

Faith, Hope & Love

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 behalf ⁸and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.
Colossians 1:3-8



FAITH
HOPE
LOVE

A few things stand out as Paul continues his introduction to the church at Colossae.

Always praying and thanking God

Paul is writing this letter from prison, but his prayers are focused on others and the spiritual health of the church. Through bad times and good, Paul never ceases praying. He longs to be close to Jesus and fulfill His calling. He knows he is **unable to do anything without God's provision**. And in his praying for the church, he always thanks God. He shows gratitude and humility, recognizing that all good things come from God. **All the credit goes to God alone**. Any success to be experienced is a result of God's hand at work.

Jesus is everything – King, God Incarnate, Savior, Anointed One

Once Paul encountered Jesus, his devotion and passion were forever changed. Even as Paul mentions thanking God, he adds that He is **Father of his Lord Jesus Christ**. All three names are used.

- Lord – **master** whose authority Paul is under.
- Jesus – **Savior**, “God Saves”.
- Christ – the **anointed one**, the chosen one, the Messiah.

Faith, Hope & Love dominate

Paul explains that he is thanking God in response to three things he has heard about the church at Colossae.

- **Faith** – their strong faith in Christ Jesus. This is foundational to all other attributes.
- **Love** – the love they have for the community of believers. Genuine faith in Jesus produces love for others.
- **Hope** – they can live out their faith and love based on the hope they have, which is laid up in heaven. They believe God wins in the end. He is in heaven and the rewards stored up for them now and for eternity can't be diminished or destroyed.

Hearing leads to understanding, which leads to bearing fruit

The church has faith, hope and love because they did the work to make it available to them.

- **They heard.** They listened to the word of the truth, the gospel.
- **They understood.** In hearing, they understood the grace of God in truth.
- **They experienced success and growth.** The result of hearing and understanding is action. Loving, serving, being part of God's plan based on hearing and understanding the truths of the gospel will bear fruit for the kingdom and introduce more people to God's grace. A repeating cycle with new believers hearing, understanding, and producing fruit.

The more our hope is fixed on the things of God, which requires faith in the work of Jesus, the more freedom we have to use our gifts and resources to love others, rather than serve ourselves for temporary worldly gains. Putting our hope in things of this world will ALWAYS disappoint us and leave us feeling anxious, overwhelmed, underqualified, alone, and unfulfilled.

Let's face it, we all want our lives and actions to mean something eternal. When we seek God first – as the authority over us, as the one who saves us, as the one who anoints us to bear fruit – we won't cling too tightly to our gifts and resources. **We won't look to this world to satisfy us. Instead we will crave bigger God things.** We will bear much fruit in His name and for His glory. And we will continually thank Him and acknowledge Him.

God, let it be so. Give me ears to hear, a spirit of understanding, and your power to love and go bear fruit – good and abundant fruit - with You and for You.



Your Turn...

What were your big takeaways?

How much time do you spend daily praying? Giving thanks?

What steps can you take to make this a bigger priority in your day?

Which is harder for you – hearing, understanding, or taking action? Why do you think this is?