

Who is Paul?

Colossians 1:1-4

Today we begin a new series on Paul's letter to the Colossians. The apostle Paul was human, just like us. Let's get to know him in this first sermon.

Colossians begins: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God..." (1:1)

- Who's Paul? Let's use the acronym P.A.U.L.

(P)ersecution: Paul knew persecution from both ends of the sword

- From consenting to Stephen's death (Acts 8:1) to becoming a martyr himself
- An odd but important question: What would you *kill* for?
 - And what would you *be killed* for?

(A)postle: Chosen and sent by Christ. Literally.

- "Go, for he [Paul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles... For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." –The Lord (Acts 9:15-16)
 - So would *you* have wanted to be an apostle?
- *But he's not the best speaker...* But he was an apostle chosen by Christ. See Paul's response in 2 Cor 11-12.

(U)ncompromising: Paul didn't mess with the truth.

- Paul even opposed Peter at one time.(!) See Galatians 2.

- Paul would 'compromise' on some things *because* he wouldn't compromise the gospel.
 - Read 1 Cor 9:19-23 carefully to see this.

(L)oving: Paul wrote the great love chapter! (1 Cor 13)

- He mentions love in every one of his letters, and on average more than once per chapter.
- "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." (Colossians 3:14)

Questions for Reflection and Application:

1. "He is my chosen instrument... and he must suffer much for my name." So the Lord says_weightily in Acts 9:15-16.
 - This statement proved *very* true. How so? List events that you recall from Paul's_life.
 - Would you want this calling? Or would you rather have the American dream?
2. Many have felt like Paul was bragging in 2 Cor 11-12. In fact, he *admits* this. But why_does he do it? Why pull out the resume like he does? How serious was the situation, and_how real was his calling?
3. We all 'compromise' on some things. It's part of loving and keeping the peace. But we_shouldn't compromise on *everything*.
 - Realistically, what wouldn't you compromise in life, work, and home? Why? Pray to the Lord about this, whether it is a good thing or not.
 - Read Paul's words in 1 Cor 9:19-23 on this topic.