

"Paul's Greeting to the Saints at Colossae"

Colossians 1:1-6

Introduction: Last week in our study we looked at an introduction to the letter that Paul wrote to the Colossians. We looked at several points.

1.

- 1. Why was this letter written?**
- 2. Where was the letter written?**
- 3. How is the letter divided?**

This now brings us to where we are in our study tonight.

I. The Greeting.

Notice Colossians 1:1-2

As we step into this letter, I want to draw your attention to the gentleness by which Paul greets these believers. His gentleness is seen in verse 2 when he calls them saints and faithful brethren. Paul was not harsh, neither was he stern with his words. He could have been because of what they allowed to slip within the church. Paul was manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in the way in which he addressed these believers.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

²³ *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Notice what Paul wrote to Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:24-26

²⁴ *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,*

²⁵ *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

²⁶ *And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

Application:

There are certain pastors who just seem to always be bitter and angry. They are quick to rebuke others who are struggling in their walk. But I have learned that patience is so important when it comes to dealing with people. The church is a group of broken and often struggling people. The church is a spiritual hospital and the people who make up the church need care. Sometimes believers do need to be rebuked but at other times they need to be handled very gently so as to help them through a struggle.

Let us consider the two titles Paul gives to these believers.

1. Saints

This word means "separated". Because they were members of the body of Jesus Christ, they were separated by God unto Him. They were set apart by God because they belonged to Him. The word "saint" also means "to be different". We too are saints in the eyes of God. That speaks of our position in Jesus Christ. In our position we are perfect but we have not yet reached perfection in our practice. As saints we are set apart to be different than those of the world.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² *And **be not conformed to this world**: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Not only are we set apart to be different but we are also set apart for good works.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Someone has said that a saint is like a boat. A boat fulfills its purpose when it floats on the water. But its purpose and function disappear when the water gets inside the boat. As saints we are the very same way. As we sail through this world, we will only keep our purpose as we keep the world out. We are in the world but the world should not be in us. A good question to ask ourselves is, "Do I need to bail any water out of my boat?"

2 Timothy 2:21-22

²¹ *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

²² *Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

2. Faithful Brethren.

The word "faithful" here refers to someone who shows themselves faithful/someone who could be trusted and counted on.

Matthew 24:45-46

⁴⁵ *Who then is a **faithful** and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?*

⁴⁶ *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

To be a faithful believer is to be faithful with what God has entrusted to us.

Matthew 25:20-21

²⁰ *And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.*

²¹ *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

II. Paul's Thanksgiving

The ancient world was very cruel. It was full of slavery, it saw little or no value in women, and then Christianity came and it began to change for the better. Christianity brought in new values and new ethics. It introduced the truth that all men are created equal and all are made in the image of God. Christianity therefore elevated every society that it penetrated. As we examine the words of Paul concerning the believers at Colossae, we shall see exactly why Christianity had such a positive influence on the societies it entered into.

Notice Colossians 1:3-8

In the Greek this is one long sentence and it forms one thought. We are going to break this sentence down and look closely at what Paul is saying.

Notice Colossians 1:3

Notice first of all that Paul is thankful. Keep in mind he is in prison. When someone who is in prison is thankful for something it is important to see what it is. I love the fact that Paul could always find something to be thankful for. He could very easily have focused upon everything that was negative and there was plenty that qualified. But he refused to allow himself to dwell on the negative. His focus was upon what he could thank the Lord for. Now don't miss the fact that Paul did not ignore the problems because he never did. He was a man that knew how to deal with the problems and to be thankful for that which he could praise God for. Paul was not a pessimist, he was not an optimist, but Paul was a realist. He saw things the way they were and he was willing to deal with them. Now as he goes on, we shall see how Christianity changes the societies that it gets into.

A. The proclamation of the Gospel.

Notice Colossians 1:4

Paul points first of all to their faith in Christ Jesus. Keep in mind that Colossae was a society that was changed by Christianity and it started with the proclamation of the Gospel. These people had to have heard in order to believe.

Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Most likely Epaphras was saved and then he carried the Gospel to Colossae. This is what started the change in the city. The world has no idea how valuable the true church is that exists today. We have the message within us that is able to completely change the world one life at a time. It is the Gospel that heals broken relationships, it is the Gospel that frees people from addictions, it is the Gospel that brings peace between people that are at odds with one another. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says it best.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

God performs a miracle even greater than the miracle of the creation of the world. He creates within us a new man.

B. The Love of God.

Notice Colossians 1:4 again.

The word "love" here is "agape love" which means it is unconditional love that comes from God and flows through the believer. Is it any wonder why Christianity changes the societies it touches? When believers walk in fellowship with the Lord and are led by the Spirit, they show forth this agape love and that is a love that expects nothing in return. This love comes directly from God. Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

⁴ *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

⁵ *Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*

⁶ *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*

⁷ *Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

⁸ *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

When this kind of love penetrates a society, it will turn that society upside down. This is the opposite of what the world offers. The world is cruel, cold, and unloving. When the Gospel gets in and people are saved those of the world are permitted to see the love of God lived out before them.

C. People are given Hope.

Notice Colossians 1:5

These people now had a hope in eternity. They lived in a dark cruel world with no hope and when they were saved, they were given a hope that was sure.

This is what the Gospel does for those who hear it and get saved. It gives them eternal hope. Before there were only the things of the world to hope for and they were fleeting. But when the Gospel comes in man is given something to live for that is sure and steadfast.

1 Peter 1:3-5

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

⁴ *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

⁵ *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

The stuff of the world brings no fulfillment to a man's life.

Ecclesiastes 2:8-11

⁸ *I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.*

⁹ *So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.*

¹⁰ *And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.*

¹¹ *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*

D. People bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Notice Colossians 1:6-8

Here was another reason why Colossae was now different. The believers were bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

Conclusion:

Galatians 5:22-23

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

²³ *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*