

# COLOSSIANS

## Lesson 1

### “ROOTED IN HOPE”

**Ice Breaker:** Describe a time when you were filled with hope. How did that hope affect you?

INTRO: Paul didn't know the Christians in Colosse (Col. 2:1), but he knew they were being hit with “fine sounding arguments” (Col. 2:4) and “deceptive philosophy” (Col. 2:8) that threatened to hijack their faith. Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians in order to help them be “rooted and built up” (Col. 2:7) in Christ.

The thing about having roots is they hold you in place and keep you from being moved. They also feed and promote growth. In this letter, Paul tells his readers of several things they need to be “rooted” in if they are to grow and resist being pulled away from Christ. The first thing on the list is hope.

#### Col. 1:1-8

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,  
2 To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.*

***3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. 7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.***

Q: In verse 3 Paul and Timothy tell us they always thanked God when they prayed for the brothers in Colosse. Why were they thanking God for these guys?

- Because they had heard of their faith and love for the saints. (vs.4)
  - Heb. 11:6 tells us faith pleases God and Matt. 17:20 says faith moves mountains.
  - 1Cor. 8:1 tells us Love builds up.
- Paul was excited to hear about their faith and love because of what these would do in their lives and the lives of others.

Q: Who are the “saints” Paul says the Colossians have love for in verse 4?

- The Greek word for “saint” is “**hagios**.” It means separate from the common, dedicated for special use... similar to the word “holy.”
- In Ro. 1:6-7 Paul said, “*And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints...*”
- All who are called to belong to Jesus are called to be saints... so all disciples are saints, separated from common humans and dedicated for special use.

Q: According to verse 5, where did Paul say their faith and love came from?

- Hope.

Q: What is this hope and where does it come from?

- In the Bible, hope is a confident expectation that keeps you moving toward the goal.
  - Hope determines what you do on a day-to-day basis.
  - Like a med student working to become a doctor, a disciple is working towards something.
- In Col. 1:27, Paul says the Hope of the Christian is to be glorified.
  - To be glorified means to be made like Jesus. Glory is usually something that can be seen... being like Him means we will look like Jesus if we keep moving forward in obedience.
    - 1Jonh 3:2-3 *“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. **But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”*
  - The hope that we will become like Jesus should motivate us to walk in step with the spirit toward that goal.

Q: In verse 5, Paul says this hope is “stored up” for us in heaven. What does this mean?

- The hope isn’t that we will **go** to heaven; the hope is laid up for us **in** heaven.
- “Stored up” means it is put in a secure place.
  - **Matt. 6:19** *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But **store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.***
  - Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount not to lay up treasures on earth because those treasures would never be secure there.

Q: In verse 6, Paul says the gospel is bearing forth fruit. How can the gospel bear fruit?

- That’s the nature of the gospel... it produces spiritual fruit.
- The image here is a metaphor. What produces fruit is a seed.
  - A seed is amazing when you think about it. It can be stored for thousands of years... it doesn’t look alive at all, but if you put it in the right kind of environment (soil, water, etc.) it comes to life and produces something much bigger than itself.
    - Scientists in Russia found seeds frozen for 31,800 and planted them. They grew!
    - <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/technology/2012/02/flowering-plant-revived-after-30000-years-in-russian-permafrost/>
    - It even produces more seeds just like it’s self, just waiting to burst into life in the same way.
- In Luke 8:5-18, Jesus said the seed is the word of God, or the word of the Kingdom.
  - The gospel produces fruit because **it is alive!**

- In John 6:63, Jesus said, *“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”*
    - The words He spoke were spirit and life.
    - The gospel is not just another philosophy that is truer than other philosophies; the word of God reproduces the life of God in the person who receives it because it is a living thing.
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APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. If Paul and Timothy were writing this letter to you, would they be thanking God for you your faith and love for the saints?
  - a. Is your faith pleasing God and moving tough obstacles?
  - b. Is your love building up others?
2. What determines what you do on a day-to-day basis?
  - a. The hope of being glorified?
  - b. The hope of being gratified?
3. The gospel is a seed that **will** reproduce the life of God in you. How deeply are you rooted in this hope?
  - a. What actions, attitudes and ambitions would you point to explain your answer?