

Understand and Live Truth – Teaching Notes

(Colossians 1:1-14; 5/2/10)

Introduction: A key idea in today's lesson is Paul was urging his readers to bear their suffering with joy and Christian living. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to bear our suffering with joy and Christian living.

Body:

Read Colossians 1:1-2

I. Greeting to the Saints. Paul greets his readers. He introduces himself as an apostle (i.e., one who has seen the Christ and was sent by Him). He writes to the saints and faithful brethren in the city of Colosse.

Applications –

- **Being apostolic.** Notice in vs. 1 that Paul refers to himself as an apostle. An apostle can simply mean one who is sent. Or in Paul's day, it also included the idea of being sent directly by and as an eye witness of Christ. Paul claimed to be an eye witness based on his experience on the Damascus road. We should be apostolic – we should view ourselves as those who are sent to do God's will. Even though we have not seen Christ physically, we, who are saved, have experienced Him. Let's work on being apostolic. That is, *let's work on doing the good work that God has sent us to do, inspired by our experience with Christ.* Good work that we should be busy doing includes inviting and bringing loved ones to church and Christ; studying, serving, and giving; and being a blessing to those in our communities.

- **Praying for others.** Notice in vs. 2 that Paul sought blessings for others. He wanted his readers to enjoy God's grace and peace. There are too many who only seek blessings for themselves. *Let's work on praying for God to bless others, especially our siblings in Christ.* We all need grace – unmerited favor. And we all need peace – tranquility, in spite of what is going on around us. Notice that from time to time our Prayer Meeting liturgy focuses on praying for others and various issues.

Read Colossians 1:3-8

II. Thanksgiving for the Saints. Paul talks about his thankfulness and praying for the people. They have developed a reputation for bearing fruit for the Lord. Epaphras is a witness of their love.

Applications -

- **Living and speaking positively.** Notice in vss. 4-8 that Paul heard about the Christian living of those in Colosse. First, we should live so people will have something good to say about us. When we are late to church, early to leave, and make no contribution to the good work in our church or

community, it is hard to speak well of us. Second, we should work on being bearers of good news, instead of simply bad news. Not only is our media guilty of making negativity the only thing worthy of attention, but too many of us are guilty of spending too much time on the negative and too little time on the positive. *Let's work on living so people will have something positive to say, and let's be bearers of good news.*

Read Colossians 1:9-14

III. Prayer for the Saints. Paul prays for his readers to continue to be filled with knowledge and wisdom as well as with good works. He wants them to experience strength, patience, longsuffering, and joyfulness. He talks about being translated/transported into the kingdom, being redeemed, and being forgiven.

Applications

- **Having wisdom and good works.** Notice in vss. 10-11 that Paul wanted the readers to have wisdom and good works. He wanted them to not only have knowledge, but he wanted them to know how to live by it with a discernment of what was right and wrong (i.e., understanding). Such knowledge is to lead to good works. This is very similar to the Pastor's push for us to study, serve, and give. *Let's work on having wisdom and good works.* Personal and church sponsored Bible studies can help us develop wisdom. Being involved in ministry groups can help us with good works.

- **Suffering with joy.** Notice in vs. 11 Paul's concern with his readers having strength, patience, longsuffering, and joyfulness. The first three imply that there will be some difficult situations ahead. Paul was making ready to deal with the false doctrines that his readers were dealing with. We should be mindful that the Christian life is a life of burden bearing and navigating over and around obstacles. It is a journey that features aggravating and sometimes painful experiences. But yet the text urges us to have strength, patience (i.e., bear pain without complaining), and longsuffering with joy. The only way to do this sort of thing is to grow in the Lord. We must decide to deny and dedicate ourselves to divine directions. *Let's work on the discipleship needed to suffer with joy.*

- **Being thankful, instead of so negative.** Notice in vss. 12-14 Paul's mention of things that his readers should be thankful for. They should be thankful for being inheritors, being translated/transported from slavery to sin to freedom in Christ, and being redeemed. It is easy to focus on the negativity in our lives. Unpaid bills, pain in our bodies, and relational drama scream for our attention. However, we can and should choose to focus on our minds on how good God has been and will be to us. *Let's work on being thankful, instead of so negative.*

Conclusion: Let's work on suffering with joy and Christian living. God has much for those who obey His will.