

Christ in Me

Hope in Christ

January 11, 2026

Colossians 1:1-8

Introduction

(Slide – Title slide) Perhaps you have heard the saying. “Don’t be so heavenly minded that you’re of no earthly good.” As a Christian and as a pastor, I can understand the sentiment behind this statement. I disagree with it (as I’ll explain momentarily), but I totally get the sentiment behind it. When people warn against being “too heavenly minded,” they’re usually reacting to something they’ve seen. Something like:

- A faith consumed with end-times charts and timelines that talks endlessly about how bad the world is getting, yet seems oddly disconnected from the ordinary faithfulness God has placed right in front of us;
- A spirituality that hides behind phrases like “God’s in control” or “I’ll pray about it,” not as expressions of trust, but as ways to avoid acting, reconciling, serving, or stepping into costly obedience.
- Or even a version of Christianity that knows how to speak confidently about doctrine, yet never seems to translate into patience, kindness, or love for the people standing right in front of us.

So yes, these kinds of experiences occur, but this kind of “heavenly-mindedness” is unbiblical.

I’ve never met someone ruined by thinking too much about Jesus’ eternal reign *rightly*.

I will tell you who I *have* met – people exhausted from trying to carry the weight of this world without any real hope beyond it.

Last Sunday, we talked about our mission statement – ***Cultivating the unwavering hope of Jesus in every generation*** – doing so from Hebrews 6:13-20 where the author explains that God is quite passionate that we be all about “seizing the hope” that we have in front of us. God’s desire for us in this life is that we live in full view of our eternal life with the Father because of Jesus. This is exactly what Paul celebrates in his opening paragraph to the Colossians. All the amazing things he says in vv. 3-8 are the result of the Colossians being obsessed with “the hope reserved for them in heaven” (v. 5). That’s Jesus. We tend to think heavenly minded people are disconnected from the real world. Scripture teaches the opposite. Only heavenly-minded people make the biggest difference in the real one. ***Heavenly-mindedness is for our earthly-goodness.***

Body

How so? What does that look like? Paul hits on 5 ways that heavenly-mindedness makes a massive impact on our earthly-goodness ... how having hope in Christ leads to a life for Christ. Let me show you these pretty quickly.

It Grows Trust

(Slide) The first thing that I want you to see is that a life centered on hope in Christ grows our faith in Christ. Look what Paul says he's heard about the Colossians faith in v. 4 – “**... we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus ...**”

Now, there's a sense in which Paul is alluding to the object of their faith, namely faith IN CHRIST, as opposed to all of the other options available to them in a pluralistic world. I'll have a ton to say about pluralism and syncretism and the exclusivity of Jesus throughout the series. But for now, I want to call attention to the fact that Paul is also celebrating the presence and practice of their faith. Their hope in Christ resulted in a faith that was expressing itself in everyday life. Things like:

- Less panic when plans fall apart
- Less need to control outcomes
- Less reactivity when things don't go our way

Imagine what this kind of faith produces in our lives today.

- You can wait without spiraling
- You can obey without needing guarantees
- You can face uncertainty without losing peace

Heavenly-minded people still feel fear, but they don't let fear drive. Hope in Christ drives faith in Christ.

It Deepens Love

(Slide) The second thing I want you to see is that a life centered on hope in Christ deepens love for others who have their hope in Christ. Paul says in v. 4, “**... we have heard ... of the love you have for all the saints**”

Now again, as we work our way through this book, we will get more granular about what this love looks like, but the phrase “THE LOVE for ALL the saints” hints at two things worth highlighting today: that hope in Christ results in **sacrificial love** and **indiscriminate love**. One of our core values at Beech Haven is that we love beyond ourselves. It's our way of saying that our hope in Jesus results in sacrificial and indiscriminate love. You can say a lot of things about Beech Haven, but one of the things I really hope you'd say is that we love people who are

nothing like us. That we love others when they can't repay us. That we stay engaged in relationships that are inconvenient. That we extend grace in the midst of conflict. That we are patient with difficult people. That we are committed to relationships with emotions fluctuate. That we choose forgiveness and reconciliation over withdrawal.

Why? Because of hope in Christ. Heavenly-mindedness frees us from using people to meet our needs—because our deepest needs are already met in Christ. This liberates us to love sacrificially and indiscriminately.

It Bears Fruit

(Slide) The third thing I want you to see is that a life centered on hope in Christ bears fruit in those who have that hope. Paul says in verse 6, “**... the gospel that has come to you ... is bearing fruit.**” And again, we will get to WHAT this fruit is as we work through the book together, but this is a Greek phrase that speaks to the ongoing, reproductive effect of hope in our lives today.

To illustrate, this past summer Holly and I bought 3-4 bags of different kinds of mushrooms ready to fruit. All we had to do what cut open the bags and the mushrooms, he said, would fruit 2-4 times. He lied. They just fruited once. Were they good? Yes of course. They were mushrooms. Were they \$35 good? No. Contrast those with the lion's mane mushroom that fruits every year on a tree at one of our member's houses (Dwight and Penny). Year after year, it naturally, faithfully, consistently fruits off that tree.

THAT is what Paul is describing as one of the effects of our hope in Christ. Slow, steady, durable fruit. Not flashy, but faithful. Not immediate, but enduring. Not manufactured, but organic. He's talking about spiritual disciplines practiced routinely without drama. He's talking about Bible reading, prayer, public worship, life groups, serving, and giving faithfully. He's talking about obedience without an audience. He's talking about faithfulness in unseen places.

When we hope in Christ ... when we are heavenly-minded ... we are not obsessed with speedy, rapid development that gains a platform. We're far more obsessed with faithfulness where we are. That's what Paul is getting at with this idea of fruit-bearing.

It Spreads through Others

(Slide) The fourth thing I want you to see is that a life centered on hope in Christ spreads through others. Paul goes on to say in v. 6-8, “**... the gospel that has come to you ... is growing all over the world, just as it has among you since the day you heard it and came to truly appreciate God's grace. You learned this from Epaphras, our dearly loved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and he has told us about your love in the Spirit.**”

This is interesting. Paul had never met the men and women at the church in Colossae. They were converted through the ministry of Epaphras, who was converted in Paul's ministry at Ephesus. So Paul was preaching in Ephesus, Epaphras was converted, Epaphras loved his people back in Colossae, traveled back, preached the gospel and planted the church. At some point, Paul is imprisoned and Epaphras went to visit him, taking with him (mostly) good news about this new church in Colosse.

This whole process demonstrates how hope in Christ multiplies leaders out to share that hope. Hope in Christ is something that we share, not something that we hoard. Hope produces reproducers, not just consumers. Hope in Christ produces people who invest in others. People who not only show up, but also step up. People who say, "Someone taught me ... now I'll teach others." People who are confident in the future are generous with good news in the present. When the hope of Christ is alive in us, silence about it becomes much harder to justify.

(SLIDE - Strategy image) This is why our strategy for executing our mission includes giving and going. Our strategy for cultivating the hope of Jesus in you is to gather (in worship and fellowship), grow (in private and in community), give (of your time, money, and effort), and go (with your time, money, and effort). Hope in Christ leads to a desire to give and to go, and doing those things cultivates our hope as well.

It Generates Gratitude

(Slide) The last thing I want you to see is that a life centered on hope in Christ generates gratitude to Christ. Look what Paul says he does as a result of hearing about the Colossians' hope in Christ. It's in verse 3. ***"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you"***

It's really simple. When we see the impact hope in Christ has in others, we want to thank Christ for it. The Colossians hope in Christ was such that Paul, who did not know them personally and who was in prison, could give thanks to God joyfully. Hope in Christ generates a form of gratitude or worship that isn't dependent on vibe or mood or momentum or circumstances.

To illustrate: When I was a kid, I recall being in the backseat of my mom's Buick Cutlass when suddenly seemingly every dashboard warning light came on in the car. We sputtered a bit, lurched some, and finally came to a stop. When my mom would turn the ignition, she would get a cranking noise, but the engine wouldn't turn, and the dashboard communicated any number of potential issues. As it turns out, she was simply out of gas. How crazy is that? In a small town with gas stations within a ¼ mile of anywhere you may be, my mom ran out of gas.

Gratitude to God is kind of like a dashboard warning light. And if that warning light is going off, we often assume the issue is something complex and hard to solve. But it's often because our hope is misdirected.

Conclusion

(Slide - Title Slide) So folks, do you see? Do you see that heavenly-mindedness ... that hope in Christ ... doesn't remove us from real life—it reshapes how we live it. It changes what we praise, how we trust, who we love, how we grow, what we share, and who we raise up.

Can we all agree that being more stable, being more loving, having more and better influence, being a part of something bigger than ourselves, and God getting glory from all that ... Can we agree that THAT is a great life? Then let us also see how we gain it - a radical commitment to the hope of heaven, Jesus.