

Church as God intends Reconciled by Christ - Colossians 1:15-23

Welcome (10 mins)

If you could be any character from any book or film, who would you choose and why?

OR

What is the one characteristic you received from your parents you want to keep and one you would want to change?

Worship (10 mins)

WRITE - In the Psalms we find a wonderful model of worship. Many begin with a surprising expression of raw emotion, even dismay and anger at the situation being faced. Then there is often a shift to reflecting on the strength and goodness of God, of his activity in the past and his promises for the future. And finally there is a response on the part of the Psalmist, a commitment to praise and honour the Lord. Take a piece of paper and spend a few minutes creating a short 'Psalm' of your own, using the pattern described above.

SING - Man of Sorrows

Play the lyric video [here](#)

Download the chord chart [here](#) (original key) or [here](#) (lower key)

Word (30 mins)

Read Colossians 1:15-23

1. The "firstborn" in many cultures has the rights of an heir. What rights does Jesus have (vv.15-18)? What is his relationship to "all things"? Why emphasise this?
2. What is his relationship to God and the church? What does "fullness" imply (v.19)?
3. Why did all things need to be reconciled to God (v.20)? How was this achieved by Jesus?
4. How much do you identify with verse 21, even now? Do you still sense "evil" in your mind? How do verses 22-23 make you feel?
5. At times, what people (or forces) seem to be more powerful than Jesus? Why? How do you respond to the fact that even these are under Christ's authority?

Witness (5-10 mins)

In verse 23, Paul states that he has become a servant of the gospel. The Greek for servant is *doulos*, and has to with setting aside one's own right in service of others, like a slave. How does that impact your understanding of how you share your faith?

Wonder (5-10 mins)

Verse 22 says he sees you as 'holy and blameless, without a single fault', flawless, restored, beyond accusation, in Christ. Do you believe this about yourself? Do you need to let go of false guilt or ditch wrong thinking about how you think God sees you? Close your eyes for a moment – take a minute in the silence to let go of any negative feelings or poor self-image assumptions you have about yourself. Ask him to show you how he sees you. Perhaps, if you're brave enough, share what he said to you, after the time in silence.

Church as God intends

A labour of love - Colossians 1:24-2:5

Welcome (10 mins)

What quality do you appreciate most in a friend?
Why?

Worship (10 mins)

Colossians 2:3 says that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge from God. Close your eyes and imagine opening the treasure chest that God gives you in Christ: what do you see, what can you touch, what do you hear? If it helps, you can draw this treasure chest and what you see inside, or just in the silence say out loud what words come to mind as you worship Christ for the mystery of the Gospel - with all its wisdom and knowledge of who we truly are - now revealed to you.

Feel free to play City Alight's Gospel- rich melody in the background or sing along to the words: Yet Not I but Through Christ in Me

Play the lyric video [here](#)

Word (30 mins)

Historical context: Paul wanted the early church to be sure of their salvation in Christ. There was a false teaching making its way around called Gnosticism, whose central teaching was that spirit is entirely good and matter is entirely evil. One of the key errors which flowed from this was that salvation was an escape from the body, achieved not by faith in Christ but by special knowledge (the Greek word for 'knowledge' is gnosis, hence Gnosticism). This in turn led to the belief that because matter/the body was considered evil, sin didn't matter. Paul is reminding them that Jesus was both fully divine and fully human and therefore our bodies and how we live does matter, and that the only special knowledge you need is to trust in Jesus' finished work on the cross.

Read Colossians 1:24-2:5

1. In what sense are Paul's sufferings a continuation of Jesus' sufferings? Why would this lead him to rejoice? (See 2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
2. What is the 'commission God gave' Paul, and who is he serving? (1:24b-26)
3. In 2:3-4, Paul contrasts clever speech and true wisdom. What does this indicate about false teaching infecting the church?
4. What is Paul's purpose in life according to 1:28, 2:2? How would you put it in your own words?
5. Read 2:4 again. What "fine sounding arguments" are you tempted to believe, which hinder you in following Jesus wholeheartedly? How does Paul speak to your concerns.
6. Jesus is described as being like a treasure-chest (2:3). How has finding Christ been like uncovering long-lost buried treasure for you?

Wonder (5-10 mins)

Verse 27 says 'Christ lives in you!' And Paul says that he depends on Christ's mighty power, that works in all of us, to help him live his life. Think about these amazing truths for a moment. Then go around the circle, and pray a short prayer of thanks, and asking that you might access and depend on this great power, in a particular area of your life – your work, parenting your children, studying, family.

Witness (5-10 mins)

Now shift your prayer focus to someone whose eyes need to be opened to the mystery of God, namely Christ. Pray: Lord, I have become a servant by the commission God gave me to present to the word of God in all its fullness (vs25). Holy Spirit, help me to be intentional and faithful to this commission in her/her life.

Church as God Intends

Unity in the body - Colossians 3:1-17

Welcome (10 mins)

Give 3 characteristics that you would most like to be known for. for eg: patient, generous, kind and why these particular ones?

Worship (10 mins)

LET GO - when we worship, we purposefully turn our attention away from ourselves and toward God. We 'set our minds on things above'. But it is quite easy to allow concerns and distractions to reduce our expression of worship, like trying to focus our eyes on two different places at once. Before singing this song, take note of what occupies your thoughts right now. Is there something to ask God's forgiveness for? Is there something to release into God's safekeeping and timing? What do you need to remember, know, or do to set your heart fully on Him today?

SING - Christ Is Enough. Play the lyric video [here](#)

Download the chord chart [here](#) (original key) or [here](#) (lower key)

Word (30 mins)

Read Colossians 3:1-17

- How do we practically grow in our walk with Christ, according to verses 1-4?
- How is setting your mind and heart on Christ related to what he has *already* done for us (v.1)? And how is it related to what he *will* do for us (v.4)?
- Paul contrasts two ways to live. Make two lists comparing the characteristics of the 'earthly nature' (vv.5-9) versus the 'clothing' of the 'new self' (vv.10-14). What stands out?
- What practical difference does this 'new self' make to how we relate to people who are racially, culturally, economically and socially different to us (v.11)?

- What is the strategy Paul gives us to help us live for God day by day (vv.12-17)? Is there a particular 'virtue' which you find most challenging?

Wonder (5-10 mins)

We all lose our temper, or are offended or are deliberately unkind - and we feel guilty! It's so important to realise that Jesus is living with us - together with us, already in this new kind of kingdom life. He's not watching us from on high, expecting us to attain some unattainable moral standard on our own, through madly striving. He does however give us clear instructions:

We must be intentional about loving

We must know how to forgive, ourselves and others

We must be always thankful to him

We must use his Word to help us

Then we can experience peace. Be quiet for a moment and let go to God any action or attitude you regret. Accept his complete forgiveness and his peace.

Witness (5-10 mins)

As we close off our study, we focus outward to the ministry of U-Turn. Watch video on U-turn [here](#). Please pray for Church House - for unity, hope, direction and spiritual renewal for each of the 13 residents, and wisdom and love for house parents, Brandon and Candice Solomon.

A consideration for your group: is there anyone in the group who would like to offer a short Bible Study or skills course with the champions at Church House? They are open to all skills; basic DIY; nutrition; budgeting. They're also looking for help to get their food garden going. Email yvonne@cck.org.za

Church as God intends

Outward Devotion - Colossians 4:1-6

Welcome (10 mins)

Who are you thankful for in your life?
Why?

Worship (10 mins)

SHARE - take a moment to think of one thing you are grateful for. Share that one thing with the group, expressing your thanks to God.
SPEAK - read Psalm 69:30 aloud together
SING - Good Grace is a beautifully written song that expresses how we need God's grace, and experience it together as His people. We choose to follow Jesus as an individual, but we worship him as a community.

Play the lyric video [here](#)
Download the chord chart [here](#) (original key) or [here](#) (lower key)

Word (30 mins)

Read Colossians 4:1-6

- In advancing the Gospel (vv.2-6), what role is played by prayer?
 - Watchfulness?
 - Thankfulness?
 - Open doors?
 - Closed doors or chains?
 - Wise actions?
 - Opportunism?
 - Graceful talk?
 - Salty talk?

- Why is thankfulness such a key ingredient in the life of a believer?
- What has helped you grow the most in your prayer life?
- From verses 5-6, what principles do you want to build into your life as you relate to non-believers?

Wonder (5-10 mins)

A great way to grow in prayer, is always to begin by thanking God. It helps us connect with him in such an easy way and it somehow fills up our hearts at the same time! Go around your group and share 3 things that you are thankful for, from today or the last week.

Think about your social circle, your work colleagues, your family. Pray together that God will give you grace to make use of every opportunity if they ask you about your faith, to be gracious and attractive in your response. Perhaps make a commitment to pray regularly for one person in your world.

Witness (5-10 mins)

Recently, a friend explained how on her post school year WhatsApp group, a Christian posted endless verses and comments about faith. This resulted in people exiting the group. This passage in Colossians reminds us to be wise in the way we act toward outsiders so that God can open a door for our message. Discuss those ways in which our witness may draw people to Christ and those ways in which our witness may turn people away from faith.