

“Gospel Gratitude”

Colossians 1:3-8

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Big Idea: *Thank God for the gospel of truth and grace!*

Thank God for Gospel *FAITH* | v.4.

- Gospel means “Good news.”
- Hebrews 11:1 *“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”*
- Westminster shorter catechism, Q.86 What is faith?
 - Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace by which we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is freely offered to us in the gospel.
- Faith primarily focuses on a person (Jesus) rather than a set of doctrines.

Thank God for Gospel *LOVE* | v.4.

- The word love here is “Agape,” which is most often crowned as the highest form of Christian love. It is the kind of love that shows empathy; extends the desire for good of another; wants the best; and embodies selflessness, sacrifice and unconditional care for others.
- Agape love is “faith in motion” and is always for someone else.
- Philippians 2:4 *“Let each of you not only look to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*
- Agape type of love is beautifully described in 1 Corinthians 13.

Thank God for Gospel *HOPE* | v.5.

- Faith and love spring from the hope of the gospel.
- Hope is presented not as the action of hoping, but as something objective; in the sense of “the things hoped for.”
- 1 Peter 1:3-5 *“³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*

Thank God for Gospel *FRUIT* | v.6.

- Paul spoke frequently of the importance of bearing the fruit of faith, love and hope (Rom. 5:1-5, 1 Cor.13:13, Gal.5:5-6, Eph. 4:2-5; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8).
- It had been roughly 30 years since Christ’s death, resurrection and the day of Pentecost. By the time Colossians was written, the gospel had already spread to places like Syria, Greece, Italy, North Africa, and beyond.
- The metaphor of fruit bearing goes all the way back to the beginning to the time of creation, when God told Adam and Eve to *“be fruitful and multiply”* (Gen 1:28). What began then as a biological fruit bearing... generations of children and grandchildren growing over time into a great nation-eventually expanded into spiritual fruit bearing, growing God’s family by means of salvation in Jesus!...

Thank God for Gospel *FAITHFULNESS* | v.7.

- The term for “learned” (Gk. *manthanō*) is closely related to the term “disciple” (Gk. *mathētēs*). More than simply listening to a gospel presentation, Paul makes it clear that the gospel involves systematic instruction in the faith and in how to live as a Christian.
- Epaphras had founded the church at Colossae while Paul was living in Ephesus (Acts 19:10). Epaphras may have been converted in Ephesus, then he returned to Colossae, his hometown and shared the gospel.
- Romans 10:13-15: *¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”*

What is the “grace of God” which motivates one to bear fruit?

Simply put, it is the "unmerited favor" which God has shown us through Jesus Christ!

We can summarize this grace of God by defining several key terms:

- *CONDEMNATION* - Being guilty of sin, we stand condemned in the sight of God and in danger of everlasting death - Ro 3:23; 6:23
- *ALIENATION* - Being guilty of sin, we also find ourselves separated from God - Isa 59:1-2
- *PROPITIATION* - but in love and mercy, God sent Jesus to be our sacrifice for sins to appease God's just and righteous anger - 1Jn 4:9-10
- *JUSTIFICATION* - by responding in obedient faith, we can be justified (declared not guilty) by virtue of Jesus' sacrifice in our stead - Ro 3:21-26
- *RECONCILIATION* - Free from the guilt of sin, we can now be reconciled with God through Christ Jesus our Lord - 2Co 5:17-20
- *SANCTIFICATION* - By virtue of Christ's death, we may also be "set apart" in service to the glory of God - Ro 6:17-18, 20-22

Reflection Questions:

1. If someone were to write about you, would they write that you have these three qualities of Christian faith, love, and hope? Which of these three areas do you need to grow in?
2. When did you first hear, understand, and receive the gospel of truth and grace?
If you haven't, why not?
3. How is the gospel reaching others through you?
4. As Christians, we also thank God for our many spiritual blessings. Do you offer regular thanks for the things Paul expresses here? For what do you most frequently give thanks to God?