

Thanksgiving & Prayer!

Colossians 1:1-14

A mother went to wake her son for church one Sunday morning. When she knocked on his door, he said, "I'm not going!" "Why not?" asked his mother. "I'll give you two good reasons," he said. "One, they don't like me. Two, I don't like them." His mother replied, "I'll give you two good reasons why YOU WILL go to church. One, you're 47 years old. Two, you're the pastor!"

If I were to tell you something and told you it was the gospel truth, what would I be telling you about that something?

Today we are going to get some of that good old gospel truth as we open our Bibles to the letter to the Colossians. Remember over the past couple months we have looked at the 7 letters Jesus sent in Revelation and the city of Colossae is near the 7th city in those Revelation letters, the city of Laodicea.

So, Paul is writing to the church in Colossae, a church he helped plant. This letter has 3 parts to it: Personal,

Doctrinal and Practical. Today we are going to look at the personal part.

I. Personal 1:1-14

A. Greeting 1:1-2

Colossians 1:1-2, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father."

Paul comes with the authority of God in the role in which God called him to, that of being an apostle. The church in Colossae knew Timothy, so Paul includes him in the greeting. Timothy was assisting Paul while Paul was under house arrest in Rome.

Keep this fact in mind, Paul is under arrest in Rome, when we look at our next point. The 2nd part of the personal section:

B. Thanksgiving 1:3-8

In this section Paul demonstrates his thankfulness for the gospel, and he does it by teaching us 7 aspects of the gospel.

1. Gospel truth is received by faith.

Colossians 1:3-4a, “We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus”

Notice that Paul thanked God for the church when he prayed for them, he thanked God, not the Colossians.

The faith that the Colossians have was received based on evidence for the work of Jesus. It wasn't blind faith that they responded too. It was facts, faith facts! And with that response it involved obedience to the proclaimed Word of God.

True saving faith contains that obedience and repentance, a change of mind, resulting in a faith-based walk with Jesus. It becomes personal.

True repentance includes 3 elements:

1. A turning to God.
2. A turning away from evil.
3. An intent to serve God.

2. The gospel truth results in love.

Colossians 1:4b, “and of the love you have for all God's people”

This is important, true faith will result in love for fellow believers. If it doesn't it isn't from God.

3. The gospel truth results in hope.

Colossians 1:5, “the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel”

Paul addresses the 3 great virtues here, faith, hope and love. The hope that we have stored up for us is in the true message, the gospel.

The Greek word for gospel is euangelion. It's from this word that we get the word 'evangelize.' It literally means the 'good news.' This is the source of our hope; we have heard and received the good news. A great reason to be thankful, right?

4. The gospel truth reaches the world.

Colossians 1:6a, “that has come to you.”

4 simple words. This message of hope came to the gentiles, that is who the 'to you' are! This message of hope is for all people, every race and every nation. It's not some American invention, it is the hope of God.

5. The gospel truth reproduces fruit.

Colossians 1:6b, "In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world"

The gospel has the power to transform lives and when it does it produces fruit in the individual. That fruit spreads to others who then in turn produce fruit and when fulfilled it spreads across the entire face of the planet. That's gospel power!

6. The gospel truth is rooted in grace.

Colossians 1:6c, "just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace."

Grace is the heart of the gospel. God freely giving us forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We don't deserve it and we certainly can't earn it. That's grace!

When God demonstrates such great grace to us, how do you think He wants us to demonstrate that grace to each other?

7. The gospel truth is reported by people.

Colossians 1:7-8, "You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit."

Epaphras was the servant who ministered God's grace to the church in Colossae. That is how God does it, He uses people. He uses us. He uses you. You have the power to be the dispenser of God's grace, you just need to allow Him to use you in this way.

You may think you can't do that, but if you have received Jesus as your savior something really cool happened to you. You received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

YOU HAVE THE POWER! Not only He Man has the power, but you have it. So, how do you use it?

Romans 10:14, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

You simply need to speak it. Speak life, speak the words that lead to salvation. How will they hear if no one speaks those precious words? Will you speak them?

SHARE RE: EVANGELISTIC TEMPERATURE CHECK:
BLESS

Therefore, our thankfulness centers on the gospel, the message that led to our salvation. Are you thankful for salvation? If you are, how will you demonstrate it? Can you ask one person this week if you can pray for them and see where the conversation goes?

The 3rd part of the personal section:

C. Prayer on behalf of the church 1:9-14

1. Being filled with the knowledge of God's will.

Colossians 1:9-11, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with

all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,"

How do we pray for each other? Paul is teaching us to pray for one another daily. He is hundreds of miles away and he is praying for the Colossians daily. Paul didn't have a cell phone, a computer, no internet, no technology to impact the Colossians, but he had prayer.

Paul was able to affect the spiritual wellbeing of believers without any other assistance, except prayer. Do we understand this? Do you understand the power of prayer? Paul did.

Can we help Pastor Fred in Malawi today, right now? Yes! Yes, we can, when we pray!

Can we help the Vangs? Yes, we can, when we pray!

Can we help our loved ones, our children, our coworkers, our neighbors? Yes, we can, when we pray.

Do you believe that? Do you really believe in prayer? Then pray! PRAYER IS THE PRIMARY MINISTRY!
PRAYER IS THE WORK!

And what was Paul's prayer? That they be filled with the knowledge of His will, filled with it. Let that sink in. This knowledge leads to wisdom and understanding. How many of us can use more wisdom and understanding?

What can we do to answer Paul's prayer?

Submissive Bible study, it's different. It's when I determine to do what the Bible says before I sit down to read it. Submissive Bible study leads to the knowledge of God's will. This leads to a walk that is worthy. It bears fruit. It increases our knowledge of God. It strengthens us with all power according to God's glorious might.

2. What makes Christians most thankful?

a. Inheritance

Colossians 1:12, "and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light."

God has 'qualified' us. This word, qualified, means 'to make sufficient, to empower, to authorize, to make fit.' God does this for us! And let me tell you, I want some of this and when we receive Jesus, we get it.

We are made sufficient, we are empowered, we are authorized and we are made fit. Praise God!

So I am thankful for my inheritance!

b. Deliverance

Colossians 1:13a, "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness"

Without Jesus we are in Satan's kingdom. Salvation literally pulls us out of hell. Hell was our fate, but Jesus rescued me, He delivered me from a fate unimaginably horrible.

I am thankful for deliverance.

c. Transference

Colossians 1:13b-14, "and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Not only are we plucked from Satan's kingdom, but we are put into Jesus' kingdom. We aren't left out in oblivion. We aren't even left here on a fallible earth. No, we are pulled out of darkness and are placed into a glorious place of light and forgiveness, a place of

redemption, of grace, of glory to live in the very presence of our God!

Paul is going to make 3 main points in Colossians:

1. The Supremacy/Preeminence of Christ.
2. The Sufficiency/Completeness of believers in Christ.
3. The Call to live a new, heavenly life, focusing on spiritual realities rather than earthly substitutes.

Are you ready to live that life?

Application:

Here is what you can do to live out this passage in Colossians:

1. Write down daily what you are thankful for. This will cultivate a thankful heart.
2. Pray for people:
 - a. For people in the church.
 - b. For people outside the church. BLESS