

Announcements

Want to keep up on what's going on around here? Drop your info card in the offering plate and we'll add you to the e-letter list.

Communities:

This is where we gather to pray, study and encourage one another as part of the missional work of the Gospel. We would love to get to know you more, and this is one of the best ways to get planted as a part of Seaside.

Please consider joining a Community to strengthen the not only your family, but the larger community.

Contact

eric@seasidechurch.com for info on where groups meet or to lead/host one.

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Most of us struggle as we fall into one of these two categories: 1) We believe we are saved but then must we work to achieve righteousness. (**2 Corinthians 5:21**) When we don't understand that we have become righteous or holy in God's eyes because of His grace, because of the cross, we go about trying to achieve this righteousness by spiritual disciplines, service, and work for God. 2) We feel we have to work to pay back this righteousness. This is what Piper would call the debtor's ethic. He says: "the Christian life is pictured as an effort to pay back the debt we owe to God. The admission is made that we will never fully pay it off, but the debtor's ethic demands that we work at it. Good deeds and religious acts are the installment payments we make on the unending debt we owe to God. (**Galatians 3:2-3, Romans 4:4-5, Ephesians 2:8-9, Proverbs 3:5-6, Phil 2:13, Hebrews 11:6**) Finally Piper puts it quite clear saying "The nature of God's goodwill in giving His Son was that it was unconditionally and undeserved-a gift of free Grace. The aim of that act was to unleash a power of forgiveness and renewal that would transform people into reflectors of God's glory. So the way our gratitude to God for His goodwill must express itself is by saying and doing what honors its nature as free and its aim as God's glory. Any attempt to express gratitude by paying God back would contradict the nature of His gift as free and gracious. Any attempt to turn from being a beneficiary of God in order to become God's benefactors would remove the stumbling block of the Cross where my debt was so fully paid that I am forever humbled to the status of a receiver not a giver."

Revelation 2:1-5, I think this will set the tone for us looking into Paul's letter to the church of Colossae. In Revelation 2, Jesus is telling John to write down instructions for 7 churches in what is known as Asia Minor or modern day Greece and Turkey. And the first church he has instruction for is the church of Ephesus. (**Acts 19:8-10**)

Jesus starts off the letter to the church in Ephesus saying two positives: 1) I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance. 2) that you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false. First, he is acknowledging the churches service to their community and people. Second, he is acknowledging that they have good theology, they know their word and they put to test false teachers, and proved them wrong. After acknowledging these two good things, he points at the bad. "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

This is the major theme of Colossians. Colossians is a letter to a church that is very young in the faith that needs to be strengthened, needs to be informed not just emotionally but physically about what has just happened to them in their hearing and trusting in Jesus and his gospel. They need to be taught how to pursue Christian maturity and warned against outside threats of teachers who are trying to sway a young church made up of people recently converted from Greek paganism.

In Chapter 1, Paul explains to the church not just emotionally but physically what is this gospel that they have recently put their faith in. As the Commentator N.T. Wright says "In a world where many varied "religious experiences" were on offer, Paul gives the Colossians the theological framework of understanding within which they will be able to make sense of what God has been doing in their lives.

In **Ch. 2** he talks about the different false teachings. In **ch. 3**, he explains to them how now to live and deal with sin in response to the Cross, then in **Ch. 4** closes in summary. Our focus will be to understand, as believers now at Seaside, as Paul is trying to communicate to the believers in Colossae, a couple of themes. 1) What is the Gospel? And what are some physical signs of it working in our body? 2) What is God's Grace? How does Grace re-define who we are? How does grace allow us to deal with our sin? And 3) How do we go forward living out who God already views us as?

Let's close with looking at verse 5 in Revelation 2. How do we view or understand repentance? How does God want us to understand and view repentance?