

Sermon

July 13, 2025

Colossians 1:1–14

Anchored in Christ's Redemption

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen!

Today, we explore Colossians 1:1–14, a passage radiant with the glory of Jesus Christ—His sinless life, sacrificial suffering, atoning death, triumphant resurrection, and redeeming work. Paul's words to the Colossians, written nearly two millennia ago, speak powerfully to us, grounding us in the gospel's hope and calling us to lives transformed by the Spirit of God. Let's unpack this text verse by verse, tying its truths to Christ's saving work and drawing illustrations from recent global events.

Greeting and Gratitude (Colossians 1:1–8)

Paul opens, *"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father"* (Col. 1:1–2). Paul's authority as an apostle comes from God's call to proclaim Christ. The Colossians are "saints," set apart by Jesus' death, which reconciled us to God, and His resurrection, which grants new life. This greeting roots our identity in Christ's finished work—His life fulfilled the law, His death paid the Devil's ransom. His resurrection seals our eternal peace with God.

Paul continues with thanksgiving: *"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven"* (Col. 1:3–5). The Colossians' faith, love, and hope reflect the gospel's power. Their faith rests in Christ, who lived perfectly, suffered for our sins, and rose to secure our hope. This hope, stored in heaven, is unshaken because Christ's resurrection defeated death, assuring our eternal inheritance. Their love is the natural outflowing from such faith and hope.

Consider an event in Turkey. On February 6, 2023, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake devastated Kahramanmaraş, Turkey, killing over 53,000 and displacing millions. In

Adiyaman, the Adiyaman Protestant Church, led by Pastor Hüseyin Çelik, partnered with local NGOs to distribute food and tents to 500 families, reflecting the Colossians' love rooted in Christ's resurrection. Their actions, grounded in faith, point to Jesus, who restores all things through His death and resurrection.

Paul notes this hope comes from *“the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing”* (Col. 1:5–6). The gospel, brought by a fellow by the name of Epaphras (Col. 1:7–8), is a living force, transforming lives globally. Jesus' life fulfilled God's law, His death atoned for sin, and His resurrection empowers the gospel's spread, bearing fruit from the Colossae of Paul's day to the Turkey of today and beyond.

Prayer for Spiritual Growth (Colossians 1:9–14)

Paul prays, *“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding”* (Col. 1:9). Paul seeks spiritual maturity, not worldly gain—knowing God's will through Christ, who is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). Jesus' sinless life modeled obedience, His death secured our righteousness, and His resurrection grants sanctification, guiding us in God's will.

Paul prays the Colossians *“walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”* (Col. 1:10). A life worthy of the Lord mirrors Jesus' obedience, even unto death (Phil. 2:8). Our good works flow from Christ's saving work—His death paid our debt, and His resurrection empowers us to bear fruit in love and mercy.

In 2021, Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Foundation launched the Jio Institute in Navi Mumbai, India, a research university advancing AI and sustainable technologies. By 2024, it partnered with MIT to offer cutting-edge programs, providing scholarships to underprivileged students. This vision reflects the hope of lifting many from poverty's grasp, similar to the Colossians' love born of faith in Christ's resurrection, inspiring us to bear fruit in service.

Paul prays they be *“strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy”* (Col. 1:11). This divine power, which

raised Jesus from the dead, equips us for endurance, mirroring Christ's perseverance on the cross (Heb. 12:2). In trials, we need this strength to stand firm with joy.

Paul urges gratitude to the Father, "*who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light*" (Col. 1:12). We were disqualified by sin, but Jesus' death paid our penalty, and His resurrection secured our inheritance, making us heirs of God's kingdom.

Paul elaborates: "*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*" (Col. 1:13–14). We were enslaved to sin, but Jesus' life fulfilled the law, His death redeemed us, and His resurrection transferred us into His kingdom. His blood forgives, and His victory assures our place in God's light.

Amy Purdy faced a life-threatening crisis at age 19 when she contracted bacterial meningitis. The infection led to septic shock, resulting in the amputation of both legs below the knees, the loss of her spleen, and near-fatal kidney failure. Bedridden and depressed, Purdy felt her dreams of snowboarding and an active life were over, plunging her into hopelessness. Chris Cook, a prosthetist at the Center for Orthotic and Prosthetic Care, intervened. Recognizing her determination but understanding her physical and emotional limitations, Cook designed custom prosthetic legs tailored for her mobility and snowboarding goals. He worked tirelessly with her, adjusting the prosthetics and providing emotional encouragement, teaching her how to walk and eventually snowboard again. His expertise and commitment enabled Purdy to regain mobility within months, return to competitive snowboarding by 2000, and later win Paralympic bronze medals (2014, 2018) and become a motivational speaker, author (*On My Own Two Feet*, 2014), and *Dancing with the Stars* finalist. Purdy credits Cook's intervention as the sole reason she could rebuild her life, as her physical condition made independent recovery impossible. Like Amy, we are helpless to live the life God intended. Jesus has come to our aid. He has given us a new heart, a new life, and is with us all the way through this life encouraging us, supporting us, strengthening us, guiding us.

Colossians 1:1–14 anchors us in Christ's saving work. First, our faith rests in Jesus alone. His life, death, and resurrection are our hope. Second, we're called to bear

fruit. Third, we need God's strength for endurance. Finally, give thanks. Jesus' work has secured our inheritance.

Colossians 1:1–14 centers us on Jesus, whose life, suffering, death, and resurrection redeem us. In a world of rivalries, corruption, greed, earthquakes and war, root yourself in Him. Pray for wisdom, live fruitfully, endure joyfully, and give thanks for His redemption. Amen.

The peace of God guard your hearts and minds as you believe and trust in Him.

Pastor Ron Breight Christ Lutheran Church Forest Hills, Pennsylvania

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