

Colossians 1:1-8, "True/False, The Gospel Truth"

10.6.19

This morning, before we begin, I want to take a few moments and talk about the Mission work we do as a church. It's truly amazing! I am convinced one of the reasons we are so blessed as a church is because we are doing what Jesus said to do: GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS.

With that said...we want to continue to give you opportunities to participate with your families in mission work...because I'll tell you there is nothing greater than being on the mission field with your family. It has changed the lives of all four of my children. You ask them what mission work has done to them...and they would say, It changed my life...to see how good we have it and how others live and to experience the blessing of seeing people come to Jesus.

We offer to the church our LOCAL MISSIONS through things like our upcoming Fall Festival/Trunk or Treat, to our Sports Leagues, FFL and Soccer, to our Easter Celebration (hiding 20,000 eggs) to the Independence Celebration...along with those LOCAL items we do FOREIGN MISSIONS in three areas: China, the Philippines and Mexico. We have an interest meeting for the upcoming mission trips of 2020, next Sunday after the third service (no meal). Or contact Pastor Dale.

China:



Kathy Eller and Michele Cordray have been leading teams for the past five years to China to help in orphanages.



Here's Kathy and Olivia



We're not allowed to show children



Here's Julianna, Olivia, Jady. Of course, this is near and dear to my heart, in that Pam and I have adopted to children from orphanages in China. It's a phenomenal work. Dates haven't been set yet.

Philippines:

Pastor Dale has led for the past 6 years and it has a two-pronged approach. A medical trip



Which is actually full...for this January...but, that trip takes nurses and doctors to help the people and share the Gospel through medicine. Another trip is April 20-30 and that's centered on teaching and backyard Bible clubs (VBS-style)



We work with Pastor Dave Dela-Paz and Shekinah Glory Baptist Church w/wife, Ethel and Pastor Jason/Katie Church from Weslaco, TX...



Weslaco TX, Mexico



There's one of our teams going into New Life Baptist Church, where Pastor Jason pastors and where we go and help grow his church. Jason and Katie have been there for 7 ½ years and doing a great job. We do backyard Bible clubs there in March, April and July.



We do the same for our namesake church in Progreso, MX. Mt. Pleasant of Progreso



The Pastor is Oscar Martinez and his wife Miriam. Here's a picture with me and Oscar and Miriam to my left...



That was when they renamed the church. We've been working with them for a DECADE.



We've built their church from the ground up



We built one of the Elders in the Church, Manuel and his family a house last year...



That's the July team with Manuel and Paula and their family. We've got more construction work to do this upcoming summer.

So, we encourage you to come to interest meeting next Sunday after the third service (no meal). Or contact Pastor Dale.

Turn in your Bibles to Colossians 1.

And all of this leads nicely into our message this morning. What I've been sharing with you is the fact that there is nothing greater that can ever happen to someone than to hear about Jesus Christ and come to know Him by faith and that's...



The Gospel Truth! YOU SEE I REALLY MEAN THAT! And that's why I ended my statement by saying: "And that's the Gospel Truth." You see, when someone says that, "That's the GOSPEL TRUTH," they are stating categorically that what they're telling you is WHAT? The Truth! It's true, that the term "Gospel Truth" has been used for centuries to describe what is considered to be the ABSOLUTE truth about something. Now, can I say, "The best ice cream in the world is Cookies and Cream and that's the Gospel Truth?"

Well, I can say that...but, it's an opinion. It's not the absolute truth, particularly if you like chocolate ice cream. But, what about this, "Jesus, said, 'I'm the way the truth and the life' and that's the 'Gospel Truth.'" Is that Absolutely true? Is that the Gospel Truth? Is that statement: True or False?

You say, "Well, it's like your ice cream...I guess it depends on who you ask. If you are someone who doesn't believe in Jesus, then that statement can't be true." But, I WOULD ASK: is that true? Does gravity become untrue just because you don't believe it's real? See this:

John 14:6

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Is that the truth or not? Because you see, Jesus said there is no other way to get to God except through Him. He qualifies and quantifies that statement categorically when He says, "No one comes to the Father except through me." BUT, is that the truth?

Listen, the answer to that question is the most important question that will ever be asked and answered in the annals of human history. Is Jesus Christ, telling the truth? Are His words the Gospel truth? Because you see, everyone can't be right! Every "truth" can't be truth! Jesus is claiming to be like: $1 + 1 = 2$, that He's the only right answer. In other words, Jesus totally refutes the idea that all roads lead to heaven. He is saying, "I'm it!" **But, is that the Gospel Truth?**

And that, Church family is what we're going to seek to answer today, and in the weeks ahead in our True/False series. Today we begin with: What is the Gospel Truth?

Colossians 1:1-8

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² To the saints and faithful brothers^[a] in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. ³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 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, ⁶ 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, ⁷ just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.^[b] He is a faithful minister of Christ on your^[c] behalf ⁸ and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

As we begin our new study in the book of Colossians, it's important that we have an understanding about the setting for this book and so I want you to see this map of Asia Minor.



At the bottom-right, you'll see Jerusalem and then work your way up to see Colossae underneath the "F," in the middle of the map. You'll notice the seven churches of the Book of the Revelation with red circles. The city of Colossae is just to their east.

Scholars tell us the Apostle Paul wrote this book around 62 AD, when Timothy was with him in Rome. 62 A.D. is about 30 years after Jesus resurrected and went to heaven and this would have been during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. (Ultimately, Paul was be killed, beheaded, the second time he was arrested and brought to Rome.)

Since Paul wrote this letter while in Rome, under house arrest, it's considered one of the "prison Epistles." The church at Colossae was established during Paul's third missionary journey, as he ministered three years in Ephesus (which was really like the mother church of all the churches of Asia Minor). We know Paul didn't establish the church at Colossae, but instead, as we read earlier, a man from Colossae named Epaphras. It appears Epaphras had gone to Ephesus to hear Paul preach and was saved and returned to Colossae and started a church there.

You see, (and we'll see this throughout our study), there was some bad teaching going on in Colossae and Paul wrote this letter to refute it and sent it back to set things straight and to encourage the believers to follow THE TRUTH! And that's the issue! What is the Gospel Truth? **Look with me at the middle part of verse 5.** This is the key to our passage this morning...

Colossians 1:5b

Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel.

Colossians 1:6b

since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

You see, church, the word: GOSPEL, means: “Good News of the truth.” Here’s the Greek word:

Euangelion: the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus.

We get our English word: “Evangelize” from Euangelion. Now get this...I did a little research on the word and it was originally a term used in relationship to BATTLE. Back in the days of the Old Testament, there would be occasions when cities would fight against cities to seek to gain more land. The people of the city would await word about the battle, particularly the women and children. They eagerly awaited news from the battlefield. That news would be brought by a messenger on horseback. All of a sudden, on the horizon, the messenger would appear, returning from the battlefield. And how he was riding in and the way he looked would tell the tale. If his face was shining, and his horse was decked out with laurel wreaths, then celebrations would erupt, for they would have won the battle. And the word that was used to describe that is Euangelion, **the good news of victory**.

What is the Gospel? It is the Good News of victory! What victory? Victory over sin! Jesus made right what we blew in the Garden of Eden. You see, the BAD NEWS is because Adam and Eve chose to desire power and knowledge of God, they brought sin into the world...and if you have a belly button, you’re a sinner! But, the GOOD NEWS is that Jesus Christ came and paid our sin debt so that by confessing and repenting our sin, calling on His name...we can be saved! Euaungelion!

Listen, the people at Colossae had heard the Good News and accepted it.

Colossians 1:3-4

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints.

Paul knew they loved Jesus and he knew they had trusted Jesus? Have you? Do you have faith in the Gospel, the Good News? You see, when Jesus came, He preached the GOSPEL. That’s...

Matthew 4:23

²³And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

Right before Jesus went back to heaven, after His resurrection, He said this:

Mark 16:15

¹⁵And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

We’re called to GO proclaim the Gospel the Good News, that overcomes the Bad News...that’s what we do as a church in China, Philippines, Mexico in this ball field and what we do every week in here! Are you proclaiming the Gospel? Are you being a Lifeguard?



You see, a Lifeguard saves lives! A lifeguard is not ashamed to wear the shirt! The Apostle Paul wasn't ashamed and he told Timothy not to be ashamed of the Gospel.

2 Timothy 1:8

⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.

Listen carefully, we can get so used to hearing a term like "Gospel" that we really struggle with understanding the fullness of it. I want to make certain that we understand what the GOOD NEWS is. Again, the Good News is the fact that Jesus Christ has solved the problem of our sin through His death, burial and resurrection!

1 Corinthians 15:1-7

¹Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ²and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

That's the Gospel! But, is that the TRUTH? Listen...the entire reason Paul wrote the letter to the Colossian Church was because Epaphras reported to Paul that people were beginning to believe strange doctrines. They were being deceived. And you see Church, this been happening for centuries. It happened to the churches in Galatia too. Satan seeks to deceive...

Galatians 1:6-9

⁶I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

OH...Church family, as we study the book of Colossians over the next several weeks, keep in mind that this entire letter is about the preeminence of Jesus Christ and the fact that He is the TRUTH!

Listen carefully, I say this a lot, but we've got to get this down. Jesus is not a choice on the Buffet Bar of religious leaders. No...they are all created human beings...created by Jesus. Jesus made them. Jesus is God. In this age of inclusivity, people try to harmonize and unite the religions so that everyone can go along to get along. But, we can't accept all truths as true! Paul would warn the Colossians of this:

Colossians 2:4

⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

Colossians 2:8

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits^[a] of the world, and not according to Christ.

I see this more and more as the years go by. People, who for the sake of not hurting anyone's feelings refuse to give them the truth. It's the lifeguard who is afraid to blow the whistle for fear of hurting someone's feelings and being seen as mean and offensive. And so we let folks drown in sin!

Have you ever been at a pool or the beach and the lifeguard blew the whistle at you and it made you mad? Why? Because you didn't like to be called out...but, they were just doing their job. You see, the Colossian church was struggling with all kinds of diverse opinions and schools of thought and various religions. The people weren't full-out denying Jesus, but they were beginning to entertain ideas that were contrary to the Gospel...that He's the only way...thus in doing so, they were actually dethroning Him and robbing Him of His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Listen, church family, everybody has faith in something. Even the people who say they don't believe there is a God is putting their faith in someone who told them that...a college professor, a scientist, an actor or musician, or someone in their family. Everyone has faith, but that faith is only as good as the object in which they place their trust.

Church, a pagan man living in the jungles of Africa may put his faith in a god he's carved out of a piece of wood with a machete. A well-educated man living on Wall Street may put his faith in his intellect and the stock market... But in both cases...their faith will be shown as empty. Why? Because the wood rots and you can't take money with you. Oh, but listen, here's the Truth...the GOSPEL TRUTH, Jesus rose from the dead and He's in heaven at this very moment...and we're keeping time by Him! As sure as it's October 6, 2019 from His birth...Jesus is alive! And that's the Gospel Truth!

John Selden, who lived in the 1600's...



was a leading historian and legal authority in England. He had one of the largest libraries in the world at that time...8,000 volumes. He was recognized as one of the most brilliant men of his day. When he was dying, he said this to a man from the church who visited him (Archbishop Ussher):

“I have surveyed most of the learning that is among the sons of men and my study is filled with books and manuscripts on various subjects. But at present, I cannot recollect any passage out of all the books and papers whereon I can rest my soul, save this from the sacred Scriptures: ‘The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.’” (Titus 2:11) John Selden (1584-1654)

You see, John Selden realized on HIS DEATH BED that there is nothing in this life better than the GRACE OF GOD THAT BROUGHT JESUS TO THIS EARTH TO SAVE US FROM OUR SINS! And that’s the Gospel truth!

Do you believe it? Epaphras did! The one who brought the Gospel to the people of Colossae. The Again, the Apostle Paul led him to Christ in Ephesus and Epaphras went back to LIFEGUARD...to rescue his people...to tell them truth! The Gospel...

Colossians 1:6-8

⁶ 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, ⁷ just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.^[b] He is a faithful minister of Christ on your^[c] behalf ⁸ and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

So church, it’s now our job to be Epaphras. Where’s your Colossae? Listen, we’ve got a job to do. It’s our turn... If you are follower of Christ...you have the ability to save lives...you’re lifeguard...



you're not saving lives from water...but from Hell! Who are you going to take the GOSPEL...the Good News to?

Would you be willing mom and dad to spend time in your living room teaching and training your children with the Gospel? Sir/Ma'am will you walk across the hall at work to share the Gospel. Young person will you share Jesus in the lunch room? As we talked about earlier, would you be willing to go with your church the oceans and across the borders to share the Gospel? And then come back, like a rider on a horse proclaiming **Euangelion!** Jesus just won the victory in another soul's life!
