

The Evidence of True Christianity

Colossians 1:3-8

Introduction

I A Pattern of Thanksgiving and Prayer

- A. Paul made it a practice to be **thankful** - Col 1:12;2:7;3:17; 4:2
- B. Paul made it a practice to **pray** for others - 1 Tim 2:1

II A Heart of Faith and Love

- A. The inspiration for Paul's thanksgiving:
 - 1. The reports of their **faith** in Christ Jesus - Rom 10:17
 - 2. The reports of their **love** for all the saints - Gal 5:6
- B. The source of the Colossians faith and love:
 - 1. The **hope** that is stored up in heaven - 1 Pet 1:3-5
 - 2. The word of truth - Eph 1:13
 - 3. The **gospel** that had come to them - Rom 10:14-15

III A Commitment to the Gospel

- A. The gospel's power is **universal** - Rom 1:16; 3:22-24
- B. The gospel's message is fruitful - Matt 13:1-23
- C. The gospel's impact is **growing** - Acts 1:8
- D. The gospel's influence is personal
 - 1. They **heard** the gospel message - 2 Tim 2:2
 - 2. They understood God's grace - Eph 2:8-9
 - 3. They **appropriated** its truth - 1 Thess 2:13

IV A Lifestyle of Service

- A. Epaphras **communicated** the gospel - Philem 1:6
- B. Epaphras was a fellow servant of Paul's - 2 Cor 8:23
- C. Epaphras was a faithful **minister** of Christ - Acts 20:28-30
- D. Epaphras reported their love in the **Spirit** - Gal 5:22-23

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time this week to consider the following:

1. What was the one characteristic of the Colossian church that you found most inspiring?
2. How does Paul's prayer life challenge you in 1) His intensity? 2) His thankfulness? 3) His faithfulness? Read Col 4:12. How is Epaphras' prayer life like Paul's? What does this teach you?
3. Do you tend to complain about your circumstances or to thank God in everything? Read 1 Thess 5:16-18. What do you think is "key" in developing an attitude of thanksgiving?
4. How is the fruit of faith, love and hope developing in your life? 1) Destroyed by the last storm? 2) Suffering from drought? 3) Budding with new life? Is there a relationship between these qualities? Whose faith and love encourages you in your Christian life? Take time this week to share that with them.
5. Romans 1:16 tells us that the gospel is "*the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes.*" When did you believe and receive the Good News of Jesus Christ? Share the last time you communicated the life-changing message of the gospel to an unbeliever. What was the outcome?
6. Take time to 1) Thank God for the many blessings He has poured into your life, 2) Thank Him for the future blessings awaiting you upon His soon return, and 3) Ask Him to give you a heart marked by the fruit of faith, love and thanksgiving.

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

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