

**THE GOSPEL**  
**Colossians 1:5-8**  
**By Andy Manning**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- a. I've got some good news, and I've got some good news.
- b. Today we're going to study the gospel. The word "gospel" means "good news." The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ.
- c. The gospel is good news. It is the best news. What would be the best news you could ever hear? Imagine if someone told you that you just inherited millions of dollars. Imagine if you had a deadly disease, and someone told you that they had discovered a cure. The gospel trumps all of that. It is the best news you could ever hear.

**II. TEXT**

- a. **Colossians 1:5-8** "5 because of the hope reserved for you in heaven. You have already heard about this hope in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. It is bearing fruit and 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. 7 You learned this from Epaphras, our dearly loved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 and he has told us about your love in the Spirit."
- b. This passage is all about the gospel.
- c. What is the gospel? In a nutshell, the gospel can be summarized with four words:
  - i. Creation: God created you to glorify Him.
  - ii. Corruption: You sinned against God and deserve eternal punishment.
  - iii. Cross: Christ died on the cross to pay for your sins.
  - iv. Choice: You can be saved from sin if you repent of your sins and trust in Jesus Christ.
- d. This passage goes into more detail, giving us six insights about the gospel.

**III. THE GOSPEL IS... (Insights About the Gospel)**

**a. About the hope of eternal life.**

- i. **Colossians 1:5** "because of the hope reserved for you in heaven. You have already heard about this hope in the word of truth, the gospel"
- ii. Paul uses the word "hope" two times in this verse.
  - 1. "the hope reserved for you in heaven"
  - 2. "you already heard about this hope in the word of truth, the gospel"
- iii. The gospel is about this hope. What is "the hope reserved for you in heaven"?

1. It looks forward to the future. You cannot hope for something that has already passed.
  2. It is an eager anticipation. Hope is the opposite of dread. Hope is when you deeply desire something in the future; you look forward to it with deep longing.
  3. It is a confident assurance.
    - a. The NT word for hope (Gr. *elpis*) is very different from the way that we use word hope in America.
    - b. When we use the word hope, we mean we wishful thinking – we wish for something to happen, but we have no confidence or assurance that it will happen. Every summer my family goes to the beach on Labor Day, the height of hurricane season. And every year, we hope that a hurricane doesn't ruin our vacation, even though we have no assurance or confidence that it will not happen.
    - c. The NT idea of hope is a confident assurance. It is an eager expectation and confident assurance of something that will happen in the future based on God's promise.
    - d. MacArthur calls hope "confident optimism."
  4. It is eternal life. **Titus 1:2** "in the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began."
    - a. The Christian's hope is eternal life and all that entails.
    - b. Matthew Henry said the Christian's hope is the well-grounded expectation of future glory.
    - c. The Expositor's Bible Commentary says that the Christian's hope refers to the glorious reward and future blessedness of God's people.
    - d. The believer's hope is...
      - i. Eternal life in heaven, in the presence of God. (Jn 3:16; Rev 21:3)
      - ii. To see Jesus face to face. (1 Jn 3:2)
      - iii. To be finished with sorrow, sickness, suffering, and sin. (Rev 21:4)
      - iv. A new, perfect, glorified body. (Phil 3:20-21)
      - v. The collection of eternal rewards. (Mt 6:19-20)
- iv. The gospel is the good news of the hope of eternal life.
1. We may suffer, but this is the closest we will ever get to hell. (Lk 12:4-5)
  2. We may face affliction, but our afflictions are only temporary. Heaven will last for all eternity.

3. We may live in poverty on earth, but in heaven we will live like kings. (Lk 18:29-30)
  4. We may deserve God's wrath, but because of Jesus Christ we can look forward to eternal bliss in God's loving presence. (Jn 3:36)
  5. We may face persecution and rejection, but in heaven we will enjoy congratulations. (Mt 5:10-11)
  6. We may live in this world in obscurity, but in heaven Jesus Christ will acknowledge us before the Father. (Mt 10:32)
  7. We may be last on earth, but in heaven we will be first. (Mt 20:16)
  8. We may weep now, but soon we will be comforted. (Mt 5:4)
  9. We may be lonely now, but in heaven we will enjoy the company of angels, and the communion of the saints.
- v. The gospel is the best news of all because it tells us how to be made right with God and receive eternal life when we die.

**b. Life-changing.**

- i. **Colossians 1:5** "because of the hope reserved for you in heaven. You have already heard about this hope in the word of truth, the gospel"
- ii. When you connect verse five with the previous verse, you see that Paul says that the Colossians loved each other ("all the saints") because of the hope reserved for them in heaven. Their hope led to their love.
  1. Col 1:3: We thank God for you.
  2. Col 1:4: for we have heard of your faith in Christ, and the love you have for all the saints
  3. Col 1:5: because of the hope reserved for you in heaven.
- iii. The hope of eternal life leads to love.
- iv. When you put your faith in the gospel, God changes your life.
- v. How does the gospel change us? Through the miracle of regeneration.
  1. We become a new creation. **2 Corinthians 5:17** "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!" When we believe the gospel we experience a total transformation. We have new opinions; new beliefs; new tastes; new desires; new ambitions; new loves; new hatreds; new friends; new enemies; new emotions; new feelings; new fears; new strengths; new priorities; new values; new perspectives. We are truly a new creation.
  2. We experience a new birth. **John 3:3** Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Before we embrace the gospel we are children of Satan, and resemble him. After we believe the gospel we become children of God, and we gradually begin to resemble Him.

3. We receive a new heart. **Ezekiel 36:26** “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” Before we believe the gospel our desire is for sin. After we believe the gospel God gives us a new heart that that loves God and desires to please God.
  4. We are indwelt by a new Spirit – the Holy Spirit. **Ezekiel 36:27** “I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances.” Before we accept the gospel we are controlled by the spirit of Satan. After we accept the gospel, the Holy Spirit enters our souls and helps us to walk in obedience and wisdom.
- vi. What is the connection between hope and love?
1. The saints in Colossae were commended for their love for all the saints. This love resulted from their hope of eternal life. How does the hope of eternal life result in love?
  2. If this life is all there is, then we will be tempted, if not forced to spend ourselves on ourselves. To be selfish. Self-centered. YOLO (You only live once). Look out for number 1. But because we have the hope of eternal life and heavenly rewards, then that gives us the strength to sacrifice ourselves for the good of others.
  3. **Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible:** “Hope, the hope that God gives, is the reason we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ and go to such limits to love one another. Only one thing could make a man love to such a point that he would sacrifice himself for another man—especially when the man is attacking or trying to destroy him. That one thing is the hope of some great promise—the hope of some great reward.”
- vii. So the gospel is life-changing not only because of the miracle of regeneration (internal transformation), but also because of the hope of eternal life – the power of an eternal, heavenly perspective.

**c. True.**

- i. Paul calls the “the word of truth” (v. 5).
- ii. The gospel is not spiritual speculation; it is not religious opinion; it is not metaphysical conjecture; it is not a guess; it is not wishful thinking; it is not a lie; it is not a fabrication; it is not a myth; it is not a legend. The gospel is the word of truth.
- iii. Atheism says the gospel is untrue. Agnosticism says we don’t know if the gospel is true. Scientism says we can’t know if the gospel is true because it cannot be proven by science. Postmodernism says the gospel may be true for you, but not for me. Narcissism doesn’t care if the gospel is true. Nihilism says nothing is true. Jesus said “I am the truth.”

- iv. **John 14:6** Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
- v. **John 18:37** “I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”
- vi. Psalm 31:5 calls God the Father the God of truth. John 14:6 calls God the Son the truth. John 15:26 calls God the Spirit the “Spirit of truth.” Psalm 119:142 says that God’s instruction is true. And Colossians 1:5 says that the gospel is the word of truth.
- vii. How do we know that the gospel is true?
  1. The OT prophecies. The book of Isaiah was written 700 years before the time of Christ, and it pointed to the gospel. Isaiah 53:5-6 “But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished him for the iniquity of us all.”
  2. The miracles of Jesus. Jesus performed countless miracles that verified His message. He gave sight to the blind, and speech to the mute. He fed multitudes. He walked on water. Turned water to wine. Calmed a storm. Raised the dead. Drove out demons.
  3. The testimony of His apostles. The NT includes the eye-witness testimony of multiple contemporaries of Christ; men who knew Jesus personally, and who proclaimed that Jesus was Messiah, Lord, crucified, died, was buried, rose again, and ascended into heaven.

**d. Available to all.**

- i. **Colossians 1:6** “It is bearing fruit and growing all over the world.”
- ii. The gospel is available to the whole world.
- iii. Let me tell you why I’m not a Calvinist.
  1. Calvinism is a system of theology that basically says that God decides who goes to heaven and who goes to hell, and people have no say in the matter.
  2. I am Arminian. Arminianism is a system of theology that says that God wants to save everyone, and makes it possible for everyone to be saved, but only chooses to save those who put their faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ.
  3. Three Biblical Errors in Calvinism:
    - a. Calvinists believe that God doesn’t want to save everyone, only the elect. He only wants to save few to glorify His love, and to send the rest to hell to glorify His justice.
      - i. The gospel teaches that God wants to save everyone.

- ii. **Matthew 18:14** “In the same way, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones perish.”
    - iii. **2 Peter 3:9** “The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.”
    - iv. **1 Timothy 2:4** “[God] wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
  - b. Calvinists believe that Christ did not die to save everyone, only the elect.
    - i. The gospel teaches that Christ died to save everyone.
    - ii. **John 1:29** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”
    - iii. **1 John 2:2** “He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world.”
  - c. Calvinists believe that everyone cannot be saved, only the elect.
    - i. The gospel teaches that anyone can be saved if they believe.
    - ii. **John 3:16** “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”
  - iv. The gospel is “good news” because it is offered to everyone. Anyone can get in on it if they want to.
- e. **Received by those who truly appreciate God’s grace.**
  - i. **Colossians 1:6** “It is bearing fruit and 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.”
  - ii. The gospel is available to everyone, but it is only received by those who “truly appreciate God’s grace.”
  - iii. What is God’s grace? Grace means unmerited favor. This verse is referring to God’s grace in salvation, which is the gospel. We are sinners, deserving of hell. But God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die in our place, for our sins, as our substitute. Now we can be saved from sin not by doing good works, but simply by faith in Jesus Christ. That is God’s grace.
  - iv. To receive the gospel, you must truly appreciate God’s grace. To appreciate means to truly understand the true nature and value of something.
  - v. What does it mean to truly appreciate God’s grace?
    - 1. To understand the gospel.

- a. Creation: God created you to glorify Him.
  - b. Corruption: We have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, and the punishment is eternal hell.
  - c. Cross: Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.
  - d. Choice: We can be saved if we repent of our sins and have faith in Jesus Christ.
2. To have faith in the gospel.
- a. **John 3:36** "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who rejects the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him."
  - b. To believe in the gospel is not merely to believe it is true. Even the devil believes in the truth of the gospel. To believe is to rely upon the gospel for your salvation.
  - c. What is it to have faith in the gospel?
    - i. Recognize your spiritual poverty. **Matthew 5:3** "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs."
      - 1. Admit you don't deserve eternal life.
      - 2. Admit you cannot earn eternal life.
      - 3. Refuse to try to earn eternal life.
      - 4. Put all hope in Christ's sacrifice on your behalf.
3. To repent of your sins.
- a. To appreciate God's grace is to be thankful for God's grace.
  - b. The person who is thankful for the grace of God does not continue to rebel against the God of grace.
  - c. **Acts 3:19** "Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out,"
  - d. Salvation is by faith alone, but this faith is a turning to Christ as Savior, and as Lord.
  - e. To appreciate God's grace is to hand the steering wheel of your life over to Jesus Christ.
- f. **Spread by God's servants.**
- i. The gospel is spread around the world as God's servants proclaim it.
  - ii. **Colossians 1:7-8** "7 You learned this from Epaphras, our dearly loved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 and he has told us about your love in the Spirit."
  - iii. The Colossians learned the gospel from Epaphras. Epaphras was led to Christ in Ephesus when Paul was there. Then he took the gospel back to his hometown of Colossae and started a church there. He was probably the pastor of the Colossian church.

- iv. The gospel spreads as believers in the gospel become witnesses to the gospel.
- v. Every Christian is called to be an Epaphras. To take the message of the gospel that we have heard and spread it to everyone we possibly can.
- vi. You are a Christian because of God's servants. And God wants to use you to serve others.
- vii. **Acts 1:8** "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- a. There is a powerful illustration of the gospel in the Old Testament book of Numbers 21. The Israelites were wandering the wilderness. The people spoke against God; they complained that God had led them to such a desolate place. It would be like you saying, "God, why have you made me like this? Why have you put me in this situation? I hate you!" The Israelites sinned against God. So, God punished them. He sent poisonous snakes to bite them, and many of them died. But then the people repented. They went to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord. Please ask God to save us!" So, Moses prayed for them, and God told Moses to make a bronze snake and mount it on a pole, and anyone who looks at the snake would recover. So, Moses made the bronze snake, and when someone was bitten, and he looked at the snake, he was healed.
- b. Just like the Israelites, we have sinned against God. And one day we will have to pay for our sins. God will cast all sinners into hell for eternity. But that's not the end of the story. Just as God provided the bronze serpent for the Israelites, God provided His Son as a sacrifice for our sins on the cross. And just as anyone who looked at the snake was healed, anyone who looks to Christ in faith will be saved from the poison of sin.
- c. But now the ball is your court. Will you look to the cross of Jesus Christ? Or will you shut your eyes and ears to the gospel, the greatest news ever given to mankind?