

## **1st Over All**

### **Colossians**

#### **Week 2 – Faith in Christ Causes Thanksgiving**

#### **Colossians 1:3-8**

**Purpose:** Christians will praise God with thanksgiving for His work in and through His people and we will strive to be a catalyst for others to continue thankfully worshipping God for His work in and through His people today.

#### **Call to Worship**

#### **Stand to Read**

#### **Colossians 1:3-8 ESV**

**3** We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, **6** which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, **7** just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf **8** and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

#### **Pray**

Father, you are known to do great things in your people's lives. You have done great things through your people. We read these things in the bible. We know you are not done yet and will continue doing great things in and through your people. Teach us to worship you for who you are and through proclaiming what you do. You are a great God, and we will worship you today.

#### **Sermon**

#### **Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)**

#### **Opening Idea**

There is a story of a woman who lived in ancient times who was not influential, didn't have great resources, and was not respected for her profession. This woman lived in an apartment style home built into the wall surrounding the city. The amazing thing is, God chose her to bring foreign spies into her home, give them intel about the condition of the city, and protected them. She believed God was the great God of the universe. She was given faith and believed. God spared her life as Jericho's protective wall fell and she was included into the Hebrew people. She becomes an honored person and is included in the lineage of Jesus Christ. God did a powerful thing giving her faith to believe, opportunity to participate in His work to establish the Hebrews

in the promised land and making her a part of His work to bring Jesus, the Christ, to save God's people. Praise God for His powerful work in Rahab to love Him, love His people, and make Rahab His daughter! (Joshua chapter 2-6)

Let's continue our study and see how we can take part in bringing God worship!

## Read

### Colossians 1:3-8 ESV

**(SLIDE 2)** **3** We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,

**(SLIDE 3)** **6** which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, **7** just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf **8** and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

### Series Graphic (SLIDE 4)

#### Notes on Colossians 1:3-8

#### Hope From Faith that Leads to Thanksgiving (v. 3-5a)

**3** We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

Paul transitions from his opening salutation to write a statement of thanksgiving and prayer. Paul gives thanks to God for His work in the saints at Colossae. This thanksgiving statement is given to God as they pray to the Father. God, the Father, has given the Colossian saints faith in Christ Jesus. God has also caused the saints to love all the saints. Paul has much to be thankful for. This isn't a statement of thanksgiving to the Colossians, but to God. God has withheld His wrath and fury from the Colossian saints; pouring it all upon Jesus Christ, the Son. Instead of wrath, God showed the saints mercy, and He also gave them faith. This faith caused them to believe in God, believe in Jesus as the Christ, to see their true condition of condemnation, and that Jesus was their substitutionary atonement. This faith also led them to seek forgiveness and to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. God loved each of the Colossian saints and demonstrated His love toward them. God loving them cause them to love God in response and to also love the saints. Faith, revealing the truth of their situation and the gift of Jesus Christ, gave them hope! This faith and love that they now have is evidence that they also have a secure place with God for eternity. Faith and love have brought them hope. God's gracious work in the Colossian saints causes Paul to worship God through thanksgiving.

## **Gospel Truth Cultivates Hope (v. 5b)**

### **Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel**

Paul continues writing that faith, love, and hope are works of God, but it wasn't through a mystical work alone, mystical being an unknown worker. Paul writes that God caused them to hear about what was laid up for them in heaven, believe it was true and hope for the day they receive what awaits them. They hoped for the future while living obediently to God now. They heard about the love of God that was demonstrated in Christ, and they enjoyed that love through faith. Paul isn't writing thankfully about things that were foreign to them, but the things they had heard before as the gospel was shared with them, read to them, and that they read for themselves. They had faith that the "good news" that was shared with them was good news and that it was true. The gospel is truth! The gospel reveals God and His work! The gospel works in the believer! The gospel cultivates hope!

## **The Gospel Bears Fruit (v. 6)**

**6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,**

Paul then writes that this gospel they heard and that was working in them to produce hope is effective to work in them in a dynamic and complex way. This work shows evidence of faith, hope, and love. This gospel wasn't only for them. Paul writes that God is sending messengers throughout the world carrying the gospel to all people. This doesn't mean that every person will believe, but it shows that the gospel was not ethnocentric. It wasn't only for Jews, but it was also for Gentiles. The gospel isn't only for men, but also for women. God will give faith causing all kinds of people to believe and be saved. God, in this moment, is revealing that He is growing His kingdom. Growth happens as God gives faith and as God grows His kingdom through people taking the gospel and sharing it with others. God purposefully chooses to grow His kingdom through a coordinated partnership. God gives faith and sends His people to share the gospel. God is perfect in His work. The gospel is truth and effective in its message. The messengers are flawed and will struggle to obediently participate in God's work, yet God chooses this to be the method to spread the gospel.

The Holy Spirit is working in the believer, and the evidence of His work is the ability to hear the gospel and understand the "grace of God in truth." Hearing the gospel is more than just sound vibrating the ear drum and causing a systemic reaction. Hearing, in this context, includes desiring to hear, processing what is heard, and focusing on what is heard. Then Paul writes that there is an ability to understand God's grace. This grace will work to help the hearer learn and believe the truth about God - all of the truth revealed in scripture about God. Paul writes that there is great evidence of God's work in the lives of the Colossian saints. The gospel is abundantly bearing fruit in their lives!

## **God's Work to Grow His Kingdom (v. 7)**

**7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf**

Paul gives a written account reminding the Colossian saints how they heard the gospel. It was from Epaphras. Epaphras was given faith, believed the gospel, shared it with the believers in Colossae and they believed the truth about God. This is the evidence of God's plan in action to grow His kingdom. He causes a person to believe. The gospel is shared with them. They believe the gospel. They grow in knowledge and understanding about God, and they share the gospel with others. This is God's plan and the Colossian saints are included in this plan. All of them!

Paul describes Epaphras with affectionate terms. Paul writes that Epaphras is a fellow servant. Paul also writes that Epaphras is a faithful minister (in the ESV). The Greek terms Paul uses to describe Epaphras are *syndoulos* and *diakonos*. *Syndoulos* is translated "fellow slave/servant/bondservant". The context of this word reveals that "bond-slave" is best word to use here. The prefix "syn" is translated as "with", "together", or "fellow" and is used to communicate that Epaphras is a "fellow bond-slave". The Greek word *diakonos* means "servant". This is the Greek word for the English word "deacon", which is a servant. It is not clear if Epaphras serves in the office of Deacon, but he is a servant with Paul to the Colossian church. Paul writes that Epaphras is faithful. Paul is writing that Jesus has called Epaphras to serve the Colossian church and Epaphras has served well. This is another opportunity for Paul to worship God by proclaiming the work God is doing in and through Epaphras. God works effectively and dynamically to save His people and grow His kingdom. Praise God!

## **Testimony of God's Work – Love (v. 8)**

**8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.**

Paul now gives a testimony to the great work of God. He writes that God's work in the Colossian saints has come to Paul through Epaphras. God used Epaphras to share the gospel with the Colossian saints. God also used Epaphras to share with Paul God's fruitful work in the Colossian saints. The spiritual fruit of love isn't just an emotion, but a deep and effective work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is producing the fruit of love in the Colossian saints and through them too! God is doing a mighty work, and it is being proclaimed!

## **Worship God for His Work in His People (SLIDE 5)**

### **Thanksgiving (SLIDE 6)**

God's work in people

God's work through people

### **Faith (SLIDE 7)**

To believe in God

To know their situation with God

Once Condemned

Now Reconciled

**Hope (SLIDE 8)**

Greater than their situation

What awaits them – presence of God

**Love (SLIDE 9)**

The love they show to God's people

The love they know God has for them

**Be A Catalyst for Thankful Worship (SLIDE 10)**

**Make His Work Known**

**Your Life**

- Show God's work in you through the way to serve, give, love, grow, and know God

**Your Speech**

- Tell what you have seen God doing through the saints – the evidence of what He is doing in the saints

**\* Live a Cohesive Life – causing worship in all areas of your life**

- Private
- Public

**Read**

**Ephesians 1:15-17 ESV (SLIDE 11)**

**15** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love[a] toward all the saints, **16** I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, **17** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,

**Series Graphic (SLIDE 12)**