

An Introduction of Inspiration (Message # 1)

Colossians 1: 1-2

Think back to those times when life was really difficult, a time when it seemed all hope was gone, the burden was too heavy to bear, and you were searching for a means of strength and help to make it through. Maybe during a time like that you got a phone call, a visit, or a card in the mail from someone you loved who just wanted to encourage you and help lift your spirits. They really didn't do anything physically or financially to help, but just knowing that someone cared about your situation made all the difference. Just a kind word of support was enough to help you overcome.

That is basically what we find in the verses we have read tonight. Paul was aware of the problems the church at Colossae faced and he wanted to encourage them in their faith. Later on in this letter, Paul will confront some of the problems they face, but he wanted to begin his letter with a word of encouragement to the church. His desire was for them to prosper and continue for the cause of Christ.

I want us to look at the [details](#) of Paul's introduction to the church at Colossae. There is much in these two verses that will help us as we journey through our Christian lives. I want to preach on: [An Introduction of Inspiration](#). I pray these words will inspire and challenge us as well.

I. A Word of Greeting (1a) – [Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God](#). He begins with a word about himself.

A. His Character – Keep in mind that Paul had never visited Colossae. [Col.2:1 – For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh](#). The people there had never met him. He begins this letter by identifying himself as Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Even though they had never met him, they no doubt had heard of Paul. It is believed their pastor, Epaphras, studied under Paul at Ephesus.

- Paul was clearly a giant of the faith. His fame often preceded him wherever he went. He was known for his passion for the Lord and those who followed Him. He was concerned about those who had never trusted Christ. Paul was a man who was respected by those of the early church. No doubt it brought comfort to their hearts to receive a letter from the apostle. He was concerned about their particular situation and wanted to help.
- That is what we need in our day. We need Christians who have a good reputation among the world. We are not here to please the world, but we ought to live in such a way that others

would quickly identify us as belonging to the Lord. We ought to be known for our passion to serve Christ and for reaching out to the troubled, hurting, and lost around us.

B. His Credentials – Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Paul was man of renown, but his fame and influence was not of himself. His reputation of old left little to be desired. While living apart from Christ, he was feared as a persecutor of the church and one responsible for the slaughter of many who followed Jesus. Now he is recognized as an apostle of Christ. The Lord chose Paul to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. There was no need to fear Paul, in fact he was to be respected and his message was to be heard.

- There is no goodness within us, but the saved are of Christ as well. We are not apostles, but we too have the opportunity to be a witness and a blessing for the cause of Christ. We have the authority, through Christ, to tell a lost and dying world of His saving grace. We have the ability, through Christ, to be a help and encouragement to those around us. We have no reason to hang our heads in shame or live as if we are defeated. We belong to the Lord and are privileged to enjoy His power in our lives.

C. His Calling – Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God. Becoming an apostle was not something Paul chose himself. He was not working according to his personal desires. He was on the road to Damascus one day and came face to face with the Lord. He was called of God and Paul was simply trying to fulfill the will of God for his life. Paul lived his life according to the will of God.

- We desperately need that kind of commitment in our day. I'm sure there were times when Paul was tired in body and weary spiritually, and yet he continued to seek the will of God. Our church and the world need those who are committed to the will of God. We need to surrender our lives in service to Him. Sure we all get tired and weary, but there is a work to perform. God has called all of the saved to be a witness for Him. We all have different gifts and abilities, but we all can tell others of Jesus.

I. A Word of Greeting (1a)

II. A Word of Gratitude (1b) – Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother. After introducing himself Paul quickly mentions Timothy, a brother in Christ. In that we see a couple things.

A. The Association (1b) – We don't find a man of arrogance and pride. He does not view Timothy as a lesser man. Paul is grateful for the association and fellowship he has with Timothy. He refers to him as a **brother**, one who is part of the family, one who has been accepted, and one who has much to contribute. Paul desired the church at Colossae to accept Timothy as well.

- Isn't it a blessing to have brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we can fellowship? I am thankful for all that God has placed in my life. We all belong to the Lord, we all have something to contribute to the work of the Lord, and all must be accepted. The church is not made up of big "I's" and little "u's." We are all part of the family.
- We ought to thank the Lord for those with whom we associate. The work is too great and it would be lonely by ourselves.

B. The Obligation (1b) – There is nothing in this verse that speaks of an obligation to Timothy, but I am confident Paul felt obligated to seek his welfare. If Paul were not concerned about Timothy, he would not have mentioned him. Many would have been prideful and desired to receive all the credit. Paul had taken Timothy in as a young Christian and sought to mature him in the faith. He wanted Timothy's work and ministry to prosper as well. He was in essence telling the church at Colossae that Timothy was OK. He was a brother in Christ.

- It would've been easy for Paul to have become so focused on Colossae that he forgot about the needs of Timothy, but he didn't. It is often easy to become so focused on our work or obligations that we forget to care for those who are among us. We have an obligation to each other. We are all in this together and we need to be mindful of that. May we never become so busy and self-consumed that we forget about the needs of others.

I. A Word of Greeting (1a)

II. A Word of Gratitude (1b)

III. A Word of Grace (2) – Now Paul turns his attention to the needs of Colossae and his desire for them. Notice:

A. Paul's Discernment (2a) – [To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse](#): He had never met them personally and yet he knew much about them. The church at Colossae has much in common with the modern church. Paul knew that:

1. They were Faithful – This was no ordinary group of people. This was the church, the body of Christ. They were recognized as [the saints and faithful brethren](#). They had been born again and were faithful to the Lord in spite of adversity. These were folks who needed to be admired and loved for their devotion.

- There is nothing like the people of God. There is no fellowship like coming together with the saints. We all have troubles and trials in this life, but I am thankful for those who are faithful to the Lord in spite of adversity. I find encouragement for my soul by meeting with the church. Even on our worst day, fellowship with the saints is far better than anything the world offers!

2. They were Forgiven – The world around them may not have associated or cared for the things of God, but these were [in Christ](#). They had been set apart, redeemed, and forgiven of sin. They identified with the Lord. Life may have been hard to bear, they may have been forsaken of those who knew them, but they were in Christ. Even if the world rejected them, they had One on whom they could depend. They were accepted and made part of the family of God.

- There is no greater blessing than to be in Christ. I rejoice that I belong to Him. I have been forgiven of my sin and adopted as a child of God. There is nothing that can ever change the fact that I am in Christ!

3. They were Fighting – They were in Christ, but they were also [at Colossae](#). Their spiritual position in Christ did not change their physical position in Colossae. These were facing adversity and their faith was challenged by living at Colossae. Paul realized they were engaged in a spiritual battle. Life was hard and they needed to be encouraged. They needed strength to press on in the fight. There was no place to sit down or quit.

- The same is true for us today. We are in Christ, but we are still among the world. Life is difficult, but we must press on. We cannot allow the trials of our day to hinder our love and devotion for the Lord. We cannot abandon His work just because the work has gotten difficult. We must persevere in the Lord. The battle will continue to rage, but we can draw strength in Christ.

B. Paul's Desire (2b) – *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* He desired a couple of things for them. First:

1. That they Receive the Gifts – Paul desired that Colossae receive the *grace of God* and the *peace that He gives*. Grace is a mystery to me. It literally means “*unmerited favor*.” We have received from God what we could never deserve. *Where our sin did abound, grace did much more abound*. God has grace for every trial we face. His grace is sufficient.

- Paul also desired that they receive the *peace of God*. That is also a mystery to me. The church at Colossae faced a most difficult task. Their faith was being challenged on every hand. Life had become difficult, but even then there was peace. I cannot explain the peace of God, but I know that it is a *peace that passeth all understanding*. God will provide peace to stand in the most difficult situations. He has the power to calm the storm or clam our soul. Either way we are at peace in Him.

2. That they Recognize the Giver – Paul reminded them that the grace and peace that they enjoyed had come from the good hand of God through Christ our Lord. He was the source of their strength and their blessings. It was important that they give God the glory.

- It is God who has met our needs as well. Of all that I have received in this life, God has given it all. *Jam.1:17 – Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*. Where would any of us be if it were not for the good hand of God? I pray that we will recognize His goodness in our lives and give Him all the praise and honor. He is worthy of that.

Conclusion: I hope you have been encouraged by the Word we have considered this evening. We are never alone. God has blessed us with a good Christian family and He is ever present in our lives. Take courage and comfort in Him. Is all well tonight? If not, come to Him as He leads.