

Theme: The Gospel of Christ has the power to grow and bear fruit in the lives of believers so that they are filled with faith, love, hope, and good works.

I. Intro – Series on Colossians

- A. Today we begin a series on the book of Colossians
- B. Colossians is a Christ centered book
- C. I am calling this “Christ is all” (Colossians 3:11)
- D. Closely related to Ephesians and Philemon
- E. Probably sent from Rome to Colossae (map)
- F. Paul’s normal letter introduction
 - 1. Greetings (vv1-2)
 - 2. Thanksgiving (vv3-8) - our focus today
 - 3. Prayer (vv9-14)

II. Paul’s Thanksgiving Prayer

- A. Paul is thankful - to God
 - 1. We always thank God (v3)
 - 2. We give thanks in prayer (v3)
 - 3. Could be ‘praying always for you’ (KJV)
 - 4. I think NIV is correct - always thankful when pray
 - 5. Thanksgiving should always be directed to God
- B. Paul is thankful - for their faith and love
 - 1. Because/since - reason for thanksgiving (v4)

2. Two reasons - their faith and love

a. Faith in Christ Jesus (v4)

- 1. Either faith ‘toward’ Christ or ‘in sphere of Christ’
- 2. Already said they are ‘in Christ’ (v2)
- 3. In either case the ultimate reference to faith is Christ
- 4. Thankful that they look to Christ/are in Christ!
- 5. He will be central in this whole letter
- 6. Christ 25x; Lord/Jesus - 10 other times
- 7. 35 references to Jesus in 95 verses!!

b. Love - for all the saints

- 1. They love their brothers and sisters in Christ
- 2. Includes all believers - worldwide Church
- 3. Finds expression in specific believers - local church
- 4. Faith expresses itself by love for others (Gal 5:6)

C. Faith and love spring from hope (v5)

1. NIV is loose but catches the idea well (v5)

- a. Faith and love not really repeated from v4
- b. Literally ‘because of the hope’
- c. But the NIV catches the spirit of the words well

2. The famous triad of faith, hope, and love

- a. Occurs 10x in the NT - table in Keynote
- b. I talked about this on January 29, 2012
- c. Each one given precedence in different passages

3. Hope as the foundation for faith and love
 - a. Faith and love spring from/because of hope (v5)
 - b. Stored up - what is hoped for more than feeling (v5)
 - c. But object of hope produces hope inside of us!

III. The Powerful Gospel of Christ

- A. Hope (and faith and love) are built on the Gospel
 1. Gospel learned from Epaphras (v5, 7)
 2. Same Gospel everywhere (Colossians 1:23)
- B. Hope, faith, love built on simple Gospel - not new truths
 1. Already heard about hope in the Gospel (v5,7)
 2. Hope held out in the Gospel (Colossians 1:23)
 3. Fringe groups always say we need special teaching
 4. Paul says we need same Gospel as everyone!
- C. Gospel is powerful to produce fruit
 1. Gospel bearing fruit everywhere (v6)
 2. Gospel bearing fruit in Colossae (v6)
 3. Gospel bearing fruit from day they understood (v6)
 4. Gospel makes us established and firm in faith (v23)
 5. Fruit - knowledge, good works, and new believers

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Are we experiencing the fruitful life seen in this text?

1. If Paul saw BRCC, would he give thanks?
2. If Paul saw my life, would he give thanks for it?
3. Do I exhibit Christ centered faith?
4. Do I display love for believers - in action?
5. Am I sustained by heavenly hope?

- B. Are we receiving the Gospel of Christ?
 1. How central is the Gospel in my life and thought?
 2. Am I restless to move on to other things?
 3. When trouble comes, do I look to Christ?
 4. Do I realize that Christ is all - and enough?
- C. Communion - the Gospel made visible

A Fruitful Life Through the Gospel of Christ

Colossians 1:1-8
 February 19, 2012
 Communion
 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father. 3 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 and of the love you have for all the saints — 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. 7 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.
Colossians 1:1–8

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.
Galatians 5:6

Uses of faith, hope and love triad in NT

Romans 5:2-5 Hebrews 6:10-12
1 Corinthians 13:13 Hebrews 10:22-24
Galatians 5:5-6 1 Peter 1:21-22
Ephesians 4:2-5
Colossians 1:3-4
1 Thessalonians 1:3
1 Thessalonians 5:8

... if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from **the hope held out in the gospel**. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.
Colossians 1:23

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Colossians 1:23

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.
2 Thessalonians 2:16–17