A Faithful Reproduction of the Portrait

Our scripture for this morning is Colossians 1:1-2

In Paul’s greeting to the Colossians we can find how the church there was perceived and how they were progressing in the Lord.

In reading Paul’s greeting to the Colossian church, we might pass over it as a simple greeting at the start of a letter. However, as is often the case with Paul, there are some profound truths to be found in all his words.

Paul gives a description of the believers he is addressing that touch on five great truths about the Christian life. **Let’s look at verse (2)**

Depending on your translation, Paul calls them “holy”, which emphasizes the Christian’s calling from the Lord to live holy lives. We are called to live separated lives. Though we are in the world, we are not to be of the world.

Someone put it this way; “A Christian is not ruined by living in the world, but by the world living in us.”

As long as the water remains outside the boat, things are fine; but when the water gets inside the boat, we’ve got problems!

I remember back when I had a boat. I could launch it myself. I would have a long rope tied to the bow and toss the other end over the dock, get back in my truck and back up fast, hitting my brakes when the boat and trailer were in the water and the boat would slide right into the water. I would then park the truck and trailer walk to the dock, hop in the boat and head out for the day.

This one day after doing that when I got back to the boat a gentleman standing at the docks yelled to me that I better get the truck back here because my boat was sinking! After loading the boat I noticed that I had forgotten to replace the boat plug after washing it out!

Again, as long as the water remains at the outside of the boat we are ok but with the water inside the boat we have problems. It’s the same with us as long as the worlds influence stays outside of us we will be ok, but if we begin to think and act as the world does we are in trouble.

How can we be sure to live holy lives separated to God?

(**Read 2 Cor. 6:14-18**)

**Matthew 11:29-30 – “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

**WOW!** There is a multiplicity of sermons in those 2 verses!

The focus of our separation isn’t to be on the world, but on Christ!

This is what Paul was emphasizing in Romans 12:1, where he tells us to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.” You see, the best way to make sure we aren’t doing wrong things is to be sure we are doing right things.

Everything we do and say should be done with Jesus our Lord in mind. And give thanks to God always through Jesus

**(Col. 3:17) “ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks through Him to God the father.”**

One person said this; **“I will go nowhere I can’t take Jesus; I will say nothing I would not want Him to hear, and I will do nothing I would not want Him to know about.”**

Those are words to live by!

***God calls us to be holy and faithful! What does that mean?***

The dictionary defines faithful as; (1) Adhering firmly and devotedly, as to a person, a cause, or an idea; loyal. (2) Having or full of faith. (3) Worthy of trust or belief; reliable. (4) Consistent with truth or actuality; **a faithful reproduction of the portrait**. Synonyms listed with these definitions are faithful, loyal, true, constant, fast, steadfast, and staunch. These adjectives mean adhering firmly and devotedly to someone or something, such as a person, cause, or duty, that elicits or demands one’s fidelity.

The part of this definition that fits what we are discussing this morning is the illustration used for the last definition. “Consistent with truth or actuality**; a faithful reproduction of the portrait.”** Thus, the title of this morning’s lesson!

For the Christian, faithfulness occurs when we follow the example of our Lord Jesus. Who remained true to the Father when things were good as well as bad!

And how can we remain faithful? Because God is trustworthy. We can trust Him and remain true to Him because He knows what He is doing.

***READ THE STORY OF THE PREACHER***

When it comes to our daily walk with God, may our prayer be, ***“Lord. Help me to be faithful to the gifts, abilities, and opportunities You have given me according to the strength You give me. Then give me the grace and faith to leave the results to You.”***

This word Paul uses in his introduction to the letter to the Colossians; “Faithful” is referring to the brethren. We can look at this as addressing the Christian family.

This word highlights two things: 1) the basis of our unity is our common bond in Jesus as Lord; and 2) the expression of our unity is brotherly or sisterly love.

Though family members may disagree at times, they will defend each other when others come against them. As a Christian family, we may struggle at times to keep the unity that is ours by common bond.

Ephesians 4:3 – ***“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”***

Notice the phrase, **“make every effort.”** Do not take that lightly or just read past it. Make every effort to keep the unity is stressed because it is that important! It doesn’t mean to give unity a half-hearted attempt. It means just what it says. To do all we can, to keep trying, to be always attentive to maintaining unity.

Sometimes in our effort to keep the bonds of peace we may be required to humble ourselves and not insist that we are right. To just let it go. The bond of peace is far more important than causing division over a point.

In other words, maintaining unity as a church family involves spiritual obedience. This shouldn’t surprise us. **Galatians 5:15** addresses this very issue. ***“But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another.”***

You may ask, how can I contribute to unity in my church family?

1. Choose daily to pursue God’s ways over your own.
2. Reflect on God’s commands calling us to love one another.
3. Focus on areas of agreement more than disagreement.
4. Count the cost of disunity.
5. Judge yourself more than you judge others.
6. Pursue humility.
7. Be the first to seek peace and reconciliation.

An additional word from Paul’s introduction to the Colossians, for our consideration is**; “In Christ”**

***We’ve been united with Christ so what is true of Him is true of us!***

“In Christ” is one of Paul’s favorite phrases to describe believers.

***Ephesians 2:6-7 – “And raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come, He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.”***

The scriptures teach us and give us assurance through the fact that we have died with Christ, have been raised with Christ and are seated with Him in the heavenly places.

Through Him we have victory over sin, death and hell itself! Knowing who we are and what we are in Christ is the key to earthly and eternal victory! This is why we are to be a family bound to each other by our love of Christ and the Father.

***Colossians 3:1,2 – “If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above not on things that are on earth.”***

Here is an anonymous quote **– “To be distressed, look within, to be defeated, look back, to be distressed, look around, to be dismayed, look before, to be delivered, look to Christ!”**

May all of us emulate the church at Colossae. Paul prayed often for the church at Colossae. May our prayers be of the same cloth.

{READ 1: 3-6} AND {V 9-10}

These two prayers should be our quest. We should be living these two prayers and concentrating on our relationship to the Lord and each other.

Looking for ways to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Looking for ways of growing the church as well as our faith. Taking a leap of faith with God’s word. Looking for places to plant the gospel and being amazed at how Gods word changes lives. Remembering that although we plant the seed God gives the increase.

Now I know that Paul was simply addressing who his audience was here. But we can find it a reminder that when it comes to fulfilling the great commission of our Lord, where do we begin? That’s simple, **“right where we are!”**

In Acts 1:8 Jesus told those early believers that they were to take the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, but they were to begin where they were!

( ok, I got one of those math problems for you}

It has been estimated that if all the unsaved people in the world were to line up single file at your front door, the line would reach around the world thirty times. And what’s worse, this line would grow at the rate of twenty miles per day. If you should drive fifty miles an hour, ten hours a day, it would take you four years to get to the end of the line, and by the time you reached it, it would have grown thirty thousand miles longer.

How long will we wait, how long will do nothing to evangelize, How can we not share the good news of Jesus as both Lord and Savior. I urge all of us to read over and over again the two prayers of Paul to the Colossians. These prayers describe what the church is to be.

These prayers must be our vision statement! If we become what these prayers are calling for. If we truly take to heart what is being said in these prayers we will experience a growth spike like never before! Our spiritual lives will greatly be enriched and enhanced. People will be asking us about what it is that gives us our special glow in life.

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians he wasted no time emphasizing how their relationship with Christ should impact their lives. Paul describes Jesus with some of the most in-depth language in the New testament, emphasizing His preeminence in all things.

Because He is Lord over all, the life of the Christian is a life of submission - to Jesus!

Are we following after Jesus as we should? Are we truly clothed with Christ? Our faith in Jesus Christ should transform the relationships we have in every area of our lives – in our homes, our church and our world.

Do we sometimes feel like we are living a double life where we act one way when around the church family and another way when with people outside the church?

This could stem from accepting Jesus as Savior but not as Lord. We cannot separate Jesus as Savior and Lord. It is not one or the other, it has to be both. To do otherwise is to deny oneself of true submission to the Lord’s will.

Remember the words of Jesus when He said, **“Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven.” {Matthew 7:21}**

**I** am considering the concept of Jesus as both Lord & Savior for the subject of my next sermon.

The Title of this morning’s lesson has been, **“A faithful reproduction of the Portrait”**

We have read Paul’s introduction to the letter to the Colossians. We have discovered 5 truths to the Christian Life.

1. That we are to be holy set apart from the world and its influence
2. That we are to be faithful to the Lord and His church
3. That we are family, the Lord’s family
4. Loyalty to Christ and the family of God
5. The Christian mission – preach the word, teach the word, live the word.

We should never be satisfied where we are concerning our walk with the Lord. We should ever be reaching for a deeper relationship with the Lord. The Christian life is one of seeking a greater understanding of the love of God, and like that one definition we read **“a faithful reproduction of the portrait.”**

Let’s ask ourselves what portrait do we reproduce? Is it the world or is it Jesus!

To anyone hearing this message that would like to know more of this Christian life, please contact us and we will aid you in your quest. It will be the greatest thing you can do for yourself. To become united with Christ through the waters of baptism. Christ died to forgive your sins. He rose again to give eternal life.