

Practical Paul: A Study of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians
Pastor Tyler Thompson
Oaks Bible Church
8.25.13

*****Pages 1-5: Basic Revised Message, based on time available.**

*****Pages 6-21: Additional info not used, based on time.**

This is going to be a different kind of sermon for a number of reasons.

First, because it would be impossible to summarize Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians in the 20 minutes that we have left this morning.

Second, this is a special morning at Oaks. It's our eighth anniversary and the people in this room are highly significant. Each one of you. You have heard this said before and I didn't write this words, but I'll say it again. Those of us in this room will most likely never be all together in this room ever again. Yes, with God all things are possible, but it is more likely that this exact group will never be in this exact place at the same time ever again. That means that each of you here is extremely important. And that's consistent with the message in this book, which says that each of God's body is invaluable.

Thirdly, what has already been said this morning is every bit as important as anything that I could say in a sermon. You know why? Because it's what God is *doing*. It's not just what God has done, but what the living God is actually doing here and now. He's working in this room and he's working across the world, and he's doing it now.

And so, this will be a different kind of sermon, because that's what a living God produces. He produces new life from dead souls. He wakes us up in the morning and gives us breath each day. He causes the blind to see and the dead to be raised. He heals, delivers, rescues, and frees us. And he does all of it all the time.

And so we, with Paul, ask for the Lord to cause the scales to fall off of our eyes as we really see again what kind of life this is that God has called us to. Would you pray with me?

Lord, open the eyes of our hearts to see you more fully. Give us a clear vision of we are in light of who you are. Let us be caught up with the cause of your Kingdom and may we see your kingdom be on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Paul understood that he was involved in the great story of God's history. He understood that this wasn't just Abraham's story or Isaac's story, that it wasn't just Isaiah who saw glimpses of the future, but that each of God's children in their own time and in their own way have a beautiful role in the God's kingdom. And so Paul, with tears, having been through hardship after hardship, writes these letters to inform the church of their Kingdom Identities.

a. Galatians 1:1-5

Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—² and all the brothers and sisters with me,

To the churches in Galatia:

³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

b. Ephesians 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

c. Philippians 1:1-2

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

d. Colossians 1:1-2

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

² To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

He starts each of the books with an identity statement. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. Paul knew who He was. He knew that it was God who willed into action His ministry. And he knew to who he was speaking. To God's holy people in Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae. But, not to Galatia. The people in Galatia had already lost sight of God's story. They had already turned to a Gospel other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A couple of weeks ago, we had a woman give a testimony. She used the word channeling and mentioned a book that isn't in line with the gospel. We don't believe in that. We believe in Jesus. And, it's important for us to say that and stick to the gospel.

Paul stuck to the gospel, and was unafraid of the consequences of what men might think. He gave them the gospel again.

Galatians 2:19-21

¹⁹“For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”^[e]

I died to the law so that I might live for God. Now. Today. I might live for God. Paul knew that there is so much more to the Christian life than *just* forgiveness of sins.

In our Thursday night parenting class we are learning this. We don't just correct poor behavior in our children. No, there is so much more than that. Instead, we encourage good behavior. We inspire our children to see the glory that is a life of being caught up in God's good will.

God, help us to be caught up in the work of your Kingdom. May we fight the battles that you have for us each and every day, as we wait expectantly for your return.

The churches in Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae had started doing this.

Ephesus- for this reason, I have not stopped giving thanks for you.

Philippi- I thank God every time I remember you.

Colossae- We *always* thank God when we pray for you.

You see, the holy people of Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae were doing it. They were living for God. This wasn't just a collection of stories for them. This was their very way of life.

We don't always get this as Gentile believers. You talk to someone who is Jewish or grew up around the Jewish culture. They'll tell you their Bible stories. And they'll tell you their Bible stories as though it had happened to them. Because they are not just stories from the Bible, they are *our* stories. They are *our* heritage, they are *our* inheritance. We are *sons* of God.

No, this is family. This is life and death. This is everything.

And that's where Paul goes with this. Serve one another, bear one another's burdens. Show tolerance for one another. We are members of one another. Be kind to one another. Speak to one another. Be subject to one another. Regard one another as more important than yourselves. Admonish one another. Love one another.

Yes, this is our story. We are caught up in a great arc of His History. And it's not done yet. Your church needs you. Each one of you has a part in this.

Instructions:

Don't live like we used to. Our time, our money, our feelings, our dreams, our goals should all be different than they used to be. This story changes everything! And we'll never be the same.

If we are caught in a sin, deal with it, but restore gently. Our Wednesday night group talked about redemption. Get your value back. Seek restoration.

Speak better, think better, relate better, live better, love better. Pray . Be stronger.

And this is possible with Christ.

Put on the full armor of God!

Ephesians 6:12

¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Aha. We're back to the story. There is a battle going on for the hearts and minds of every person in this room, every person in this country, and across the world. And unless we are prepared with the mind of Christ and the armor of God, we won't be ready for the role that each of us has in this battle.

Note two things here:

- 1) People are not the enemy. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, power of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. You have heard the phrase you have to fight fire with fire. Paul says that we have to fight spirits with the Spirit! We must be alert to this.
- 2) We are not in this alone. Just as Paul shared with the churches of Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae what God was doing in and through him, so the Staats, the Vivancos, and Layne Campbell have shared with us what God IS doing in and through them. What an encouragement to see God at work and to know that there is work he is doing right here as well.

Dear church, hear this, in conclusion. We are a part of God's great story. It is our story and there is a role for each of us to play, even this very day. And so we say with Paul:

Press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Forget what lies behind and reach forward to what lies ahead. Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

²⁴ Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. Amen.

(Philippians 2:12-14, Colossians 4:2-6, Ephesians 6:24)

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II. OUR STORY - notes taken from Leonard Sweet

[\(http://iws.edu/2013/07/leonard-sweet-worship-as-identity-formation/\)](http://iws.edu/2013/07/leonard-sweet-worship-as-identity-formation/)

- a. Stop thinking text, start thinking story.
- b. The story is not just happening to Abraham or Moses, it is happening to us. This is OUR story. Identity based on narrative. Not verses or principles, stories.
- c. A new form of Expository teaching. You lead people through a narrative by which they live and die.
- d. Function of doctrine is to get you across the bridge. (Scaffolding/walls on the bridge).
- e. Increasing see worship as a table, a table on which Christ is served. God's first command in the Bible is a yes. Eat freely. Last command in the Bible is a yes. Drink freely. Everything in between is a table on which we feast on Him.
- f. Worship ought to be seen more as play than work. We need to learn how to celebrate, not just reason together.
- g. If this is your Christ, tell me your stories. "Your Church Needs You"

III. IDENTITY

- a. Paul opens each letter with 3 identity statements:
 - i. Who am I?
 - ii. Who is Christ?
 - iii. Who are you?

b. Galatians 1:1-5

Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—² and all the brothers and sisters with me,

To the churches in Galatia:

³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

c. Ephesians 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

d. Philippians 1:1-2

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

e. Colossians 1:1-2

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

²To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

f. Our Story...

- i. Is rooted in Christ identity.
- ii. Exists in accordance with God's will, not man's.
- iii. Is for and a result of the Gospel.
- iv. Desires grace and peace for God's people.

IV. CURRENT EVENTS

a. Galatians 1:6-10

⁶I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an

angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! ⁹As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

¹⁰Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

b. Ephesians 1:15-23

¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^[f] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²²And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

c. Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family^[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

d. Philippians 1:3-26

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,^[b] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard^[c] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.^[d] ²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your

progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

e. Colossians 1:3-14

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— ⁵the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel ⁶that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. ⁷You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,^[c] who is a faithful minister of Christ on our^[d] behalf, ⁸and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,^[e] ¹⁰so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹²and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^[f] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

f. Our Story...

IV. DOCTRINE

a. Galatians 2:15-21

¹⁵“We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles ¹⁶know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in^[d] Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

¹⁷“But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn't that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! ¹⁸If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker.

¹⁹“For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”^[e]

b. Galatians 5:13-18

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh^[a]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”^[b] ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever^[c] you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

c. Ephesians 2:1-10

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

d. Ephesians 2:14-22

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in

himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

e. Philippians 2:1-11

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

f. Philippians 3:1-14

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. ² Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. ³ For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴ though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in ^[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

g. Colossians 1:15-23

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of ^[a] your evil behavior.²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

h. Colossians 2:16-23

¹⁶ Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. ¹⁸ Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. ¹⁹ They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

²⁰ Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: ²¹ "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"²² These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. ²³ Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

i. Colossians 3:1-17

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your ^[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ^[b] ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and

have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

j. Our Story...

V. INSTRUCTIONS

a. Galatians 6:1-17

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. ⁴ Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, ⁵ for each one should carry their own load. ⁶ Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let

us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

¹¹ See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

¹² Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. ¹⁴ May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which^[a] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. ¹⁶ Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to^[b] the Israel of God.

¹⁷ From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

b. Ephesians 4:17-32

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ "In your anger do not sin"^[d]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit

those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

c. Ephesians 5:8-11

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

d. Ephesians 5:21-33

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing ^[b] her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ^[c] ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

e. Ephesians 6:1-20

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³ “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” ^[a]

⁴ Fathers, ^b do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

f. Philippians 4:2-20

I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

g. Colossians 3:18-25

¹⁸ Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

²¹ Fathers, ^[c] do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵ Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

h. Colossians 4:1-6

Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

i. Our story...

VI. GOODBYES

a. Galatians 6:18

¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

b. Ephesians 6:21-24

²¹ Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²² I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

²³ Peace to the brothers and sisters,^[c] and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.^[d]

c. Philippians 4:21-23

²¹ Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings.²² All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.^[a]

d. Colossians 4:7-18

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant^[a] in the Lord. ⁸ I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our^[b] circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹ He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

¹⁰ My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) ¹¹ Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews^[c] among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. ¹³ I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

¹⁶ After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

¹⁷ Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord."

¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

e. Our story...