

Rooted

“From Root to Fruit”

Colossians 1:1-8 ESV

The Book of Colossians is actually a very short letter to the Church in Colossae, which was in a community that would become modern-day Turkey. As we begin this study and continue through this journey through the letter to the Colossians, we’re going to make a “rooted declaration” which is, *“Christ is supreme, Christ is sufficient, we are rooted in Him, and in Him our lives will grow deeper and go further.”*

Written by the Apostle Paul, who was in prison for the first of many times in Rome around 60 AD, Paul had plenty of time to write this letter to the Colossians, actually a “mini Book of Romans,” which was, by far, Paul's deepest theological work in terms of technicality and depth. When he wrote the letter to the Colossians, it was a highlight reel of the Book of Romans, and we can see a lot of overlap of the principles, but at more of a thirty-thousand-foot level. It was addressed to a church Paul had never visited, even though it was planted during the same period of his missionary journeys.

The Book of Colossians was actually written by someone that Paul led to the Lord, who, in his excitement and exuberance, went out and planted a church in Colossae. It was a difficult place because the economy was declining, and many of the poor people who lived there had mixed belief systems from different places. These new believers had pagan backgrounds with pagan belief systems of mysticism, worship of angels, and all kinds of things. We can see those issues rise up as we read through the book, and Paul’s letter was written to address them.

In the middle of all of that, the purpose of the letter was to root the church in two things: the supremacy and the sufficiency of Christ - because if Christ is *not* supreme, then someone else *is*, and if Christ is not our source, who gives us *what* we need and *all* that we need, and if Christ is not our *life*, then *someone* or *something* else *is*. That’s what Paul came to bring and to remind these believers of, because they had all these other teachings, but needed to understand that Christ alone is supreme - over creation, over the church, and over every political power and every demonic power from hell.

1] The Gospel takes root in our identity

Believers in Christ are rooted in him. Their foundation is *in him*, and they are complete in him according to Scripture. Complete means whole. We are *whole* - we are complete in him, and we're established in *Truth*. In Colossians chapter one, Paul is addressing ordinary believers as "saints" who are in Christ. There's a whole page on the Bridge Church website with declarations of scriptural confessions about our identity in Christ that we all should read through, and as we do that, we can literally feel our spirit begin to lift, correct, settle, and reset.

Our identity at in Christ is one of the greatest tipping points as believers in our journey of faith, and if we don't know who we are, then the enemy, the world, and others will come along and try to tell us who we are. They will define our identity. Or if we don't know who we are in Christ, we'll tend to get our identity from our work. We tend to say, "*I'm this. I'm that.*" And and yet that's really not who we are. It's what we do. But when it comes to our walk with Jesus, and if we're rooted in him, then we understand that our identity is him - it's in him.

We are sons and daughters *of Christ*. We're *his*, and that's what defines us and *that's* where all of our identity starts. And so the gospel takes *root*. The word *gospel* simply means *good news*. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the *good news* - it's the message of Jesus. So whenever we hear that word "*gospel*," just know that's it is the message of Jesus - the *good news* of Jesus. When Paul addresses ordinary believers. he calls us "saints." We didn't act like that yesterday, and we weren't like that this morning, but we were getting ready.

Sometimes we're identified by the Word of God as *saints*, but that doesn't mean we always act like saints. We're not identified by our last mistake or by our worst moment. When Paul says, "*Fight the good fight of the faith*," this is one of those good fights that we need to fight and to never allow the enemy or that voice in our head to tell us, "*Yeah, but you did this fifteen years ago. Oh, but you did this thirty years ago, or you did that yesterday.*" We're not defined by that. We're defined by who God says we are.

So, before the gospel changes our behavior, it changes who we are. The good news changes us from the *inside out*. We're not defined by our past, our performance, or our position. We are defined by our union with *Christ*. As we take communion - *common union* - that means becoming one with him - *Christ in us, the hope of glory* - and we are seated with him in heavenly places. We are in union together. That's who we are.

Imagine how different it would be if we held to this truth, that when we saw others, we didn't see them as the sum total of their mistakes. We saw them as who Christ sees them and calls them - that they're saints. If we're born again, and we've given our heart to Jesus, and we've said "yes" to him, then we are a saint - even if we didn't act like it on the way to church today - even if we stayed home to watch church on-line because it was cold, we're still a saint.

Colossians 1:1-2 ESV - Greeting

"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."

Paul was Timothy's spiritual dad. Timothy was his son in the faith. Timothy was a pastor and a shepherd, and he was tending to Paul, meeting with him, taking care of him, and bringing him various things. In other scriptures, Paul talks about how Timothy visited him. They spent a lot of time together, and even while Paul's in prison, he is mentoring Timothy. So, he actually includes him in the greeting. And then Paul he calls us who we are - not who we're *becoming*, but who we are now in Christ: "To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ..." Imagine if we took that seriously.

A lot of times we'll read a greeting and we diminish its impact because it's a common phrase, but what if we took it literally and said, "*You know what? I receive the grace of God right here. As I read it, I receive it and I receive the peace of God right here as I read it.*" Receive it by faith. Let it let it have power. Let the anointing of God pour that into our soul and pour it over our dry, parched hearts.

2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

Are we an "anyone"? Then we're a "new creation." This happens every day that we get up. In the book of Ecclesiastes, it tells us that his mercies are new "every morning." Every day that we get up, we get a clean slate. Every day that we wake up, that whiteboard is completely clean. *Why?* Because his mercies are new "every morning." Great is his faithfulness to us. If we had a bad day yesterday. Guess what? This is a new day. The gospel does not produce religious activity; it produces a new identity.

The Lord isn't just giving us something to *do*. He's actually giving us a new identity. He's not just giving us more *stuff* to do. He's not just bringing *ritual* to us. He's bringing a *relationship* to us. He's bringing life to us. And we're now *rooted* in him. Our roots are firmly planted in Jesus Christ. *Are we perfect?* No, but we are being perfected in Christ. The word *perfect* simply means *whole, complete, total*. It's not perfectionism. When the Bible says we're perfect, it just means we're complete. We're whole in him.

2] The Gospel produces visible fruit

Galatians 5:22-23 ESV

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

If there's a root, there's going to be fruit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. *Against such there is no law.* There is nothing to stand against these things. There's a difference between fruit and gifts. We can walk in the fruit of the Holy Spirit and walk in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but we need to understand who we are and exercise those gifts in the context of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness. The fruit of the Spirit will keep the boundaries where they need to be.

1 Thessalonians 1:3-5 ESV

“Remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.”

Faith, love, and hope all work together. "Against such thing, there's no law." The rooted truth in this is *depth precedes display*. It's the root that goes down into the earth and brings stability. Joyce Meyer said, *"Stable makes you able."* What grows deep will eventually grow visible. When our roots are solid and grounded, we'll see the fruit of that. Wherever we go, there should be something being produced out of us that is life-giving that other people can partake of.

3] The gospel grows and multiplies through us

1 Thessalonians 1:6-8 ESV

“And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything.”

The good news grows and multiplies *through us*. The gospel is not just to be spread by someone who's a gifted evangelist or a pastor or preacher, a teacher who stands before a group and preaches or goes online or has the greatest podcast in the world. The same gospel bearing fruit in Colossae is bearing fruit in the whole world because that which is rooted will bear good fruit. What God does *in us*, he intends to do *through us* - that goodness that he's done for us. Where would we be if he didn't show up in our life? Where would we be now?

So what has he done in us? He saved us. He birthed goodness in us and he's given us the fruit of his Spirit. Love, joy, peace - all those are ours in the Spirit in because of the Holy Spirit - and we have that to give away to others. World-change is our destiny. It's on our life. And what he did in us, changing our life, he intends to do for others through us.

Epaphras was the disciple that heard Paul preaching and who then went and planted the church in Colassae that we now know by Paul's letter to the Colossians. Epaphras shows us that the gospel spreads through faithful people who live and share the truth in love. God's not looking for rock stars. He's looking for the faithful. He's not looking for those with the biggest ministry - the most *this* or the most *that*. He's looking for us to show up and let the light that's in us shine out - *Christ in us and through us, the hope of glory*. Depth precedes display. What grows deep will eventually grow visible.

Colossians 1:6-8 ESV

"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."

What they were seeing was an explosion of revival, an explosion of all these churches being planted. These were small churches and small outposts that Paul had led and yet they were exploding with the gospel and people were coming to Christ more than they could keep up with. It was all happening so fast. That's revival! God's grace is God's power. It's God's strength. It's God's ability. It's God's authority, and it's God's favor working in us and through us to do what we cannot in and of ourself do.

That's God's grace, but it's not passive. Grace is not only undeserved or unmerited favor. It *is that*, but that's only one facet of a very large jewel - a very large diamond. They understood the grace of God and that empowered them to be saved. Epaphras was the beloved fellow servant, a faithful minister of Christ on their behalf and has made known to them their love in the Spirit.

Isaiah 55:11 NKJV - God's Word Accomplishes His Purpose

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

Romans 10:17 NKJV - Faith Comes by Hearing

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The gospel is alive, growing, and meant to be passed on. What God grows deep in us, He intends to grow far through us. The question is not, *"Do you know the gospel?"* The question is, *"Is it bearing fruit in your life?"* This is the gospel in the Word of God, going out and accomplishing the purpose for which God sent it. He's going to do that in and through us. We're the hands and feet of Jesus. We're the body of Christ. There's a reason why Jesus uses that metaphor. Some of us may be elbows and pinkies, but we're all a part of the body of Christ, and that's a good thing. That means we get to mobilize the gospel on the earth. We get to do this.

So here's our "rooted truth." The gospel is alive, growing, and meant to be passed on. This is what the gospel does. It's a living thing. It's the message of Jesus. What God grows deep in us, he intends to grow far *through us*. That's God's heart for us. It goes down deep *in us*, but it goes far *through us*. That's the heart of the gospel. That's the heart of what he's doing. So, here's the question. Do you know the gospel? - the good news of Jesus Christ who lived the life we couldn't live, who died the death we couldn't - and who died in our place. Three days later he rose from the dead proving that he's the son of God and that whoever will believe in him and trust in him shall be saved and experience eternal life. That's the gospel in a nutshell just in a phrase. That's the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The second question is this: *Is the gospel bearing fruit in our life?* We can have deep roots. We can have fruit, but we can also *hide* our fruit. It can get caught up in distraction. It can get hidden in the fray of other things that are happening around us. This week when we get up in the morning, we should say, *"Good morning Holy Spirit. Good morning Lord Jesus. Good morning Abba Father. Yes lord - what's the question? Lord what does the gospel mean in my life and what does it mean through my life?"* ...we should all ask him that question.

Prayer

Father, we simply ask You what does the gospel mean in our life? - and what does it mean through our life? What are You doing in our lives and what do You want to do with the gospel through our lives this week? Father as we step into this study, teach us. Be our Teacher. Holy Spirit, You're the Spirit of Truth who leads us and guides us into all Truth. We honor You and we declare that Christ is supreme. Christ is sufficient. We are rooted in Him, and our lives will grow deeper and go farther. In Jesus' name. Amen.