

Thank God for the Gospel

Text: Colossians 1:3-8

Introduction

1. Brief review of background
2. Brief review of previous lesson
3. This lesson: Paul's prayer of thanksgiving for the work of the Gospel in the Colossian believers.
4. The Gospel is central to the Apostle's gratitude.

The Gospel is...

I. A Thank worthy Gospel (Vs. 3)

- A. The habit of thanksgiving (3a)
 1. Thanksgiving a key aspect of Christian living presented in Colossians (1:12, 2:7, 3:15, 3:17, 4:2)
 2. The centrality of thanksgiving in the Apostle's prayer life and walk.
- B. The Object of thanksgiving
 1. 'God'
 2. 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'
 3. Thanksgiving in the N.T. almost exclusively made to God the Father.

II. A Transformational Gospel (Vs. 4)

- A. The triad of Christian graces
 1. *"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."* 1 Corinthians 13:13
 2. 'Faith'
 - a. Personal Faith – 'your'
 - b. Christ-centered Faith – "in Christ Jesus"
 3. 'Love'
 - a. The Source of their love – The Holy Spirit (Vs. 8)
 - i. Romans 5:5 *"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is **shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost** which is given unto us."*
 - ii. Vs. 8 *"...love in the Spirit."*
 - b. The Demonstration of their love – All Saints
 - i. Note: Vertical faith produces horizontal love
 - ii. A mark of salvation: 1 John 3:14-15 *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, **because we love the brethren**. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."*
 - iii. A testimony to others: John 13:35 *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."*

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- iv. A command to be obeyed: 1 Peter 1:22 “...love one another with a pure heart fervently.” ‘fervently’ = **to stretch forth**
- 4. ‘Hope’ (Vs. 5)
- B. The Gospel produces these graces in the life

III. A Hope Full Gospel (Vs. 5a)

- A. Hope’s Definition – Confidence
- B. Hope’s Object – Heaven (primary view here)
 - 1. 1 Peter 1:3-4 “*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, To an inheritance **incorruptible**, and **undefiled**, and that **fadeth not away**, **reserved in heaven for you**,*”
 - 2. Some of that inheritance: We will be like Christ (1 John 3:2); Everlasting Life (John 3:36); Rewards for faithful service; Prepared mansions; No more tears, death, sorrow, crying & pain (Rev. 21:4)
- C. Hope’s Declaration – The Gospel
 - 1. Note ‘whereof’
 - 2. The Gospel contains a genuine, trustworthy offer for the glories of heaven.

IV. An Infallible Gospel (Vs. 5b)

- A. The Gospel’s Definition (1 Cor. 15:1-8)
 - 1. Christ died
 - 2. Christ was buried
 - 3. Christ rose
 - 4. Christ was seen
- B. The Gospel’s Nature
 - 1. ‘truth’ – Vs. 5
 - 2. ‘truth’ – Vs. 6
 - 3. God cannot lie! (Titus 1:2)
 - 4. **Truth**: Prophesied (O.T.)
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:3 “...according to the Scriptures.”
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:4 “...according to the Scriptures.”
 - 5. **Truth**: Personified (Jesus Christ)
 - a. 1 John 1:1-2 “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*”
 - b. John 14:6 “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”
 - 6. **Truth**: Preserved (Scriptures)
 - a. 2 Peter 1:16 “*For **we have not followed cunningly devised fables**, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*”
 - b. John 17:17 “*Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.***”
 - c. Matthew 24:35 “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*” (Also Mark 13:31 & Luke 21:33)

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V. An Available Gospel (Vs. 6a)

- A. The Elitist Error of the False Teachers
- B. The true Gospel is for the whole world!
 - 1. 1 John 2:2 *“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”*
 - 2. 1 Timothy 2:3-4 *“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”*
 - 3. Revelation 22:17 *“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”*

VI. A Powerful Gospel (Vs. 6b)

- A. Life-imparting power
 - 1. The Gospel is a seed
 - 2. 1 Peter 1:23 *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever.”*
 - 3. Luke 8:11 *“Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.**”*
- B. Propagating power
- C. Fruit-producing power
 - 1. The potential for fruit bearing and growth are all contained in the Gospel seed: Luke 8:15 *“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and **bring forth fruit with patience.**”*
 - 2. Fruit is produced by Life, not Law: John 15:4 *“Abide in me, and I in you. As **the branch cannot bear fruit of itself**, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”*
- D. Contrast the fruit of the Gospel with fruit of false religion

VII. A Reputable Gospel (Vs. 7-8)

- A. Epaphras' Character (Vs. 7)
 - 1. He was a 'fellow servant' = fellow bond slave
 - 2. He was a 'minister' = deacon, servant
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:14 *“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, **knowing of whom thou hast learned them;**”*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 4:14-16 *“I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many **fathers**: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me.**”*
 - c. Epaphras' ministry stood in contrast to the false teachers.
 - 3. Note: It is very possible that the false teachers had attacked the character of Epaphras. Jeremiah 18:18 *“Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. **Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.**”*
- B. Epaphras' Report (Vs. 8)

Conclusion: Have you experienced the life-transforming power of the Gospel? Are you thankful for the work of the Gospel in your own life?