

Colossians 1:1-8 Does your knowledge of God make you act? The Gospel

Background of the book of Colossians

Paul wrote the letter while under house arrest between 60-62 AD

Epaphras started the church after hearing the Gospel in Ephesus.

Colosse was a small town in between Hierapolis and Laodicea and was generally overlooked because of how major the road was going between Hierapolis and Laodicea.

The town was mainly made up of Gentiles but also had many Jewish descendents as residents.

Epaphras came to Paul asking advice about how to battle the heresy going on within the church.

This heresy was an early form of Gnosticism which basically meant that people were saying they had a higher knowledge of how to get closer to God than going through Christ. This could've been through angel worship, following Old Testament Jewish rituals, as well as forms of mysticism.

The letter is written to combat that in two parts: 1. The first two chapters explain who Jesus is and the importance of Him being enough for us. 2. The last two chapters give us some practical ways of living that sufficiency in Christ out.

To get the full background go to the refuel website: www.usfbc.com/refuel

Paul begins the letter with a greeting and then goes right into the Gospel of Christ.

If you've ever wondered exactly who Jesus is and what He is all about we can learn this throughout the book of Colossians.

The first 8 verses alone give us an amazing description of how someone who is a follower of Christ lives. So let's get right into it by going through the first 8 verses.

Colossians 1:1-8

v. 2. Faithful – only used in the NT and is exclusively used towards believers. Paul is writing to the believers in Colosse

v. 3 – Here Paul describes that Jesus was in one nature with God. Even in the introduction Paul is trying to make sure the believers at Colosse understand that Jesus is God. He goes back to that statement throughout the letter to combat the heresy going on.

v.5 – expression that literally means “stored away for you.” Such as when a child's inheritance was locked away in a treasure or when grain was stored for later use.

v.6 – Has the Gospel changed your life? Have you ever talked to someone and you gotten that blank stare back. Like the other day Griffin's teacher asked me to do a slideshow for their class. When I gave her the dvd and started explaining how to copy it to her computer so she should keep it, she just stared at me. She heard me but never understood me. Have you ever had those conversations? You can hear something as much as you want but until you understand it, you won't follow it, believe it, act on it or even let it change you. Are you that person? You have heard about how Jesus died on the cross for you, crushing sin and then rising from the dead proving He was God, and restoring your place in front of God so that you can be blameless in front of Him and be in heaven forever; but, you haven't really understood it and you haven't had the “fruit” that comes from it. Fruit like peace, self-control, patience and the other things listed in the book of Galatians. You might say you are a Christian but if there is not understanding or change then you don't have God's grace and aren't going to get into heaven because you don't get it yet. You can tell me all about what He did on the cross but it hasn't made it from your brain to your heart. You are living like a Christian Atheist: believe in God but act as if He doesn't exist.

Go back to verse 6 and underline the statement “heard it and truly understood God’s grace.” Here Paul is talking about how the church at Colosse has heard and understood the Gospel. Gospel: Greek – evangelion which is where we get the English word evangelize. Literally means “good news.” Often used in classical Greek to speak of the report of victory brought back from a battle. The gospel is the good news of Jesus’ victory over Satan, sin and death. It is also the good news that we too can triumph eternally over those enemies through Him.

However, many of us know about the Gospel. We have heard that Jesus Christ died for our sins, allowing us to be faultless in God’s eyes so that our sins (everything that goes against God) are forgiven. This happened when Jesus rose from the dead proving he had the power to conquer sin and death. Many people know this. But what verse 6 is saying, is that not only did they hear and know the truth of the Gospel but they understood it. There is a big difference between knowing something and understanding something. Remember the conversation I mentioned where another person just stares at you kind of awkwardly and you know they just aren’t getting what you are saying? In my experience she heard it but didn’t understand it. How many of us know what Jesus did, what the Gospel is, say we love God but live as if we don’t understand it? That’s called being a Christian Atheist. Someone who says they believe in God but lives and acts as if He doesn’t exist.

Paul, in these 8 verses, gives us 7 aspects of what the Gospel looks like in the life of believers.

7 aspects of the Gospel:

1. received by faith – The Gospel is received by faith in Christ
2. results in love – Once received, the Holy Spirit of God comes into your heart and the result is love for all.
3. rests in hope – The Gospel allows us to rest in the hope that is stored in heaven - us being in heaven with God forever.
4. bears fruit – The book of James says faith without works is dead. Is your life changed to where you are living for Christ through your actions and words? Are you any different or do you just know about the Gospel?
5. reaches the world – the “Good News” isn’t kept to yourself, God uses us to make it spread throughout the world.
6. rooted in grace – Knowing that you didn’t do anything to earn it, nor deserve it. There are no works you could do to get it and/or keep it.
7. reported by people – Others know that it has affected your life.

If you believe Jesus came and died for you, yes you, and the rest of the world, but don’t truly understand it then you might think you are going to heaven but aren’t. If that is you then you need to repent – turn to God, turn from doing evil and serve God. Then obey what the Bible, God’s Word, says. We need to check if we are following these aspects of the Bible. Because when we do we will live lives of peace and joy, knowing that we are secure in being with God for eternity when we die. Are you lacking in any of these areas? Ask God to help you with it so that you can trust Him with everything and bring others with you by building relationships that matter. If you don’t know Christ, or aren’t sure. We can help you with that. Contact me because God loves you and has a plan for your life. You just have to accept the free gift. He wants you to be in heaven with Him. What’s holding you back?