

LIVING FAITH
BRINGING HOPE
SHOWING LOVE

Colossians—Lesson #2, Faith, Hope and Love are the Main Ingredients Here!

Gerald Cumby, Teacher

Location, Location, Location...

Businesses, churches, shopping centers, housing districts, etc. are successful only when they are in the right place at the right time. So many times, our lives are touched in various ways by the location and surroundings as to where we are at specific times.

It hasn't changed since the beginning of time until the present day. It won't change in the future if you are looking at the world and basing your decisions to build your life around past history. Today's trash dump might be where the tallest and most sought-after building is located in the future. Likewise, the most successful shopping center in the city at present might be a "ghost town" of closed businesses tomorrow.

So it was in Biblical times. The ancient city of Colossae was located in a very beautiful, mountainous area near the Lycus River and Mount Cadmus, the highest mountain in that area of the world (Turkey, present day). The Gentile Christian church at Colossae had all the markings of being a hub for new converts to the Christian faith. However, things can change in just a few short years; and, it did in Colossae. Here is why!

Ancient Colossae...100 miles east of Ephesus, 9.3 miles southeast of Laodicea, and a few miles from Hierapolis was the ancient city of Colossae (now in the country of Turkey). Even in today's world, the area is mountainous and scenic.

Colossae was in Phrygia, in Asia Minor (ancient location) on the road through the Lycus Valley near the Lycus River at the foot of Mt. Cadmus, the highest mountain in Turkey's western Aegean Region. The name derives from its manufacture of dyed wool.

The city was decimated by an earthquake in the 60s AD and was rebuilt independent of the support of Rome. Scholars agree that the letter to the church was written before the earthquake occurred. Today, we can't even tell exactly where Colossae was located (no foundation stones or pillars).



Important information before we start the letter.

1. **The church at Colossae was founded by Epaphras, not Paul.** Paul never visited Colossae, but had been instrumental in assuring the church was well established with its own pastor.
2. **The Apostolic Constitutions list Philemon as a bishop of Colossae.**
3. ***It should be noted here that Philemon was the owner of slaves.***
4. ***In the letter to the church at Colossae, Paul mentions slavery and the responsibilities for the slave and slave owner as to their conduct and the way they were to treat each other (provide and perform their job).*** We will discuss this very important subject when we come to those Scriptures in the letter.

Colossians 1:1, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and from Timothy, the brother, to the dedicated people of God and faithful brothers in Christ who are in Colosse."

- Since Paul had never actually been to Colosse, he has to start his letter by making clear what right he has to send a letter to the Colossians. He does that in one word; he is an "apostle."
- "Apostolos" literally means one who is sent out. Paul's right to speak is that he has been sent out by God to be his ambassador to the Gentiles.
- ***Not only that he is an apostle by the will of God. That office is not something which he has earned or achieved; it is something which has been given him by God.*** "You did not choose me," said Jesus, "but I chose you" (John 15:16).

- **At the outset of the letter, is the whole doctrine of grace.** A man is not what he has made himself, but what God has made him.
- **Paul associates Timothy as a brother;** the fundamental necessity for Christian service and the office of the Christian faith is brotherliness.
How important little words are in the Bible. Note: “to” and “from.”
If, all, in, is, virgin...not young girl; I saw and not I heard,
Faith...and seen.
“Faith is always above see level.” Meaning, “More than we can comprehend (Our thinking can’t even bring us to that realm of truth). Don’t ever diminish “faith” in your mind, it is the basis for you salvation!

The letter was from Paul and Timothy... “from” Timothy, my brother (in Christ)...not “to” Timothy.”

- ***Timothy is not described as the preacher, the teacher, the theologian, the administrator, but as the brother.*** The same Christian DNA. Blood brothers (washed in the blood of Christ Jesus).
- ***This opening address is to:***
 - ✓ ***God's dedicated people and to...***
 - ✓ ***The faithful brothers in Colosse.***

In the matter of opening addresses Paul's custom changed. In his earlier letters he always addressed the letter to the Church. I and 2 Thessalonians, I and 2 Corinthians and Galatians are all addressed to the Church of the district to which they are sent. But beginning with Romans his letters are all addressed to God's dedicated people in such and such a place. It is so in Romans, Colossians, Philippians and Ephesians. As Paul grew older, he came more and more to see what matters ***is individual people.*** The Church is not a kind of abstract entity; it is individual men and women and children. As the years went on, Paul began to see the Church in terms of ***individuals; therefore, he changed to this style of greeting.***

The openings, greeting closes with a most significant placing of two things side by side. He writes to the Christians who are in Colosse and who are in Christ. A Christian always moves in two spheres.

1. He is in a certain place in this world;
2. but he is also in Christ.

He (WE...You, Me) live in two dimensions.

1. We live in this world whose duties we should never treat lightly;

2. Beyond that...we live in Christ Jesus.

THE DOUBLE COMMITMENT

Colossians 1:2-8, NKJV “To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father ²and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; ⁷ as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.”

The essence of the Christian life is in this passage of Scripture. It shows the two (2) sides of the Christian life:

- 1. The Christian must have faith; He must know what he believes.**
- 2. He must have love for mankind; He must turn that belief into action.**

As the Word of God should always emphasize to us...We should grow in grace and mercy. We can only do that if we know what we believe...and believe it strong enough to put it into action.

Paul heard of their (the church's) faith in Christ Jesus and their love for all the saints...But...is Paul saying that it is “Because of the hope that is laid up in heaven” that they exhibit their faith and love?

- *Is he asking the Colossians to show faith in Christ and love for men only for the hope of some reward that is going to come to them some day? There has to be something much deeper than that here.*
 - ✓ *The Christian hope is that God's way is the best way and that the only real peace, the only real joy, the only true and lasting reward are to be found in it.*
 - ✓ *Loyalty to Christ and the hope (in this context, assurance) of glory is the confidence that it is better to stake one's life on God than to believe the world.*

Colossians 1:6-8 are a kind of summary of what the gospel is and does.

The Colossians had already listened and accepted the gospel (the good news).

What does the gospel bring to people?

1. The gospel sets us in a right relationship with God.

2. The gospel is truth.

All previous religions could be entitled "guesses about God." The Christian gospel gives a man "not guesses" but certainties about God.

3. The gospel is universal. *It is for all the world. It is not confined to any one race or nation, nor to any one class or condition. But the message of the gospel is open without exception to all men.*

4. The gospel is productive. It bears fruit and increases.

5. The gospel tells of grace.

6. The gospel is humanly transmitted. Epaphras brought it to Colossae...It was Epaphras who brought it to the Colossians.

- ✓ *This is where we come in!* The possession of the good news of the gospel involves the obligation to share it.
- ✓ Jesus Christ needs us to be the hands and feet and lips which will bring his gospel to those who have never heard it.

Let's think about it...Are we sharing our faith?