**“THERE’S HOPE!”**

**Colossians: ch.1**

H

ave you detected a growing sense of hopelessness in the world? Refugee caravans, pandemics, panic, mass graves, millions quarantined, longtime values under assault. What was no-brainer wrong is now said to be right. Even old-line churches go wobbly on their non-negotiables. Flashback … “Everyone did as they pleased” (Judges 21:25; Proverbs 21:2).

***Sects in the City***

Once a bustling, Turkish city, Colossae was under imperial Rome’s rule. For three years Paul lived in Ephesus to start his showcase church. Epaphras embraced Jesus there and planted the Colossae church, only to face false teachers who denied Jesus’ deity. Jews accepting Peter’s gospel insisted that converts to Jesus obey temple laws. Eastern faiths, abstinence of personal pleasures. Jailed in Rome Paul writes this **HOPE-**filled letter to rebut heresies, stating that Jesus is God over all (Acts 4:12).

***“So’s Yer Ol’ Man!”***

Nothing in us is heaven-worthy. When God saves us, His Spirit moves in with our spirit as the down payment on our inheritance, **(2 Corinthians 4:5-12, p. 1047, 5:5)**. Sin no longer *controls* you **(Romans 5:5, 17-19, p. 1019).** Your *old man* died with Christ. Now you have new life. **Let’s read together Galatians 2:19-21, p. 1057.**

Discouragement, fear and guilt have no place in our spirit where God’s Spirit lives. As we hang out there, our mind, emotions, will and body start to “get it,” raising our **HOPE** (Psalm 42:5, 121:1-8).

Let’s read Colossians 1:1-29 (p. 1070).

#### Good News

#### Colossians 1:1-8

When the Colossians heard Paul’s gospel, they were smitten by its tone of **HOPE**. Paul’s customary greeting of “Grace and peace to you” is beautifully reframed by the late Eugene Peterson to read, “The lines of purpose in your lives never grow slack, tightly tied as they are to your future in heaven, kept taut by **HOPE**.”

God freely offers forgiveness and salvation to all. Paul learned direct from the Lord that now, after the crucifixion, all believers are complete in Christ who Himself contains all of God the Father.

**DISCUSS: Describe your reaction when you first heard the gospel.**

We live with **HOPE** anchored in God’s unchangeable promises **(Titus 2:11-14, p. 1088).**

The Greek used for **HOPE** does not convey wishful thinking. It “means we can be confident and secure in our expectation” (Romans 8:28). Christ’s resurrection is the basis of our salvation, without which we have no **HOPE** **(1 Corinthians 15:12-19, p. 1043).**

The apostle is **HOPE**’s poster child, never discouraged by circumstances. His pressed ahead with patient endurance, anticipating Christ’s return, “the Rapture” the “blessed **HOPE**“ (Philippians 3:13-16; **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, p. 1076).**

**DISCUSS: How can one man in Seattle spread HOPE in his world?**

#### The Colossian believers’ faith in Jesus and their love for people was very personal, not private. They couldn’t keep quiet! Let’s read 2 Corinthians 5:16-20, p. 1048).

 **“Let Us Pray”**

**Colossians 1:9-14**

To fuel our **HOPE** Paul asks the Father to fill us with His perspective and with *epignosis*, a super knowledge of God’s will that’s gained through first-hand encounters with God (Job 28:28).

Paul desires that God’s Spirit within us strengthen our inner man, giving us patience, love and all “the fruit of the Spirit” **(Romans 8:20-25, p. 1022, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, 5:5 p. 1048).**

Paul’s urges us to …

• Live based on who God says we are, not on how we think or feel

• Rely on God’s strength to repel Satan’s overtures

• Thank God for making us co-heirs with Christ of all He owns!

Paul asks God to give us:

• An intimate **wisdom** grounded in the Scriptures

• **Conduct** befitting one who knows Jesus as Lord and Savior

• **Dedication** to what God’s called you to do

• A passion for **excellence** in serving God and man

• **Perseverance** to run life’s race with **HOPE** and joy

• **Gratitude** to God for all that comes your way

**DISCUSS: Let’s take 8 minutes and get crazy. Pair up in two’s. Each man will have 4 minutes to describe the role HOPE plays in your life. I’ll announce the time like on the “Great British Baking Show!” OK, pair up and start now!**

**Jesus LinkedIn**

**Colossians 1:15-19**

Jesus became a man so we could see what His Father is like. God’s eternal purpose is for all creation to worship His Son (John 3:35).

**DISCUSS: “Everything comes *from* Him, happens *through* Him and ends up *in* Him” (Romans 11:33-36, p. 1026).**

**“But Now ….”**

**Colossians 1:20-23**

Jesus declares those who receive Him in faith have eternal life and are *right* with His Father (Romans 5:1-11, p. 1019). Those who spend eternity in hell will be there because they rejected His offer.

**DISCUSS: What can we say about heaven, hell and fairness?**

#### “I’ve Got a Secret!”

#### Colossians 1:24-29

Paul was sent by God to “make the Word of God fully known,” ushering in the Age of Grace. The risen Lord taught Paul that we are *“in Christ”* and have *“Christ in us*.” This is “the mystery,” “the secret” **(1 Timothy 1:12-17, p. 1080)**.

**DISCUSS: How can we take advantage of having Christ in us?**

Faith is God’s gift to equip us to trust Him. Love is who He is! **HOPE** is the confident expectation that He’ll keep *all* His promises (1 Corinthians 13). If you haven’t closed your deal with God yet, do it today **(1 Timothy 2:3-5, p. 1080; 2 Peter 3:9, p. 1113).**

The Bible ends on a **HOPEful** note as Jesus texts us from heaven, *“Yes indeed! I am coming soon!*” (Revelation 22:20, p. 1138)

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