**Paul’s Letter to the Colossians**

***“If It Walks Like A Duck”***

**Colossians 4:1-18**

**“From Bossing To Blessing”**

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oss Radio was molten-hot in the 60’s. At KHJ Los Angeles boss jock “The Real Don Steele” arrived after stints in Kennewick, Yakima, Spokane and Portland. Loud-lunged deejays sounded “boss” (cool, suave, cocky), barely blurting out a song’s artist and title. Ad libbing “time and temp” was their big moment, punctuated by quick jingle stabs. “Air personalities” who’d come from looser formats chafed under these stifling, boss boundaries. Maybe you’ve been there in your career. Maybe you were, or are, that boss.

# Master Control

# Colossians 4:1

In 62 A.D. the New Testament’s chief writer, Paul, sent this note from prison in Rome to Christ’s folks in Colosse in now west central Turkey, then a pagan mecca. Gnostic heresy put ultimate confidence in man’s wisdom, gutted God’s role in Creation, and resulted either in being a holed-up monk or a hell-raising maniac. **Let’s open Paul’s mail, reading Colossians 4:1-18 (p. 447, MSG).**

**DISCUSS: Knowing how God power-washes us with His love, describe ways that we can we pass it on to others.**

Paul warns, don’t add to or subtract from what Christ accomplished for us in His death and resurrection. “Jesus is all that matters” is his point. Now he unpacks this into real, day-to-day living by imploring employers who love Jesus to treat their people with care and fairness since the earthly boss is actually working for God who showers that earthly boss with TLC (Ephesians 2:1-6; I Corinthians 13:1-13).

# The Oskars

# Colossians 4:2-4

Hang out in a 24/7 chat room with God, Paul urges. No dozing off mentally, emotionally, spiritually and, in light of Rome’s harshness toward God’s people, stay physically alert, always thanking God.

Paul wants open doors to tell others that God loves them, has wiped away ***all*** their sins, and is the only Way to spiritual freedom, safety and security (John 10:22-33 and 14:6). Oskar Schindler risked his life to save some 1,300 Jews from Nazi gas. Two years before his death, this unlikely savior told a friend, "I would do it again over and over for I hate cruelty and intolerance." Beheaded by Nero, Paul gave his life to get God’s life-saving message to you and me.

**DISCUSS: How do you know when it’s time to talk about life after death, to tell someone that it’s time to choose their final destination (Hebrews 9:27; Romans 6:23; John 3:36)?**

# Too Blessed To Be Stressed

# Colossians 4:5-6

Is your speech laced with undeserved respect for others, giving them lots of slack, the way you’d like to be treated? Paul echoes Jesus, saying that our conversations should have salt’s qualities: pure, penetrating, preserving, bringing out the full flavor of the hearer. Elsewhere Paul urges Christ’s people to listen for needs, to encourage, console, love, enjoy, caress, empathize, unify, be unselfish, humble, Christlike, obedient, trusting and scriptural (Philippians 2:1-16). Impossible, unless Jesus does it through you.

Patrick Lencioni, in *The Three Signs of a Miserable Job*, writes, “There’s one question every employee wants answered by his or her boss: ‘Am I doing a good job?’” John Eldredge in *Wild at Heart* states, “Even if he can’t put it into words, every man is haunted by the question, ‘Have I got what it takes when it counts?’”

In 1980 baseball Hall of Famer George Brett batted a whopping .390, but his sullen father greeted him with “If you’d only gotten three more hits, we’d have something to talk to each other about.”

If only dad had read *The Blessing* by Gary Smalley and John Trent. Giving and getting the blessing goes back to Old Testament times (Genesis 27). It explains the fallout when parents fail to give this lifelong gift to their children. Possessing this blessing affects how you see yourself and how you interact with anyone and everyone. Here are the five steps of “the blessing,” something we all need:

# 1. Express High Value

When we value something, we confer significant importance and priority. In Hebrew the root meaning of *blessing* is “bow the knee.” Showing honor. We all need to hear that we’re highly valued by someone who means the world to us. The old patriarch Jacob used metaphors, or word pictures, to communicate his love and esteem for his children (Genesis 49:9-28).

# 2. Speak Words

Words can crush or catapult us (James 3:5-6). Blessing someone requires actually *saying* it to them, not leaving it up to actions or assumptions. We yearn to *hear* that we’re loved, valued and accepted, and hear it regularly, not just at your wedding. This won’t cut it: “I told you I love you in ’89; if I change my mind, I’ll let you know!” Someone dear to you needs to *hear* you bless them today.

# 3. Touch Meaningfully

When Jacob blessed his grandsons, he “embraced” them (Genesis 48:8-20), Ancient Jewish religious rituals involved laying hands on a person. It symbolized transferring power, showing confidence, respect. Documented, physiological benefits accrue when we’re hugged, when we shake hands or receive any non-sexual touch. Jesus brought healing and affirmation when He used touch to bless (Mark 1:40-42 and 10:13-16). Imagine getting a hug from Jesus!

# 4. Picture A Special Future

Children take it literally when parents make predictions about how they’ll turn out. Those words can haunt or inspire a person for life. Isaac knew this when he blessed his son Jacob, looking ahead to Jacob’s adult years (Genesis 27:28-29). God spoke hope to the Jews through one of His prophets (Jeremiah 29:11). And Jesus described a glorious life in heaven to those who follow Him (John 14:2-3). Expressing our optimistic expectations to someone gives hope, confidence and purpose to the recipient who translates this into positive feelings, wise choices and brighter tomorrows.

# 5. Be There

A good coach doesn’t just slap your tush as you enter the fray, then split. No, he’s dedicated to being there when you need him (James 2:15-16). This is the guarantee God made to Isaac re Isaac’s descendants (Genesis 26:24). Likewise God assures His followers, “I will never leave you or forsake you” (Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5).

**DISCUSS: What benefits could come from implementing The Blessing in your family and with your friends and colleagues? What could keep you from doing this? What’s the difference between blessing and flattery?**

# We’ve Got People

# Colossians 4:7-17

Paul diligently, intentionally keeps up with people, showing God’s emphasis on relationships without prejudice, knowing that God is drawing people from every tongue, tribe and nation to worship Him (Romans 1:20). Paul willingly invests his life in introducing others to the One who wants and deserves to be the Hinge of our lives.

DISCUSS: Who do you need to check in with this week, and what does he/she know about your own spiritual journey?

#### “Grace, You’re Amazing!”

# Colossians 4:18

Paul ends on God’s grace note. To be blessed by your Creator who died for you, to know His love, is the cry of every soul.

In *Get Out Of That Pit* Beth Moore writes, *“All of us were born with a natural tendency to attach ourselves to (and worship) a savior … it had better be Christ. We are safe with no other.”* God says, “I am the Lord, and apart from me there is no other” (Isaiah 43:11).

John Newton, born in 1725, goes to sea at 11 and becomes a slave transporter. In a furious storm he begs God for mercy, survives and starts reading the Bible, discovering that God’s not turned on by sending sinners to hell. No, He’s willing to forgive even slave traders.

He composes *Amazing Grace* and helps end slavery in England in 1807, leaving this final note: “’My memory is nearly gone; but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior.’” John Newton could say, “Jesus Christ is my life.”

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.*

*I once was lost but now am found. Was blind, but now I see.*

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,

*We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come.*

*‘Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far, and Grace will lead me home.*

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.*

*I once was lost but now am found. Was blind, but now I see.*

#### “But Now I See”

Since Jesus paid in full with His life our sin debt, He offers us a clean, sinless and non-cancelable standing with Him now and always. All because He loves us! Need a kick start in how to give the blessing, or receiving God’s blessing yourself? I’m here to help (Romans 5:1-11; Colossians 1:21, 2:6-7).

**HOW TO ACCEPT GOD’S GIFT OF TOTAL FORGIVENESS:**

• “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

• “We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. … God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus” (Romans 3:22-26).

• “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

• “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved” (Romans 10:9-10).

• “Whoever believes in the Son of God inwardly confirms God's testimony. Whoever refuses to believe in effect calls God a liar, refusing to believe God's own testimony regarding his Son. This is the testimony in essence: God gave us eternal life; the life is in his Son. So, whoever has the Son, has life; whoever rejects the Son, rejects life. My purpose in writing is simply this: that you who believe in God's Son will know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you have eternal life, the reality and not the illusion” (1 John 5:10-13).

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