

“The Hope of Salvation”
Colossians 1:4-5
(Preached at Trinity, November 5, 2017)

1. After greeting the Colossian Christians, whom he describes as holy and faithful, Paul reveals his heart for them. Although Paul probably hadn't met most of them, he loved them as brothers and sisters in Christ. He prayed for them and praised God for His marvelous work in them.
Colossians 1:3 NAU - "We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you"
2. Much of **Chapter 1** is the expression of Paul's prayer for the Colossian church. **Verses 3-8** are in the form of thanksgiving as Paul raises his heart to God in gratitude for His blessings upon the Church of Colossae.
3. In **Verse 4** Paul begins to share the substance of those things that have filled his heart with thanksgiving. As I stated last time, Paul is using the triad graces of faith, hope, and love.
Colossians 1:4-5 NAU - "since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven"
Paul often wrote about these graces.
1 Corinthians 13:13 NAU - "But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love."
4. Paul began with expressing gratitude for their faith. The Colossian Christians had embraced the truths of the Gospel, resting upon Christ alone.
Colossians 1:4 NAU - "since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus"
5. Then he expressed his gratitude for their love, the outward expression of their faith. If holiness is the chief expression of the Christian life, love is the grand display of holiness.
6. In **Verse 5** Paul brings out the third facet of the triad – hope. He expresses it in an unusual way. In other passages Paul simply speaks of faith, hope, and love. Here in **Verse 5**, however, Paul implies that their faith and love were the result of their hope of eternal blessings.
Colossians 1:5 NAU - "because of the hope laid up for you in heaven"
The NIV expresses it: "the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven"
7. This seems strange. How is it that faith and love are the result of their hope; that hope is the reason for faith and love?
 - a. We must insist that the hope of heaven is not the reason we believe, as if we are wooed by reason of reward. Rather, we believe for the sake of Christ alone and would savor Him if there was no promise of eternal life. Nevertheless, Paul makes a connection here between our hope and our faith and love.
 - b. Some try to solve the difficulty by linking the word “hope” back to the “thanks” in **Verse 3**. In other words, Paul is giving thanks on account of their hope. It seems unnatural grammatically.

- c. I think Paul's point is the close relationship between these triad graces of faith, hope, and love. They are intimately connected.
William Hendriksen: "Christian mental and moral attitudes and activities such as believing, hoping, and loving, always react upon each other. In general, the more there is of the one the more there will be of the other. This holds too with respect to hope. It reacts mightily and beneficially on faith and love."¹
8. Christian hope is unique, completely different from the understanding of the world. For most people, hope implies a strong desire but it is in no way a certainty. It is more like "wishful thinking." Christian hope is distinct from the worldly concept of hope. In this passage Paul is declaring that our hope is intimately connected to our faith.
- I. What is Christian hope?
- A. Hope for the Christian is based upon a future expectation – our surety.
1. It is the one, true, absolute hope. It is a bold confidence. Christian hope is based on absolutes, certainties, unfailing promises.
 2. Christian hope is a tangible reality. Notice Paul describes it as something "laid up" for us in heaven. It is something that is ours.
 - a. This hope is God's promise to all who trust in the Savior.
 - b. Hope is something that already exists and kept in store for us but we do not yet enjoy it its fullness.
Colossians 1:5 NAU - "because of the hope laid up for you in heaven"
 3. We have the blessed promises of God concerning our future. Much of our redemption is still future but we have absolute confidence and assurance regarding it.
 4. In other words, although our salvation has not yet been brought to completion, we rest in confident expectation.
Philippians 1:6 NAU - "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."
Philippians 3:13-14 NAU - "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing I *do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."
- B. This great confidence rests upon our trust in work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has been given as our pledge or guarantee.
2 Corinthians 1:20-22 NAU - " For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. ²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, ²² who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge."
Ephesians 1:13-14 NAU - "having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory."

¹ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon*, New Testament Commentary, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 6:49.

1. This life is full of uncertainties. Everything you own could disappear tomorrow. Your plans can be crushed, friends can disappear, health can fail. But our hope is not in this world. Our hope is built on the sure foundation of Christ.
2. Your confidence can only be based upon your relationship with Christ
Verse 4 - "since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus"
 Paul was driven by this confidence
Philippians 3:12 NAU – “Not that I have already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”
3. Do you know Him – not of Him or about Him. Do you know Christ?
 Is your hope built on Christ?
 My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly trust in Jesus’ Name.
4. It is because of our hope we press on. Our hope is in Christ. It is a certainty. We are patiently waiting for Him. This is made possible because of our confidence of His love for us and by the love that God has placed in us.
2 Thessalonians 3:5 NAU - " May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ."

II. What is the effect of this abounding hope upon our lives?

- A. It increases our faith
 1. This is Paul’s point in this passage
Colossians 1:4-5 NAU - "since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel"
 a. The three graces of faith, hope, and love work together and are strengthened by each other.
 b. God gives us His promise and we set our hope upon it *with expectation* thus we have our hope in the promise of God.
 c. Faith, on the other hand gives the thing hoped for its substance
 God gives us the promise upon which we set our hope and faith makes it real to us.
 2. It is because the gospel is true; it is because God cannot lie; it is because God has purposed to accomplish his work of salvation that the believer can have assurance. Our faith rests upon our confidence in the promises of God and we hope with expectation.
 3. With an eye upon eternity we press on with confidence.
 If your hope is in this world and this world is your reward you will be continually disappointed. You’ll live in continual fear—the fear of loss of those things you love and the fear of being powerless to stop it.

4. As we go through the trials of this life our blessed hope comforts us and keeps us pressing on in faith.
Romans 5:1-5 NAU - "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."
 5. The Christian can have confidence in death because of our hope of heaven
- B. Hope increases our love
Colossians 1:4-5 NAU - "since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven
1. Christian hope has Christ as its great focus. Our hearts have been captivated by the object of our hope. As our minds are filled our glorious future expectation our hearts are inflamed more and more for Christ.
 2. We are on this journey with the family of God. It is a great source of unity as we share this great hope together. As a part of God's eternal family our hearts are united together in love.
1 John 5:1 NAU - "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him."
 3. When we take our eyes off our hope our love begins to fade.
- C. Hope creates patience
1. By faith we believe God's promises to be true. Hope, on the other hand is the contemplation of the promises. Hope causes us to wait patiently for that which is to come.
 2. If your hope is beyond this world you patiently await the consummation.
Romans 8:24-25 NAU - "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." ὑπομονή - Patience
 3. Christian patience implies perseverance. We are pressing towards the object of our hope.
- D. Hope keeps Christ at the center of our lives
1. Paul describes this hope as the "hope laid up for you in heaven"
 Of course, we are looking to our eternal home. Heaven is our hope. But what is the fullness of this hope? Is it not Christ exalted?
 2. This is of the essence of the Christian life. We have met Christ and have found Him most glorious.
 3. Your blessed hope should cause you to strive to honor the One who is the Savior of your soul
1 John 3:2-3 NAU - "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

4. It should cause you to walk with your head up looking towards Christ.
Colossians 3:1-4 NAU - "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

Conclusion:

1. Both faith and hope are temporary. They are for this life alone. Heaven is the fulfillment of God's promises of which we trust by faith and hope with expectation and patience.
2. Both faith and hope are based on the unseen.
Hebrews 11:1 NAU - "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."
Romans 8:24-25 NAU - "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."
3. Of this triad of graces, faith, hope, and love, Paul says love is the greatest because it is the only one that survives into eternity.
1 Corinthians 13:13-14:1 NAU - "But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love. "
 - a. Now, at this present time, all three abide. All three are present and active.
 - b. In eternity, however, our sight will be made whole and there will no longer be a need for faith and hope. But love endures as the greatest of these graces.