

April 21, 2024

Worship | 8:15 and 11 am

Livestream | 11 am



LEXINGTON

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

For God's glory, we are making disciples of Jesus as we worship, love, and serve.

WELCOME

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. We invite you to experience the meaning of the Gospel through this service, which reflects both ancient and modern elements of Christian worship. When we gather as a worshipping community, we enter into a dialogue with the living God. God calls us into worship, we rejoice in the hope of the gospel, confess our sins, lament the brokenness of our world, give our offerings, and hear God's Word read and preached. We hope that by worshipping with us you will experience joy and hope from a community of people who love Jesus.

At Lexington Presbyterian Church for God's glory, we are making disciples of Jesus as we worship, love, and serve.

Complete our Connect Card at lexpreschurch.com/connect to join us on mission!

General inquiries: hello@lexpreschurch.com

LORD'S DAY WORSHIP

Prelude

PRAISE

Updates | Following Christ Together

Call to Worship | Psalm 67:1-4

*Leader: May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,*

All: that your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.

*Leader: Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!*

All: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.

Trinity Hymnal # 115—All Creatures of Our God and King



1. All crea - tures of our God and King, lift up your voice and
 2. Thou rush - ing wind that art so strong, ye clouds that sail in
 3. Thou flow - ing wa - ter, pure and clear, make mu - sic for thy
 4. And all ye men of ten - der heart, for - giv - ing oth - ers,
 5. Let all things their Cre - a - tor bless, and wor - ship him in



with us sing al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Thou burn - ing
 heav'n a - long, O praise him, al - le - lu - ia! Thou ris - ing
 Lord to hear, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Thou fire so
 take your part, O sing ye, al - le - lu - ia! Ye who long
 hum - ble - ness, O praise him, al - le - lu - ia! Praise, praise the



sun with gold - en beam, thou sil - ver moon with soft - er gleam,
 morn in praise re - joice, ye lights of eve - ning, find a voice,
 mas - ter - ful and bright, that giv - est man both warmth and light,
 pain and sor - row bear, praise God and on him cast your care,
 Fa - ther, praise the Son, and praise the Spir - it, three in one,



O praise him, O praise him, al - le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

TEXT: Francis of Assisi, ca. 1225; Tr. by William H. Draper, 1926

TUNE: (LASST UNS ERFREUEN) Geistliche Kirchengesänge, Cologne, 1623

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Prayer of Invocation

Scripture Reading | Colossians 2:1-10 | Pew Bible pp. 983-984

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

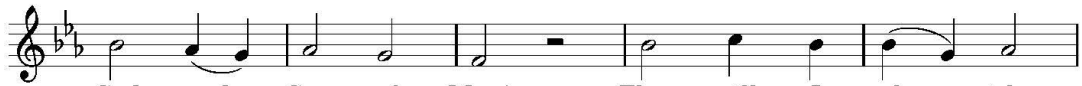
Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

Trinity Hymnal # 170—Fairest Lord Jesus



1. Fair - est Lord Je - sus, Rul - er of all na - ture, Son of
2. Fair are the mead - ows, fair are the wood - lands, robed in the
3. Fair is the sun - shine, fair is the moon - light, and all the
4. Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior! Lord of the na - tions! Son of



God and Son of Man! Thee will I cher - ish,
bloom - ing garb of spring: Je - sus is fair - er,
twink - ling, star - ry host: Je - sus shines bright - er,
God and Son of Man! Glo - ry and hon - or,



thee will I hon - or, thou, my soul's glo - ry, joy, and crown.
Je - sus is pur - er, who makes the woe - ful heart to sing.
Je - sus shines pur - er than all the an - gels heav'n can boast.
praise, ad - o - ra - tion, now and for - ev - er - more be thine.

TEXT: Münster Gesangbuch, 1677; Tr. 1850, 1873

TUNE: (CRUSADER'S HYMN) Silesian folk song; Schlesische Volkslieder, Leipzig, 1842

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RENEWAL

Spiritual Call to Confession | Isaiah 59:1-2

*Leader: Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save,
or his ear dull, that it cannot hear;
but your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
and your sins have hidden his face from you
so that he does not hear.*

Corporate Confession of Sin | Psalm 51:1-5; 10-12

All: Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.
Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Silent Confession

Words of Comfort | Psalm 55:22

[Please stand]

*Leader: Cast your burden on the Lord,
 and he will sustain you;
 he will never permit
 the righteous to be moved.*

Passing of the Peace

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.
All: And also with you.

Jesus, Strong and Kind

1. Je - sus said that if I thirst, I should come to him.
2. Je - sus said if I am weak, I should come to him.
3. Je - sus said that if I fear, I should come to him.
4. Je - sus said if I am lost, he will come to me.

5
No one else can sat - is - fy, I should come to him. [verse 2]
No one else can be my strength, I should come to him.
No one else can be my shield, I should come to him. } For the
And he showed me on that cross, he will come to me.

9
Lord is good and faith - ful. He will keep us day and night. We can

13
al - ways run to Je - sus. Je - sus, strong and kind.

CCLI Song #7139992

Words and Music by Colin Buchanan, Michael Farren, Jonny Robinson, and Rich Tompson

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Worship Through Giving

The offering is a way for members and friends of Lexington Presbyterian to present the substance of their whole lives to God. Please feel no pressure to give.

Ways to give:

- You may use the offering plates located in the back of the sanctuary as you exit.
- Go to “Giving” on your Church Center mobile app, or lexpres.churchcenter.com.
- Text2Give: text any dollar amount to 84321 to give.

Friendship Register

Kindly remember to give your neighbor the Friendship Register. Once it reaches the end of the pew, then please pass it back. Making acquaintances with guests and fostering friendships within the larger church family is the goal of this register. Starting from the middle aisle, the register is located at the head of each pew.

One God, One People, One Voice | Choir Anthem [11 a.m. service only]

When we were in darkness, when our joy was gone,
when in fear and weakness we could not go on;
Then God sent the good news: He had paid the price.
We could be accepted through the blood of Jesus Christ.

So that with one heart and with one voice we may glorify the Father;
for through Jesus Christ, His Son, ev'ry wall is broken down.
And then one day, in His presence, we will fill all heav'n with harmony,
united for eternity, one God, one people, one voice.

God gives us endurance with His mighty hand
so we can reach the lost ones, help the weak to stand.
Encouraging and patient, growing day by day,
following His footsteps as He guides our homeward way.

So that with one heart and with one voice we may glorify the Father;
for through Jesus Christ, His Son, ev'ry wall is broken down.
And then one day, in His presence, we will fill all heav'n with harmony,
united for eternity, one God, one people, one voice;
one God, one people, one voice;
one voice!

Words and Music by Larry Shackley
CCLI #: 668805

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Corporate Prayer

Children Sermon | Growing Donuts from Seed? Yes, Please!

Scripture Reading | Colossians 1:1-8 | p. 983

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

² To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷ just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf⁸ and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Sermon | The Colossian Letter's Pertinence and Relevance for Today

Rev. Dr. Curt McDaniel

Sermon Notes

Introduction: The Colossian Letter's Pertinence and Relevance for Today

It is impossible to understand the importance and significance of the Colossian letter's message without first understanding the background, history, issues, and reasons that prompted the letter's writing. Failure to explore these topics can easily lead readers astray from grasping their central truths: "The apostle pointed out to the Colossians in a more excellent way. It was the one purpose of Christianity to satisfy those very yearnings which were working in their hearts, to solve that very problem which had exercised their minds. In Christ, they would find the answer which they sought. His life—His cross and resurrection—was the guarantee; His Person—the Word Incarnate—was the solution. He alone filled up, He alone could fill up, the void which lay between God and man, could span the gulf which separated the Creator and creation. This solution offered by the Gospel is as simple as it is adequate." What do we know that caused this letter's writing? Key thoughts:

1. **The Founding of the Colossian Church** (likely AD 54-56) resulted from the two-plus year ministry of Paul in Ephesus, according to Acts 19:10: "All the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." One of them was Epaphras, a Colossian who heard Paul's preaching and teaching in Ephesus (100 miles west of Colossae) and took the gospel back to his hometown and shared it with his family and friends (1:7). One of the converts to Christianity in this city was a man named Philemon, who, along with his wife Apphia and son Archippus (Philemon 2), became dear to Paul in the faith. Philemon had a slave named Onesimus, who apparently was caught stealing from his master (Philemon 18) and fled from him into the open world. By God's providence, his wanderings brought him to the place where Paul was imprisoned, and someone from the apostle's group recognized him. He was then brought in to see Paul, subsequently heard the gospel, and professed faith in Christ.
2. **Paul's imprisonment.** For centuries, it was believed that Paul was in chains in Rome; however, that view continues to present difficulties and challenges. The two most prominent perspectives are:
 - *Traditional view:* Rome. Paul ministered in Ephesus for two years. Apparently

he had successfully built a significant ministry there that threatened the economic livelihood of the Temple merchants at the shrine of Artemus, the fertility god of the Ephesians. This prompted a great riot in the city that poured mobs of protesters into the great outdoor theater of Ephesus. Some estimate that up to 20,000 people flocked into this arena and shouted loud peals of intimidation against Paul and his followers (Acts 19:28). When the riot ended, the apostle sensed that his time in Ephesus was now complete. It was time to move on.

So, he said goodbye and traveled throughout Macedonia (northern Greece today) and stayed for three months (Acts 20:3). He made stops at Philippi (20:6), Troas (20:6), Assos (Acts 20:14), Mitylene (20:14), Chios (20:15), Samos (20:15), and Miletus (20:15) where he called for the elders at the Ephesian church (20:17). When they arrived, there was a very emotional meeting between them and Paul because, as Acts 20:38 states, “What grieved them the most was his statement that they would never see his face again.” From Miletus, Acts 21 records Paul’s boat journey to Ptolemais (21:7) where they traveled on land to Jerusalem (21:15, 17). At Jerusalem, Paul reported to James and the elders of his ministry to the Gentiles (21:19).

While in Jerusalem at the Temple, he was spotted by some Jews and was seized by a mob who attempted to kill him (21:31). This caught the attention of the Roman commander, who intervened while they were beating the apostle (21:32). Paul was chained and put in the barracks while the angry crowd shouted, “Away with him!” (21:36). Because he was fluent in both Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew, Paul was able to speak to the Roman commander in Greek (21:37), who allowed him to speak in Aramaic to the angry mob. Acts 22 records Paul’s testimony of his faith in Christ and call to the work of an apostle (missionary) church planter. His testimony infuriated the crowd and caused a great uproar among the mob and the Sanhedrin (23:10). While in the barracks, Luke records these words in Acts 23:11:

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said,
“Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem,
so you must also testify in Rome.”

The rest of Acts 23 and subsequent chapters record Paul's journey to Rome. Acts 28:16 teaches that Paul was allowed to live by himself under the guard of a soldier. Acts 28:30 says that from this rented house (not a cell or dungeon), Paul preached the gospel boldly and without hindrance for two years. In addition, he welcomed many people who came to visit him, some from the churches that he established while he stayed in Ephesus. It is believed that Onesimus, the runaway slave, came to Paul's rental home, heard the gospel, and became a new Christian convert. In addition, ancient manuscripts K (Codex Mosquensis) and L (Codex Angelicus) are inscribed with the words, "Written from Rome by Tychicus and Onesimus." Likewise, the church historian Eusebius stated that Paul was in Rome and "Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow prisoner."

DIFFICULTY: "What most harms the Roman imprisonment theory is distance from Colossae, some 1,200 miles—it requires all these Lycus Valley believers to be present in Rome, have the financial wherewithal to return, and then again go back to Rome."

- *Modern view:* Ephesus. We know that the apostle experienced numerous imprisonments (note the plural in 2 Corinthians 6:5 and 11:23), and when you examine the Corinthian and Roman letters (1 Corinthians 4:9-13, 15:32, 2 Corinthians 1:8, 4:8-12, Romans 16:3-4), you get the sense that something other than a Roman confinement is implied. Clearly, this appears in 2 Corinthians 11:23: "...Far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death." We know that Timothy was located in Ephesus (Acts 19:22, 1 Corinthians 16:10, 1 Timothy 1:3) and not Rome. As for Tychicus, we know that he was in Rome and in Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:12), especially at the end of Paul's detention. We see that Aristarchus was present during the Ephesian riot (Acts 19:29). With these companions of Paul noted, it becomes paramount to consider the perils of sea travel to and from Rome, especially during seasonal weather changes. At least four trips are implied in texts (Colossians 1:7-8, Philemon 8-12, Colossians 4:7-8, Ephesians 6:22, and Philemon 12, 22). McKnight summarizes the issue aptly: "How such people could all be in Rome is harder to explain than an Ephesian imprisonment. In fact, I am inclined to think that, for the slave

Onesimus, traveling 1,200 miles to Rome, being sent back home 1,200 miles to Colossae, and then, at Paul's request, returning 1,200 miles to Rome yet again beggars the imaginations at the level of historical realities." Finally, consider that Aristarchus was with Paul in prison (Colossians 4:10), and we know he was taken in custody at Ephesus (Acts 19:29), and that Philemon 22 shows Paul's request to Philemon to prepare him a room. If this were a Roman confinement, it would conflict with Romans 15:14-33 which indicates that Paul was headed to Spain after his release. If Paul's imprisonment were in Ephesus, it would have to be earlier than Rome, perhaps around AD 57, the likely year of the Ephesian riot led by Demetrius (Acts 19:23ff).

3. **Epaphras' visit and report to Paul.** While under arrest, Paul welcomed all who came to him (Acts 28:30). When they came, they brought reports of the work of the gospel in their towns and of the ministry of the believers in their respective churches. One who came to him was Epaphras, a man from Colossae who heard Paul preach the gospel in his two years in Ephesus. Colossae was only 100 miles from Ephesus, so after time spent with Paul in discipleship and training, Epaphras took the gospel back to his hometown and not only planted a church there, but also likely one in Laodicea (10 miles away) and another in Hierapolis (6 miles further north), according to Colossians 4:13.

Apparently, not too long into the development of the Colossian church, some person or group brought false teachings and erring philosophies into this fledgling congregation, causing great concern to Epaphras. Out of this concern, he travels to the place of Paul's confinement (Rome or Ephesus) to talk to the apostle about the situation, and from this visit, the letter to the Colossians was penned.

But while Epaphras visits Paul, he sees Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave. Epaphras led Philemon to Christ, and now the apostle has told him that his friend's fugitive servant is now a Christian. He realizes that there must be reconciliation between his wealthy friend (Philemon) and the runaway slave (Onesimus). It is here that Paul pens a second, brief letter to Philemon, asking the believer to forgive and to receive Onesimus back into his home, not just as a slave but as a new believer in Christ. So with one visit from the founding pastor of the Colossian church, two, likely three, letters were written by Paul and given to Tychicus (Colossians 4:7) and

Onesimus (Colossians 4:9) for delivery: 1) The Colossian letter; 2) The Letter to Philemon; and likely 3) The Laodicean letter (Colossians 4:16) - what we believe today was the Letter to the Ephesians. When these letters were received, they were read publicly.

4. **The Colossian “Philosophy,” an opponent to the gospel.** To understand the issues that caused this letter’s writing, you need to comprehend something about Colossae and the Lycus Valley. Sadly, the lack of archeological work at the ancient city still leaves us with many questions, yet we can still piece together prominent themes that form the opposition to the early Christian gospel proclamation. In the Lycus Valley, there were three prominent cities: Hierapolis, Laodicea, and the smaller Colossae. Connecting these cities was the Lycus River, a tributary of the Maeander River. This valley became prosperous from the abundant production of textiles and wool from a unique black sheep; however, a devastating earthquake in AD 61 left little remaining in Colossae, yet Laodicea was able to rebuild its fortresses. It is believed Paul’s letter arrived shortly before this catastrophe.

From this prosperous center, a major east-west trade route was formed, connecting this valley to Ephesus and the Aegean Sea. As with any trade route, not only are there merchants traveling on business ventures, but also there are people from all walks of life, beliefs, philosophies, and worldviews coming and going. New ideas, teachings, and debates were passed around just as fast as the sale and distribution of wool garments and blankets. We detected at least four different groups living in Colossae when the Colossian Letter was written:

- *A sizeable Jewish minority* (likely 2,000-3,000 people) stems from a transplantation of nearly 11,000 Jews into this entire region two centuries before by Antiochus the Great to stabilize it. These Jews were orthodox practitioners with ties back to the Temple of Jerusalem, and they paid their temple taxes. This orthodoxy would insist on Jewish ceremonial laws and observances, as taught in the Torah: “The Colossians are being influenced by Jews, or perhaps better, Jewish Christians, who advocated certain ascetic practices and ecstatic spiritual experiences in order to attain ‘higher levels’ of understanding of the mysteries of God.”

- *A larger population practiced sorcery and participated in the mystery cults*, as documented dramatically by Luke in Acts 19:18-20. Apparently, this entire region of Asia Minor was permeated with the practice of black magic, enchantments, witchcraft, and necromancy.
- *Perhaps an even larger population practiced Roman and Greek mythology*, as seen in Ephesus with the Greek Temple of Artemis (the Roman goddess “Diana”), and in Hierapolis with the Temple of Apollo (the Roman god of music and medicine) and the Plutonium (the Temple of Pluto, the Roman god of the underworld). Strabo’s ancient description of the latter is jarring and breathtaking in effect:

The Plutonium...is an opening of only moderate size, large enough to admit a man, but it reaches a considerable depth, and it is enclosed by a quadrilateral handrail, about half a plethrum in circumference, and this space is full of a vapor so misty and dense that one can scarcely see the ground. Now to those who approach the handrail anywhere around the enclosure, the air is harmless since the outside is free from that vapor in calm weather, but any animal that passes inside meets instant death. At any rate, bulls that are led into it fall and are dragged out dead; and I threw in sparrows and they immediately breathed their last and fell. But the Galli, who are eunuchs, pass inside with such impunity that they even approach the opening, bend over it, and descend into it to a certain depth, though they hold their breath as much as they can (for I could see in their countenances an indication of a kind of suffocating attack, as it were), whether this immunity belongs to all who are maimed in this way or only to those around the temple, or whether it is because of divine providence, as would be likely in the case of divine obsessions, or whether it is the result of certain physical powers that are antidotes against the vapor.

- *A region dominated by mystic, Greek thought*, seen especially in the Hellenistic quest for wisdom, knowledge, and transcendent thought, obtained either by humanistic rationalism (the Greek pursuit of philosophy) or by the Jewish practice of asceticism, a series of rituals aimed at buffeting the body and mind in such a way as to position the soul to receive ecstatic revelations, secret

knowledge, and mystic insights. It was believed that this pursuit and attainment of supernatural knowledge would ward off and defeat the many spirits and demonic forces (“elemental powers of the earth”) present and actively working in the world.

Against these forces of paganism, sorcery, ascetic ceremonialism, and humanistic rationalism, the gospel was advancing in the formation of a fledgling congregation at Colossae. Yet, it seems that early in the spiritual development of these new believers and in the discipleship formation of their fellowship, some or all of these forces were pressing against them in an effort to lead them away from the central truths of the Christian faith. Was it one or several “errorists” or “false teachers” that were attempting this? Colossians 2:4 only states, “In order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments” (“no one” also appears in 2:8, 16, and 18). While there could have been one false teacher, there may have been several. You are reading a letter that attempts to combat false philosophy, paganistic sorcery, legalism, and humanistic rationalism with the revelation, power, and supernatural wonder of the Christian gospel.

5. The Apostle Paul’s Language Strategy. The plight of the Colossian church parallels the plight of North American Christianity today. Our western culture has been barraged by a frontal attack empowered with elements such as, but not limited to:

Paganism	Mysticism, Astrology, Occultism	Humanistic philosophy
Traditionalism	Legalism, human performance	Ceremonialism & rote

Like the situation at Colossae, all these belief systems (“isms”) say to the modern-day Christian, *“It is ok to believe some of this Christian truth, but you do not need to believe all of it. Take the best ingredients from all these systems and contour them with your own system of practice for living today. Faith in Christ may be all right, but it is not sufficient. Christ is not a complete Savior. You must add these other things to find total sufficiency.”*

It is this dilemma—the situation explained by Epaphras to Paul—that empowered the apostle to author the Letter to the Colossians. What is the central message in this letter?

- Jesus Christ is the fullness of God in human form (1:19, 2:9);
- So do not follow deceptive and hollow philosophy (2:8);

- Continue to live and to grow from your rootedness in Christ (2:6-7);
- Do not let anyone judge you (2:16);
- Live like a Christian filled with the fullness of Christ in this dark world (chapters 3-4).

Paul's strategy in crafting this letter shows five clear components:

- * *Methodology*: It is important to realize that there is a definitive method that the apostle used in writing this letter, a method that represents: 1) an understanding of the forces and enemies that were trying to persuade the Colossians away from the gospel; 2) the explicit components (content) of the gospel that expose and confront the error; and 3) the form of argumentation (persuasion) that would serve best in connecting the minds of his Colossian readers to the truths of the gospel. This methodology is best seen when reading and analyzing the thought processes that the apostle used to “get into the minds” of the Colossian believers, carefully applying biblical revelation to human comprehension in order to persuade:

The letters of Paul are not theoretical exercises in theological exploration, and neither are they objective descriptions of the content; rather, they are pastoral letters driven by mission... There is a local, contingent reality to Colossians that must be respected. That is, the coherent message in Paul's overall theology comes to expression in this particular contingency called Colossians in a dialectical manner. To the degree that we can determine this contingency (the context, the setting, the date, the opponents), to that same degree we can determine how Paul's theology came to expression for that context... We can learn more about the precise context of this letter from those who study Colossians from the angle of rhetorical criticism.” To that end, we shall employ this approach—with others—in our study of this text. It is quite clear that in this letter, the apostle chooses to employ deliberative rhetoric.

- * *Vocabulary usage*: To a first-century world obsessed with secret knowledge, mysteries, Jewish mysticism, ceremonial performances, and practices that will repel evil powers and authorities, it is little wonder that Paul uses words such as “knowledge” (1:9, 10, 2:2,3), “wisdom” (1:9, 28, 2:3, 23, 3:16, 4:5), “understanding” (1:9,

2:2), “mystery” (1:26, 2:2, 4:3), “asceticism” (2:18, 23), and “fullness” (1:19, 2:2, 2:9-10).

- * *Power imagery*: Repeatedly, the language crafted by the apostle puts a reader into a mode of envisioning the conflict and battle between the forces of God and the forces of evil, pictured as the “dominions, rulers, and authorities” (1:16, 2:15), and the “elemental spirits of the world” (2:8). Additionally, the words utilized to depict the accomplishment of redemption and the atonement reveal power displays (1:13, 20-22, 2:11-15) to convince the reader of the superiority of Christ over the forces of the world and of the devil.
- * *Jewish imagery*: The selection of words “circumcision,” “tradition,” “festival,” “new moon,” “Sabbath,” and “psalms” in chapters 2 and 3 all point to the presence of a Jewish audience and mindset. The apostle carefully chose these words to show his Jewish readers how Christ’s accomplishment fulfills every aspect of Jewish law, ceremony, and the pursuit of divine truth.
- * *Modeling*: In a mystical world filled with demonic and barbaric behaviors and practices, the best witness is seen in an orderly life, marriage, home, and in the treatment of others. The final 2 chapters in the Colossian letter are intended to show believers how to take the internalized gospel and demonstrate it externally by the character they display and by the way they treat each other in the church, in the home, and in the community:

We have here one of the earliest examples of the mode in which Christianity operated upon these relations: not by any violent disruption of the organization of society, such as could only have produced another Servile War, but by gradually leavening and interpenetrating society with the spirit of a religion that recognized the equality of all men in the sight of God.

When a reader and disciple of Christ understands some of these principles and dynamics from history, culture, and language, a more fruitful and engaging reading of the Colossian Letter will inevitably yield greater benefit and a more lasting impact.

Footnotes:

1. J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*. Revised Text. Fourteenth Printing. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, 115.

2. Gregory-Aland 018, 9th century:
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_018
3. Gregory-Aland 020, 9th century:
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/Manuscript/Group/GA_020
4. Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History II:22.1:
<https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250102.htm>. This links with Colossians 4:10 and Acts 27:2.
5. Scot McKnight, The Letter to the Colossians. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Ed. Joel B. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, 37.
6. Ibid., 38.
7. Various spellings exist, yet it is most often seen as “Maeander” or “Meander” River.
8. Strabo, Geography XII:8: xvi:
https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/12H*.html
9. Tacitus, Annals XIV:27:
https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Tacitus/Annals/14A*.html
10. James D.G. Dunn, The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Eds. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, 22.
11. Josephus, Antiquities, XII:147-153.
12. Marianne Meye Thompson, Colossians and Philemon. Two Horizons New Testament Commentary. Eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 7.
13. Clinton E. Arnold, The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996, for a good overview; McKnight, 20.
14. Strabo, Geography, XIII:4.14. For an excellent description of this sight, go to:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoYi1BJ4cis>
15. Ben Witherington III, The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A

Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, 104.

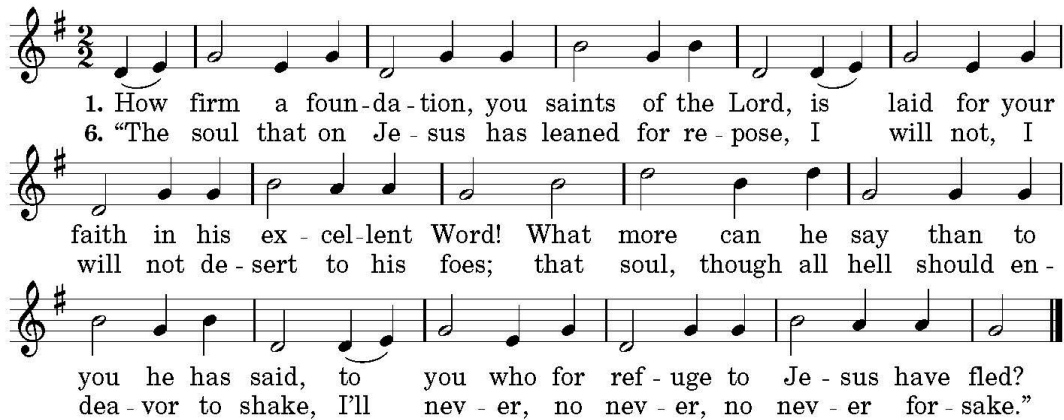
16. W.J. Conybeare and J.S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*. Fifteen Printing. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978, 688.

Trinity Hymnal # 94— How Firm a Foundation

TEXT: Rippon's Selection of Hymns, 1787; alt.; Mod.

TUNE: (FOUNDATION) Traditional American melody; J. Funk's A Compilation of Genuine Church Music, 1832

CCLI #: 668805



1. How firm a foun-da-tion, you saints of the Lord, is laid for your
6. "The soul that on Je-sus has leaned for re- pose, I will not, I
faith in his ex- cel-lent Word! What more can he say than to
will not de- sert to his foes; that soul, though all hell should en-
you he has said, to you who for ref- uge to Je- sus have fled?
dea- vor to shake, I'll nev- er, no nev- er, no nev- er for- sake."

Sending

Benediction | Colossians 1:9-14

Leader: 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, so as to 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; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 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.

Postlude

Serving This Morning:

Updates: Anita Boland.

Liturgist: Owen McCullough.

Pastoral Prayer: Steve Baarendse.

Readers: Kempson Parnell and Vicki Accordini.

Musicians: Angela Brant, Heather Coleridge, Theron Drayton, Jeff Francis, Barb Howell, Jackson Love, and Tim McConnell.

Audio/visual and livestream: Tommy Spurgeon, Jeff Becker and Don Parker.

Stewardship

- LPC fiscal budget year is July 1st to June 30th.
- The current budget was revised on January 1st, 2024.

Through the end of March, 2024:

Budget FYTD \$922,937

Received FYTD \$982,594

Expenditures FYTD \$932,493

Updates

Last Spring Midweek Reset | April 24

Join us for the Last Spring Midweek Reset this Wednesday, **April 24th!** Our evening begins with a delicious meal at 5:30 p.m. in Tomlin Hall. Then at 6:15 p.m. we have discipleship opportunities for all ages including children, youth, men, women, and a co-ed small group. Remember to register for the meal each week at lexpres.churchcenter.com/registrations. Also, children ages three through the fifth grade must register for Kids Quest at lexpres.churchcenter.com/registrations. See you there!

Study on Book of Colossians

Pastor Curt will start a new series of expository preaching on the book of Colossians today. Please, make time to prayerfully read through the book this week in order to have deeper understanding of God's wisdom.

Church Administrator and Director of Youth Ministry

LPC is seeking a full-time Church Administrator (aka Business Manager) and Director of Youth Ministry. Please visit lexpreschurch.com and click on "Jobs" at the bottom of the home page to view the full job description and learn how to apply. Thank you!

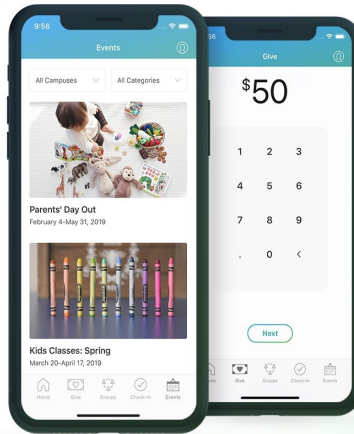
We invite you to download our Church Center from your app store. Or visit lexpres.churchcenter.com.

Help your fellow members find you! Join the Directory in Church Center. In your



- Service Times
- Easy Giving
- Event Signups
- Community Connection
- Family Pre-Check

Download the app



profile, check the boxes to make your contact information visible to others in the Directory.

Need help? Visit the Church Center Help Desk in the Welcome Center.

Missions this summer

Are you looking for an opportunity to serve in missions this summer? Check out the listings on our denominations MTW website at <https://www.mtw.org/missiontrips>.

Opportunities to Serve

The Children's Ministry team has immediate needs for loving volunteers the second Sunday of each month in our nursery for the following areas:

- 8:15 Service: one adult lady
- 11:00 Service: an adult couple, 2 adult ladies, or one adult lady and 1-2 teen (s)

Please contact Rebeca at rgallegos@lexpreschurch.com to volunteer or to learn more.

WOMEN, YOU'RE INVITED

LPC Women's Birthday Party

BRUNCH | APRIL 27TH | 11 AM




Scan to register




Pittsburgh Mission Trip
July 13-19, 2024
Registration ends April 30.
For rising 9th - graduated 12th grades
To serve
Covenant Fellowship
Reformed Church





YOUTH
MINISTRY

For more information
 and to register
 click the QR code



INQUIRERS
CLASS

LEARN MORE ABOUT LPC'S
MISSION AND HOW YOU CAN BE PART
OF OUR COMMUNITY!
STARTING APRIL 28TH
DURING CE HOUR | 5 WEEKS




Register Here!

FAITH PROMISE GIVING

At LPC, we are committed to partnering in the mission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations, including how we financially support our ministry partners. While our church budget will continue to set aside at least 10% for local and global mission work each year, all of your Faith Promise gift will go directly to missions. Faith Promise Giving is in addition to your regular church giving.

Faith Promise Giving is not primarily about money; it is about an overflow of generosity from the Spirit for seeing global kingdom expansion. A Faith Promise involves asking God to enable us to give more than we thought we could give, and at the same time trusting him to provide for our daily needs. Lord willing, there will be an increase in our ability to support missions at home and abroad!

ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH GOSPEL HOPE IN LEXINGTON AND AROUND THE WORLD



2024-2025
FAITH PROMISE

lexpreschurch.com | hello@lexpreschurch.com | 803.359.9501 | 246 Barr Rd, Lexington, SC 29072

What a wonderful time this past weekend to hear what God is doing through local missions! LPC supports world and local missions through our general fund budget and through faith promise giving. Last year, total faith promise pledges for missions were \$97,970. As of this past weekend, pledges for our year beginning July 1, 2024, total \$44,400.

Visit the tables in the back of the sanctuary for copies of our 2024-2025 Missional Partners booklet, pledge cards and the Faith Promise Pledge card box to submit your pledge.

Connect Card

Thanks for joining us today!
We would love to come alongside
you in your walk with Jesus,
whether you're new to our
community or you've been here
awhile.

Visit lexpreschurch.com/connect
or scan the QR code to fill out
our Connect Card!

If you're not familiar with QR
codes, we're here to help!

1. Open your smartphone's
camera and point it at the QR
code so that it shows clearly on
your screen.
2. Wait for the camera to
recognize and scan the QR code.
3. Click the link banner or
notification when it pops up on
your screen. Our Connect Card
will automatically load in your
browser!



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