

# EXPOSITORY TEACHING ON THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

## MESSAGE THREE: THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

### SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1:3-8

- ❖ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Everything for which Paul gave thanks to God, everything that has happened in the lives of Colossian believers—it is because of the gospel of Christ Jesus.

**Gospel:** The word “gospel” originates from the meaning of the New Testament Greek word “euaggelion” meaning “good news”. This isn’t any other gospel, but the gospel of Christ Jesus. There is no good news without the Lord Jesus.

Let us look at what the gospel is and its power.

### 1. The Gospel is the Manifestation of God’s Grace

**Scripture:** 1: [5] Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, [6] which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

Paul says you have understood the grace of God in the Gospel. Have you understood the grace of God in the gospel? The Gospel is the manifestation of God’s grace.

**Grace:** “Grace” in Greek, *charis*, means “unmerited (undeserved) favor.”

The Scripture reveals three things:

#### a. God is gracious.

- ❖ **Psalm 145:8**, “*The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*”

#### b. God manifested His grace through Christ Jesus.

- ❖ **John 1:14-16**, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, *full of grace and truth*. (John bore witness about him, and cried

out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) *For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*”

*Signs of Salvation (pg. 120-121):*

The Lord Jesus is the incarnation of God’s grace. He is grace in flesh. Outside of Christ, there is no saving grace of God. People may still breathe air, drink water, eat food and live their earthly life normally. But, they eventually perish in sin without the grace of God manifested through Christ Jesus.

Without the grace of God, no one can be saved. And without Christ Jesus, no one can experience God’s grace.

The reason why God’s saving grace is only through Christ Jesus is that he is the only One who paid the price for grace to reach sinners. Salvation is God’s free gift to us because it cost the life of Christ for our sins. Because we cannot earn salvation, Christ had to earn salvation for us by laying his life on the cross. Because we do not deserve salvation, Christ took upon himself the wrath of God in order to justify us and to declare us worthy in him to receive salvation. Because we could do nothing to attain salvation, Christ accomplished everything for us to freely receive salvation.

Grace is free for us to receive but cost God a great price. The blood of Christ satisfied God’s righteous laws through which God’s grace was manifested towards us. The grace of God flowed to us through the blood veins Jesus. Whoever made the following acrostic of GRACE stated it well: **God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.**

**c. God’s grace can only be received as a gift. We don’t deserve it and we cannot earn it.**

❖ **Romans 6:23**, “The free gift (Grk “*charisma*” from “*charis*”) of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Observe, this free gift is what the grace of God is, and this free gift of eternal life is at our disposal only in Christ Jesus.

**Note:** Paul says you have understood the grace of God in the Gospel. This is what the grace of God is in the gospel of Christ. Have you understood it?

## **2. The Gospel is the Truth**

**Scripture: Colossians 1:5**, “Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel.”

**Truth:** In Greek, *alētheia*, meaning, “that which corresponds to reality.”

a. The Gospel is not an opinion (about truth). It is the truth.

❖ **1 Corinthians 2:13**, “And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”

b. The Gospel is not an illusion (deceptive impression) or a lie. It is the truth.

❖ **1 Timothy 1:15**, “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.”

c. The Gospel is not one of the truths or relative truth. It is the absolute truth.

❖ **Acts 4:12**, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Whatever the Gospel says is the word of truth:

- Man’s depravity
- Subject to God’s wrath and eternal destruction
- Jesus’ death and resurrection (justification of God’s righteousness and manifestation of God’s grace)
- Forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to God
- Eternal life in heaven and eternal destruction in hell

### 3. The Gospel is Blooming

**Scripture: Colossians 1:5-6**, “Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is [i.e. the gospel] bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you...”

Paul also writes in **1:23**, “not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.”

**Note:** This does not mean the spread of the gospel in every nook and corner of the world. This means the widespread impact of the gospel on the world. The gospel is powerful, blooming and life-changing. No powers in hell and on earth could stop it.

- The Jewish leaders tried to stop the spread of the gospel, but they couldn’t (1<sup>st</sup> century).
- ❖ **Acts 8:1, 4**—“And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.... Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.”
- The Roman leaders tried to stop the spread of the gospel, but they couldn’t (2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century).
  - Beaten, lost body parts, crucified, beheaded, thrown to the wild beasts, burnt as torches on the streets...etc.

- The Roman Catholic Church leaders tried to stop the spread of the gospel, but they couldn't (15<sup>th</sup> century).
  - Burnt alive the reformers at the stake.
- The communist leaders tried to stop the spread of the gospel (in Russia, China, Vietnam), but they couldn't (19<sup>th</sup> century).
- Even today, in Islamic countries, Buddhist countries and Hindu nation like India, people are trying to stop the spread of the gospel, but let me tell you, they cannot bind the gospel. The gospel is blooming.
- ❖ **2 Timothy 2:8-9**, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound."

**Remember:** The gospel is of God and no one can stop the God of the heavens and the earth.

#### 4. The Gospel Produces Hope

**Scripture: Colossians 1:3-5**, "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this [i.e. the hope] you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel."

The gospel is a message of hope. It produces hope in us.

**Hope:** In Greek "*elpis*" meaning "expectation of something sure." **Romans 8:24-25**, "Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

**What kind of hope did Paul convey?** Not the hope that one day my spouse will change according to my expectation. Not the hope that I will be blessed with a good comforts in life. Not the hope that one day I will have everything I dreamed in this world. Not the hope that my problems will come to an end. It is the hope of eternal life in heaven—"the hope laid up for you in heaven."

#### What does this hope produce?

- ❖ **Colossians 1:3-5**, "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of (on account of) the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel."
  - a. This hope of eternal life *produces faith in Christ Jesus.*

- b. This hope of eternal life *produces love in us for God's saints*.
  - c. This hope of eternal life also *frees us from unhealthy dependence on earthly wealth and comforts (love of the world)*.
    - ❖ **1 John 2:15-17**, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world— the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life —is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”
  - d. This hope of eternal life *enables us to resist the pleasures of temporal sinful pleasures and to make effort to live a holy life*.
    - ❖ **2 Peter 3:13-14**, Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these (i.e. new heavens and a new earth), be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.
  - e. This hope of eternal life *encourages us not to lose heart when we go through various kinds of suffering*.
    - ❖ **1 Peter 5:6-11**, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”
- And this hope is produced by the gospel of Christ Jesus.

## 5. This Power of the Gospel Cannot be Experienced Without the Preaching of the Gospel

- ❖ **Colossians 1:3-7**, “We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—

as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.”

**This is how it flowed:**

- ✓ Epaphras preached the gospel
- ✓ The Colossians heard the gospel
- ✓ The Colossians understood the grace of God
- ✓ The Colossians got hope of eternal life in heaven
- ✓ The Colossians put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- ✓ The Colossians began to love God’s saints.
- All this began with Epaphras’ obedience to preach the gospel of Christ.
  - Just think, what if Epaphras had not preached the gospel to the Colossians?

**This is exactly what Paul expressed in Romans 10:13-15,**

- ❖ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

**SUMMARY:**

1. The Gospel is the Manifestation of God’s Grace
2. The Gospel is the Truth
3. The Gospel is Blooming
4. The Gospel Produces Hope
5. This Power of the Gospel Cannot be Experienced Without the Preaching of the Gospel

**GROUP DISCUSSION:**

1. What five things have you learned about the gospel?
2. How were you challenged in your Christian life through this message?

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:**

1. How is God's grace manifested in the gospel?
2. How can you say that the gospel is the absolute truth?
3. What does hope produce in a person?
4. What is the importance of preaching the gospel?
5. What resolutions and actions have you taken after listening to this message?