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>2</sup>If you want answers to your prayers, you must keep praying, and not give up.<sup>a</sup> And as you continue to wait before God for what you are praying, fill your prayers with praise and thanksgiving.

<sup>3</sup>And as you pray, be sure you continue to pray for us as well. Keep asking God to open doors of opportunity for us to preach His message, reveal-

ing the secret that God has also included the Gentiles in His salvation plan, even though I'm in jail because I preached that message.

<sup>4</sup>Pray that I'll have courage to continue to tell everyone about it, which is the only right thing for me to do.

<sup>5</sup>Always be wise and considerate in the way you conduct yourselves toward those who are not followers of the Lord.<sup>a</sup> But never fail to make use of every opportunity to speak out<sup>b</sup> and tell them the Great News.

<sup>6</sup>In doing so be gracious and kind. However, in every conversation, take the opportunity, or make the opportunity, to include a warning about our ultimate meeting with either Jesus as Lord and Savior or Jesus as Judge.<sup>a</sup> And as you are challenged with objections and arguments for which you don't have an answer, pray and investigate, so that the next time you'll have the answer.

### Final Greetings

<sup>7</sup>Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He's a much-loved brother, a faithful minister and a fellow servant in the Lord's work.

<sup>8</sup>I'm sending him to you for the very purpose of finding out how you are coming along, and to encourage you.

<sup>9</sup>Your own faithful and much-loved brother, Onesimus, will also be coming. They will also give you a full report of what's happening here.

<sup>10</sup>Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you

---

tant! Another has stated, "As those who make the songs of a nation can shape its political and moral life, so the hymn writers have in a large degree shaped the theology of the Church."

If God has given you the gift of song writing, here's an opportunity to serve Him in a much-needed way, by challenging God's people in their solemn duty to obey Him and to witness about Christ to those who are still lost. These matters are not optional for Christians, they are mandatory! So they certainly should be included in what we sing.

Charles Wesley used to write as many as 18 verses to his songs for the express purpose of teaching theology, and in their song services they would sing all 18 verses! It was a catechism as much as it was an act of worship. Much of the Christian music of today focuses on feelings and not on God—a tragedy.

**3:18,20,22a** ... *in everything except where obedience would mean to go against your conscience or to disobey some command of God.*

**3:22b** 2 Chronicles 16:9; Proverbs 5:21; 15:3.

**3:25a** Galatians 6:7-8.

**3:25b** Revelation 20:11-15.

**4:1a** ... *who decides whether your business will be blessed, or not.* See Psalm 75:4-7.

**4:2a** See Genesis 32:24-29; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8. And there are many others. See Luke 17:6 note.

**4:5a** If you claim to be a true follower of Christ, make sure that you now treat others in the same way that you want others to treat you. Unbelievers are much more concerned about your honesty, integrity, and compassion, than they are about what you believe and how faithfully you worship and serve the Lord. You aren't ready or even qualified to speak to others about Christ if you are not obeying your Lord in truth, especially in your dealings with others. You are then in need of true conversion yourself.

**4:5b** Romans 10:9-10.

**4:6a** The Greek for this sentence is *season with salt*. In other words, don't fail to put something into the conversation that will help to preserve the soul of the one to whom you are speaking. Consider both of these verses in the light of Romans 10:9-10.

greetings, and so does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. You've already been told to warmly welcome Mark if he comes your way.

<sup>11</sup>And Jesus, who is called Justus, sends greetings. These are the only Jewish followers of the Lord here among my fellow workers for the Kingdom of God, and they have been such a comfort to me!

<sup>12</sup>Epaphras, who is also one of you and a devoted servant of Christ, sends greetings. He's always wrestling in prayer for you, praying that God will help you to obey Him in everything, perfectly and completely.

<sup>13</sup>I can testify to the fact that he has great zeal for you, and also for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

<sup>14</sup>Our dearly loved Doctor Luke also sends greetings, and so does Demas.

<sup>15</sup>Give my greetings to all in Laodicea who love

our Lord, and to Nymphas, and to all who meet as a church in his home.

<sup>16</sup>After you read this letter, be sure that it's also read by the church in Laodicea. I want you in turn to read the letter I sent to the Laodiceans, which they will send to you.

<sup>17</sup>And there's this message for Archippus: "Have real concern for the assignment the Lord gave you, and keep working diligently at it so that you may complete it."

<sup>18</sup>*I, Paul, write this final greeting with my own hand.* Remember to pray for me here, chained in jail. May God's special blessings be with all of you. So be it!

Most Sincerely,  
Paul and Timothy

