

4 For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, 5 which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News. 6 This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

7 You learned about the Good News from Epaphras, our beloved co-worker. He is Christ's faithful servant, and he is helping us on your behalf. 8 He has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you. 9 So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10 Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

11 We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, 12 always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. 13 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, 14 who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

Colossians 1:4-14 (NLT)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- Think of a time when you saw someone's life radically changed for the better. How did you react to the change? What did you think and say about that person? To that person?
- When you pray for another Christian, how/what do you usually pray? What about when you pray for a non-Christian?

Observation (what does the text say?)

- What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?
- What qualities does Paul see in the lives of the Colossians that indicates the gospel is bearing fruit in their lives?
- What impresses you about how the gospel was spreading (v.4-8)?
- What are all the things that Paul prayed for the people on Colosse?

Interpretation (what does it mean?)

- How do you see Paul's prayers (v. 9-14) actively play out in terms of fruit in Colosse (v.4-8)?
- Why is understanding God's will important for spiritual growth (v.9-)?
- What, based on this passage as well as other passages in the Bible, does the word "Gospel" mean? How narrow &/or how wide is the Gospel message? How important/powerful is the Gospel message?

for pre-reading or future reading, the following is a deep heady article on the gospel: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/spring/9.74.html>

Application (what does it mean to me/us?)

- What examples of faith, love, and hope have you seen in your home group?
- To what extent would you say "the truth about God's wonderful grace" is evident in your own life? In you home group and in Riverside?
- Looking at this passage, what would be the reasons for a lack of spiritual fruit in your life; what are the reasons for the spiritual fruit you are experiencing? (v.5&10 are good starting points)
- What areas in Paul's prayer (9-12) resonate with you the most? Which areas can the group specifically pray for you?

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Pray that what Paul heard about the Colossians will also be said of you and of Riverside Church. Pray specifically and boldly as Paul did in v.9-14
- **Respond:** v.10 states that as we live out our faith and have fruitful lives, that this will happen as we learn to know God better and better. Commit this week to actively and consistently be in God's word, to be in prayer, and to share the gospel with someone this week.

Reread verses 12-14 this week, putting your name in each sentence. Meditate on these verse and thank God for what he has done for you and in you.

- **Read:** Next week's sermon (1/17/2010) will focus on Colossians 1:15-29. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. These guides rely heavily upon James Reapsome's &/or N.T. Wright's study guides on Colossians & Philemon (ISBN 9780830830145 & 9780830821921), as well as Ryan Roeder's 2005 discussion guides on Colossians & Philemon.