

“The Foundations of a Christian Worldview”

Colossians 1:1-8

When we look around at the current state of our world, it's hard for us to imagine how global affairs could be any more dangerous. Our problems go far beyond even our greatest statesmen and thinkers. We wonder who those individuals are. If we were to get on an airplane and fly around the world, think about what all would be happening beneath us. Looking down at America, we'd see a country polarized by political division, deeply in debt, riddled by crime, and now sinking down into the quicksand of godless ideologies. And before we know it, we're flying over the European continent where there is the ongoing Russian and Ukrainian conflict, open borders, and historically low birth rates. If we head south, we find struggling nations in North Africa, a breeding ground for terrorists. In places like Sudan, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Christians are facing persecution on a mass scale. Then in Asia, China and its allies have been trying to maneuver into a new order. Just this week, on the sidelines of a military parade in Beijing, the leaders of Russia and China were overheard on a hot microphone discussing how organ transplants are a means of prolonging life. They made the comment that eternal life could perhaps be achievable as a result of innovations in biotechnology, according to a translation of their remarks. That is a sampling of what's going on in Europe and Asia. Heading back home, we can detour over South America where poverty, drug trafficking, and economic inflation is threatening the continent and democratic governments are collapsing into corruption and Marxism.

When we land, ponder the brutal fact that we flew over 59 wars that are going on now somewhere on earth. That's the view at 35,000 feet. On the ground, the world is filled with suffering, political chaos, war zones, refugee camps, famines,

and is in the grip of satanic delusion. Maybe you remember from childhood the song, “He’s Got the Whole World In His Hands.” But as we look around, many would question that idea. To get an accurate view of reality, you need to go higher than 35,000 feet. What you need is the view that only God can provide.

Turn with me in your Bibles this morning to the little letter in the New Testament known as Colossians. We’re beginning a brand new series this morning called ‘Foundations’ where we’ll be considering the importance of a biblical worldview. Now I’m almost positive that you are familiar with that term. Our worldview is about our most basic beliefs. Think of it as the lens through which we view life. The first time I ever heard it was the summer of 2000 when Anita and I were working on staff at a Christian camp. The staff study that year was a book by Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey entitled, “How Now Shall We Live?” Until that point, I had never thought about how my faith impacted the way that I viewed life and the convictions I had about the world. Though you won’t find the term ‘worldview’ in the Bible, the concept is there. Worldview seeks to answer basic questions such as:

- How did we get here?
- What’s wrong in the world?
- What is the solution?
- Where is history headed?

How exactly does Christianity stack up in a world where there are so many ‘isms?’ You know what I’m referring to, don’t you? I’m referring to the smorgasbord of ideas and philosophies about what constitutes truth. All sorts of ‘isms’ exist in our world, with each one of them representing a very different outlook on

humanity, with each one offering a different opinion about the way societies should function, or about the way in which humanity should believe and behave. Words like relativism and pluralism, capitalism and socialism, postmodernism and humanism. Each one of these begins with an idea or a truth claim, and whether we realize it or not, those ideas have consequences.

The most brutal regimes in history always began with an ideology that it makes absolute. The twentieth century saw this play itself out in tragic ways. It was only a short jump from the ideas of Karl Marx to the inhumanity of Stalin. Or the ideology of Nazism which led to the evil attempt by Hitler to exterminate the Jews. Let me tell you, one of the most sobering experiences I've ever had was walking through the Holocaust Museum. One of the things that I'll never forget is the pile of 4,000 shoes which belonged to some of those who were murdered in Hitler's concentration camps. We now shudder at the horror of it all, but we often fail to remember that Hitler didn't just appear out of nowhere. It never happens that way. Before there was a Hitler, there was an evil idea.

There is a cultural concoction being brewed in the minds of today's generation, with an idea of origins which says life is nothing more than the product of an evolutionary process. Then add an idea of humanism that basically says we are god. Throw in a dash of morality is whatever you want it to be. Add to that the view which says that the state is the answer to everything. The church or the Christian that has anything to say in opposition of the new majority religion is extremist. Mix all these ingredients together, who knows what kind of poisonous pastry you have when that comes out of the oven? Ideas have consequences. Some say the only thing you can know is what science can prove.

This is nothing more than 'scientism' which makes science ultimate. It is so very easy to see that science is limited in that it cannot answer the simple questions of

a child, “Where do I come from, where am I going to, and what is the meaning of life?” Science takes things apart to understand how they work and what they are made of, while religion puts them together to see what they mean. The answer we need is found in God’s Word.

Colossians 1:17—“And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

Paul’s letter to the Colossians is one of the most worldview shaping books in the New Testament. Paul is writing to a church that was being threatened by false ideas, and urges them to be rooted in Christ. A Christian worldview involves seeing and interpreting all of life through the lens of Christ’s supremacy and sufficiency. And nowhere in the Bible is the preeminence of Jesus emphasized any more so than in the four chapters, 95 verses of Colossians. (Read)

Colossians is one of the most important letters to ever be written, and it is one of 13 written by the apostle Paul. It is important because it is inspired Scripture, and as such, it is the authoritative Word of God for our lives. It certainly isn’t the longest of letters. In fact, it is fairly brief, made up of only four chapters and 95 verses. And to read it in a sitting will only take you 10-15 minutes. However, it will take us the rest of our lives to understand and live out its message.

We need to consider a bit of background...

The story behind this letter is fascinating. We know it as Paul’s letter to the Colossians because it was written to a group of believers living in the city of Colossae, which was located in the Lycus Valley in what is now modern Turkey. As a city, Colossae was nowhere near the size of some of its larger neighboring cities like Heirapolis and Laodicea, or even the city of Ephesus which was 120 miles to the west. It was on a major route from east to west, which meant that

people traveled through this area from both sides of the Roman Empire. That was a good thing and a bad thing all at the same time. It was a good thing if you wanted to stay up on the latest fashions and products. But it was a dangerous thing because it meant constant exposure to all the philosophies and new ideas coming from the east. It became a hotbed for weirdness and pluralism as any new idea or philosophy came to town and gained a following.

Not long after Paul wrote this letter, the city was destroyed by a major earthquake and was never rebuilt. But here in this little city was a congregation of believers. How was it that the Colossian church began? As far as we know, Paul had never visited Colossae and was not the founder of the church that was there. But he does tell us in this letter how the church had gotten started. In verse 7 he mentions a guy by the name of Epaphras and how they had learned the truth of the gospel through him. Most scholars believe Epaphras was converted as the result of Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus. We read in:

Acts 19:9-10— “[Paul] reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.”

As Paul preached and made disciples in Ephesus, those converted to faith under his ministry took the gospel back to their towns and villages so that much of Asia Minor was evangelized. And apparently, Epaphras was one of those disciples. He came to faith while listening to Paul preach, and he took the gospel back to his home in Colossae and planted a church among his family and friends. Ten years later, Paul is under house arrest in Rome, and Epaphras tracks him down because the church had come under the influence of some false ideas. The ‘spirit of the age’ had crept into the church, and the faith of these believers was under attack. Epaphras comes to Paul needing help, and the help he is given is

this letter we know as Colossians. In that sense, Colossians is relevant to where you and I currently live. One person has said:

Chuck Swindoll — *“Colossians is a letter for then and now.”*

It may have been written then, but it has everything to do with how we live now. As a preacher, I’ve learned that it isn’t my task to make the Bible relevant. My responsibility is simply to deliver the message and get out of the way.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 — **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

In other words, when we study the Bible:

- We will encounter the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
- We will be made aware of what is not the truth.
- We will gain discernment to know the difference.

Embracing truth that was written back then equips us to defend the faith now. Acknowledging false ideas back then reminds us of similar ideas going on today. And maintaining discernment from truth written back then keeps us alert to false teaching now. We must keep this in mind as we study Colossians.

Now, that brings up a good question: “What are the false ideas which Colossians confronts?” There has been much debate about it over the centuries, but we are given some clues throughout the letter. And what we piece together is that it involved a lethal combination of philosophy, legalism, and warped Christianity. Call it the ‘wokism’ of the day that said people needed Jesus ‘plus’ something

else. Paul will give repeated warnings against being led astray by false ideas and influences. If you flip to chapter 2, here are the main ones he confronts:

- The danger of plausible arguments

Colossians 2:4—“I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.”

Paul warns against being deceived by smooth speech and convincing logic that undermines the gospel. The danger is that of being swayed by words that sound wise but deny Christ’s supremacy.

- The danger of philosophical deception

Colossians 2:8—“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”

Empty human traditions and worldly wisdom can enslave the believer. The danger involves building life on man’s reasoning instead of God’s revelation.

- The danger of pharisaical legalism

Colossians 2:16-17—“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are shadows of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Religious regulations—dietary laws, festivals, Sabbaths—were shadows that pointed to Christ. The danger involves trusting in ritual observance rather than the reality of Christ.

- The danger of pretentious mysticism

Colossians 2:18-19—“Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.”

False humility, angel worship, and obsession with visions lead believers away from Christ the Head. The danger is chasing spiritual experiences instead of clinging to Christ.

- The danger of powerless asceticism

Colossians 2:20-23—“If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—do not handle, do not taste, do not touch (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.”

Rules like, “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” may appear spiritual but lack real power over sin. The danger is in relying upon external rules rather than Christ’s internal transforming work.

And so every warning in Colossians points us back to this truth: Jesus Christ is sufficient! And anything that subtracts from Him or adds to Him ultimately is a substitute for Him. Paul takes on these ideas in this little letter to help genuine believers distinguish a biblical worldview from the spirit of the age. Knowing the truth helps us identify the lie! The Secret Service learns to spot counterfeit currency, not by studying the fakes, but by careful knowledge of the real deal.

The early church needed the instruction of Colossians as it was a crucial and challenging time that it was facing. And if there is anything that we need in our time of confusion with its plethora of ideas, it is this same message. Because as much as things change, they really stay the same. People are just as lost and in need of salvation as they were in the first century. Lies and false ideas which keep people blind to their sin are just as much a reality now as they were in Paul's day. Many of the same problems that existed back in the early church still persist today. And that is, there is still the tendency for us within the church to get off course, to become distracted, so that we even find ourselves being seduced by the spirit of our times.

Paul's message in Colossians is that Christians must begin to appropriate what they already have. Not that they need something else, but that what they need for salvation, what they need for life and godliness, they already have in Jesus Christ and in the Word of God.

I remember hearing a story about William Randolph Hearst who was one of the richest men in America, and how he was also an avid art collector. One day, he read about a particular painting that he desired to add to his collection. He sent people all over Europe and America, telling them to spare no expense in locating and purchasing it. Well, after months of searching, his people finally reported back that they had found the painting—it was already in one of Hearst's own warehouses. He had purchased it several years before, and it had been sitting in storage all along, and forgotten.

Well, here in Colossians, Paul reminds believers that they already have all they need in Christ. We don't have to look for something novel or trendy, nor must we get caught up in chasing cultural fads. All that we need for life and salvation is supplied through Christ who is our firm foundation. And so from these first few

verses of Colossians, I want to show you three foundational truths about a Christian worldview.

1—Jesus Christ is the CENTER of reality (1:1-4)

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints.”

Worldview seeks to answer these questions, “Who am I? What is truth? Where do I find my place?” Philosophers, scientists, and thinkers have all attempted for centuries to define the center of reality. Some say it is found in human reason, others in power, wealth, or personal freedom. But Paul, writing to the believers in Colossae, reminds us that the true center of reality is not an idea but a person—Jesus Christ. He mentions Christ 35 times (every 2-3 verses).

In these opening verses, Paul doesn’t waste any time with pleasantries. He is writing with purpose, which is true of all the letters he wrote in the New Testament. Sometimes, he write with the purpose of comforting. Other times, he wrote with the purpose of confronting, which is what he does here in Colossians. The main problem in Colossae involved the ideas of those who claimed Jesus wasn’t enough for a well-rounded faith. Paul confronts this notion and, from the very beginning, sets Jesus Christ at the center of the believer’s identity, faith, and love. If we understand this, our lives will have stability, no matter the pressures or uncertainties that surround us.

Christ defines our identity

Following the custom of his day, Paul began the letter with his name and apostolic office. We do this backwards in our time, signing our names at the end of a letter instead of the beginning. In verse 1, Paul begins by identifying himself as “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” His identity as an apostle is not self-made, nor is it the product of human ambition. Rather, it is by the will of God in Christ. He also makes mention of Timothy, his young associate. At this point, it had been more than a decade that Paul had taken Timothy under his wing. Timothy had assisted Paul throughout his third missionary journey, which resulted in Paul’s arrest and imprisonment. More than likely, Timothy is there with Paul in Rome and serves as his scribe.

Notice he then addresses the church, “To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae.” Paul addresses the believers as ‘saints.’ To be a believer in Christ is to be a saint. We saw this same thing when we went through the letter to the Philippians last year. It has nothing really to do with practice, but everything to do with position. A ‘saint’ is someone who is set apart by God for Himself. And notice how he describes these believers as the saints and faithful brothers in Christ. The Bible is clear when it says that the saint’s position is to be in Jesus Christ. To be lost is to be in Adam, but to be saved is to be in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:22—“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”

By nature we are in Adam; we are not in Christ. Therefore, without being placed into Christ and if we remain in Adam, then we will die in our sins. So that the coming of Christ and the atoning death of Jesus on the cross is in order to provide an atonement for sinners who are delivered from their old position in Adam to their new position in Christ. The Bible says it this way:

2 Corinthians 5:17—“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

J.B. Phillips paraphrases it this way: “For if a man is in Christ he becomes a new person altogether—the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new!” Jesus came to do all that Adam failed to do, and He came to undo all that Adam did in the fall, so that by His death and resurrection Jesus dealt with the guilt and the power of sin. And now when we come to believe in Christ, then all of salvation’s benefits and blessings apply to us, having been placed in Christ.

So Paul is writing to these saints and faithful brothers who are in Christ at Colossae. In other words, they have two addresses. They have an earthly address as well as a heavenly address. Their problems were with their earthly address. But the key to solving them was in their heavenly address. Pay attention to the key phrase—in Christ. Their identity is not primarily tied to being citizens of Colossae, or part of a particular family, or members of a certain social class. Their real identity is found in Christ. Friends, that’s important for us because in a world where people try to define themselves by their career, by politics, or sexuality, or achievements, God’s Word calls us to remember who we are as believers—we are in Christ. Paul is writing to a congregation that is made up of saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colossae. They are in Christ at Colossae, just like you and I are in Christ at Charlotte, or Monroe, or in the community in which you live. Physically, we are here in the world. We live in a difficult environment. But spiritually, we are in Christ. This is the basis of our true citizenship which informs how we think and live.

By way of an illustration, think of a passport. I had to have my passport updated this week because I’ll be traveling out of the country in a few months. But wherever you go in the world, your passport defines your citizenship and rights.

To be 'in Christ' is like having a passport that declares we now belong to Him. It is our ultimate identity. And then notice:

Christ anchors our faith

In verse 3, Paul says that when he prays, he thanks God because of their 'faith in Christ Jesus.' Faith is not a vague optimism or a religious feeling. It is the act of placing trust in the person and work of Christ. What makes their faith powerful is not their own strength, but the object of their faith. A weak faith in a strong Savior is far better than a strong faith in the wrong thing. Christ is the anchor of our faith, the foundation that secures our lives in the midst of life's storms. He is our clarity when facing confusion.

There are those who say that the Christian worldview isn't plausible because it is based on faith. They argue that the secular worldview is based on reason. But the fact of the matter is that everyone lives by faith—whether in money, relationships, science, or self. The question is not whether you have faith, but what you have faith in. But only faith anchored in Christ holds firm when life's realities shake us.

A few years ago, Anita and I were up in Erie, Pennsylvania. It was early February, so it was cold and snowing. We took a little excursion out on Lake Erie which was frozen over at the time. I can remember that she and I walked so gingerly out on the ice, carefully watching where we placed our feet. In my mind, I feared stepping out on a place where the ice was thin and falling in. That is until I heard a sound behind me, and watched as a Chevy Silverado drove right on by. Then I realized my fears were unfounded. If the ice is thin, even strong confidence will end in disaster. But if the ice is thick, even hesitant steps will

hold. What matters most is not the intensity of faith but the strength of what you place your faith in.

Christ produces our love

Paul goes on to say in verse 4, “and of the love that you have for all the saints.” Notice the connection—faith in Christ naturally produces love for others. In other words, evidence of real faith is love for others. By the way, this is where a Christian worldview is fundamentally different from other worldviews which put ‘self’ at the center. The world is self-centered, self-focused, self-motivated. There’s even a magazine called ‘Self’ magazine. You see where we are in our culture by magazine titles. There was ‘Life’ magazine, and then there was ‘People’ magazine. Then along came ‘Us’ magazine. And then ‘Self’ magazine! And now there is social media where everything can be about you. But faith in a believer’s life will manifest itself in love for others.

John 13:35—“By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

A Christian’s love is not manufactured by human willpower, but it flows out of our union with Christ. The love that the Colossians extended to ‘all the saints’ and not just those they found easy to get along with. Christ’s love removes barriers of race, social status, and background, making real community possible. If Christ is truly at the center of your life, it will show in how you love people. Not just family and friends, but even the difficult, those who are different, and the undeserving.

Think of the sun. The sun doesn’t try to shine, but simply radiates because of what it is. In the same way, when the Son of God is at the center of our lives, then love naturally radiates from us to others. And so the first thing we learn

about the Christian view of the world is that Jesus Christ is at the center of reality. And then notice a second thing:

2—Heaven is the GOAL of life (1:5)

“Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel.”

What set these people apart from the rest of the world was their faith, love, and hope. That’s the difference that Jesus makes in our lives. Faith in Christ, love for each other, and hope of heaven. The faith and love they had flowed out of the hope they possessed. Pay attention to Paul’s train of thought here.

Christians are marked by a contagious and joyful sense of purpose springing up from the hope that we possess. A Christian’s view of the world understands this world isn’t our home. We’re looking for something better than anything else this world can offer. We have hope in the eternal promise of God that He will one day bring this world as it is to an end and will usher in the new heavens and the new earth.

The promise we have

Notice in verse 5 that Paul refers to the ‘hope’ laid up for us in heaven. He says believers presently live with faith and love because of the hope that is laid up. That hope is not wishful thinking, it isn’t simple optimism, but is a confident expectation rooted in God’s promise. It gives direction and purpose for life on earth. Heaven is secure and reserved. Paul emphasizes that this hope is ‘laid up’ for us in heaven.

“Laid Up” — *reserved, stored safely*

Unlike earthly goals that fade, the Christian's inheritance is guarded by God and cannot be lost. Peter writes about it when he says:

1 Peter 1:3-4—“He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.”

Pay attention to the fact that we have a hope that goes far beyond the hurts we experience in this life. How practical is that hope? Suppose you are...

- going through a particular rough patch right now in life; your health isn't what it used to be; your marriage is strained because you have kids in college and parents who are aging; *“How do I react to the stress of it all?”* The answer lies in the hope laid up for you in heaven!
- struggling with a nagging habit that you just can't seem to shake; *“Is change something that is really possible?”* The answer lies in the hope that is laid up for you in heaven!
- a Christian woman who lives with a husband who is an unbeliever; he doesn't share your same commitment to Christ; impacting your marriage; *“Is there help for me?”* The answer lies in the hope that is laid up for you!

God's Word has something to say to us about how we can live out our faith in the midst of life's struggles, and it is all on the basis of the hope we have laid up for us in heaven.

The place we belong

Paul is referring to a very real place. Scripture consistently presents heaven as a real place where God dwells. Jesus said:

John 14:2—“In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.”

Philippians 3:20—“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

We don’t talk about heaven as much as we ought to as the people of God. A biblical worldview is one that operates in an understanding that heaven is where we belong. We’re citizens of a heavenly country, and we look at the situations of life in this world from our King’s point of view.

The perspective we need

The hope of heaven provides us with some much needed perspective as we encounter the false ideas that come our way in life. It keeps us from getting too comfortable in this world that is not our home. Though we are in the world, we are not of the world. Though we want to make a difference in the world, we must maintain a distinction from the world.

One of the most striking ironies to me from 2020 was that while at the same time our whole country was ‘masking up’ to avoid potential infectious germs, we were at the same time throwing out all discernment regarding certain ideas and movements. An infection was spreading, and it was not simply an infection of the lungs, but an infection of the mind. Well-meaning people bought into all the hashtag movements like Black Lives Matter, Love is Love, and Me Too. Even people within the church who I thought would have been more spiritually discerning. I saw it happening in our Christian school. I saw it among leadership within the Southern Baptist Convention. People who meant well, but had

embraced the world's agenda. Social justice and adopting the goals of those in the culture had taken priority over gospel proclamation. We need eternal perspective.

3—The gospel is the WORD of truth (1:6-8)

“Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.”

The third thing that we see about a Christian worldview is that the gospel is the word of truth. Christ is the center of reality, heaven is the goal of life, and the gospel is the word of truth. That's how Paul describes the gospel in verse 5—“the word of the truth.” The gospel is the truth. It is not a truth, one of many truths, your truth or my truth. It is the truth. It was this truth of Jesus Christ that had changed their lives. Now, it is hard for us to imagine why this is so controversial in our time, but to say that truth is definable, it is objective, and outside of the individual is most definitely counter-cultural. It is not in step with the thinking which marks our time, the notion which says truth is relative to the individual, one that says all truth claims are equally valid. It is seen in popular slogans:

- “What's true for you may not be true for me.”
- “Live your truth.”

In issues of morality, many argue that right and wrong are determined by personal choice, culture, or circumstance rather than objective standards. For instance, debates on gender and sexuality, marriage, or abortion often assume that individuals or groups can each define their own 'truth' without reference to an objective principle. It's common to hear people say, "All religions are basically the same," or "As long as you're sincere, any path to God is valid." It is a worldview that says truth depends on the individual, not on an absolute standard. In the media and among the stars of Hollywood, you often hear, "Everyone has their own truth," which elevates subjective experience over objective facts. Even among those who claim to be Christian, we hear this mantra. "Speak your truth!" Oprah Winfrey, in her speech at the 2018 Golden Globe Awards, she said:

"What I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have."

That phrase 'speak your truth' quickly went viral, and it has since become a cultural catchphrase. That may be Oprah, but it's not Jesus. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." There's no such thing as your truth. Friend, there is simply the truth. And anything that is not the truth can only be classified as the lie.

The truth is the most important thing that exists. It is the most important, fundamental reality in the universe. It is by the truth you and I are saved from hell. It is by the truth we are sanctified for the purposes of God. It is by the truth we are given strength, we are edified, we are comforted, we are encouraged. So important is truth that when all is said and done, truth will remain. Jesus said it this way:

Matthew 24:35—“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.”

Psalm 119:89—“Forever, O Lord, Your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.”

But Romans 1:18 says that men take the truth and, by their unrighteousness, they ‘suppress’ it. What does that mean?

“Suppress” — *word means to hold down or to restrain*

The word means to press down, to forcibly prevent something, to actively push uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, or memories out of your consciousness. Sinful and fallen humanity suppresses the truth which can be known about God. Even though what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them, sinful man suppresses the plain truth that God has revealed. That’s sinful, fallen human nature. Jesus said in John 3:19 that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. And so as a result, sinners are not seeking God, they are not worshiping God, they are not serving the God who made them. No, in order for that to happen, men and women need a life-changing encounter with God’s grace like the Colossians had experienced! They heard the word of the truth of the gospel, and they embraced its message. And they were never the same.

I read where the evangelist George Whitfield once asked a man, “What do you believe?” The man replied, “I believe what my church believes.” Whitefield pressed further, “And what does your church believe?” The man said, “Well, the same thing I believe.” Whitefield then asked again, “And what do you both believe?” The man concluded, “Why, we both believe the same thing!” The point of the exchange was to show that many people have a vague, secondhand religion rather than possessing knowledge of the truth, understanding and

embracing the gospel for themselves. It shows the danger of professing a faith without possessing a faith, without personal conviction or experience of the new birth. Paul wants these believers in Colossae to know how grateful he is for what the truth is accomplishing in their lives. And lest they move away from the simple truth of Christ, he writes to build them up in that faith. And we'll see more of what he says next time.

I'll ask you the same question—“What do you believe?”

That's really the most important question anyone can answer—‘What do you believe?’ Because at the end of the day, what you believe will determine how you live, how you approach life's issues, and most important of all, where you'll spend eternity. Everyone has a worldview. Everyone believes in something—whether it's themselves, their good works, religion, or nothing at all. But my friend, the Bible says the only belief that saves is trusting in Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose again. The question isn't just ‘What do you believe?’ but ‘Who do you believe in?’ Because only faith in Christ can give forgiveness, peace, and eternal life. So let me ask you, if you haven't done so, would you be willing today to place your trust in Him?