

THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL

COLOSSIANS 1:3-5 • TV102A

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By

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The Hope of the Gospel

Colossians 1:3-5

“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”

I would like for you to open your Bible today to the **book of Colossians**. I’m going to be speaking to you from **chapter one of the book of Colossians** and the title of our message is: **“THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL.”**

Now, if you will, turn to **Colossians the first chapter** and let me read three or four verses of Scripture and as I read these verses I want you to listen for the word hope and the hope of the Gospel. That’s our subject: **“THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL.”**

First of all, **verses 3 and 5 of Colossians 1**, Paul says: *“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel. I give thanks to God for the hope which is laid up for you*

in heaven which you heard about when you heard the gospel of Jesus Christ the Lord, which we preached to you.”

Now listen to **verse 23**, *“if you continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard.”*

Now listen to **verse 27 of Colossians 1**: *“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles which is Christ in you the hope of glory.”*

Now, man is a religious creature by nature; there is no question about that. Where you find man you are going to find a religious altar, or a religious shrine, or some type of worship. Where you find a man you are going to find some form of religion because man is a religious creature by nature.

There are several things that are true of all men (practically all men). We just say all men because it is 99 % true.

First of all: Most every man knows that God exists!

James wrote: *“You believe in one God or you believe there’s one God; you do well. The devil believes and trembles.”*

And when Paul went down to Athens to preach he passed through their city and then he spoke to them in this manner; he said: “I perceive that you are more religious than most people.” He said: “I passed through your city and I saw all the different shrines, altars, and idols, and even found one shrine that had been erected to the unknown god.”

So, man is religious. Paul talking about the Jews of his day, he said: *“I bear them record; they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge.”*

In other words, they knew there was a God but they didn’t know Him. They believed there was a God but they weren’t acquainted with that God. So, man is religious by nature and nearly all men believe to some extent that there is a God or a God exists or they have a God.

Secondly: Most all men know that to some degree they have sinned!

Most all men know that; *“If any man say he hath not sin; he deceives himself.”* And all men aren’t deceived in this regard; they believe that they’ve sinned. Some people believe they’ve sinned but not much, you know.

And some people believe they have sinned but not as much as other people have sinned. And then some people believe that they have sinned but now they’ve got religion and they sin no more.

And then some people believe that they have sinned, they are sin, they do sin, and they will continue to sin as long as they live in the flesh. So, men believe this; they believe to some extent that they are sinners.

Thirdly: Most all men believe that one day they are going to die!

Now, nearly everybody believes that. You won't find very many people that do not believe they are going to die because by experience we are taught that every man one day will die. The Scripture tells us that: *"It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment."*

Fourthly: And most everybody believes that he will one day die and there's a day of reckoning, there's a day of accounting, and there's a day of judgment!

The Scripture bears record that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; yes we shall all stand. John writing said: *"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. The sea gave up the dead which were in it. Death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them and they all stood before God and the Books were opened."*

Everybody believes that, that there is a God and to some extent they have sinned against that God and that there will be a day of accounting, there will be a day of reckoning, and there will be a day of judgment.

Fifthly: Most people believe there's life after death!

You don't find many folks that do not believe to some extent that there is life after death. Job asked this, *"If a man die shall he live again?"* Yes, he shall live again. The Scripture teaches us that some shall live forever in God's presence sharing God's glory, enjoying God's peace in joy, and the rest will live forever in darkness, sorrow, and eternal despair.

Now, most men believe that. These are things that nearly all men have in common because men are religious. They believe there is a God, they believe to some extent that they have done wrong unto various degrees.

They believe that there will be a day of reckoning, there will be a day of accounting, and there will be a day of judgment.

Sixthly: Then they believe that there is going to be a day after that day; there's going to be an eternity, there's going to be a heaven, and there's going to be a hell!

Now, here's the important point and here's what I want you to listen to; now here's the critical area right here and here's the critical point. Most people entertain some kind of hope of being among those who come out well in the judgment.

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Most men regardless of who they are in the pulpit, in the pew, or in the world; entertain some hope of being among those who live forever in God's presence, in heaven and among those who will be saved, secure and forever happy.

And they base this hope on different things. And this is what's so important and I want you to listen very carefully now. So, the word hope; we use the word hope constantly, not only in our vocabulary but even in our experience, and in our thoughts, and in our plans.

There's not many people listening to my voice who plan to go to hell; there's not many. There's not, there's not many people listening to me who do not plan on, at least have intentions of, spending eternity with God and with Mom and Daddy, and with their loved one, but they base this hope on different things.

Some base it one thing and some on another. Let me give you some examples:

First of all: The Jews of old, the Israelites; they felt that they were secure. They felt they were forever blessed because they were Abraham's seed. They said as much; they said: *"We have Moses."*

And Christ said: *"Well, if you would have believed Moses you would have believed me. Moses wrote of me."* But that didn't shake them from their foundation. That didn't shake them from their hope; they held to it. They said: *"We have Moses. We are Abraham's children."*

And our Lord said, *"God's able to raise up of these stones children unto Abraham,"* but that still didn't shake them. *"Why, it's impossible for us to be separated from God; we are God's children. We are God's chosen people. We are Jews, we are Abraham's seed. We have Moses and the prophets."*

And our Lord even spoke to a whole Sabbath Day congregation of them one day, hundreds of them down in Nazareth and He said, *"Don't you remember; I tell you the truth, don't you remember that in the days of Elisha that there were many, there were many lepers in Israel and God didn't heal a one of them, not a one of them, but he went over and healed a Gentile from Syria by the name of Naaman?"*

And He said: *"Don't you remember in the days of Elijah that there were many widows in the land of Israel and God fed none of them and he went over into the land of the Gentiles and fed a woman who was a Gentile?"*

Do you think that, do you think that made them think? No sir; that made them mad. Do you think that disturbed their confidence? Not at all! In fact; it made them so angry they were going to throw him off a cliff. Rather than examining the truth and examining their position, and examining their hope, they got angry. They said: *"We won't listen to you; we will murder you."*

I wonder how many listening to my voice today are basing their hope of eternal happiness and eternal joy and eternal life on the fact that they are Baptists, Methodists, Catholic, or basing their

hope on the fact that their mother and father were Christians and they were raised in the church as an infant they were sprinkled, catechized, confirmed, and grew up in the church?

I'm being honest with you now. As our Lord was honest with those people in His day; it didn't do any good because they wouldn't believe Him and they wouldn't listen to Him. I hope you will listen.

No man is saved, no man knows God because his daddy or mother was a Christian or because he was a Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, or any other denomination. That's not a foundation. That's no hope.

And our Lord showed these people that. Think of Judas; he was an apostle. I know a lot of men think it will be well with my soul, I'm a preacher. But Judas was an apostle. He didn't know God.

I can give you so many other illustrations: Demas was a companion of the apostle Paul and Paul said, "He left me; he loved this world more than he loved God." What's your hope?

Secondly: There were people back in those days that rested their hope for eternal life on their morality, on their good works!

Our Lord said: *"Two men went up to the temple to pray. One of them was a Pharisee;"* that is he was a preacher, a teacher, or a theologian. He was a church member. He was a man in good standing. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews. He was a knowledgeable man in the Scriptures, an orthodox man.

And he stood in the temple and he prayed thus with himself; he said, *"God, I thank you I'm not like other men. I'm not an adulterer, I'm not an extortioner and I'm not an unjust man. I pay my tithes, and I give alms to the poor, and I fast twice a week."*

This was his hope. He was hoping; he entertained this hope that it would be all right with him at the judgment and all right with him in death and all right with him eternally because he did not do certain things and did do other certain things.

And our Lord said; that same day there was another man in that same temple praying. And this other man he didn't claim any of these things. He wouldn't even so much lift his eyes to heaven but he smote upon his breast and he cried, *"Oh God, be merciful to me the sinner."*

This was a Publican. He wasn't religious. He wasn't a moral man. He wasn't a man who fasted or prayed; he was a man who knew he was a sinner. And our Lord said *"he went home justified, not the other man; the other man went home condemned."* What is your hope?

Thirdly: There are millions today who are basing a hope for eternal life on their good works and on their morality and on the fact that they are not as evil as somebody else!

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But brethren; comparing ourselves with ourselves and comparing ourselves with others is no gain. We are going to be judged not by the life of other men but by the holiness of God, by the holy, spotless, immutable, unchangeable, law of God, the immaculate, pure, law of God, the character of God himself and we've come short of that glory. What's your hope?

Fourthly: Well, I'll tell you another group of people during our Lord's earthly ministry; they found a hope in circumcision and in keep Sabbath Days and in keeping days of festivals, feasts, Holy days, church ordinances, and ceremonies.

And you say; "Well, how do you liken that to us today?" Well, men talk about being saved today because they're baptized. I tell you this and I tell you with all the compassion of my soul; water will not put away sin.

I don't care when it's administered or by whom it's ministered or to whom it's administered or how it's administered; *"it's the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."* God said: *"When I see the blood I will pass over you. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."*

I know that baptism has its place; it's for believers, it is following salvation. It's to confess Christ. It's identifying with the Son of God as all our salvation. I'm not ashamed of baptism. I believe everyone who is saved will confess Christ in baptism.

But I'm telling you this, if you are basing your hope on eternal life on the fact that you've gone down beneath a body of water and been brought up; my friend, you are in as much trouble as that old Israelite who believed he was saved because he had circumcision, the token of the covenant and because you've been sprinkled or anything else or confirmed, dedicated, or anything else.

Some people believe because they have come to the sacrament or the communion or to the Lord's Table or to something along that fashion that they've received salvation through eating the wafer and drinking the wine; it doesn't come that way, it comes by faith, by faith alone.

Yes, we eat His flesh and drink his blood, but not literally; we do it figuratively. The Lord's Table, the elements of the Lord's Table, the bread and the wine represent, these elements represent Christ's broken body and shed blood.

And I hope that there is no one listening to my voice, who like Simon Magus of old, who was baptized but then he heard Peter say: *"Your heart's not right with God."*

And then in **Matthew 7**; I hope that none will be among those who stand at the judgment and begin to plead, *"Lord; we preached in your name and we cast out demons in your name and we've done many wonderful works in your name."* Only to hear Christ say, *"I never knew you."*

What is your hope? Men have a hope. Well, Job said: *"Even the hypocrite entertains a hope;"* isn't that something, even the known hypocrite? That's what he says in **Job 27**: *"What is the hope of the hypocrite?"*

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My friend, it's tragic today; there are men who are making merchandise of the souls of men. They are making a vocation or an occupation out of the ministry. It's a money-making proposition; it's a money-making scheme and it's a way to gain fame, popularity, followers, power, money, and to build great monuments to themselves.

They put their names all over things and they build monuments with folks Social Security checks and things like that. They've got no conscience. They've got no scruples and they've got no principles whatsoever. What is the hope of such a man, such a hypocrite? Well, he's got one, yes sir, he's got one. Though he gains; what's he going to do when God takes away his soul, what's he going to do?

Is there hope? Can a fellow like me and a fellow like you have a hope, I mean a good hope? I don't mean the hope of a hypocrite or a false hope but a real hope.

Is there hope for folks like us, honest people who face themselves as they are? Well, Paul said in **2 Thessalonians 2:16**: *"God has given us a good hope."* There's a good hope.

All right, let me ask this question; is there a hope that won't put us to shame, that won't put us to shame, that someday will come up and find out that this hope won't hold water, that it will fail? That's the way these hopes I've been mentioning; they are going to fail. Well, is there a hope that won't fail, that won't put us to shame?

Well, Paul wrote in **Philippians 1:20**: *"According to my earnest expectation and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed."* I'm not going to be ashamed at His coming. I'm not going to be ashamed at His unveiling. I'm not going to be ashamed at the revelation of His Son and I'm not going to be ashamed at the judgment. I'm not going to be ashamed, in nothing am I going to be ashamed.

All right, is there a living hope? I don't want a dead hope that I have to go down to the church to find every Sunday morning or every Easter Sunday morning or every Christmas morning or every special Sabbath day.

I want a living hope, a 24-hour-day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, living hope. Is there such a thing? Well, in **1 Peter 1:3**, the apostle Peter says: *"God has begotten us unto a living hope."*

Well, what is it? Well, I will give you three things that we are to remember if we are going to have this good hope, this living hope, this hope that in nothing we shall be ashamed:

First of all: This hope is not in my merit; it's in God's mercy!

Now, you remember that; it's in God's mercy. The Lord is sovereign and you and I need to understand this and we need to understand it loud and clear that God doesn't owe us anything. That's the first place you want to come and that's the first thing you want to get settled between you and God; he doesn't owe you anything. God is not obligated to the creature.

It says: *“He took not on himself the nature of angels but he took on himself the seed of Abraham.”* That was God’s sovereign choice. He chose men, not angels, but men. He left the fallen angels in everlasting chains, in darkness, reserved to judgment for that great day. He was pleased to visit Abraham’s seed, the people of faith, with mercy.

Secondly: The Lord is righteous and holy; he must punish sin!

Let’s remember this, God must punish sin! *“The judge of the earth shall do right. God will in no wise clear the guilty. The soul that sinneth it shall surely die. The wages of sin is death.”* So, this hope, if we have a hope, it’s not in our merit; it’s in God’s mercy.

God will be merciful. Thank God He will be merciful. He told Moses: *“I will be merciful.”* He doesn’t have to. He’s not obligated to, He doesn’t owe us anything and it’s strictly His mercy and His mercy alone.

We cast ourselves on the mercy of God’s sovereign grace. We cast ourselves on the mercy of God almighty Himself. We say, “Lord; you will be right if you damn us and you will be just if you condemn us. If you pass us by it’ll be all right, but Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.”

Now, let that be established first of all. This mercy, this hope, is in God’s mercy, not in my merit. I don’t earn salvation; it’s a free gift. *“The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Thirdly; This hope is not only in God’s mercy, not in my merit, but in His mercy, but this good hope, this living hope, is not in my work; it’s in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.” “In the fullness of time God sent his Son (into the world), made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were born under the law.”

“He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

In other words, it pleased God to make you His people. That is what the Book of Samuel says: *“It pleased God to make you his people.”* He passed by some; He passed by the angels but he’s going to have a people out of every tribe, kindred, nation and tongue under heaven; he’s going to have a people.

“And it pleased God that in Christ should all fullness dwell (all righteousness and all justification and all redemption); it pleased God that in Christ it should dwell there, in him.” He’s vested everything in Christ.

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Jesus Christ our Lord is our representative. He's our substitute. Now watch this, Christ came down here and lived on the earth. Most people know that; the calendar tells you that.

I got amused the other day. I was listening to the radio riding along in the car and they were talking about it being Confucius' birthday. He was born (you know they claim that Confucius is God and so forth), but he was born 500 B.C. In other words, he was born and his birthday was measured by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world.

Everybody knows Christ came, the calendar tells you that, so many years BC; (that's before Christ), so many years A.D., Anno Domini (in the year of our Lord). So, Christ lived here on the earth and He lived a righteous life and He died on the cross.

Most people know that. Josephus the historian; you folks that don't believe the Bible, buy you a history book and you will find out that Jesus Christ lived during the days of Caesar and He died on the cross.

Now, why? Christ was our example but that primarily is not why He came. He didn't come to set an example; He came to redeem a people. He said: *"The Son of man has come to seek and to save the lost."* *"This is a faithful saying: Christ came into the world to save sinners."*

And so, when He came, Christ came as our representative. You see, God commands that men keep His law. We don't do it but Christ did as a man in the flesh. The holiness and justice of God demands that men who sin die under the wrath of God, under the judgment of God, under the penalty of sin, and under the justice of God the righteousness of God demands that we die.

Well, we can't die and live at the same time. So, Christ died for us, you see; He is our substitute. He is our example. But that primarily is not why He came. He didn't come to be an example or a reformer, although He is an example, and he by His grace does reform men and He changes men.

But Christ died on the cross as a substitute and His life was lived as a representative. So, our hope is in Him. *"He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He was wounded for my transgressions and by his stripes I'm healed."*

So, my hope is in the mercy of God that he will show mercy to me. And my hope is in the merits of Christ, in the sacrifice of Christ, and in the obedience of Christ. I live because He lives. I am saved because he died for my sin.

Fourth: My hope must be drawn from the Word of God!

Now, this is important. He talked all the way through this Scripture that I read a while ago, *"the hope which you heard in the gospel, the hope of the gospel; this is the record that God hath given us eternal life. This life is in his Son."*

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Now, we must put no confidence in the flesh. A thing is not so because I say it. A thing is not so because a famous person said it. A thing is not so spiritually because the Pope said it. It's not so because the superintendent or the Bishop said it or the Pastor said it.

It's not so because it was said a long time ago. It's so because God said it and that's the only reason it is so and our hope is based upon the Word of God: *"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."*

It's not the words of men or the traditions of men, or the ancient fathers. The ancient fathers may have been wrong. Buy you a Bible and find out what God says.

And I will tell you this, it's not so because we think it: *"My thoughts are not your thoughts."* It's not so because we feel it. *"The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked."* It's not so because we have always believed it; it's so because God said it.

That's our hope. Our hope is in the mercy of God, in the merits of Christ, and in the Word of God!

"We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we may know him that is true and that we are in him, in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and this is eternal life!"