

PREFACE

*“Yesterday’s exposition of Colossians was very fresh. I remember last year pastor preached from Colossians; in summary he said: ‘Let Christ be at the steering wheel of your life and you be in the third row.’ That is still very fresh in my mind. But yesterday, pastor preached afresh from Colossians – that so many of us gathered from different nations, cultures, and backgrounds. How can we live together? It is the Spirit of God and the grace of God. In the Naigaon conference, 150 of us stayed together! The newcomer, Lazarus’ wife, did not understand the message on the first day but by the second day, she was ministered. She was asking me, “How can so many people stay together?” In her previous church in Kerala, there are many members; but when they try to stay together, 40-50 of them, there is fighting! Yesterday, pastor showed us that we could be harmonious because of the Holy Spirit and grace of God. I felt it is also attributable to pastor’s preaching, the exposition of the Word of God, to bring down all our past cultural strongholds – so that in Christ, there is no Macedonian, no Indian, no Chinese, all partitions are removed. [Pastor: “The great wall of China, and the Berlin wall are removed!”] Therefore yesterday when pastor asked us to make chapati – Careah Todorov from Macedonia and Euodias Cordero from Philippines made chapati! The Word of God is able to bring down all our strongholds. Many of us testified Christ was endeared to us through the book of Colossians. Those without grace are trapped under this delusion of self righteousness and cultural prejudice. But pastor preached about Christ and magnified Christ – we were very attracted to have Christ in our lives. Many sisters spoke yesterday that those who have this grace of God, they could see Who Christ is and how we are truly complete in Christ! Nothing less, nothing else – Christ is All in All! Pastor said that the spirits conjured in Pentecostalism and Charismaticism enters through their legs and they collapse! Pastor showed from James chapter 3 that such spirit comes from the earth but the Holy Spirit descends from heaven! It brought clarity. But I felt, who am I to have this understanding? Pastor said the Bibles are everywhere, but why people cannot see these things? I truly feel I am blessed; **I can read it a thousand times but I wouldn’t have seen it if not for pastor.** But I feel in me the pride and carnality. Pastor corrected us as sometimes we think, these Pentecostals, these Catholics, they are stupid- is it that they cannot read or what? But pastor showed us this book is an antidote for our pride and carnality. We haven’t seen how carnal we are. Pastor caused us to examine ourselves. We can debunk them, but first I must consider this subtle pride and carnality in me. I have not fully embraced Christ, and the Gospel! Pastor said there is this need, before you put on Christ, you have to put off the old man! You have to put off the old layers, not put new clothes on the old layers! Pastor gave the example of a building – you cannot destroy half and then build on the other half! You have to destroy even to the foundation thereof or it (the new building) will not stand! And hence pastor said: the foundation is also Christ, the roof is also Christ: Christ is everything! We have to renounce our past! We have to be rooted, grounded, and built up in Christ. We need nothing else! We have to be conscious; the heart is depraved. Satan is always there to deceive us. Hence, Paul is warning us to beware of the philosophies and rudiments of the world! Yesterday, the preaching from Colossians was eye opening and caused me to renounce my past Hindu beliefs and cultures especially the Brahmin spirit – I think the most stupid people in Nepal and India are the Brahmins – it caused me to think and meditate – how stupid they are and how stupid I was! Oh that God would demolish fully all my past cultures through the preaching of the man of God, so that this new house (in Christ) may be built in my life. Pastor also talked about Onesimus, Epaphras and Paul, and how Paul’s special ministry was affirmed. Though Paul had never gone physically to preach at Colosse and he did not plant the Colossian church but he affirmed the ministry of Epaphras who preached Christ to them first before he wrote this letter (Colossians 1:25). Paul had given due regard to Epaphras in other verses – but he is affirming his ministry at this point, that he has brought the Gospel to these churches. I need to know the source of my blessing, affirm the minister of God, from whom I have received the Gospel. Pastor was angry sometimes that we say, this is the message on Ephesians, but we forget that it is the exposition of the man of God that we are receiving. Thank God for these fresh angles and perspectives pastor went through. I pray all these things may renew my inward man. Therefore, it is important to come and be Christ-like, to put on charity and have the bowels of mercies! Paul said, ‘You have to be rooted and grounded in Him!’ Pastor said if Paul were to say it again in our times, he would have added on, and in the Word of God! The Word of God is the Written Word. With that knowledge, then we can be renewed in the image of Christ. I see how important therefore it is for me to come and hear preaching, that all my strongholds and worldly philosophies are removed. But pastor said it is not a one-night thing – you probably don’t change to become an angel overnight. But you have to come continually to the means of grace, every conference, every Sabbath! I reflected on my life. I saw my thinking and life before I came under pastor’s ministry. Everything has changed when I came to pastor’s ministry – the way I behave, the*

way I think and relate to people. Pastor said if we are changed, all aspects of our life will be affected for good – the way we behave in the church, in our domestic sphere, and our working place. In what ways through the preaching of pastor am I renewed? I need to continue to seek for the perfection, that God may justify me, and make me an elect of God. Thank God Paul did not say ‘only the elect of God’ but thank God even as a seeking sinner, I can seek to put on the virtues of Christ, and that is possible through the preaching of the man of God. Thank God for this privilege to hear. Pray God help me to wait and hope upon Him. May God preserve and protect me, that I may not be resigned but graciously God may give me the desire to come to the means of grace by all means.” Thanksgiving of Eliezer Pandey (Naigaon, India), Part 3 (final), Cameron Highlands, Pahang, Malaysia; this is the last of the instalment for this litany; 14 December 2017 AD