

# *Jesus our Centre* (Colossians & Philemon)

## **Week 1: Jesus our Confidence**

### **WELCOME**

*Spend time relaxing and sharing together.*

Think of someone you know whose life has been radically changed for the better. Share the story if you are able to. What did you think about them?

### **WORSHIP**

Give thanks in worship and/or prayer for what the Lord has done in the lives of the people mentioned in the Welcome and for what he is doing in the lives of the people represented in the group.

Possible song: Give Thanks (With a grateful heart)

### **WORD**

Paul never visited Colossae, but he would have been highly regarded by the Colossian Church because of his missionary work in Ephesus.

Imagine that you are part of the Colossian Church gathered in a house church expectantly waiting to hear Paul's letter to your church read out to you. Listen to Colossians 1:1-14 read one person.

1. What characteristics does Paul see in the life of the Colossians that demonstrates that the gospel is bearing fruit in their lives? (1:3-6)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Remaining in the sandals of a Colossian Christian, how do you feel about what Paul says?

## **Growth Group Notes**

### **Spring 2022**



Paul reports what Epaphras has said about them, “about your love in the Spirit” (1:8). That doesn’t necessarily mean that they are all best friends (they may or may not have been). What it does mean is that their behaviour was changing from what marks out the way of the world (anger, lust, lies, etc.) and was being replaced by kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, etc., and loving each other as members of the same family, regardless of their race, culture, background, etc..

3. What characteristics of the Colossian Christian would you like to see more of in your life and/or the life of Christ Church?

4. How can we encourage this to happen?

Paul refers to what he considers to be the three main features of Christian living: faith, hope and love. We see this in his other letters (most famously 1 Corinthians 13), but unusually in this letter, Paul stresses “hope”, by saying “the faith and love that spring from hope stored up for you in heaven” (1:5). It is quite likely that the false teachers at Colossae were intending to rob the Colossian Christians of this aspect of the Christian message, possibly by denying any future dimension of Christian salvation. If this was so, then it was necessary for Paul to emphasise again the nature of their Christian hope, as originally taught by Epaphras.

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5. What other adjectives does Paul use to stress “the true message of the gospel” (again perhaps to overturn false teaching)? (1:6)
6. Why should we take confidence from hearing that the gospel is powerful, effective and universal (“bearing fruit and growing throughout the world”)?
7. What does Paul pray regarding the will of God? (1:9-12)
8. Where does Paul’s confidence come from for the future of the church? Is it in the people of the church or something or someone else? (1:12-14)

## **WHAT NEXT?**

9. What characterises do you value in each other?

Take it in turns to select another member of your growth group and tell them one thing that you see in them that you value. Ensure that everyone receives an encouraging comment.

Listen to Colossians 1:9-12 being read out loud again.

10. What would it mean to you to have this prayed over you? Are there specific elements of the prayer that resonate with you presently?

Perhaps as a growth group you could each commit to pray for another member of your group at least weekly using the words of vv9b-14 (or a paraphrase of these verses).