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| **Bellevue Chapel**  **Colossians**  **April-May 2019** |  |

**Colossians: Jesus is Everything**

The book of Colossians was written by Paul and Timothy (1:1, 4:18) to Christians in Colossae (1:2) and was intended to be shared with their neighbouring church in Laodicea (2:1; 4:13,15-16). Paul makes clear his concern and efforts for these two churches, even though he does not know them personally (2:1).

These churches were founded by Epaphras (1:7-8; 4:12) who was in prison with Paul (1:7; 4:12; Philemon 22). It appears that Epaphras has been speaking to Paul about these churches, and in the discussion, it becomes clear that they are struggling with some of the same issues Paul has encountered elsewhere. Of particular concern to Paul are those false teachers who suggest that there is some hidden knowledge or “mystery” that must be discovered in addition to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul launches a robust defence of the gospel, and forcefully argues that the God has revealed everything in Jesus Christ, and that Christ and Christ alone is the heart of the gospel message. Refuting the false teaching that we need Jesus “plus something else” is a reoccurring theme in many of Paul’s letters.

Colossians contains incredibly truths about who Jesus is and what God has done for us through Christ. Like most of Paul’s letters, Colossians has a great list of folk who supported and worked alongside Paul in gospel ministry and the letter has much to say about how we conduct our relationships inside and outside of the church.

It takes 10-15 minutes to read the whole of Colossians. As we read this beautiful letter together as a church, we would encourage everyone to read the whole of Colossians as many times as possible, that the wonderful truths of God’s word might sink deep into our hearts, minds and lives.

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| **Sunday 28th April** | **The Gospel bears fruit Colossians 1:1-14**  The opening verses of Colossians are filled with joy as Paul gives thanks to God for the way the Christians at Colossae have embraced Christ.  Paul delights to let them know that gospel that they have come to believe, “is bearing fruit and growing throughout the world”.  Paul then turns from thanksgiving to prayer, expressing his longing for the gospel to bear fruit in their lives in ever increasing measure. | **Christiaan** |
| **Sunday 5th May** | **Jesus is everything! Colossians 1:15-23**  In this beautiful passage, Paul paints a stunning panorama of the character and work of Jesus Christ. Repeated throughout is the phrase, “all things”/” everything” as Paul explains that Jesus is over everything and changes everything. | **Christiaan** |
| **Sunday 12th May** | **No pain, no gain Colossians 1:24-2:5**  Paul begins, “I rejoice in what I am suffering for you”. Speaking of “strenuously contending”, Paul outlines the task he has been given by God, and the suffering this involves.  However, his suffering has a goal: “that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, name Christ”. | **Adrian** |
| **Sunday 19th May** | **Accept no substitutes Colossians 2:6-23**  Paul encourages the Colossians to keep Christ at the centre of their lives in light of alternative offers, which Paul describes as “hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition”. Taking on those who would seek to add human tradition to Christian faith, Paul urges the Colossians to depend upon Christ alone. | **David** |
| **Sunday 26th May** | **Set Jesus at the centre of your life Colossians 3:1-4:1**  Paul’s instruction to “set your hearts [and] minds on things above” is backed up with practical instructions and encouragement that will enable the Colossians to put Christ at the centre of every part of their lives. | **George** |
| **Sunday 2nd June** | **Team Jesus Colossians 4:2-18**  These closing verses of Colossians are a reminder of the network of people with whom Paul worked as he sought to proclaim the gospel and establish churches. Referring to them as “brothers and sisters”, “fellow workers” and “fellow servants” the strength and warmth of these vital relationships shines through, as does their partnership in the gospel. | **Christiaan** |