

Dear Friends,

Grace to you and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Two thousand years ago in a city that had gone from being in the limelight to being rather insignificant, lived a little church. This church was the only church in this entire city, and this church was so little that it met in someone's home. There was no choir or worship band, no pews, no youth group, but there was Christ and He was enough. And in this little church were men and women who loved Jesus and lived for Him. In other words, Christ was central to them.

Yet, like all churches, there were many things vying to be the center. This little church was tempted to replace the True Center of all things with lies. Worldly philosophy was knocking on the door, works righteousness was perverting the grace of God, and the cross of Christ was in danger of becoming an artifact.

Though by today's standards such a little church might hardly qualify as a church, to the Apostle Paul, and more importantly to Christ Himself, this little church was of great value. In fact we may even be allowed to judge the value of this church by evaluating the significance of a letter that was written just for her, a letter that stands as one of the greatest letters about Christ of all time, a letter unfolding the glory, mercy and the absolute centrality of Jesus Christ in the world and in the church.

Our little church here in Kladno, Czech Republic, has begun to study the letter to the Colossians. We rejoice that though we are small, we are significant in the eyes of Christ, and that though we are small, the Gospel continues to go forth in power, sowing seeds and in due time yielding a great harvest.

Yet we are aware that though we are growing, like the Colossians there are ten thousand idols seeking to remove Christ from our center. So in Colossians chapters 1-2, Paul skillfully unfolds WHY Jesus Christ is the Center by showing us His deity, His power and authority, and His singular ability to justify, sanctify and reconcile rebellious sinners to a Holy God. This letter shows us that Christ is the center of life, He is the sun that our lives orbit around.

But if we mess with Christ, we mess with our universe. If this sun is removed our lives will fly off into oblivion. That's why from chapters 3-4 Paul unfolds how practical Christology is. If Christ is not in the center, your marriage, your wife or husband will fly out of orbit (3:18-19), sex will fly out of orbit (3:5-6), children (3:20-21), work (3:22), EVERYTHING (3:17) will be thrown into utter chaos if Christ does not remain the center of it all. But if Christ IS the center then you will experience His mighty gravitational pull upon your life (3:1-3). You will see your life orbiting the way it ought to, with family, work, marriage, children, entertainment, money, all being held in check by the centrifugal force of Christ, so that in the midst of the storm, in the midst of pain and suffering, you will know that the one who holds all things together (Col 1:17) will never allow you to be flung off into oblivion.

Friends, we here in Kladno beseech you to pray for us. We ask of you to pray that just as the original Colossians needed more of Christ, we too would be granted to know more of the greatness and centrality of Jesus. We need wisdom, we need grace, we need men who are Christ centered, men who will lead Christ centered homes and who will help us become even more of a Christ centered church. Jesus is our center no doubt, but we pray that the distance between us and Him would be shorted, that day after day, week after week we would be drawn closer to the Center of all things.

Friends, we here in Kladno beseech you to pray for us. We ask of you to pray that just as the original Colossians needed more of Christ, we too would be granted to know more of the greatness and centrality of Jesus. We need wisdom, we need grace, we need men who are Christ centered, men who will lead Christ centered homes and who will help us become even more of a Christ centered church. Jesus is our center no doubt, but we pray that the distance between us and Him would be shorted, that day after day, week after week we would be drawn closer to the Center of all things.

Specific prayer items.

- † Outreach Bible study will resume here Thursday, September 17th. Pray for the many who do not believe but continue to be exposed to the truth of the word.
- † Our English outreach class begins this Wednesday. There will be around 20 unbelievers who will come to speak English as well as to openly discuss the Gospel of God.
- † Pray for the men who minister the word each Sunday (Daniel Adomovsky, Jan Lukeš, Petr Papež, Jarda Kernal, and myself) and for the men who help lead and minister (Rosta and Milan).
- † God is working in the hearts of the few young people and we are beginning a 'youth group' in two weeks. Beseech the Lord to mightily work in their lives and to use it as a vehicle to save other young men and women.
- † Pray for the women of our church (Dana, Mirka, Kari, Lydia, and my wife Amie). They have expressed the desire to meet every week to study the word and fellowship together. Dana translated the book "The Excellent Wife" into the Czech language and the women will continue their study of this book.
- † Our family needs grace and wisdom to see Christ as the center of all things.
- † Please pray for Peter and Sonya Smith—the couple that God used to establish the Kladno church. They're now in Michigan where Peter is pastoring. Pray for wisdom as they adapt to a totally new life and in essence begin on a new mission field all over again (except the language!!!)
- † Lastly, please pray that God would give us much grace to learn the Czech language. I have felt at times that the weight of trying to learn this foreign tongue while trying to serve and lead the church and minister to the lost is well near impossible—and it is apart from Him. We need His strength and your prayers!

We bless the Lord for your faithful prayers. This incredibly late email in no way reflects how much we need and covet your prayers. We also ask you to write us and to let Amie and me know how we and the church here might be in prayer for you and yours.

Attached is a picture of our church, Biblický Sbor Křesťanů Kladno (Christian Bible Church of Kladno)

May Christ be the center of it all,

Marcus and Amie Denny

