

## WHY PRAY FOR THE CHURCH?

---

The Church Is Worthy of Prayer Because It Displays the Transforming \_\_\_\_\_ of the Gospel.

The Church Is Worthy of Prayer Because It Displays the Glory of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church.

## Colossians 1:3-23

<sup>3</sup> We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup> 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, <sup>7</sup> just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf <sup>8</sup> and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

<sup>9</sup> 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, <sup>10</sup> 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; <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks<sup>l</sup> to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. <sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

<sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

# Why Pray for the Church?

---

May 8, 2022

**Open:** How would you explain to someone why the church is an important institution in the world?

**Read & Discuss:** Colossians 1:3-9

1. Twice in Colossians 1 Paul mentions that he prays for the Colossian church (vv. 3, 9). Why do you think Paul thought it was important to pray for the church? What is your practice in praying for the church?
2. Paul starts this passage by commenting on how he always thanks God for these believers (v. 3). In verses 4-8, what does Paul say causes him to be thankful? What causes you to be thankful regarding ways God has been and is at work in Neighborhood Church?

**Read & Discuss:** Colossians 1:13-23

3. Paul described the Colossian believers as people who have faith in Jesus (v. 4). According to verse 21, what was the nature of their relationship with God before this? What do you see in verses 5-7 that God used to bring about such great change in these people?
4. In verse 13 Paul speaks of the transformation that God caused in these people. In verses 14-22 he goes on to describe how Jesus is at the center of this transformation. List all the ways Jesus is described in verses 15-20. How does this picture of Jesus help us see the value of the church more fully?
5. How does the goal of Jesus' redeeming work described in verse 22 help give focus to your own spiritual growth? In what ways can you cooperate with Jesus in pursuing this goal?
6. In verse 23, Paul reminds the Colossian church that continuation in the faith is the test of the reality of one's faith. This does not mean having perfection in our faith, but rather not abandoning faith in the Gospel. How does this principle help you evaluate your own faith?
7. In light of these passages, how would you now explain the importance of the church and why it is essential that we pray for the church? Where might you incorporate praying for the church (both your own church and other churches) into your prayer life?

**Pray:** Pray that God would cause us to value His Church as He does—and that we might grow in our desire to pray for God's work in and through other believers.

## **Colossians 1:3-9**

<sup>3</sup> We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup> 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, <sup>7</sup> just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf <sup>8</sup> and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> 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...

## **Colossians 1:13-23**

<sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

<sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (ESV)