

The Gospel is Bearing Fruit: Colossians 1:1-8 Explained

Scriptures for Today

""Colossians 1:1-8

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, 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; 6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: 7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; 8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.""

Intro: to Colossians — A Church Facing a Crisis Never Expected

Before we open Colossians 1, we need to understand where we are in the Bible story. Unlike many churches Paul wrote to, **the church at Colosse was not founded by Paul**, nor did they learn the gospel from his preaching. Scripture tells us exactly who taught them: "As ye also learned of *Epaphras*."

So Epaphras is the man God used to bring them the gospel. Paul did not plant this church and Scripture does not say whether any of them had previously met him. What Scripture DOES say is that Paul carried a deep burden for them:

""Colossians 2:1

For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; ""

Paul is writing to believers:

- he didn't personally train,
- he didn't personally disciple,
- and whose church he didn't personally start.

Yet he cared for them like a shepherd cares for sheep, because the unity of the Spirit is deeper than geography. Epaphras, after ministering to them, traveled to Paul and **declared their faith, their love, and their spiritual condition** (Colossians 1:8).

From this report, Paul writes this letter. Why? Because these believers were facing pressures that threatened to distort the gospel they had received.

False teachings were rising—teachings that attempted to mix human philosophy, Jewish legalism, mystical practices, and man-made traditions with the simplicity of Christ. The danger was not that they would abandon Jesus, but that they would **lower** Him and treat Him as one part of their faith instead of the fullness of it.

Colossians is Paul's Spirit-filled response. This letter is a declaration that: Christ is supreme. Christ is sufficient. Christ is preeminent. Christ is everything.

Colossians lifts Jesus so high that no false doctrine can reach Him. It magnifies Christ so clearly that error collapses under the weight of His glory.

And before Paul corrects anything, before he warns them about anything, he begins with gratitude, encouragement, and a celebration of the fruit that the gospel had already produced in them.

And the opening eight verses set the foundation for the entire book.

Verse 1 — Paul's Apostolic Authority and Timothy's Partnership

""Colossians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,""

Paul establishes his authority immediately:

- **"An apostle"** — not self-appointed
- **"by the will of God"** — not man-made
- **sent by Jesus Christ** — not sent by man but Jesus Himself

Why is this important? Because the false teachers denied Paul's authority. They wanted to replace apostolic truth with philosophy and traditions. So Paul starts the letter by reminding them: **This message comes from God, not from man.**

Timothy is introduced not as a pastor, but as:

- "our brother"
- a trusted coworker
- a faithful witness of Paul's heart

This shows unity, humility, and credibility.

Verse 2 — Saints, Faithful, and in Christ

""Colossians 1:2

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.""

Paul calls them:

- **saints** — set apart
- **faithful brethren** — loyal to Christ
- **in Christ** — their position
- **at Colosse** — their location

Two identities: 1) In Christ (spiritually). 2) At Colosse (physically). One eternal. One temporary. And notice again:

Grace → **Peace**. The order never changes. Because peace never comes without grace. And grace never comes without Christ. We've seen this repeated at the start of all these letters to the churches.

Verse 3 — Paul's Prayer Life for a Church He Never Met

""**Colossians 1:3**

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,""

Paul thanks God for believers he may have never seen with his own eyes. He's heard of them, but he may have never seen them.

This teaches us:

- You do not need to know someone personally to love them spiritually.
- You do not need a relationship to pray for someone.
- The unity of the Spirit is deeper than physical distance.

Paul prays "always" — consistently, repeatedly, faithfully. He is preparing to correct this church, but he begins with gratitude instead of rebuke.

Verse 4 — Faith in Christ and Love for the Saints

""**Colossians 1:4**

Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,""

Two marks of a genuine, growing Christian:

1. Faith in Christ Jesus
2. Love for all the saints

True faith always produces love. Not selective love. Not convenient love. Not love for people who agree with you. **Love for "all the saints."**

Love does not save, but love reveals salvation's fruit.

Verse 5 — Hope Stored in Heaven

""Colossians 1:5

For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; ""

Their hope is not on earth. Their hope is not in works. Their hope is not in law. Their hope is not in feelings.

Their hope is:

- **laid up** — stored
- **secured** — protected
- **preserved** — unshakeable
- **in heaven** — untouchable

A believer's inheritance cannot be stolen by false teachers, sin, or Satan. Paul adds:

""Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;"" Your hope came from the gospel — not philosophy, not tradition, not rituals, not man, and not anything else but the Gospel!

Verse 6 — The Gospel Is Alive and It Bears Fruit

""Colossians 1:6

Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: ""

Notice the Bible itself says the Gospel is come unto you, as it is in ALL THE WORLD. Some people say the Gospel hasn't reached the entire world. Many Scriptures throughout the Bible tell us that it has. The Gospel is alive! It is come unto all the world.

The gospel is not static. It is not stale. It is not silent. **The gospel is alive — and living things bear fruit.** Three truths you see here:

1. The gospel spreads everywhere — “in all the world.”
2. The gospel produces spiritual fruit — changed lives.
3. The gospel began working the moment they believed — “since the day ye heard of it.”

What kind of fruit would we see from someone who believes the Gospel and walks in the Spirit? Repentance, righteousness, holiness, joy, evangelism, transformation, Christlike character.

Christ does not merely save — He changes. Now, a person can resist those changes by walking in the flesh. But a saved person is a new creation. The old flesh is still there, obviously. But we

SHOULD see the bringing forth of fruit. A saved person SHOULD preach the Gospel and get people saved.

Verse 7 — Epaphras: A Faithful Minister

""Colossians 1:7

As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;""

It is common for people to teach that Epaphras is the founder of the Colossian church (Acts 19:10). But the Bible doesn't say this and that would be speculation or adding to the word of God.

The Colossians learned the gospel from Epaphras (Col. 1:7). Scripture does not say where Epaphras heard the gospel, when he was saved, or whether he founded the church. Anything beyond Colossians 1:7 is speculation and should not be stated as fact.

Scripture calls him:

- **dear** — loved
- **fellowservant** — equal, not inferior
- **faithful minister** — dependable, doctrinally sound

He brought the gospel to Colosse. He returned to Paul for help when false teachings spread. This shows his loyalty to Christ and his love for the church.

Verse 8 — Their Love Was the Work of the Holy Spirit

""Colossians 1:8

Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.""

This is not natural love. It is not fleshly affection. It is not personality-driven kindness. This is **Holy Spirit-produced love** — supernatural love that flows from a heart transformed by grace.

Application — What This Passage Teaches Us About the Gospel

1. **The gospel spreads beyond the preacher who first delivered it.** Truth outlives the messenger.
2. **The gospel has the power to produce real fruit in believers.** If you walk in the Spirit, you can produce fruit. Fruit is evidence of growth but not salvation.

3. **The gospel must remain the center — not philosophy, law, or human wisdom.** Colossians is a defense of Christ's supremacy.
4. **Spiritual love comes from the Holy Spirit, not emotions.** Their love was "in the Spirit," showing it came from God, not natural personality.
5. **Hope is stored in heaven, secured by Christ, unreachable by Satan.** Your hope cannot be lost or touched because Christ Himself guards it in heaven.
6. **Faith, hope, and love mark genuine Christianity.** These three qualities shape the Christian life, not as proofs of salvation but as goals for growth.

Closing — The Gospel That Grows Wherever It Goes

The church at Colosse began with one faithful man, Epaphras. It grew through the unstoppable power of the Gospel. And now Paul writes to them to magnify Christ — the Head of the church.

The gospel Paul preached still spreads, still saves, still transforms, still bears fruit.

Where Christ is preached, fruit will appear as people walk with Jesus.
Where grace is believed, lives will change as people walk with Jesus.
Where the gospel is planted, it grows as people walk with Jesus.

The Gospel has real power. And the more we use that power, the greater this church will become in the eyes of God.

Let's pray.