

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 3-13-16 PM NOTES
"JESUS IS ENOUGH"
COLOSSIANS 1:1-8
1 in Series, "Jesus Is Enough"

Colossians 2:10 (NASB) "and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority."

Colossians 2:9 (NASB) "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form."

Colossians 2:3 (NASB) "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Colossians 2:8 (NASB) "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

Colossians 2:16-17 (NASB) "16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."

"Human therapies are embraced most eagerly by the spiritually weak—those who are shallow or ignorant of biblical truth and who are unwilling to accept the path of suffering that leads to spiritual maturity and deeper communion with God. The unfortunate effect is that these people remain immature, held back by a self-imposed dependence on some pseudo-Christian method or psycho-quackery that actually stifles real growth."
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1 Corinthians 6:18a (NASB) "Flee immorality."

1 Thessalonians 4:3 (NASB) "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality".

Galatians 5:16 (NASB) "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."

"I have no quarrel with those who use either common sense or social sciences as a helpful observer's platform to look on human conduct and develop tools to assist people in getting some external controls in their behavior. That may be useful as a first step for getting to the real spiritual cure. But a wise counselor realizes that all behavioral therapy stops on the surface—far short of actual solutions to the real needs of the soul, which are resolved only in Christ. On the other hand, I have no tolerance for those who exalt psychology above Scripture, intercession, and the perfect sufficiency of our God. And I have no encouragement for people who wish to mix psychology with the divine resources and sell the mixture as a spiritual elixir. Their methodology amounts to a tacit admission that what God has given us in Christ is not really adequate to meet our deepest needs and save our troubled lives."
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2 Corinthians 11:3 (NASB) "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."

I. The Gracious Greeting (vv. 1-3)

Colossians 1:9-11 (NASB) "9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously."

II. The Glorious Gospel (vv. 4-8)

"[The Gospel is the] good news that the just and gracious Creator of the universe has looked upon hopelessly sinful men and women and has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection, so that everyone who turns from their sin and themselves and trusts in Jesus as Savior and Lord will be reconciled to God forever."
—David Platt

A. The Gospel Is Received by Faith (v. 4a)

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NASB) “constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.”

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NASB) “But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

“Faith is the indefinable certainty of God behind everything.” (Oswald Chambers)

“Faith is the response of the heart to the character of God.” (Adrian Rogers)

“Faith is the soul’s eye by which it sees the Lord. Faith is the soul’s ear by which we hear what God will speak. Faith is the spiritual hand which touches and grasps the things not seen as yet.” (Charles Spurgeon)

“Faith is acting like God is telling the truth.” (Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

“Faith bids eternal truth become present fact. Faith is dependency upon God, and this God-dependency begins only when self-dependency ends.” (Manley Beasley)

“Faith is trust that rests upon evidence and leads to action.” (Alan Redpath)

Hebrews 11:1 (NASB) “Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

B. The Gospel Results in Love (v. 4b)

John 13:35 (NASB) “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NASB) “⁴ Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Philippians 2:3-4 (NASB) “³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

C. The Gospel Rests on Hope (v. 5)

Hope is the joyful confidence and expectation that what God has promised, He will accomplish in His perfect timing.

1 Peter 1:3-4 (NASB) “³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living **hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”

James 4:14b (NASB) “You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.”

D. The Gospel Reproduces Fruit (v. 6a)

Romans 1:16 (NASB) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is **the power of God** for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

E. The Gospel Is Rooted in Grace (v. 6b)

F. The Gospel Is Reported by Men (vv. 7-8)

First Baptist Church Powell, TN 3 13 2016 PM

Sermon 1: Jesus Is Enough

Series: Jesus Is Enough

Colossians 1:1-8

Though written almost 2,000 years ago, Colossians is more up to date than today's newspaper. What we call "the book of Colossians" was originally a letter that the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Colossae. Colossae was a city in what is modern day Turkey. Paul himself didn't start the church. The probable person who started the church was a man named Epaphras who was from Colossae, who likely heard the Gospel from Paul while he was in Ephesus and after being disciplined went home to Colossae and started this church. Colossians is categorized as one of the "prison letters" and was probably written by Paul while a prisoner in Rome. Many New Testament scholars consider this book the most profound of all the Pauline epistles. I would not argue with that assessment.

In my opinion, the key verse, the one verse that summarizes why the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write Colossians is Colossians 2:10: "and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority." The Greek word translated "complete" means to be full, to be sufficient, and to have all that is needed to accomplish or perform, fully, a task. The word used here is a perfect passive participle. "Perfect" means that it is referring to something done in the past with results continuing in the present. The passive means that it was done to or for the subject. In other words, Paul is not talking about something we did for ourselves. Let's put that all together. Paul is writing here to believers. He tells us that at a point in time in the past (at salvation) we were made complete in Christ; we were given "in Him" all that we need. Jesus is enough! We have been made complete in Him. The verse just before this one reminds us exactly who this one is that we are in union with. Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." We read of this one we are united to in Colossians 2:3: "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Jesus, the fullness of Deity in bodily form, the one in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, is enough! He was enough when you received Him. He is enough right now. He will be enough tomorrow and every day after that. We have no reason to worry or fret.

Sadly, so many people are looking for something in addition to Jesus. It may be an experience, an accomplishment, a relationship with someone, or any number of things. Growing or advancing or maturing in your Christian life is not accomplished by getting something in addition to Jesus; it is discovering what you got when you got Jesus, appropriating by faith all that He is and gives, and walking by faith, trusting Him to accomplish through you all that needs to be accomplished. Jesus is enough! You are complete in Him.

This message of the completeness of Christ is as desperately needed today as it was in the first century. Let's examine the errors that were enticing the Colossian believers in the first century and then point out what some of the errors are in our day. What was tempting the believers in Colossae was so dangerous that Epaphras made the journey to Rome (over a thousand miles away) to talk with Paul in prison. The letter that Paul wrote in response to Epaphras' visit is what we call the New Testament book of Colossians. When we look at the warnings from Paul, we see that the danger was a combination of at least two categories of error – false Greek philosophy and Jewish legalism, especially involving special days and special ceremonies.

The Greek culture (which was the culture in Colossae) elevated philosophy, and the more complicated it was, the better they liked it. They prided themselves in the sophistication of their systems of philosophy. The temptation of those in the church was to add philosophy to Jesus. We will see examples of this error as we go through the book, but the warning Paul gives is very clear. Colossians 2:8: "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

In Colossae, there was also the enticement to add to Jesus Jewish legalism involving various ceremonies. For example, we see a warning in Colossians 2:16-17: "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a *mere* shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."

How does this apply to us? We are not so much tempted with Greek philosophy (at least in the same form it came to those in first century Colossae). Neither are we typically tempted with Jewish legalism and ceremonies that were fulfilled in the coming of Christ. We will, however, see as we go through the text several temptations that we must deal with that entice us to add something to Jesus. Allow me give you one or two examples. I believe that one of the most dangerous areas where we seek to add to the sufficient Christ is in the area of counseling. I thank God for those believers that God has called into biblical counseling as a vocation. We have at least two in our congregation and I do not hesitate to recommend either of them when someone asks me to refer someone not on the church staff. However, “Christian Counseling” as a whole is a mess! There is a wholesale combining of extra-biblical psychology (which most often is unbiblical) with a facade of Christianity. What we often see is counseling that is not biblical counsel and is often anti-biblical.

John MacArthur says this about unbiblical counseling that assumes Jesus is not enough.

Human therapies are embraced most eagerly by the spiritually weak – those who are shallow or ignorant of biblical truth and who are unwilling to accept the path of suffering that leads to spiritual maturity and deeper communion with God. The unfortunate effect is that these people remain immature, held back by a self-imposed dependence on some pseudo-Christian method or psycho-quackery that actually stifles real growth.

[John MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, page 67]

Let me give you an example of the type of counseling that MacArthur is talking about. Some time back on a popular *Christian* broadcast that offers live counseling to callers, a woman called in and shared that she had a problem with “compulsive” sexual immorality and said that she felt powerless to change. The counselor suggested that she was using her immoral conduct as her way of striking back at wounds inflicted by her passive father and overbearing mother. The counselor told her, “There is no simple road to recovery. Your problem won’t go away immediately – it’s an addiction, and these things require extended counseling. You will need years of therapy to overcome [your problem].” The counselor then made a suggestion that the caller find a church that would be tolerant while she worked her way out of the “painful wounds” that were “making her” continue in this sin. [From John MacArthur, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, pages 68-69]

That is absolutely horrible! What about 1 Corinthians 6:18a: “Flee immorality.” What about 1 Thessalonians 4:3: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality”? Victory is not found in years and years of therapy. The victory is found in Galatians 5:16: “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” Jesus, through His Spirit in us is enough! Again, John MacArthur has a good word for us here that expresses what I believe.

I have no quarrel with those who use either common sense or social sciences as a helpful observer’s platform to look on human conduct and develop tools to assist people in getting some external controls in their behavior. That may be useful as a first step for getting to the real spiritual cure. But a wise counselor realizes that all behavioral therapy stops on the surface – far short of actual solutions to the real needs of the soul, which are resolved only in Christ. On the other hand, I have no tolerance for those who exalt psychology above Scripture, intercession, and the perfect sufficiency of our God. And I have no encouragement for people who wish to mix psychology with the divine resources and sell the mixture as a spiritual elixir. Their methodology amounts to a tacit admission that what God has given us in Christ is not really adequate to meet our deepest needs and save our troubled lives.

[John MacArthur, page 70]

What we are going to see in this series is that the fact that we are complete in Him affects every area of life – our personal life, our family life, our work life, every area of life without any exceptions. We will be challenged over and over to stop living like spiritual paupers eating out of the world’s garbage cans and being influenced by the world’s philosophies when we are complete in Him. Jesus is enough! He really is! 2 Corinthians 11:3: “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity *of devotion* to Christ.”

I. The Gracious Greeting (v 1-3)

There was no one more influential in the early church than Paul. As an apostle, he had authority from God and because of the rebuke he will deliver in this letter, he reminds them of who he is. Paul addresses the church members of Colossae as “saints and faithful brethren in Christ.” In other words, Paul believed that the people in this church were truly saved. “Saints” literally means “set apart ones.” A *saint* is not some special type of Christian, a super-Christian. Every true Christian is a saint. These people had been saved and set apart to God, but there were errors among them that were robbing them of the victorious life that was theirs in Christ. Though Paul had never been to Colossae, he regularly prayed for these believers. I believe that based on the content of the letter, he was praying for them to appropriate all that was theirs in Christ. In fact, when we get to verse 9, Paul details exactly what he prayed for them. Colossians 1:9-11:

For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously.

II. The Glorious Gospel (v 4-8)

The genuine salvation of the Colossian church members was not in question in Paul’s mind. Epaphras had already told Paul of the evidence of their genuine salvation. As Paul affirms these church members before he begins to deal with their problems, he deals with the Gospel. That word “Gospel” is used so much that I fear that it may have lost its meaning. Today many make the Gospel so broad and inclusive that it ends up being nothing. I like David Platt’s definition of the Gospel.

[The Gospel is the] good news that the just and gracious Creator of the universe has looked upon hopelessly sinful men and women and has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection, so that everyone who turns from their sin and themselves and trusts in Jesus as Savior and Lord will be reconciled to God forever.

[David Platt, *Counter Culture*, page viiii]

By way of introduction, Paul reminds this saved, but struggling, church of the Gospel that we can be reconciled to God and know the sufficiency of the Son of God – Jesus Christ who is enough.

A. The Gospel Is Received by Faith (v 4a)

As we go through these introductory verses, we will see three crucial words – faith, hope, and love. I think it would be safe to say that these are three of the apostle Paul’s favorite words. He uses this triad in several of his letters. In 1 Thessalonians 1:3: “constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.” He says in 1 Corinthians 13:13: “But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

What exactly is faith? Over the years I have run across a lot of descriptions of faith. All of these examples are good, but don't really give us a completed picture of faith (each person who gave these descriptions would agree with that statement). Here are a few of my favorites:

- "Faith is the indefinable certainty of God behind everything." (Oswald Chambers)
- "Faith is the response of the heart to the character of God." (Adrian Rogers)
- "Faith is the soul's eye by which it sees the Lord. Faith is the soul's ear by which we hear what God will speak. Faith is the spiritual hand which touches and grasps the things not seen as yet." (Charles Spurgeon)
- "Faith is acting like God is telling the truth." (Martyn Lloyd-Jones)
- "Faith bids eternal truth become present fact. Faith is dependency upon God, and this God-dependency begins only when self-dependency ends." (Manley Beasley)
- "Faith is trust that rests upon evidence and leads to action." (Alan Redpath)

The best explanation of faith is of course in the Scripture and it is explained most succinctly in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the assurance [persuasion] of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

B. The Gospel Results in Love (v 4b)

Verse 4 tells us that the saints at Colossae gave evidence of the genuineness of their faith by their outpouring of love for one another. Remember that Jesus Himself said in John 13:35: "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Love is not defined in the Scripture; it is described. The fullest description is given to us in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

This love that marks us, evidences us and separates us from the world is a focus on others and not ourselves. The Gospel transforms us into a new person who is characterized in Philippians 2:3-4: as one who will "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

C. The Gospel Rests on Hope (v 5)

What exactly is hope? I have often defined hope this way: "Hope is the joyful confidence and expectation that what God has promised, He will accomplish in His perfect timing." The special focus of hope in our text is the joyful confidence and expectation that what God has promised that is laid up for us in Heaven is ours now and will be ours in experience when we go to Him in His perfect timing. The phrase "laid up" means reserved for us. 1 Peter 1:3-4:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

Whatever we go through here, our time here is described in James 4:14b: "You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."

D. The Gospel Reproduces Fruit (v 6a)

The Gospel is not merely a system of ethics or a code of behavior. The Gospel is a transforming power. Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." When the Gospel is savingly believed and we are

baptized into Christ and the Spirit of Christ comes to dwell in us, there will be dramatic changes. Fruit will spring forth. Not only is there the fruit of individual lives changed, but as the Gospel is shared, there will be the fruit of people coming to Christ and being saved.

E. The Gospel Is Rooted in Grace (v 6b)

Grace is at the heart of the Gospel! Every world religion is based on works. Grace is found only in Christianity. The Gospel is the good news of God's grace that has come to undeserving sinners. It is God's grace that opens our blinded minds, convicts us of sin, righteousness, and judgment; it is grace that draws us to Christ, grants to us repentance, and faith to trust wholly in the Christ who died in our place and gives us His righteousness. The Gospel is firmly rooted in grace!

F. The Gospel Is Reported by Men (v 7-8)

Here is a marvelous truth. This Gospel that transforms lives is not entrusted to angels to spread it throughout the world. It is entrusted to human beings who are flawed, but who have experienced its life changing power.

Conclusion

I can't wait to get into this book and dig out its incredible riches. May we be a church that believes that Jesus is enough and may we demonstrate what God can do through a people who are totally devoted to Him and to the proclamation and spread of the glorious Gospel.

NASB (New American Standard Bible)

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