

THE LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT OF THE GOSPEL (Part One)

(Colossians 1:1-8)

Dr. Jim Cecy

Introduction:

Week #1: A Renewed Focus: Introducing Paul's Letter to the Colossians

Week #2: Ancient Problems — Current Battles — Biblical Solutions (An Overview of Colossians)

"What exactly is the gospel?" gospel = Greek: euangelion = glad tidings/good news

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, . . ."

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature (i.e. a brand new creation); the old things passed away; behold new things have come."

When Jesus Christ enters a life that life is changed forever!

Colossians 1:1-8 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and understood the grace of God in truth; just as you learned *it* from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit."

I. ITS IMPACT ON THE LIFE OF PAUL

SAUL'S life before . . .

1 Timothy 1:15-16 "...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life."

PAUL'S life after . . .

A. His New Position

1. An Apostle of Jesus Christ

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God . . ." (Colossians 1:1)

Whereas Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor of the church by his own will (Phil. 3:6), now Paul is an apostle of the church by the will of God. He was no longer a self-appointed Champion of Judaism; he was now a divinely-appointed Apostle of Jesus Christ.

2. A Brother in Christ

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother." (Colossians 1:1)

Before his conversion Saul of Tarsus was a terrifying threat. (cf. Acts 9:13-14). Now he is a brother to everyone who trusts in Christ.

3. A Recipient of Grace and Peace

 "Grace to you and peace from God our Father." (Colossians 1:2)

- As an object of GRACE, we receive salvation as a free gift.

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

- As a recipient of PEACE, we are no longer enemies of God and walk in peace with Him.

Romans 5:1 "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"

4. A Child of the Heavenly Father

Col. 1:2 "...God our Father..."

- Whereas once Saul of Tarsus prided himself on being a child of Abraham, now the Apostle Paul rejoiced in the reality that he was a child of the Heavenly Father.

B. His New Practice

“We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” (Colossians 1:3)

Before being transformed by the Gospel, Saul of Tarsus was known to be a cynic, but now a transformed man engaged in..

1. Continual Thanksgiving

“We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (Colossians 1:3)

2. Constant Prayer

“... praying always for you.” (Colossians 1:3)

• In his former life, Saul of Tarsus was dedicated to the rituals of Judaism. In his new life, Paul was committed to the freedom of Christianity...praying intimately to God as His Father in response to God’s grace and peace.

An Overview of Paul’s Transformed Life

- A change of position from persecutor to apostle — from enemy to brother — from condemned sinner to recipient of grace and peace — from ritual worshiper to intimate child of God.
- A change of practice — from cynical zeal to continual thanksgiving and praise — from ritualistic worship to constant communion with the Heavenly Father.

II. ITS IMPACT ON THE COLOSSIANS

A. Their New Position

“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” (Colossians 1:2-3)

1. Saints

In biblical theology a saint is anyone whose conversion to Christ is a miracle and is recognized as such by God Himself. “Saints” are people who are separated from the penalty of sin and are set apart unto God.

2. Faithful Brethren in Christ

“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* at Colossae.” (Colossians 1:2)

3. Recipients of Grace and Peace

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father.” (Colossians 1:2)

4. Children of the Heavenly Father

“I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God...”

B. Their New Practice

“We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel.” (Colossians 1:3-5) (cf. 1 Thess. 1:1-3; 5:8; 1 Cor. 3:13; 1 Cor. 13; etc.)

1. (Walking by) Faith

“Walking by faith is taking ownership of the reality that my God can do anything and then it is acting upon those realities before it happens.”

2. (Working in) Love

“Working in love is recognizing the value God places on a person and then it is acting upon that value with self-sacrificial service and God-ordained fellowship”

3. (Waiting in) Hope

“Waiting in hope is the eager expectation that God will do what He promised in the future and then it is acting as if it will happen today.” cf. Col. 3:1-5

An Overview of the Colossian’s Transformed Lives

- A change of position from idolaters to saints — from divided citizens to faithful brethren — from children of Satan to children of the Heavenly Father.
- A change of practice from walking by sight to walking by faith — from fighting among themselves to working in love — from restless despair to waiting in hope.

“What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought; Since Jesus came into my life. I have light in my soul for which long I have sought. Since Jesus came into my heart.”

History is really His story . . . and it can be YOUR story!