

Colossians 1:1-8

“Jesus is Risen! Now What?”

Scripture: Colossians 1:1-8

Memory Verse: Colossians 1:2b *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Lesson Focus: While we finished the gospel of John and celebrated the triumph of Jesus’s death and resurrection, we can be left wondering, “Now, what?” Fortunately, God gave us letters like this one which instruct us on how we take Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection and apply it to our lives. We will introduce this letter and show the kids how Paul’s instruction to this ancient church still applies to us 2000 years later!

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Pictures of Grace/Peace for both 1st & 2nd and 3rd-5th, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th. Craft for 1st & 2nd: Letter to a Friend

Starter Activity: Letters

We will get our lesson started by having some discussion about giving and receiving letters. First ask the kids some questions about letters:

Q: Have you ever received a letter from someone? Who? How did it make you feel?

Q: Have you ever written a letter to someone? Who? Why did you write it?

A: We write letters to people we love and care about and want to say something to them as if we were with them! Letters are also important because we can keep them and cherish them so that we REMEMBER what is written!

Teachers: Consider digging out some letters from your attic that you have kept and cherished and read them out loud sharing why that letter is so special to you!

People in the ancient world wrote letters for many of the same reasons! We are going to begin studying a new book of the Bible, Colossians, and it is very important to keep in mind that this “book” is simply a letter!

Background:

Important questions to establish context and background of any book of the Bible.

- 1) **What?:** The book of Colossians is a letter written to the believers in Colosse.
- 2) **Who?:** The apostle Paul wrote this letter.
- 3) **When?:** Most experts believe it was written while the apostle Paul was imprisoned in Rome about 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- 4) **Why?:** Instruct the believers in Colosse how to live as Christians (**Col. 2:6**)

Bible Study:

We just finished the gospel of John and spent almost an entire year learning about Jesus, the things He said, the things He did, and then finally His death and resurrection.

Now what? One of the last things Jesus said was “*You Follow Me!*” Letters like this that were written to this church help us, as believers, know how we can follow Jesus. We will continually ask this question throughout the study of this book.

Colossians 1:1: Like any letter you would write today, you would put your name on it so that who you are sending it to would know who it is from!

Q: What would happen if you received a letter from someone that said special and nice things about you, but you didn’t know who it was from?

Paul calls himself an apostle. This means that this letter is not just from one friend to another, but from someone chosen by God to speak exactly what God wanted!

Imagine yourself in this little town called Colosse in a brand new church getting a letter from someone REALLY important like the apostle Paul. They would read it together, share it with others, even as we do now recognizing it as God’s inspired word!

Colossians 1:2a: Like any letter you would write today, you would next address it to someone.

Q: How do you begin most letters? A: **Dear** “So-And-So” *

This verse is Paul’s way of saying “**Dear** Believers in Colosse”.

Q: Notice he calls them “saints”. What does this mean?

A: A lot of people think that saints are amazing people who lived amazing lives and are now in heaven. But that is not what the Bible teaches! Here and elsewhere “saints” are simply those who believe in Jesus Christ and through faith become children of God. Paul is writing to ORDINARY believers like you and me in Colosse and calling them saints. *

Colossians 1:2b: What a wonderful greeting!

Saints enjoy and experience the grace and peace of God. You hear these words at church a lot. But what do they actually mean?

Grace: Getting what you do NOT deserve! We deserve punishment because of our sin, but God extends His forgiveness and favor (grace) to us when we believe and trust in the finished work of His Son on the cross!

Peace: This describes how we feel when everything is right and good. This is what we experience when we know that all of our sins, past, present, future, are forgiven! *

So one answer to “**Now What?**” is: BELIEVE that you are a saint, a child of God through faith in Jesus, and experience that grace and peace that only comes from God!

Colossians 1:3: Paul mentions two things that he and Timothy are doing.

Q: What are those two things?

1) Giving thanks to God.

Q: Why should he (and us) give thanks to God? A: Because of that grace and peace that God has freely given us!

2) Praying for these believers at the church!

Q: Why would he pray for them? A: Because he loves them and cares about them and wants to see them growing in their walk with Jesus! *

Colossians 1:4: Paul mentions in this verse that he has heard of their faith and love.

Q: Remember where Paul was when he was writing this? A: In prison!

Imagine how encouraging it must have been for him to be thrown in jail for telling people about Jesus only to hear that more and more people are getting saved! *

Colossians 1:5: Let’s talk about this word “hope” a little bit.

Q: What are some things that you “hope” for?

A: Expect most kids to answer with things or wishes that they would like to have and would maybe need to earn.

Q: But is Paul talking about a shaky, wishful thinking kind of hope? No way!

A: He is talking about a **sure** and **confident** hope based on the promises of God in the gospel. This is a hope that you CLING TO when life is hard. * This is a confident expectation that God has a “happily ever after” for us because we are His through our faith in Jesus Christ.

So another answer to “**Now What?**” is: HOPE and TRUST in the promises of God, even when life is hard, because God is faithful and keeps His promises!

Colossians 1:6-7: The gospel has come to them and it is bearing fruit not only in them but throughout the whole world.

Kids: This is still happening today as people go out and share the gospel with people all over the world just like Epaphras did 2000 years ago!

Colossians 1:8: Epaphras reported back to Paul in prison how these people had something special: LOVE! That is what happens when Jesus Christ gets a hold of your life! You realize how much God loves you and by the power of the Holy Spirit, you then go and love others!

So perhaps the most important answer to “**Now What?**” is: LOVE.

Key Point: So far, this letter that the apostle wrote to this church at Colosse could also have been written to you and me.

Instead of “To the saints in Colosse” it could read “To the saints at RMC in Colorado Springs”. For we have received the same gospel, and believe in the same Jesus Christ that they have received and believed in!

So if you believe that Jesus Christ has died for your sins and has risen from the dead just like the believers in Colosse did, then this letter is for you too!

God, through the apostle Paul, would have you also:

- 1) Believe that by faith in Jesus you are a saint and can enjoy and experience His grace and His peace every day. Do you believe that?
- 2) Trust in that living hope that Jesus Christ is going to return and make all things new. Do you believe that?
- 3) Love God and love others by the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you want to do that?

Bring It Home

Lesson Theme: “Jesus Is Risen! Now What?”

Scripture: Colossians 1:1-8

Memory Verse: Colossians 1:2b *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Teachers/Parents: We introduced our study of the book of Colossians by talking about letters we have written or received and why we would write them. Consider pulling out some letters that you have kept and treasured and sharing with everyone what makes them special.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) The book of Colossians is a letter written from the apostle Paul to the little church in the town of Colosse to provide them with instruction in their walk with Jesus Christ. How do you think the believers in Colosse reacted to receiving a letter from the apostle Paul and why?
- 2) In **Colossians 1:2**, most Bible translations have Paul addressing the church as “saints”. What is the common cultural understanding of the word saint? How is this different from how the word is understood here and elsewhere in the Bible? Do you consider yourself a saint? Why or why not?
- 3) Read **Romans 5:1-2**. How does this better help us understand the amazing “grace” and “peace” that Paul refers to in v. 2 that is available to all believers in Jesus Christ?
- 4) Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison. Yet in v. 3, he says he is giving thanks to God. What do you think he was thankful for? What are some things that we can be thankful for even when it seems that things are not going our way?
- 5) **Read Colossians 1:5**. We use the word “hope” a lot in our culture but in a less confident sort of way. For example, Episode IV of Star Wars is called “A New Hope”. The rebels have a “hope” that the empire will be defeated, but not an assurance that it will happen. How is the biblical hope that we have in the promises of God different and so much greater?
- 6) We just finished the gospel of John which finished with the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. We might ask, “**Now What?**” The first eight verses of this letter give us a snapshot of what a healthy church looks like that has been transformed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pick one quality you see in these verses and discuss how you might embody that this week.