

Paul's Appreciation for the Believers # 2

Colossians 1: 3-8

As I studied these verses, I quickly realized the passion and appreciation Paul had for the church at Colossae. He has just introduced himself and you can already sense the passion Paul possesses. He has borne his soul in loving admiration for the believers. These were a people who were being battered and challenged in their faith and Paul was determined to help them overcome the obstacles they faced. It seems as if, although he had never met them, that Paul has adopted these people and feels responsible for them.

The time I spent in study reminded me of the deep appreciation I have for the church, especially our congregation. God has placed each of you in my life and there is a fondness and appreciation that is beyond my ability to express. I have never met a group of people like those of the church. You are my kind of people. I can relate to you. You bring encouragement that the world cannot provide. I am committed to the welfare of this body of believers. I will support and defend you with all that I have.

I pray as we move through these verses tonight that you will also be reminded and reflect upon what we have together. We are privileged of God to have each other to walk a portion of life with. I want to look at the [reflections](#) displayed as we consider: [Paul's Appreciation for the Believers](#). I hope the same appreciation Paul had for Colossae will be evident in our lives as well.

I. A Passionate Intercession (3) – [We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.](#) Paul had prayed for the church there. He reveals the nature of the prayers he had prayed. They were:

A. Prayers of Celebration – Paul had given [thanks](#) unto God for the saints that dwelt at Colossae. These were not idle words to win their affection; Paul genuinely cared for them and gave thanks for their existence. The word [thanks](#) means “*to be grateful, to express gratitude.*”

- I don't know about you, but I am thankful for the church. When I pray, I thank God that He has placed me here. I thank Him for allowing me the privilege to be your pastor. I am thankful for the lives you live and the work we do together. If we can't be thankful for the church, what can we be thankful for? Give God praise and thanksgiving for the church!

B. Prayers of Confidence – Paul offered these prayers of thanksgiving unto [God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ](#). He knew it was the Lord who had made all of this possible. God had sent His Son

and Christ willingly gave His life for the church. He knew God would hear and answer his prayers in regard to the welfare of the church. Paul had confidence in the Lord. [2 Tim.1:12b – for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.](#)

- I have absolute confidence in my Lord this evening. He cared for the church so much that He died for it. He conquered sin, death and hell for the church. He rose victorious and is seated at the right hand of God making intercession for us. We are loved and we can pray to Him in confidence that He will hear our requests. He desires the church to march forward. “We are not fighting for victory; we are fighting from victory,” Bro. Rick Safriet.

C. Prayers of Continuance (3) – [praying always for you.](#) Paul didn’t pray for them occasionally. He didn’t pray only when he heard of their troubles. He prayed [always](#) for them. He literally prayed for them at all times. Once again, these were not just words to gain their favor, Paul cared and he prayed continually for them.

- Do you love the church? Do you care for the needs of the church? If so, do you pray for the church? We are obligated to pray for each other. That is the only hope we have in navigating this perilous journey. I need the prayers of God’s people. You need the prayers of God’s people. We don’t need them on occasion; we need them every moment of every day! [1 Thes.5:17 – Pray without ceasing.](#) You may not see the need but the Bible says in [Jam.5:16b - The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.](#)

II. A Pleasant Observation (4-6) – Paul had never met them personally and yet he had observed some things that brought joy to his heart. He knew of:

A. Their Saving Faith (4a) – [Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus.](#) They had received Christ as the Savior of their souls. The word [faith](#) means “*a conviction of truth, a strong conviction that Jesus is the Christ.*” That is essential to salvation. One must be convicted of truth. We must accept that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of our souls. These were not your average, run of the mill people; they had faith in Christ, being born again in Him.

- I rejoice for the day I experienced that conviction of truth, for the realization that Jesus died for my sin and I saw Him as the Savior. At the moment I accepted that truth, in faith believing, I was saved. Oh glorious day. I am redeemed and forgiven in Christ my Lord!

B. Their Sacrificial Love (4b) – [and of the love which ye have to all the saints](#). This was not a passive or shallow love; it was agape love, the same love God has for us. It was that sacrificial love that offered the only begotten Son for the sins of the world. It is love without restraint or limitation. It exceeds all boundaries and expectations. They possessed that love.

- We need to develop that same type of love in our day. We must learn to love others unconditionally, sacrificially, and completely. It is impossible to love God and serve Him if we do not love others. [1 John 3:14; 2:10-11, 20-21](#).

C. Their Steadfast Hope (5) – [For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel](#); Paul was also aware of the steadfast hope the saints possessed. Their lives were filled with adversity and turmoil on every hand and yet they were confident in the hope they possessed. This hope is “*a joyful and confident hope, an expectation of eternal salvation.*” The believers at Colosse refused to be hindered and defeated by the cares of life. They had a confident hope that this world had not given and it could not take away. They were secure in their faith and had no doubt that they had received eternal life in Christ.

- We live an ever-changing world. Clearly life has become more difficult for the Christian even here in America. There is much that brings concern and is beyond our control. But, I rejoice like the church at Colossae that my hope is not in this life. I have received eternal salvation that will never fade or pass away. All that I have in this life is temporal except my faith and hope in the Lord. He will one day call for His bride and the hope of the saved will end in reality! [Tit.2:13; 1 Pet.1:3-5](#). I have a confident hope in an eternal future!

D. The Supernatural Gospel (6) – Paul noticed the power of the gospel message, the good news, the glad tidings, in the lives at Colosse. It is:

1. A Fundamental Gospel (6a) – [Which is come to you, as it is in all the world](#). This is the same gospel that brought salvation in Jerusalem, to Paul on the Damascus road, to the believers in Antioch and all across the world. It is the gospel that broke down religious formalities, hatred, paganism, and all manner of evil. It is a universal gospel that had not changed since the day Paul met Christ in salvation. It had brought deliverance to him and to the believers at Colossae as well.

- It is that same gospel that brings salvation today. The methods may have changed, but the message never will. The gospel still has the power to change lives and bring about salvation.

2. A Fruitful Gospel (6b) – This gospel [bringeth forth fruit](#). This gospel had power to change the lives of those who were raised under the Grecian and Roman influence, a society that embraced multiple gods, self-indulgence, and many varied sects of religion. This gospel had produced fruit among such a rebellious and ungodly society. They had been the recipients of truth.

- The gospel has not changed in our day. It is still reaching those whom the world thought could never change. It is bringing forth fruit from drunkards, adulterers, atheists, and all manner of wickedness. There are none beyond the reach of the gospel and the Lord's power to save! It has produced much fruit.

3. A Flourishing Gospel (6c) – [as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth](#): This gospel was working mightily in the lives of those who had received it. No doubt Paul was reminded of the change that had come forth in his life. He was seeing the same gospel working in the lives of others. They were flourishing in the faith. They were growing spiritually and reaching others for Christ.

- We continue to see the gospel flourish in the lives of believers today. It has the power, once it is received to transform lives for the glory of God. It is not within our flesh to desire to serve the Lord and live for Him. There is something great and powerful working in and through us. A life that has experienced the gospel in salvation will be a changed life for the better.

III. A Positive Co-operation (7-8) – Here Paul speaks of their Pastor, [Epaphras](#). His name means “*lovely*.” Paul was thankful for who he was.

A. A Fellow Servant (7a) – [As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant](#). They both shared a common trait, they were fellow servants to the Lord Jesus Christ. This was a title that literally meant “*a fellow bond slave*.” Paul recognized that Epaphras possessed the qualities of a true servant, a willing slave to his Lord and Master.

- We need those who possess those qualities. You don't have to be a pastor to be a servant of the Lord. Few are willing to truly be a servant, one who is sold out and submissive to the Lord and the Master of their lives.

B. A Faithful Minister (7b) – [who is for you a faithful minister of Christ](#); Epaphras was a man of compassion and submission, but he was also a man of conviction. He was a man who preached the gospel without compromise. The idea conveyed here for a faithful minister is “*one who executes the commands of the Master.*” Epaphras didn’t waver in his allegiance to the Lord, even in adversity.

- It is my heart’s desire to be a faithful minister. I want to carry out the Lord’s command at all cost. I want to be one who will preach the truth without compromise and stand firmly on the Word. You ought to desire that in your life as well. You may not be called to preach, but you can faithfully carry out that which the Lord desires of you.

C. A Fervent Pastor (8) – [Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.](#) It is clear Epaphras had a heart for the church at Colossae. He had talked with Paul about them. He sought godly counsel in order to be beneficial in their spiritual lives. Epaphras was a man who loved the flock that God had called him to pastor.

- There can be little doubt we need more men like Epaphras in our day. We need men of God who are more concerned about the sheep than they are the salary. We need pastors with more desire for the people than the prestige. We need preachers who are more concerned about needs than numbers. I pray that God will allow me to grow in my compassion and desire for you.

Conclusion: I hope that this passage has enriched your admiration for the church. Love it and support it in prayer. We are a people of hope and confidence. There can be no doubt Jesus loved the church; He gave His life on Calvary for the church. If He loved her enough to die for her, then we ought to love the church as well.

Are there needs in your life this evening? Do you love the church as you should? Are you willing to give of yourself for the benefit of the church? It is impossible to love the church apart from Christ. You may attend, but you will never love the church or be a part of it without salvation.