

The Truth of the Gospel Colossians 1:1-8

INTRO: In this age of error, we must stand for the truth. To stand for truth, we must know what the truth is. In this time of compromise, we must stand without wavering. I Corinthians 15:58 says: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

False teachers and social Gospel advocates are perverting the truth. Much of what is called Gospel is not the Gospel at all. In the rush for acceptance of the ecumenical movement and the one world church, many have thrown the Gospel and much of the Bible out. Christ is the head of the true church (1:18).

What is the true Gospel? The Gospel is the fact of the death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor 15:3-4).

As we study the book of Colossians, we will see that the Christ of the Gospel is the only remedy for sin.

1. Christ reconciles sinners to God and makes them holy, He changes lives (1:21-22).
2. Christ gives stability to the Christian (2:6-7).
3. Christ is what we need, He's all we need for our spiritual health (2:10).

I. THE SALUTATION

- A. VS. 1, This epistle was written by Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee with, a brilliant mind, a tender heart and dedication.
 1. "An apostle of Jesus Christ..."
 - a. An official representative of the One who sent him; more than a messenger.
 - b. Paul does not call himself an apostle in a haughty way, but in a way that reminds his readers that what he has to say is back by his important position.
 2. "By the will of God..."
 - a. Not by:
 1. Aspiration
 2. Usurpation
 3. Nomination of other men

4. But by divine preparation (Gal. 1:15-16).
 - b. John MacArthur says, "Paul was an apostle by the will of God. God having chosen him long before, brought His Sovereign choice to realization with that most striking of conversions on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1-9)" (14).
 - c. Paul was also set aside by the Holy Spirit for missionary service being commissioned by the church at Antioch (Acts 13:2-5).
3. "Timothy our brother," He was not a co-author of Colossians, but he was a trusted friend and brother, a kindred spirit, Paul's son in the ministry. We need men like Timothy in our churches today.
- B. Vs. 2, "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ..." These are not two distinct groups, the "saints and faithful brethren" are equivalent terms. "And" is the Greek *kai* which can be translated "even".
1. "Saints", The Greek word is *hagios* meaning, "holy, separated from sin, set apart to God." Christians have been called out from the world to live holy lives. I Corinthians 1:2: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints...." Child of God, you have a calling on your life, a call to holiness.
 2. "Faithful", Christians are in the family of God because of faith in Christ Jesus, that is what Galatians 3:26 says.
 3. "In Christ," the scripture here says that these were saints at Colossae, a pagan city. How could these Christians make in a heathen town? They made it because of being "in Christ." Over and over in Paul's writings he reminds us that we are "in the Lord," "in Him," and "in Christ." Christ is in you (1:27, and you, believer, are in Christ).
 4. "Grace unto you, and peace."
 - a. "Grace" - *charis* , same as in Ephesians 2:8-9; God's unmerited favor in action. This "grace" saves, keeps, and motivates.

GRACE A CHARMING SOUND

1 Grace, 'tis a charming sound, Harmonious to the ear! Heav'n with the echo shall resound, And all the earth shall hear. 2 Grace first contrived the way to save rebellious man; And all the steps that grace display Which drew the wond'rous plan. 3 [Grace first inscribed my name in God's eternal book; 'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb, Who all my sorrows took.] 4 Grace led my roving feet To tread the heavenly road, And new supplies each hour I meet, While pressing on to God" (Lloyds Primitive Hymns 1856)

- b. "Peace" The result of believing in the atoning work of Christ. This is peace that passes understanding. Assurance of salvation in Christ brings peace.
 - c. Salvation brings harmony to our discordant lives.
5. The source of Grace and peace is God.

II. VSS. 3-4, THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL IS RECEIVED BY FAITH

- A. VS. 3, All the praise and glory for salvation goes to God. Paul gives thanks to, "God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..."
 1. Salvation from start to finish is the work of God (Titus 3:5 "Not by works of righteousness....").
 2. Paul continually thanked God for salvation, and he lived in the attitude of prayer.
- B. VS. 4, Here we have the reason for this thanksgiving of Paul.
 1. For their faith
 - a. This word "faith" means more than intellectual assent. "Faith" is the Greek word *pistis* which comes from the root *peitho* "to obey".
 - b. This faith means there will be a difference in the true believers life. The true believer believes and goes on believing in God.
 - c. Here is a faith that brings about works (Eph 2:10).
 - e. "Faith in Christ," Here we have the object of faith, "in Christ." The Greek word for "in" is *eis*, which conveys the idea of coming to a

place of security, a harbor to anchor in, a home or dwelling place in Christ, “abide in me,” Christ says (Jn 15:4). Believers have come to anchor in Him. He safely keeps us as we ride out the storms of life.

2. For their love toward all saints.
 - a. A true believer will love the brethren, even the sometimes unlovable.
 - b. As Christ has loved us, we are to love our brethren (John 13:34 “As I have loved you. . . also love).
 - c. I John 3:23: “This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.”

III. VS. 5, THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL

- A. Because of the “hope” that resides in the believer, many strengths and virtues grow and bear fruit. In this hopeless society, the Gospel gives hope.
- B. “Laid up” means “in store” or “reserved.”
 1. In Hebrews 6:18-19, hope is the rope connecting us to God’s throne. Titus 1:2 says: “In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began.”
 2. Part of our hope is an inheritance in heaven (I Peter 1:4).
 3. Christian hope is the willingness to sacrifice the present for the future.
 4. The world says “Buy now- pay later;” the Christian is willing to “pay now and receive later.” (Rom. 8:18)
 5. Jim Elliot: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”
- C. The Gospel means “good news”.
 1. It is the word of truth.
 2. The truth of the Gospel is that Christ died for sinners, was buried, and rose again. Because He lives, we have hope for tomorrow.

- IV. VS. 6, THE GOSPEL REACHES OUT TO THE WORLD
- A. Salvation is not universal, but the Gospel is. It is good news for the whole world for it crosses ethnic, geographic, cultural and political boundaries.
 - 1. Many verses emphasize the universality of the Gospel (Mark 16:15 “Go ye into all the world. . .”).
 - 2. We have a commission, church, to get the Gospel out (Matt. 28 :19-20).
 - B. The good news bears fruit.
 - 1. The Gospel brings forth spiritual growth (I Pet. 2:2).
 - 2. When salvation enters a heart divinely prepared, it brings forth fruit (Matt. 13:3-8).
 - 3. Since the day the Colossians had heard the Gospel with believing ears; they had been fruit bearers. The Gospel produces fruit in individual lives.
- V. VSS. 7-8, THE GOSPEL PREACHED BY MEN
- A. VS. 7, The Colossians had heard the Gospel from Epaphras, “a faithful minister of Christ.”
 - 1. He was faithful to preach the Gospel truth.
 - 2. Romans 10:14-17
 - B. VS. 8, What is reported here, no doubt, brought joy to Paul. The Colossians received the Gospel and it changed their lives.

CONCLUSION: Sinners believe the Gospel. Saint never be ashamed of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16 “For I am not ashamed. . .”).

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