

Series Title: **'Moving Forward: What does that look like for you?'**

Message Title: **'Choosing to Move Forward'**

Scripture Source: **Colossians 1:1-14**

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### **The Life My Mother Chose**

What an instructive and inspirational story...here was a woman confronted with unexpected and devastating circumstances that changed her life abruptly and profoundly...yet, she chose to 'move forward' with purpose and hopefulness, rooted in a deep faith and love for God. She had every reason to give up, to become bitter and angry and withdraw into a very small and hollow world. She chose a different path, a path toward maturity of thought, faith and behaviour.

What of our choices? When life confronts us with the unexpected and unwanted, what choices will we make? What choices are we making today? Moving forward or being 'stuck in a moment'?

### **'Stuck in a Moment'**

Let these lyrics probe your thoughts...

"You've got to get yourself together, You've got stuck in a moment and now you can't get out of it..." (U2)

Who of us can't identify with these haunting words? We know what it is like to 'get stuck' in some reality/emotion/circumstance and fail to move forward in a purposeful way. What kind of a moment have you gotten 'stuck' in? Regret, fear, shame, guilt, anger, uncertainty, disappointment, loss, setbacks of different kinds, unhealthy behaviours...what name would you attach to your 'stuck in a moment' experience? \_\_\_\_\_

We want to move forward, in a healthy and constructive way. How can we pull this off? What does it require of us? What are some of the threats we have to face courageously and act upon with wisdom and practical 'next steps'?

### **Ancient Words and Timeless Truths: Paul's letter to the Colossians**

Paul was a first century church leader. He was a brilliant thinker, a 'make it happen leader' and a man marked by 'faith, hope, and love.' His world revolved around Jesus and the mission of Christ. Illustrate: Colossians 1:28-29 He yearned to see people experiencing the grace, truth and power of the risen Christ in their everyday lives. To help people understand God's love and purpose for their unique and precious lives. To see people 'rooted' in a relationship with Jesus as Saviour and Leader of their lives, learning to 'move forward' and get 'unstuck' from unhealthy moments of life. He uses the word 'continue' to stress forward movement along the path of 'faith, hope, and love.'

Paul wrote this letter @ 60 AD, from a prison experience that lasted about 2-3 years. He 'moves forward' with purpose even though living with significant circumstantial limitations. He chooses a life of purpose, rooted in a deepening trust in God. His words were read by a group of Christ followers in a city in what is now modern day Turkey. Hundreds of years earlier it had been a thriving city, commercially, now in the first century, "a second rate market town." Yet, populated with people who mattered to God and to those who founded the church in Colossae.

Paul's words, though ancient have a 'ring of truth' that can enrich and enlighten a teachable mind...like yours and mine today. Over the next number of Sunday mornings we will explore and discover truths that can help us 'move forward' with hope and purpose. We will examine a way forward that has a relationship with Jesus at its heart. If the Christian faith is a new realm of exploration for you, this series could answer significant questions. For those who profess a faith in Jesus, may this series deepen 'faith, hope and love' in ways that are manifested in daily living.

## **Moving Forward...Motivated by Relationship: Colossians 1:1-14**

How many great and wonderful things are done, out of love? Illustrate...parent for a child, friend for a friend, a stranger for a stranger. Love can be profoundly motivational. In his opening words Paul reminds Christians of the richness of relationship they possess through faith in God and his message of salvation.

Intro remarks: 1:1-2...even here, the language of relationship is heard

Paul's Gratitude Expressed: 1:3-5. Paul recognizes the power of God in changed lives and he is thankful. He notes the reality of 'faith, hope, and love' being manifested in everyday people and everyday circumstances. Cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:3

The Power of God's Word is Evident: 1:5-7 Note the descriptors: "the word of truth, the gospel" The word gospel means 'good news.' This message comes from God and is potent. 1 Thessalonians 1:5, 2:13 When God's word is understood and acted upon, things happen! Life change and growth occurs, practical needs of others are met in Christ's name, and the good news that sins can be forgiven is furthered. Folks, a lot of 'moving forward' is happening!

### A Passionate and Thoughtful Prayer is Offered: 1:9-12

Paul yearns for their growth and ongoing maturity of spiritual understanding. He knows that 'moving forward' in healthy and constructive ways requires a genuine and thoughtful faith in Christ. He wants them to grasp God's character, purposes, and power more fully and experience them more consistently.

"the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding" His 'will' is found most fully in his word, the Bible and his Son, Jesus. We need to make an effort to grow in our understanding of God's word through reading, study and thoughtful conversation. Sundays and between Sundays, in settings such as Journey Groups and one on one conversations. One of the most important choices we make are the 'environments' we engage in consistently and on a recurring basis. This is critical for us and our children and grandchildren...to be an example and a practical help for others along the way.

Paul speaks of consequences: 1:10-12 Moving forward in a way that actually pleases God and enriches the lives of others. "bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power...you may have great endurance and patience..."

### A Simple Reminder: 1:13-14

At the heart of 'moving forward' with purpose and wisdom is where we have moved from and to spiritually. From darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, all through faith in Jesus.

### Moving Forward...what might that look like for you?

What change do you yearn to experience? What moment do you long to get 'unstuck' from?

What does moving forward look like to you? Time to ponder... and begin to identify.

God yearns for you to move forward along a path of maturity and health...spiritually, relationally, emotionally and practically. Yet, we have to make choices and commitments every day and follow through every day.

What holds you back? Why do we procrastinate? What fear must we break through and what manifestation of ego must we subdue? Moving forward or staying stuck...what will your choice be? What kind of life are you creating through your actions?