

Enough...there are few English words more offensive to the values of our culture. We can never have enough stuff, money, activity, friends and likes, options, variety, insights, streaming services. “Enough” can never be the answer because the question is always “Is there anything more?” That extends to our spiritual life. There can’t be one God, one way, one truth, one way to live in relationship with that God, one purpose for my life. There HAS to be something more, right? It is a question being asked today, but it’s one that been asked for centuries.

2,000 years ago, an upstart church was asking that same question. Is there something more? They started as faithful followers of Jesus but, after a few years, some new teaching began to make its way into their church, teaching that ultimately said “Jesus isn’t enough. His gospel isn’t enough.” **It was teaching that questioned the person of Christ, the effectiveness of his work on the cross, and the life one was to live united to him.** It was secret spiritual insight that only a few claimed to have and, ultimately, it was teaching that called into question the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. It didn’t reject Jesus. It just said he wasn’t enough. And it was beginning to take a toll on that church.

One thing is quite clear. The false teachers came in with the claim that they would complete and perfect the simple and elementary faith to which the Colossians had been introduced by Paul and his friends. This is what the false teachers always do. ‘What you have is quite all right, and a good foundation for faith. Now let us just finish it off for you, and you really will be Christians.’ -Stephen Niell

The exact teachings that infiltrated the first century church may not be around today, but we face our own set that calls into question the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus. The gospel of self, which puts me at the center of my universe, viewing Jesus thru the lens of me instead of viewing me thru the lens of Jesus; the subjectivity of truth; the idea that Jesus is one of many ways to God but not God himself; the addition of socio-political ideology to our faith; the idea that God just wants me to be happy; or any teaching that says “Jesus+”...plus works, plus signs of the Spirit, plus having to confess something other than Christ to be saved. All of these, in one way or another, declare “Jesus isn’t enough”. And the consequences are tragic. If I don’t or can’t know Jesus, I can’t love him. If I question the effectiveness of his work on the cross, I won’t have security and peace around my identity and salvation. And if those first two are confused, I’ll struggle to live the free and abundant life he offers and fulfill the purpose he has for me.

So, this morning, we begin a series in the book of Colossians called *Enough*. Colossians was written from a prison cell in Rome by the apostle Paul in 62 AD to this upstart church located around 100 miles from Ephesus, who needed clarity on the person and work of Christ. Through it, my prayer for our church is that we know Christ more, that we would more fully rest and rejoice in our salvation, and that we trust **the life we have in Christ isn’t just barely enough, but abundantly full**. And, if you’re not a follower of Jesus, my prayer is that you would see him for who he truly is and what he has done for you and receive him as your Lord and Savior.

To begin, Paul wants to take us back to the beginning. Not Genesis 1:1, but the beginning of our faith journey. Think about what you do if you’ve misplaced something. You retrace your steps. What do you do if you are lost? You go back to the start. All of us had a moment where the truth of Jesus compelled our hearts to put our faith in him. Paul wants to start there.

[Colossians 1:1-8] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. 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, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which 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, ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf⁸ and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Paul begins with his customary warm and encouraging greeting. He's never been to Colossae but has heard about their church and faith and commends them. But before he directly addresses any of the false teachings they are dealing with, he wants to remind them of where they began. Paul wants to make three things clear as a foundation for the rest of what he has to say.

The Jesus you know is enough.

The false teachers in Colossae believed they had special insight into who Jesus is and called into question his uniqueness and deity. We had something similar a few years ago when 80 million copies of the *Davinci Code* were sold as a new insight into Jesus. We are inclined to want to hear that stuff. Paul will go into much greater depths later in chapter 1, perhaps the richest Christology in the Bible, but here he begins with a reminder of who Jesus is, and who we knew him to be when we put our faith in him. He refers to him as Christ, the Son of God the Father, and Lord. It is a reminder to Jewish Christians Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah. He is the Son of God, a reference to his deity and preeminence, and he is Lord of all. There's no one else they should be looking for. No one that is his equal. Jesus is the one true God, Lord and Savior.

The person and identity of Jesus is the place to begin. If we don't get that right, nothing else matters; not what he said, not what he did, not what he promises. If our understanding of him is counterfeit, there can be no relationship. I spent yesterday morning with a bunch of guys at our Men's Breakfast. I have a deep relationship with some because I know them intimately. Others I have no relationship with because I was meeting them for the first time. **Our relationship with Jesus is only as deep as the extent to which we know him.** God desires to have a relationship with us and has revealed himself throughout history in different ways to make that a possibility. But in Jesus, the fullness of God dwells. When we see Jesus, we see God. When we know Jesus, we know God.

So, do you know him? How do you respond when someone says Jesus was just a man, only a great teacher, a myth...not enough? Does the idea of knowing and being known by God seem crazy? There's a great book written about him, and it contains everything we need to know to have a deep and eternal relationship with him. If you're not sure who he is, read it. If you want to know him more intimately, read it. You won't be disappointed or misdirected. It is enough.

The Gospel you believed is enough.

The false teachers began to teach about a deliverance and freedom achieved apart from Christ. Sure, he died on the cross, but there's more needed. It wasn't enough. So, Paul takes them back to the Gospel of Jesus, to remind them what it is, what it's based on, and what it accomplishes.

In v5 he refers to the gospel as "the word of truth." Not "a truth", not "my truth" or "your truth", but as "the truth", and if it is the truth, nothing can, or need be added or taken away from it. It doesn't change with the times or bend to fit culture. There is no need to pursue some new teaching. It is the message of the person and work of Christ, the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. It is enough.

If there is anything believers claim today that gets pushback it's that there is one truth, it can be known, and we have it. Our culture of tolerance says, "You can have your Jesus but let me have my _____.", and we can start to believe that maybe there can be more than the gospel. But that's why we start with who Jesus is. If he's God, what he says is truth, and he says he is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through him. The gospel is true because Jesus is the truth.

Paul also affirms the gospel because of the way it was delivered. It came in the form of a word proclaimed by a Jesus-follower. Epaphras brought the gospel to Colossae, and Paul says the same message went out in the same way throughout all the world. It wasn't everyone having their own private mountaintop experience with God. God could do it that way, but he has chosen not to. Missionaries even tell stories of going to remote villages and the people there say they have had dreams and have been waiting on someone to come and tell them about Jesus. The gospel of truth has been passed on person by person for the last 2,000 years and you and I are the beneficiaries of some faithful follower who told us the good news, whether a parent, missionary, friend, or pastor.

V6 says this gospel of truth is an expression of God's grace. The good news of our salvation, our deliverance from the bondage of sin and death, is a free gift offered to us by God himself that we receive by faith. It is based solely on the life and work of Jesus, and there is nothing we can do to earn it, add to it, or help God to make it possible. If you have to pay for it or earn it, it's not grace. Thankfully, Jesus is enough.

Paul confirms the gospel's result. If you are concerned about your standing before God, you can be reassured here. If you have put your faith in Christ, what Paul says about the Colossians is also true about you. In v2 he refers to them as saints, *hagios* in Greek, which is the same word we get *holy* and *sanctified*. You have been set apart for God. He refers to them as brothers. You are now part of the family of God. And they are "in Christ". This is now your permanent identity. In short, you are a Christian, you are saved, you are right with God, and you are good.

We worship a God who is good and who wants us to live in peace and security in who we are in him. Any "gospel" that leaves us to doubt or question that is no gospel at all. Any teaching that says we have to add something to the mix to make our salvation possible is not a gospel at all. Man was created sinless and in right relationship with God. We sinned and broke that relationship, there was nothing we could do to make up for it. But God can and, by his grace, did.

He sent his son Jesus to take on flesh, live the life we couldn't live, die the death we deserve, rise three days later in victory over sin and death, and ascend to heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father to rule until he returns to finish the job. **What he has done is enough**, and he offers us the gift of eternal life that must be accepted by faith. If you do that, he will give his Spirit to you who will regenerate you, unite you to God, and unite you to other followers. There is nothing you must do and there is no way to lose it. If you want to receive that gift you can do that now, come see me, prayer rooms, connecting center. If you are unsure if you have, let's talk after service. If you have accepted the truth, you are God's for now and forever, and nothing can change that.

The way your life has changed is enough.

The false teachers in Colossae taught that true faith was evidenced in self-deprivation and religious rituals. They claimed a greater spirituality than a life lived in the Spirit. But look what Paul says. In v3-5 he thanks God for them and commends them for their faith, hope, and love. This is a familiar triad of descriptors he uses for a genuine Christian. It's been said faith is the soul looking *upward* to God; love looks *outward* to others; hope looks *forward* to the future. All are signs of a true spiritual life, the change made when the gospel is believed, and Jesus enters someone's life as Lord and Savior.

Who were you before Jesus? Who would you be without Jesus? I would be a pathological narcissist who indulged his flesh at every turn and charmed and bullied people to affirm me and get what I wanted. What about you? But take a look at your life. How has God changed you? What fruit do you see in your life that is only there because of him? This is not an exercise to pat ourselves on our back. It's a moment to recognize and thank God for the way his grace has made you new. Don't let anyone disqualify you by adding to the gospel. That doesn't mean we're opposed to progress. We need to humble ourselves, repent of our sin, and allow God to refine us by his grace so we can live more and more faithfully to him. And if you look at your life and see no life change, no evidence of God's work in your life, I want to encourage you to ask if you've really invited him in. But your only qualification is the perfect life of Jesus you get credit for. Anything else is just bondage.

Go back to the beginning. Tell yourself and tell others the story of you coming to faith in Christ. What was the simple gospel you believed? Who did you know Jesus to be? How did it change you when you trusted in him? Our testimony glorifies God, it encourages us and others when we tell it, and it fortifies us for when false teaching comes our way.

Assess the threats. I use the word "threats" not to make us live with fear, but to look soberly at what Jesus-confusing, gospel-denying ideas you might be entertaining. What have you been tempted to believe, add, or subtract from the gospel? Who are you listening to? Do they preach the Jesus of the Bible? Do they preach Jesus' gospel? Bring it to the light. Process in your Life Groups. Ask the question. This is a safe place to do it! We have no shame for you, just the truth! Let this be a season where we grow in our understanding so we can fall more in love with Jesus and live a life of purpose with him.

Rejoice in your salvation. You were dead. Now you are alive. God was once far off. Now he is near. You once were lost. Now you are found. You were destined for destruction. Now you are destined for glory. It is finished. Nothing more is needed. Hallelujah!

So, let me ask you. Is Jesus enough? Yes, he is. Let us rest in that good news, and let our God show us more and more of who he is so we can live more and more of our life with and for him.