**The Church at Colosse**

**Introduction:**

Colossians forms a part of what is usually called the “Prison Epistles”: Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon being the others. These books are so-called because they were written during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment. [61-63 A.D.] The city itself was located in Asia Minor, Phrygia in particular, on the banks of the river Lycus. Today this is modern Turkey. Laodicea was only about ten miles west and Ephesus another one hundred miles.

There is no direct statement in the Scripture telling about the establishment of the church there. From information in this book and in Philemon, it is very possible that the church at Colosse met in Philemon’s house.

Why did Paul write this letter? While imprisoned in Rome, he was able to receive visitors. Apparently Epaphras came to Paul telling him how the church at Colosse was doing. Certain ones had begun teaching error on different subjects, especially on who Christ really was. This error stemmed from two different groups: Jews [In the 3rd century B.C. Antiochus III had sent two thousand families here.] and Gentiles. [Many of whom were saying that Jesus was not the Son of God.] So Paul stressed in this letter that Jesus possessed the fullness of the Godhead and that Christians’ spiritual needs are all met in Christ. We are complete in Him.

Paul’s method of refuting error should serve as a model for us today. He did not seek some middle of the road compromise, but used the sword of the Spirit to cut away error to reveal the truth. Only the truth can make us free. (John 8:32) “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” NKJV *“The book of Colossians calls all Christians to love Christ and His truth.” T. Warren*

**Text:** Colossians 1:1-8

Colossians 1:1-2 “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” NKJV

**Theme:** The truth is essential for the church to survive.

**Body:**

1. **The Truth Produces Faith and Love** Colossians 1:3-4, 7-8 “We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.” NKJV

Epaphras, a minister to the church at Colosse, had informed Paul of their faith and love. Faith comes from hearing God’s Word. (Romans 10:17) “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” NKJV (John 17:17) “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” NKJV This kind of faith cannot be kept quiet or hidden because it is active. Others will soon hear about this and wonder what is happening. (Romans 1:8) “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.” NKJV It gives us strength when we hear about the strong faith of others. We are thankful for it. (Ephesians 1:15-16) “Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:” NKJV Paul was thankful for their faith in Christ Jesus. Their faith was not in angels, human philosophy, mankind, but in Christ. This is the only kind of faith that can save. (Galatians 3:26-27) “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” NKJV The truth also produces love both for God and for each other. (I John 4:7-11) “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” NKJV (I John 3:18-19) “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.” NKJV The Holy Spirit, through His Word [the truth] should influence us to love each other with a “pure heart fervently.”

1. **The Truth Produces Hope** Colossians 1:5 “because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,” NKJV The Colossians’ hope had come through the truth, the gospel. It did not come from feelings, but from a proper understanding of the truth. (Ephesians 1:13a) “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:” NKJV Their hope was one of eternal happiness and joy in heaven. (I Peter 1:3-4) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,” NKJV Our hope is based on Christ and His resurrection from the dead. (Colossians 1:27) “To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you the hope of glory.” NKJV So unless Christ is in us and we in Him, we have no real hope. (Galatians 3:27) “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” NKJV The knowledge and confidence of this hope can be a very powerful influence in our lives. (Hebrews 6:18-19) “that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,” NKJV
2. **The Truth Produces Fruit** Colossians 1:6 “which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;” NKJV The gospel, the truth which sets man free, came to them and bore fruit in two ways.
* First, it produced children of God, the Christians at Colosse. (I Peter 1:22-23) “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,” NKJV

 The pure gospel will only produce Christians – not a certain “kind” or “type” of Christian, but only Christians – nothing more, nothing less. It will produce “saved” people, not a member of a religious order, cult, or denomination. It’s impossible for the gospel to produce anything other than a Christian.

* The truth also produces good works in the lives of each Christian, works of righteousness. When the gospel is received and allowed to influence our hearts, precious fruit is brought forth, such as is described in James 3: 17-18. “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” NKJV

**Invitation:**

Do you possess real hope as we have seen today? Only those in Christ have it. Is your Christian life producing fruit because of your active faith?

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