

Colossians 1:3-8

Evidence of the True gospel

02/23/2020

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

²To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which 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, ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf ⁸and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Last week, we began our study in the book of Colossians, and just by way of recap, let me remind you that this book like all the New Testament letters was specifically written to believers, Paul, who we know had never been to this church..... was correcting an apparent drift into philosophical, Christless, moralism.....highlighted by rules, regulations and self denial in order to become more spiritual.....

The corrective he will be offering is a full, robust, powerful description of the deity of Christ, the nature of Christ, and the redemption we have in Christ..... The theme of this book and what you will hear me say over and over and over is Christ and Christ alone is preeminent and sufficient in all things..... He is sufficient for salvation, He is sufficient for sanctification, He is sufficient for glorification..... He saves us; He makes us Holy; and He brings us to Himself to be with Him forever. We will be explaining these in more detail in the weeks ahead.

Today, we will only deal with verses 3 through 8, and it is not hard to notice in verse 3 that Paul begins by letting the believers in the Colossian Church know that he prays for them..... he prays for them, even though he has never met them..... even though he had not preached to them, even though he had never been their pastor..... Paul had a deep concern for all Christians, and might have been especially concerned over the ones he had little to no contact with.....or those who seem to be wavering or struggling in their faith.....

If you glance over at chapter 1 verse 28 and 29, you will see the heartbeat of Paul's soul and what motivates him to both correct their false teaching and to labor in prayer for them..... and this needs to be or should be the heart beat of any and every pastor, elder, and church leader....

“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. ¹”

Of course, the “Him” here is Christ..... Paul's deep desire for the Colossian believers and the believers in Ephesus, and Philippi, and Rome and Corinth and every where is that through proclaiming Christ..... which would include warning, teaching, toiling, struggling, praying, serving, suffering.....that he would present every man and woman and child mature in Christ.....

Beloved, this must be the heartbeat of every pastor, elder, and church leader.....Every Sunday, Every Wednesday, Every Sunday night, Every Sunday School Class, men's meetings, ladies meetings..... Seminars, conferences..... other ministries.... Or even Meeting with people one on one, visiting families.....

All of these have the goal in mind that we might present you, every one of you.... mature in Christ..... and it does take warning.... And it does take teaching.... And it is a struggle and toil.....

but, it is God's work.....as he works in and through His servants for His glory.... According to verse 29, he even provides the energy to accomplish this.....And, prayer is a big part of the labor and the toil.....

What I want you to see this morning, as we look at verses 3 through 8 is the impact that the gospel made on these believers in Colossae.....we will see this, first by noticing how Paul became acquainted with the work in this city, that was through Epaphras.....2ndly since the word gospel is mentioned without an explanation of what it is, we will spend some time explaining it..... then, thirdly, we will notice the effects of the gospel had on these believers....

So, Paul begins his letter, telling these believers how thankful he and his companions are for them..... and this comes out as he expresses his thanksgiving to God through prayer.....Paul's thankfulness and subsequent prayers for these believers is a direct result of the impact the gospel made upon them..... His actual prayer begins in verse 9 and we will look at it next week...

1 “ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 1:28–29). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

For, now, notice that he became acquainted with what went on in this church through the person mentioned in verse 7, “Epaphras” who Paul describes as a beloved fellow servant and a faithful minister of Christ.... He writes in verse 8 that, He, that is Epaphras, “has made known to us your love in the Spirit. ²”

Epaphras had given Paul a full report of all that had taken place in this church.....and we actually know for sure that Epaphras gave him a full report because at the time Paul was writing this letter, He and Epaphras were cell mates.... They were in prison together.....Hold your place in Colossians and Turn with me for a moment to the book of Philemon, so you can see this for yourself.....

remember Philemon was written when Colossians was written, while Paul was in prison..... and they were delivered by the same people at the same time.... Philemon is right before Hebrews.... Notice verse 23

“Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you,³” This is 10 or 12 years after the Colossian church was started, and Epaphras is in prison with Paul.....and he has all day and all night to tell Paul all of the things taking place at the Colossian church..... Epaphras, likely started the church in Colossae, he likely pastored the church for some time..... and we don’t know when he was arrested..... but here he is in a Roman prison with Paul, and he is talking to him all about this church that Paul had never visited..... Paul had a full report of what the Colossians were taught, and the effects the gospel had upon them.

Go back to Colossians and this time go to chapter 4, and note verse 12, Paul writes.....

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ⁴

The Colossians learned the gospel through the preaching of Epaphras.....Here about a decade after the gospel came to the city and the church was established, He is now in prison with Paul in Rome....and, he continues to pray for those he had labored over.....He wants them to mature..... he wants them to grow.... He wants them to be doctrinally sound.

And, as I said, since these two are cell mates, they have a lot of time on their hands to talk about the gospel going forward, and Epaphras was the one that told Paul what he had taught these dear people.....

2 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 1:8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

3 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Phm 23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

4 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 4:12–13). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Now, I find it real interesting how Paul in this passage, talks about the gospel.....and he talks about the effects of the gospel, but he does not explain, at least here, what the gospel is.... And, I think the reason why he does not explain it is on account of the fact that he knew they already had been taught it.

In verse 5, Paul writes “Of this you have **heard** before in the word of the truth, the gospel,⁵” And in verse 6 he goes beyond hearing and uses the word understood.... He writes, “since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth⁶”

And then in verse 7, he explains where Epaphras fits in, “just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant.⁷”

So, because of Paul’s relationship with Epaphras, and knowing exactly what Epaphras taught, he was very confident that these Colossian believers **heard** the truth of the gospel, **understood** the truth of the gospel, **learned** the truth of the gospel, and **believed** the truth of the gospel.....

And, since the gospel is such an important part of not just this book, but such an important part of our Christian life, I wanted to take the time over the next few minutes and try to reconstruct what Epaphras taught..... What did they hear? What did they understand? What did they learn? And what did they believe?.....

Whatever it was, Paul is quick to point out that their belief turned into behavior..... or their faith turned into practice..... because Epaphras made it known to him in verse 4 that:

*they had faith in Christ, and

*they had a love for other believers

*which was on account of the hope they had in heaven.....then in verse 6,

*the gospel had such a profound effect on them that from the first day of their new found faith, they were bearing fruit and growing....then in verse 8,

*he makes mention again of their love in the Spirit....

It is the hearing, the understanding, learning, and trusting in the truth of the gospel that produced these visible, tangible evidences of their believing faith. And what we must glean from this section of this letter is that our trust in the true gospel always results in a transformed life.

5 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 1:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

6 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 1:6). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

7 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 1:7). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Paul stated it in one sentence in II Corin 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”⁸ When you trust Christ to save you, just like these Colossians, you will be on a trajectory to become more like Jesus until the time he takes you to glory.....and it will be evident in your life through your love for believers, and by visible fruit..... we will come back to this...

But, notice that it starts with the true gospel....I say true gospel because Paul uses the word truth in regards to the gospel in verses 5 and 6..... And what we need to understand is that there are specific elements that must be included in the proclamation and understanding of the gospel in order for it to be true....

Let me start by saying that to believe the gospel, you have to know something.....that sounds almost too simple..... but if it needs to be heard, understood and learned, than there is content behind it..... and that content, according to verse 5, must be true.....

Open your Bibles, please to Mark chapter 1..... Mark 1 verse 1 gives a bit of an snapshot of the gospel with just 12 words..... Mark 1:1

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”⁹

Now, the word gospel means announcement.... In the secular world, it was used when there was a proclamation of a new emperor.....or when the army came home victorious from Battle..... it was an announcement of good news.... Of great news..... of spectacular news..... of happy news....So, what Mark is telling us, as he begins his biography about the Lord Jesus is that the first sentence of his book is the beginning of the gospel or the beginning of the great news concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God..... It is not the whole story of the great news..... it is just the beginning of it.....

Verse 1 is the beginning..... and the rest of the book explains why the announcement of Jesus coming into the world is so great..... In other words, the main focus, the main character, the subject of, and most pre-eminent figure in the gospel..... is the Lord Jesus..... The gospel is the good news about Jesus Christ.....The gospel is the announcement of who Jesus is and what He has done.....and Mark 1:1 is the beginning of the announcement and the rest of his 16 chapters explains the good news about Jesus in detail.....

Why is this so important? And why does Paul start here with a church that is beginning to believe that their holiness and sanctification, and their victory over sin is related to self effort instead of through Christ? Why start here with a church that minimized Christ, that removed

8 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (2 Co 5:17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

9 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 1:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

his preeminence, that has lost sight of his sufficiency and has pushed forward traditions and philosophies and man made rules as a way of becoming pure?.....

Paul starts the epistle by getting back to the basics...reminding them of what they already knew was true.....and quite honestly, one of the most important parts of our Christian lives is to continue to be reminded of things we already know.....

I need this in my own personal life..... I find myself in my own studying and growth walking down the same well worn paths that I have heard before so I might know them better on a personal level, then to be able to explain them better in my pastoral duty.....

I have been listening to a lecture series by Dr. Swain from Reformed Seminary in Orlando on Systematic Theology, and when he explained the person of Christ, he said, "It is as easy as counting 1, 2, 3, 4.....

He is one person...2nd person of the Trinity

He has two natures ... He is God and man

He has a three fold office Prophet, Priest, and King

He fulfilled a four fold purpose..... by His Incarnation, by His substitution, by his resurrection, and by His exaltation

Now, I know and have heard all of those things..... but I love to hear them again and again and again.... There is enough content in those 4 things to expand and teach on Christ for months....

So, one of the first things that Epaphras had to teach is that Jesus coming into the world was good news..... and of course, the smart guy in the city of Colossae would have said, "I have never heard of Jesus, and why is him coming into the world good news?"

To explain why he came, Epaphras may have used the Matthew's words in In Matthew 1, when the angel spoke to Joseph, after Joseph discovered Mary was pregnant and he wanted to divorce her quietly..... The angel and told Joseph, not to be afraid to take Mary as your wife..... "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

As Epaphras explained the gospel, he surely told these men and women in Colossae that The great news about Christ coming into the world was that He was coming to save us.... Coming on a rescue mission..... the gospel is the wonderful message about the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and how His death and resurrection saves us from our sin..... The gospel includes many many things.... But two you don't want to miss are the words: "sin and savior."

If those two phrases are not included in your presentation or understanding of the gospel, then you have not understood it.....

Now remember, Epaphras had to teach them..... they had to hear the word of truth..... They had to understand it..... they had to learn it.....we know it is the Spirit of God that opens blind eyes, but it is also our responsibility to teach the truth of the Gospel from God's Word as clear as we can.....

Tonight, for our evening service, I am going to show you a video made by New Tribes Missions that is called Eetow..... The word Eetow, means it is true, it is very true..... It is a documentary of some missionaries presenting the gospel to an indigenous tribe in Papua New Guinea..... called the Mouk people

They used a curriculum that is now called creation to Christ..... It has been used with great success in many tribal areas around the world.....The instruction starts in Genesis, then goes through the Old Testament to give a background for our need for the gospel... our need for the good news about Christ.....

You see, by simply saying that you need a savior.... The logical question is, "A Saviour from what?" the answer of course is, "A saviour from your sin." The next 2 questions might be; "What is sin? And why do I need to be saved from my sin?"

Today, in our own country where the majority of the population is biblically illiterate, and we have all been marinating in a philosophy that says we are good, we can make it on our own....God does not exist.... Or there is no need for God.. our culture has no concept of what sin is, when it started, why we are sinners, and why salvation should matter to them....

In this Eetow documentary, you see how the progression of teaching the fall in Genesis, the effects of the fall throughout the Old Testament, and how Jesus was the one promised to come and save... who finally arrived and died for sin..... When the tribe grasped this, when they understood their sin before a Holy God..... and they understood the sacrifice that Jesus paid for them by dying on the cross for their sin..... it was truly amazing..... but they had to be taught.....

And, part of you and I learning the gospel.... And surely part of Epaphras instruction in the gospel is we might have to point people back to the beginning and tell them that God created Adam and Eve, and he set them in a garden with only one command to obey..... "do not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil." And the day came when Eve was tempted by the devil, she succumbed to his temptation, and she ate.... Then she gave some to Adam and he ate.

From that moment, sin came in to the world and all of the consequences that came along with it..... You will have to read Genesis 3 to have a more clear understanding, but as soon as Adam and Eve ate, they were separated from one another, they were now going to struggle in their marriage... they are going to struggle to survive or make a living....., struggle in their family, in child bearing and rearing.....,

and because of their sin, God drove them from the garden..... they were expelled from God's presence, no longer in fellowship with him..... and now..... because of their sin and disobedience, they are under his wrath and the curse of both temporal and eternal death.

The entire chapter is a demonstration that the God who created us is Holy, Pure, good, and just..... Habak 1 tells us that God's eyes or countenance cannot see or look at evil.....His holiness, purity, and goodness means that he cannot dwell with evil.....and because he is just, sin and evil must be punished.....

Epaphras may have gone on and explained that in the Old Testament, in His mercy, God provided a way for man to come to Him for cleansing and forgiveness.....sin must be punished, and the sacrificial system was put in place for men and women to come with a sheep or a lamb or a ram that was unblemished and perfect, and they could be offered up as a sacrifice in order for the blood of the animal to appease or assuage the wrath of God that was against them because of their sin.....

the animal died as a substitute.....The animal's life paid the payment that was owed to God because of sin....we are told in Leviticus that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin.....

How this applies to us is that The Bible tells us that Adam was the representative of the whole human race, and his sin was passed down to us, and we continue in sin and are under the same wrath and just condemnation as Adam and Eve were...

We, too, are sinners.....we, too, have no fellowship with God..... Look at the Way Paul describes our predicament later in colossians chapter 1 verse 21..... He tells us that we are alienated from God, we are hostile toward God, and we do evil deeds against God.... Romans 3 tells us there is none righteous, no not one, and Ephesians 2 tells us that we are dead in trespasses and sin.....

This does not mean that we will commit every sin we are capable of.... But it does mean we are capable of committing any and every sin..... we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and one sin separates us from a holy God..... And, it is our sin that that condemns us to an eternity in hell.

Epaphras may have said that Sin is anything that violates God's Word in your words, actions, attitudes, thoughts, or motives..... If you commit one sin, tell one lie, have one lustful thought, have one wrong motive, or say one abusive word..... you are guilty of breaking all of God's law.....we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Beloved, you cannot understand the gospel, if you do not understand sin.....and, not sin in general.... But understand it personally..... You cannot understand the gospel, the good news until you come to the place where you see and admit that you personally are a sinner.....you have to admit, "I know that in me dwells no good thing."

this, surely, is what Epaphras told these men and women in colossae.....

he had to give them the bad news..... "You are sinners and you are under God's just wrath and condemnation." that is the bad news

Thanks be to God it does not stop there..... Enter the gospel.... There are a number of places we can turn in our Bibles, and there a number of references in the bible Epaphras could have used in his explanation.....and I want you to turn to I Peter 1:22 so we can hear about this good news.....

"He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.¹⁰"

Verse 22 begins by telling us that Jesus was perfect..... He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.....he was unblemished and holy In verse 24, we are told that Jesus bore our sins in his body..... These two truths are so significant to the gospel..... Because verse 22 tells us that Jesus was holy and righteous..... and verse 24 tells us that by bearing our sins..... He was our substitute.....

He was our unblemished sacrificial lamb.....Verse 24 goes on to say that The way he bore our sins in his body was on a tree.....that reference to the tree is a reference to the cross.....When Jesus died on the cross, He bore our sins..... elsewhere it states, "he became sin for us." On the tree, or on the cross, God poured out His wrath on His Son who became sin..... On the cross, Jesus took the penalty we deserve..... and in the process, we have been given His righteousness, which we don't deserve.

Beloved, that is the good news..... that is the glorious news..... That God sent His son into the world to save sinners..... that Jesus died in our place..... That we might have life in Him..... and

10 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Pe 2:22-24). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

the final part of the good news is that though he died, and was buried, he rose again on the 3rd day never to die again..... and those who put their faith and trust in His atoning death and resurrection will be raised with Him to be with Him forever and ever and ever....

And, the right response to this news is to repent..... to turn from our sin, and trust in Jesus Christ as the only sacrifice for the sin we are admitting to and turning from.....

That my friends is the gospel.....we need the bad news to then give you the good news....do you believe it? Do you see the main elements in it that make it true?

God is Holy, We are sinners, You need to admit you are a sinner, Jesus is perfect, Jesus is our substitute, Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead. We receive his righteousness when repent or turn from our sin and we put our faith and trust in him

This is so much more than ask Jesus into your heart..... beloved, if we don't get the gospel right, our foundation will be off forever... Let me ask you, "on what basis or what grounds would you say you are accepted by God?"

One of the most harmful effects on the church in the past several decades is a gospel without sin, without a savior, without repentance..... Without these elements, it is not the gospel..... Many are under the illusion that they are saved because they were asked if they want to go to heaven and they said, "Yes." so they prayed and asked Jesus in their heart..... that is not the gospel.....

In a different ministry, many years ago, I was confronted with this.... I met ladies in their 70's who were convinced that their sons or daughters were believing Christians because 50 years earlier on the last night of VBS, some asked, "Do you want to go to heaven? Or, Do you want to be accepted by God?" And their child said yes by raising their hand..... They were told in order to be accepted by God or to go to heaven, then needed to pray and ask Jesus into their heart..... and they did..... so, from mom's perspective, they are in..... saved.... They are now Christians...

They never have showed any evidences of believing faith..... Never involved in a local church..... Rarely darken a church door..... Never having victory over various sins.... No changes, no fruit.... But, mom says, "They have Jesus in their heart."

Remember, Paul began with the fact that the gospel is something that has content.... It must be heard, and understood, and learned.... And it must be true..... A person is not a Christian if they have not understood and believed the basic elements of the good news..... beloved, we have to get this right..... and we have to keep preaching it until we all know it..... A Holy God, sinful man, a crucified risen Savior, and a response of repentance and faith....

Which brings me to my 3rd and final point..... The lives of those who believe in the true gospel will demonstrate new life in Christ.....

Verse 4 tells us that Paul had “heard of your faith in Christ Jesus.” This is a profound statement..... they were not known for trusting in their good works; they were not known for trusting in their own merit.... They weren’t trusting in trying to be good, trying to win God’s favor..... When they first heard the gospel preached, they believed that Christ was the way, the truth and the life and no one could come to the Father except through Him..... The first evidence of understanding and learning the gospel is putting your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. And this apparently was visible and known enough for Paul to hear about it through Epaphras....

But the evidence or what was known about them did not stop there.....along with their faith being known, the 2nd half of verse 4 states that Paul was aware “of the love that you have for all the saints,¹¹” . we know the love that is described here is agape love... which is an observable action, not a gushy feeling..... And, as I said before and I will continue to say, it presupposes interaction... it assumes there is involvement with each other....

We have seen from I Corinthians 13 that Love is an action, it is patient, kind, not jealous or envious..... we will see later in Colossians that love is demonstrated by serving one another, forgiving one another and having compassion for one another..... and when our time together is only from 11 to 12:15 on Sunday’s, you can’t really demonstrate love to each other....

Paul would only know of their love for each other by what took place from Monday through Saturday.....

Now, I don’t want to be the guy that keeps pounding the same drum.....but it is mentioned enough in the book of Colossians that it might seem like I am... love is seen in outward actions..... The greatest love is the love of Christ, and he said “Greater love hath no man than this, that one lay down his life for His friends.” Laying down your life, would imply involvement, commitment, and participation.....

We saw this last week, when we noticed all of the family language in verses 1 and 2..... Timothy is described as our brother, we know that saints are believing Christians, faithful brothers includes brothers and sisters, and the grace and peace come from God our father.....we as believers in Christ are part of the family of God

nothing is more joyous than fellowshiping with our own children and or own parents and our own brothers and sisters who are believing Christians...

11 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 1:4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

But, let's not forget that Jesus said that his brothers, sisters, and mother are those that do the will of God.... And, my challenge to all of us today, and will be in the future is for all of us to ask God to help us to demonstrate our love to one another by learning more about each other..... spending time with some who we don't know as well.... and, maybe our first baby steps could be more involvement with each other as a body..... Come to the family luncheon... come and see EE taow tonight and talk afterward.....invite someone over.....

maybe these will be platforms then allow that to spill out into building relationships.....

Now, notice the reason Paul states that they are united to Christ and united to one another..... verse 5...

⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.¹²

Do you see what unites us? Do you see what brings us together? It is not deer season.... It is not what school or team we root for..... it is not that we are on the same level economically..... it is not because we have similar educations..... Paul attributes their commitment to Christ and to one another to the "hope we have in heaven," or to our eternal life, or being in the kingdom of God, together."

This is so important, and this is why we need to have a more clear view of the gospel.....

When people are saved from a horrific event, it is not unusual for them to be united for life.....You hear this from WW II Veterans and others..... my neighbor in Florida was on a battleship over 50 years ago, that collided with an aircraft carrier..... someone made a big mistake.....

He was thrown nearly across the entire mess hall..... 7 people died, the carrier had a huge hole in it's hull..... And it was absolutely frightening at multiple levels..... the survivors meet annually and will for the rest of their lives....they were united over what they were saved from.....though they mourned the loss of their comrades....

When we think that we are united because of the hope we have in heaven..... It is a reminder that we were saved from a far more horrific event than any thing on this earth..... we were saved from God's wrath and judgment..... and through no merit of our own, no goodness of our own, we were brought into the family of God, saved from God's judgment and wrath, and given an eternal hope of heaven....

This is what binds us.... This is what bring us together..... this is why we have unity..... this is why we have fellowship and harmony.....

12 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 1:4-5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Paul describes it in more detail in chapter 1 verse 12-14...

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹³

when you believed and trusted in the true gospel, you who were not qualified, were not deemed qualified..... you, who had no inheritance, now share one with other believers.....you who were under a darkness that you could escape, have been delivered from that darkness..... you who were not worthy of the kingdom of Christ, have been transferred into His kingdom..... you who were a slave of sin were redeemed..... and you who were lost and hell bound were forgiven.....

It is because of all of this and even more that you have faith in Christ and love others in the body of Christ.....because they have the same hope of heaven that you do.....and they too have been qualified, transferred, delivered, redeemed, and forgiven.

The more we understand doctrine, the more we understand our predicament as sinners..... the more we understand our helplessness and our hopelessness.... The more we understand our eternal condemnation and our being sentenced to an eternal death in hell.....

And then, the more we understand our savior, his suffering, his dying, and rising again.....the more we understand God's mercy, and love for us, and His wrath that was poured out on His son.....the more we understand what we were saved from and what we are saved to.....

The more we understand all these things, then the more we will really hang on to the hope we have in heaven, and the more we will be united with other believers who have the same hope of heaven and eternal life..... we are united because we have been saved from the most horrific future.... Though undeserving sinners....

And, Paul does not stop here with the evidences of believing the true gospel..... He also states that it was bearing fruit and growing in verse 6

When ever we see the word fruit..... we should always understand it in 2 ways....

One is reproduction..... Apple trees produce apples.....And we do believe that when the true gospel is being proclaimed, that God will produce fruit from the gospel seeds that are planted.... So, we pray for conversions..... we pray for growth in the church..... we pray for baptisms..... we pray for more people to come join us.....

13 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 1:12–14). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

When Paul preached, he anticipated that the Word of God would bring people to saving faith and churches would grow and multiply, and we need to pray to that end..... and Paul may have been referring to this when he said that the gospel was bearing fruit and growing

Along with that, we need to also see fruit as the fruit of the Spirit that Paul explains to us in Galatians 5..... he writes in verse 22...

the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.¹⁴

The results of God's Spirit living in and through us means that we should be becoming more loving, more joyful, more peaceful, more patient, more kind and so on.....

I hope and pray that if someone knew you 5 years ago..... And if you have been a believer all that time..... I hope and pray that someone could give testimony on your behalf that over the last 5 years, these qualities have become more and more apart of your life....

Fruit is the evidence of belief in the true gospel.....

Let me close by asking a few questions:

*Have you admitted you are a sinner and have you trusted in Christ alone to save you?

*Does your life reflect the evidences that you believed the true gospel, or that you have put your faith and trust in Christ to save you?

*Has your faith produced a love for other Christians? Not a feeling, but the action of love?

*Are you absolutely sure you have eternal life? Do you have a hope laid up in heaven?

*Can those around you attest to the fact that you are a growing Christian? Not perfect, but being conformed into the image of Christ.....

These do not save you, but should be at least some of the evidences of your life in Christ.

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ help you to know, understand, learn and believe the true gospel. And may the evidences of your faith in Christ be known to those around you as you determine to walk faithfully with Him.

14 [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Ga 5:22–23). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

