

**Colossians 4:17-18**  
**(John 1:14, 16-18)**  
**“Grace Be with You”**

## **Introduction**

I have had the privilege over the years of teaching young church-planting pastors in India, and one of the very helpful features of the conferences on preaching is the time when an appointed speaker stands and responds by summarizing and applying in an Indian context the lesson just presented. I had originally planned to press on to the study of another book of the Bible beginning today, but am also preparing for another pastor’s conference in India, and thought that it might be helpful to return one final time to our study of Colossians and make sure that we have understood and pressed home the major themes of the letter.

Paul wrote to a community of Christians who were being encouraged to look beyond Christ for their salvation. Paul emphatically refuted all such teaching, presenting Christ as preeminent in both the creation and in the new creation, the church, and therefore fully sufficient to work in and through us all things necessary for life and salvation.

As I read back through the Colossian letter this past week, I was struck by Paul’s wisdom and clarity in introducing in the first chapter all of the major themes of the letter, themes that we have seen him then unpack and develop in the chapters that followed. So I thought that this morning we might look back again at five crucial themes introduced in the first chapter and then developed in the letter.

## **Body**

- 1. It is crucial that we know grace when we see it (1:3-8).**
- 2. It is crucial that we know the source of grace (1:15-21).**
- 3. It is crucial that we know the cost of grace (1:24).**
- 4. It is crucial that we know the mystery of grace (1:27).**
- 5. It is crucial that we know the goal of grace (1:28).**

## **Conclusion**

We are as tempted as were the Colossian Christians to look beyond Christ for our lives to have ultimate worth and value. It is crucial that we understand and believe the words that Paul has left for us, and to hear him call to us across the years:

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When *Christ who is your life* appears, then you also will appear with him in glory (3:1-4).

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