

Reteaching/Study Guide from Lakeside's Online Worship  
Sunday, September 13, 2020, Sermon by Dr. Greg Corbin, Senior Pastor  
"Living in the New Normal" –Colossians 1:1-14

"Normal" ended for me Friday the Thirteenth, March 2020. That was the day we officially suspended corporate worship and all other activities at Lakeside. It was the day I started wearing a mask and made a "survival" run to the grocery store. Although some things have returned to a level of familiarity, seven months later life still isn't "normal" again. While I am optimistic that a day will come when wearing masks won't be so common as to be a fashion statement, I do think many things have changed for good. I'm just not sure what the "new normal" will be like or when we can say it has arrived. *"I do not know what the 'new normal' will be like in the future, but I DO know that Christ has come and Christ has risen and Christ is coming again. Because Christ has come and I have come to Christ, I can live in the 'new normal' of life in & through Christ. THAT is the NEW NORMAL that really matters"* (Greg Corbin).

Although Paul had never visited the church at Colossae, he had heard about their faith and challenges from his associate, Epaphras, a native of the city. During his imprisonment in Rome, Paul's concern for the Colossian believers pressed him to write to them between AD 61 & 63. In the letter, he stressed the supremacy of Christ and the completeness of His work and described the new way believers are called to live – the "New Normal." Over the next few weeks, we'll explore the new normal Christ has made possible for us and to which He has called us. Our post-Covid 19 circumstances may be uncertain, but the new normal that we have in Christ provides a certain focus for our lives. Living in light of the new normal of life in Christ should be our real concern. **In the opening verses of his letter, Paul unfolded four realities of living in that new normal.**

**Live SURRENDERED to the WILL of Christ (Colossians 1:10).** The essence of Paul's prayer that the Colossians would be filled with the knowledge of God's will is that they would be surrendered to His purpose. Our natural tendency is to focus on ourselves, to live for ourselves. The new normal for followers of Christ, however, is to live for Christ, to be conformed to what pleases Him.

**Live FOCUSED on GROWING in Christ (Colossians 1:10).** Paul called on the Colossians to "walk worthy of the Lord," to bear fruit, and to grow in their understanding. The wonderful truth of the Gospel is that God has loved us just as we are, but Jesus didn't die to leave us as we are. Salvation comes to us freely and completely by Christ's work. But as believers, we are called to live in our new normal, to intentionally cooperate (obey) with the Holy Spirit by doing the things God's Word requires. These are the things that promote spiritual growth, conforming us to Christ's image. *"This is where you and I INTENTIONALLY take steps to grow in our Christian life. It is where we intentionally pray. Where we intentionally study the Word. It's where we intentionally share our faith. It's where we intentionally give generously. It is where we intentionally do good works that we know are God's will"* (Greg Corbin).

**Live STRENGTHENED by the POWER of Christ (Colossians 1:11).** Paul's prayer was that the believers at Colossae would be strengthened by God's power to live in joy with patience and long-suffering. Thankfully, we don't live in the new norm by our strength and effort. On our own we would fail. God's power enables us to face adversity and difficulty with strength beyond our own measure. As we live surrendered to God's purpose and do the biblical things necessary for spiritual growth, we benefit from God's power. He helps us face in a Christlike, joyful way what we could never face on our own.

**Live THANKFUL for SALVATION in Christ (Colossians 1:12-14).** Living thankfully requires intentional effort. Of course we are to be thankful when good things happen to us or around us, but the thankfulness Paul reflected upon here goes deeper than circumstances. It's grounded in the ultimate, awesomely astounding gift God has given to us in Christ. We have been redeemed, forgiven, and made a part of God's Kingdom forever. That knowledge empowers us to live thankfully and with joy no matter what we face.

**To reflect further about living in the new norm and to prepare for our venture through Colossians, read Colossians 1-4. It's a masterpiece, but a quick read.**

**Questions/Actions for Reflection/Discussion/Application**

-After reading Colossians 1:9-29, use it's content to offer God your own prayer of thanksgiving for your salvation.

-In what areas of your life do you need to be more surrendered to God? Where do you need to grow?

-Where are you struggling to live in the new norm? Where are your patience and hope wearing thin?

-Yield yourself more fully to God's purpose and commit yourself to doing the things necessary for spiritual growth: spending regular time with God in Bible study and prayer, sharing the Gospel, serving, and giving.

You're in My Prayers,

*Stacey*