

Sermon Notes for August 19, 2012

**Sermon Series on Colossians**  
**“The Thankfulness Of Paul”**  
**Colossians 1:3-8**

**Introduction**

**A. We Continue Our SERMON SERIES “THROUGH” THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS**

1. types of sermons:
  - a. topical
  - b. textual
  - c. expository
2. why we are going through an entire book
  - a. two sections:
    1. Chapters 1 and 2 – doctrine; theology
    2. Chapters 3 and 4 – duties; practical living
  - b. such topics as:
    1. The supremacy of Christ
    2. our freedom in Christ
    3. avoiding legalism
    4. how to live the Christian life
    5. dealing with sin in your life
    6. dealing with forgiveness
    7. the peace of Christ
    8. the Christian family
    9. employers and employees
    10. living a life of prayer
    11. how to deal with non-believers
    12. developing friendships
3. last week, we looked at the introduction to the book of Colossians
  - a. we found out who wrote the book as well as the audience
  - b. today, Paul will make some opening comments about how he felt about the believers at Colossae

**B. In Today’s Text, PAUL EXPRESSES HIS THANKFULNESS FOR THE BELIEVERS AT COLOSSAE**

1. I have never understood why some coaches, parents and leaders think that they can motivate people by criticizing them; as if the “worst” way to motivate people is to encourage them by telling them they are doing a good job.
  - a. I once saw a coach berate a quarterback so harshly on the sidelines that I wondered if the quarterback would quit the team at that very moment
  - b. a man told me a story about when he was a football player; one night, he scored 5 touchdowns: after the game, his father complained that he could have scored another touchdown and played better

2. I, also, do not understand preachers, who think that the best way to motivate people is to:
  - a. berate them
  - b. and make them to feel guilty “all of the time”
    1. I fully realize that much of Scripture is about what we have done wrong and what we need to do better
    2. however, Paul models for us how to truly encourage fellow believers
    3. quotes:
      - a. **“Appreciation is a great medicine for the soul.”**
      - b. **Proverbs 16:24** – **“Pleasant words** are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”
      - c. **Proverbs 18:21** – **“The tongue has the power of life and death,** and those who love it will eat its fruit.”
      - d. **Romans 14:19** – **“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”**
  4. the apostle Paul was a positive, encouraging man
    - a. for, not only did he **begin** his letters with encouragement and thankfulness
    - b. he often **ended** his letters with thankfulness
      1. **Colossians 4**
        - a. **4:7** – **“Tychicus** will tell you all the news about me. **He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.”**
        - b. **4:12** – **“Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus,** sends greetings. He is always **wrestling in prayer for you,** that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.”
      2. **Romans 16**
        - a. **16:3** – **“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus.”**
        - b. **16:12** – **“Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.”**

## I. Paul Was THANKFUL IN HIS PRAYERS FOR THE BELIEVERS IN COLOSSAE

### A. THANKFUL PRAYERS

**Vs. 3** – **“We always thank God,** the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.,”

1. PLEASE NOTICE that Paul was **THANKFUL in his prayer** for the church at Colossae
  - a. in fact, the Greek word for thankful is **eucharisto** from where we get the word eucharist – the word for The Lord’s Supper
  - b. the root word for eucharist is the word charis – the word meaning grace; forgiveness

- c. as Paul was THANKFUL for the believers at Colossae, **IT WAS A THANKFULNESS FOR THE GRACE OF GOD IN THEIR LIVES!**
  - 1. who “deserves” the grace of God
  - 2. who “earns” the grace of God
  - 3. **THAT WAS WHY PAUL WAS SUCH A GRATEFUL PERSON, BECAUSE HE UNDERSTOOD THE GRACE OF GOD IN HIS OWN LIFE!**
- 2. WHEN YOU SEE AN UNTHANKFUL, JUDGMENTAL, NEGATIVE BELIEVER, THAT BELIEVER DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE GRACE OF GOD!
  - a. Preachers included!
  - b. Paul’s understanding of the grace of God in his life and the lives of the believers at Colossae “made him” to be a thankful man  
**I Timothy 1:12-16** – “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a **blasphemer** and a **persecutor** and a **violent man, I was shown mercy** because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The **grace of our Lord** was **poured out on me abundantly**, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinner**s —**of whom I am the worst**. But for **that very reason** I was **shown mercy** so that in me, **the worst of sinners**, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an **example** for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.”

## B. TIMELESS PRAYERS

**Vs 3** – “We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **when we pray for you,**”

- 1. besides being thankful in his prayers for the believers in Colossae, Paul was persistent and constant in his prayers “**for**” the believers at Colossae.
- 2. the real meaning of this verse in the Greek is this:
  - a. (NASV) “We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **praying always for you**”
  - b. the verb tense for praying **is a present participle** – indicating a constancy of prayer
  - c. AND, after the Greek verb suggesting constancy of prayer, Paul **ADDED** the word “always”
    - 1. ever
    - 2. at all times
  - d. it was as if Paul was saying: “**I am constantly praying for you, always**”
- 3. how did the apostle Paul pray “this constantly”
  - a. Paul himself wrote to the church at Thessalonica in **1 Thessalonians 5:17**- “**pray constantly**”
    - 1. without ceasing
    - 2. without intermission
    - 3. incessantly

- b. **John Phillips** – “How did Paul manage to get through the prodigious prayer lists that he must have compiled? Look at him! There he goes on one of his long, missionary journeys. He is tramping up and down hills, mile after mile, day after day. **How does he fill the endless hours? He prays!** Or there he goes on another of his voyages by sea. He will be shut up on that little ship for weeks on end. **What will he do? He will pray!** No idle gossip for him, no time to spare for games. **There’s too much to pray about.”**
4. beloved, we are learning a lot about prayer here at Christ Covenant
- a. for the past two years, we have been praying for revival in our church
    1. your elders have prayed
    2. your staff has prayed
    3. prayer cells have prayed
  - b. This is what I am learning about prayer: **THIS** is where the power lies; **THIS** is what God wants; **THIS** is how He moves
  - c. **C. H. Spurgeon – a man of prayer**
    1. **One of Spurgeon’s greatest concerns was that his people learn to truly pray.** “He taught his people to pray, doing so far more **by his example than by any preaching.** People heard him pray with such reality that they became ashamed of their own mere repetition of words.” Throughout his entire ministry many hearers remarked that they were moved by his preaching, but **yet still more affected by his praying.** **D. L. Moody**, after his first visit to England, was asked upon his return to America, “**Did you hear Spurgeon preach?**” He replied, “**Yes, but better still, I heard him pray.**”
    2. “**Shall I give you yet another reason why you should pray?** I have preached my very heart out. I could not say any more than I have said. **Will not your prayers accomplish that which my preaching fails to do? Is it not likely that the Church has been putting forth its preaching hand but not its praying hand? On dear friends! Let us agonize in prayer.**”
    3. When a group of American ministers visited Charles Spurgeon in the late 1800s, he offered them a tour of the church’s facilities. He took them through the massive sanctuary and around the various buildings of the compound and then asked if they would like to see the power source—the boiler room of the ministry.  
Thinking it dramatically unremarkable, the visitors tried to politely decline, but Spurgeon insisted. So he led them down a rather ordinary stairway to the church’s basement, then down a hallway to a room with a closed door. When he opened it, instead of finding the plumbing and furnace they expected, they found a hundred or so people on their faces in prayer. “**This,**” said Spurgeon with a smile, “**is my boiler room.**”

## II. Paul Was THANKFUL FOR THE BELIEVERS IN COLOSSAE

### A. Paul Was THANKFUL FOR THEIR FAITH

**Vs. 3 – 4** – “We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus** and of the love you have for all God’s people—“

#### 1. what faith **is not**:

##### a. let’s understand what most people think about faith

1. “You need to have more faith.”
2. “It doesn’t matter what you have faith in; just as long as you have faith.”
3. This is a great illustration about “this kind of faith”:  
The great Preacher, **George Whitefield**, was witnessing to a man. Whitefield asked, “**What do you believe?**” The man replied, “**I believe what my church believes.**”  
“**And what does your church believe?**” asked the evangelist.  
“**What I believe,**” replied the man.  
Undaunted, Whitefield tried again and asked, “**And what do you both believe?**”  
“**Why, we both believe the same thing!**”
4. the 19<sup>th</sup> century Danish philosopher, **Soren Kierkegaard**, believed in “taking a leap of faith”
  - a. not so much a leap of faith to an objective truth but to a subjective truth
  - b. **Psychologist, Jim Taylor** – “The leap of faith involves having a basic belief in yourself and a fundamental trust in the vision of who, what, and where you want to be in the future. **The leap of faith involves the belief that good things will happen when you choose to change your life.**”
  - c. **let me say that I think that is one of the dumbest statements I have ever heard**
5. **let me ask you a question: – do you want to leap anywhere without knowing where you are going to land?**

##### b. that “kind of faith” is hopeless

#### 2. what faith **is**:

- a. I like what Kent Hughes said about faith: “**Faith has no intrinsic value. It must derive its value FROM ITS OBJECT.**”
- b. for example:
  1. every time you take medicine, you show your faith in your Doctor and your pharmacist
  2. every time you take your money to the bank, you have faith that your money will be safe in that bank
  3. every time you drive over a bridge, you have faith in the engineers who designed that bridge
  4. thousands of people “had faith” in Barney Madoff and they shouldn’t have

- c. however, when we have faith in Jesus, we have faith that He can save us, **BECAUSE HE CAN.**
- 3. Paul was thankful for the faith of the Colossae church
  - a. a faith that trusted in Jesus Christ
  - b. and a faith that was still trusting in Christ

## **B. Paul Was THANKFUL FOR THEIR LOVE**

**Vs. 3-4** – “We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and **of the love you have for all God’s people** —“

- 1. please realize that Paul was thankful for the **faith AND the love** of the believers at Colossae
  - a. yes, a Christian can have faith, but not express love
  - b. **BUT, THAT IS IMMATURITY; INCOMPLETENESS!**
- 2. The love that Paul is talking about is a love that **IS SHOWN TOWARD OTHERS** – “**The love you have for all God’s people.**”
  - a. by the way, the Greek word for love here is agape
    - 1. this is not a love:
      - a. “because of”
      - b. or “if”
    - 2. no, this is a love “in spite of”
      - a. to love people who are not “like us”
      - b. you don’t act like me, look like me, want the same things that I want, but I love you in Jesus
  - b. we must realize that the love that Paul speaks of is a love that is expressed to all kinds of believers
    - 1. rich and poor
    - 2. young and old
    - 3. smart and not so smart
  - c. and, this is a love that is expressed in all kinds of situations
    - 1. especially, when people need your help
    - 2. When **Chuck Colson** was serving his prison sentence after the Watergate scandal, his newfound faith was severely tested. His wife did not understand the “born again” business; his son was picked up on drug charges and Colson himself was despondent. But God met him in his misery. A group of Christians in Washington were praying for him. One senator discovered an old law that allowed an innocent man to serve a prison term for another. So, this senator volunteered to serve the remainder of Colson’s term. Colson turned him down, but he had experienced love. **Chuck Colson was refreshed in his faith.**”
- 3. there was something very unique about the love of the early church
  - a. **Acts. 2:44-45** – “All the believers were together and had everything in common. **Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.**”

- b. Because of the great impact of Christians in the days of Emperor Hadrian, the Emperor sent a spy name Aristides, to find out more about the people known as Christians: Here was what Aristides reported back to the Emperor: **“Behold, how they love one another.”**
- 4. what was Jesus’ call to the church in **John 13:34-35** – “A new command I give you: **Love one another**. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**”
  - a. of all of the societies, clubs, and organizations,
  - b. **THE INDICATOR OF THE CHURCH IS HOW WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.**

### C. Paul Was **THANKFUL FOR THEIR HOPE**

**Vs. 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”

1. PLEASE NOTICE THAT THIS WORD HOPE IS A NOUN AND NOT A VERB
  - a. it is not; “I hope that I will go to heaven”
  - b. no; it is instead, “heaven is our hope”
2. to the apostle Paul, hope was a place; and hope was heaven
  - a. **I Peter 1:3-4** – “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. **This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,**”
  - b. **Colossians 1:5a** – “the faith and love that spring from the hope **stored up for you in heaven**”
    1. stored; kept
    2. laid away; the great spiritual “lay away” plan
3. DO YOU REALIZE WHAT “THIS HOPE” MEANS?
  - a. despite your sin, your failure, your hypocrisy; **BECAUSE** you are resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ, you will go to heaven forever!
  - b. it is not: “I hope so,” no: it is “so, I **will** experience my hope”
4. **PLEASE DON’T MISS WHAT PAUL WROTE IN VERSE 5!**

**Vs. 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”

  - a. what Paul is saying here is that our “understanding” of this hope of heaven “drives” or “feeds” our faith and love

- b. in other words, **BECAUSE** I know that I am going to heaven, my faith grows and my love is expressed  
**Revelation 21:1-4** – Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “**Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**”
- c. so. . .what do you say about people who do **not** experience faith nor express love?
1. EITHER they do not really and fully realize that they are going to heaven
  2. or they are not Christians at all
  3. **BECAUSE THIS IS HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD THINK!**
  4. IF ONE HAS AN “**ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE,**” HOW CAN THEY NOT BE FILLED WITH FAITH AND LOVE?  
**Hebrews 12:2** – “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, **who for the joy set before Him** endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

### III. Paul Was **THANKFUL FOR THE GOSPEL IN THE COLOSSIANS**

#### A. Paul Was **THANKFUL THEY HAD HEARD THE GOSPEL**

**Vs. 6b** – “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.**”

1. Paul was so thankful that the believers in Colossae had heard and responded to the gospel
2. now, what is the gospel?
  - a. the Greek word is euangellion; from where we get the word evangelism
  - b. the basic meaning of the gospel is “good news”
  - c. and what is the “good news”?
    1. that, despite our sins, we can be forgiven and made righteous by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
    2. all that we have to do is accept or “rest in” that gospel



## 3. PLEASE KNOW THIS:

- a. a person CANNOT go to heaven until he has received the gospel or the good news of Jesus
- b. Paul used a preposition “to” or “unto you”
  1. into
  2. unto
  3. to
- c. the meaning here is that the gospel, must be received, **into** your life

B. Paul Was **THANKFUL THAT THEY HAD SHARED THE GOSPEL**

**Vs. 6b** – “**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.

1. besides being thankful that the believers in Colossae had received this gospel, Paul was also thankful that the believers in Colossae had “shared” this gospel with Others
2. **John Phillips** – “The early church was a **missionary church**. Almost every book in the New Testament was written by a **foreign missionary**. Every epistle in the New Testament addressed to an individual was addressed to the **convert of a foreign missionary**. Every epistle addressed to a church was addressed to a **foreign mission church**. All of the apostles, except one, **became a missionary**; the one who didn’t become a missionary became a traitor. The disciples were first **called “Christians” in a foreign land**.
3. **IF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL CAN CHANGE YOU, THE GOSPEL MUST BE SHARED ALL OVER THE WORLD WITH OTHERS WHO NEED IT TOO.**
  - a. the apostle Paul was thankful that the believers at Colossae were sharing that gospel
  - b. I am sure that Paul would have criticized the believers in Colossae if they had not shared this gospel
4. **it is absolutely beyond me how someone can be touched with the grace and mercy of God and NOT want to share that good news**
  - a. God called you to Himself from a life of confusion, discouragement and lostness
  - b. He gave you His blessed, wonderful Holy Spirit
  - c. and, instead of discouragement and confusion, you now have peace and joy and purpose
  - d. you are constantly cared for by His oversight and sovereignty
  - e. **AND**. . .He will take you to heaven where you will live forever
5. and, yet there are people all around you who are just as **MISERABLE AND LOST** “as you were”
  - a. **AND YOU MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO TELL THEM OF JESUS!**
  - b. I fully realize how awkward it can be to tell someone of Jesus, but we should still try

- c. I have often wondered how a person with cancer would react if someone walked into his hospital room and gave him a pill that cured him of cancer. Before that wonderful person left, he left 10 more pills just like the one he gave you. Let me ask you a question: would you walk out of that cancer ward with those 10 pills still in your pocket?
  - 1. well folks, we are not talking about “a little cancer” that can kill you
  - 2, we are talking about having the greatest news that a person can ever hear that will keep them out of hell
- d. The apostle Paul was thankful for the believers in Colossae who shared this wonderful gospel with those around them who needed that gospel.

### Conclusion:

1. The apostle Paul was a positive man, a thankful man, a man who expressed his thanks and appreciation for the believers in Colossae
  - a. he was thankful for their **faith in Jesus**
  - b. he was thankful for their **love for one another**
  - c. he was thankful for their **hope of heaven**
  - d. but, he was also thankful that they did not keep the wonderful news about the **gospel** for themselves
2. In **125 A.D.**, a letter was written by a Christian to an unbeliever. The recipient of the letter was a man named **Diognetus**. Some have thought him to be the tutor of Emperor Marcus Aurelius. We don't know who wrote the letter. The letter expresses the difference between the lives and views of Christian and non-Christians.

“They dwell in their own countries simply as sojourners. . . They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. **They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven.** They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time, they surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, but are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned. **They are put to death, but (will be) restored to life.** They are poor, yet they make many rich. They possess few things; yet, they abound in all. They are dishonored, but in their very dishonor are glorified. . . And those who hate them are unable to give any reason for their hatred.”