

Colossians 1:3-8
The Gospel in Christ

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2

Independence Day

Socially, I like to think of myself as an independent person. I am thankful for the liberties and the freedom I enjoy in this country. I hope to continue to enjoy this liberty for as long as I live.

I am thankful to have the opportunity to celebrate Independence Day!

3

Independence Day

We need to honor those who have fought and died for our freedom and liberty. Let us never forget that our freedom came at a high price

4

Independence Day

Spiritually, I celebrate another independence day. It also came at a high price. It is when Jesus died on the cross and set me free from the bondage of sin and its ultimate consequences.

5

Independence Day

In Christ, we are able to celebrate Christian Liberty. However, this is never the liberty to willfully sin and live a worldly lifestyle.

The question we should be asking is not how far I can move into the world and be ok, but how much like Christ can I be!

Being set free from the bondage of sin and the bonds of tradition, I now have the liberty to serve God and live freely in Him!

6

Independence Day

So while socially, I am an independent person, spiritually I recognize that I must be a dependent person.

7

Independence Day

I must learn to be dependent upon God for:

- His guidance and direction in my life.
- His boundaries He places so I can live safe
- His strength He gives me to live holy in an unholy world.
- His Spirit to give me the courage to be a lighthouse in a darkened world.
- His Word to encourage me when I am discouraged.

8

Independence Day

The greatest area that we all need to be dependent upon God for is our salvation.

So many people are trying to earn and work their way to heaven. They give a great amount of time keeping traditions and performing various rituals. They always worry if they have done enough...

I rest in God's grace. He has done it all. He has set me free to be independent in this world while I am totally dependent upon Him. This brings us back to Colossians.

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Colossians 1:3-8

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.

10

We have seen:

- The Gospel is received by faith.
- That faith must be placed in Jesus as the object of faith.
- True faith results in love for God and fellow Christians.
- That Faith gives us a glorious hope of the future.

11

Hope of the Gospel

Colossians 1:5

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,

Our hope in heaven:

- It is the hope of being raised from the dead and being given a new and perfect and glorious body—a body just like Jesus Christ.
 - It is the hope of the Jesus' return and of being with Him forever.
- It is the hope of entering the veil of heaven and of living there forever.
- It is the glorious inheritance we are to receive from God as sons and daughters of His.

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Hope of the Gospel

Colossians 1:5

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,

All this “hope” hinges on one critical point - the Gospel. It is only in Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross to pay for our sins that we have any hope of heaven and any reward there.

Notice that the Colossians had heard and responded to the gospel. The Colossian believers had placed their faith in Jesus and His payment for sin.

Notice that the gospel is proclaimed to be the **“Word of the Truth”**. It is not the ideas of men, but the Word of God who is Truth!

13

The Gospel Reaches the World

Colossians 1:6a

which has come to you, as *it has* also in all the world,

The gospel is also universal; it **has come to you, just as it has in all the world.** Christianity was not just another of the local sects of the Roman Empire. It was not merely one more cult like the others at Colossae. It was and is the good news for the whole world. The gospel transcends ethnic, geographic, cultural, and political boundaries.

Revelation 5:9-11 tells us that in heaven there will be believers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. The message of the gospel is universal for all people!

14

The Gospel Bears Fruit

Colossians 1:6b

and is bringing forth fruit, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

The gospel is not a stagnant system of ethics; it is a living, moving, and growing reality. It bears fruit and spreads. Hebrews 4:12 says, “The word of God is living and active.” When the gospel is received and believed, it results in fruit.

The gospel produces fruit both in the internal transformation of individuals (fruit of the Spirit), and also in the external growth of the church. The two concepts are interrelated. The spiritual growth of individuals will lead to new converts being won to Christ.

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The Gospel is Rooted in Grace

Colossians 1:6b

and is bringing forth fruit, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

Grace is the very heart of the gospel. It is God’s freely giving us the forgiveness of sin and eternal life, which we do not deserve and cannot earn. Christianity contrasts sharply with other religions, which assume man can save himself by his good works. Nothing is more clearly taught in Scripture than the truth that “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, that no one should boast” (Eph. 2:8–9).

Paul describes saving grace as **the grace of God in truth**. The phrase **in truth** carries the sense of genuineness. It is truly **the grace of God** in contrast to all other religions. God is freely, sovereignly merciful and forgiving. We can do nothing to earn our own salvation; God saves us freely by His grace.

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The Gospel's Effect is Reported

Colossians 1:7-8

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.

Epaphras brought the good news of God's grace to the Colossian church. They learned it from him. Paul often referred to himself as a *doulos* (**bond-servant**) of Christ (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Titus 1:1). By referring to Epaphras as his **fellow bond-servant** (*sundoulos*), and calling him a faithful servant of Christ on your behalf, Paul connects Epaphras' ministry with his own. Epaphras was Paul's representative at Colossae, backed by his authority and that of the Lord Jesus. While Paul was imprisoned, unable to go to the Colossians, Epaphras ministered to them on Paul's behalf. He also informed Paul of the Colossians' **love in the Spirit**, a report that no doubt brought great joy to Paul's heart. Paul was thankful for the gospel, and for the Colossians' reception of it.

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So What ...

God gives us the wonderful **privilege** and **responsibility** of being His agents in proclaiming the gospel of His grace.

May we be faithful to share with others the gospel that has meant so much to us.

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