

Monday, November 7, 2022 ▫ Colossians 1:3–8

Questions from the Scripture text: What does the apostle give to Whom (v3a)? When doing what (v3b)? For what two things is he thankful and toward whom, respectively (v4)? What has been the foundation of this faith and love (v5)? Where did they hear of this hope? Where did this gospel come, and to where has it now gone (v6)? What is it bringing forth? What did they hear and know, that produced this fruit? From whom, also, had they learned this grace (v7)? What two things does the apostle call Epaphras? What else has Epaphras declared, to whom (v8)?

How do believers encourage one another? Colossians 1:3–8 looks forward to the devotional in this week’s midweek meeting. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **one of the ways that believers especially encourage one another is by thanking God with and for one another.**

Just as he testifies that he always does when he prays for them, so the apostle here also does as he writes to them: he gives thanksgiving to God. Let us learn to be full of thankfulness to God, so that it comes out in everything that we do! Especially when we are going to be rebuking or warning of danger, as the apostle will be against Jewish legalisms and Greek philosophizing, we can have and communicate a right attitude if we begin with whatever thanksgiving we can give for whatever true evidences of grace we can see.

By offering thanksgiving not only in his prayers but also here in the letter, the apostle models for us three great subjects of thankfulness in our prayers: the measure of God’s grace, the means of God’s grace, and the ministers of God’s grace.

First, we are to be thankful for the **measure** of God’s grace. Indeed, to measure this is to measure God Himself. As not only our Father in Christ, but Christ’s everlasting Father within the Godhead (v3), we see that in His Son, God has given Himself to us and for us. So when we praise God for giving them faith (v4a), and love (v4b), and hope (v5), we do so knowing the great cost at which these have all been purchased: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son!” Jesus is “our” Lord because His Father gave Him to be so.

Second, we are to be thankful for the **means** by which God’s grace is given us. This great gift of God Himself, with its great fruit in their lives of faith and love and hope, has come to them in a very simple fashion. True words entered their ears (v5b). What a marvelous gift God gives us, when He gives us to hear the words of the truth of the gospel! What extraordinary blessing He bestows on us and wonders He works in us through such an ordinary means as preaching! And it was like this not only in Colossae but in the whole world; it was the preaching of the gospel that bore this fruit (v6). How important, then, to stick to this preaching and reject the false self-advancement either of moralism like the Judaizers or humanistic philosophy like the Greeks.

Finally, we are to be thankful for the **ministers** by whom God’s grace came to us. Paul had not planted the church at Colossae; Epaphras had. Still, the apostle piles up the affectionate (“beloved fellow-slave”) and commendatory (“faithful servant of Christ”) language. There is no spirit of rivalry here—only joy over another’s labor and a desire that those who have benefited would also be grateful to God for him. He gladly affirms to the Colossians Epaphras’s Christ-wrought service. For his part, Epaphras had done quite similarly, telling Paul of the Colossians’ Spirit-wrought love. Let us learn to incubate thankfulness for believers’ graces when speaking to God, so that our speech to one another may be filled with mature thanksgiving for one another.

What gives God’s gifts to you their true measure? How does your thankfulness reflect the greatness of God’s gift of Christ? What place does this give preaching, prayer, and the sacraments in those things for which you are thankful? How do you practice fostering and expressing your thankfulness for other Christians?

Sample prayer: Our gracious God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—how glorious is Your goodness to the children of men that for us You have given God the Son! Every one of your good gifts to Your adopted children in Him come in that love—but especially that Christian faith, love, and hope that we have in heaven with Him. We bemoan before You how small our thankfulness has been—both for Your grace and for those means by which You give it to us. Help us to treasure Your means of grace, and those believers with whom You have united us in grace, especially in the Son of Your grace, Jesus Christ, in Whose Name we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP22C “I’ll Praise You in the Gathering” or TPH433 “Amazing Grace”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Colossians 1:3-9. These are God's words. 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 saints because of the hope, which is laid up for you in heaven of which you heard before, Then the word of the truth of the gospel which has come to you as it all has.

Also in all the world and is bringing forth fruit as it is also among you since the day you heard. And you the grace of God and truth as you also learn from a pathrus, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ. In your behalf, He also has declared to us your love and the spirit.

And I'll go ahead and include for sine For this reason. We also since the day, we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and ask that. You may be filled with the knowledge of his will, and all wisdom and spiritual understanding, So farther and reading of Gods inspired, and the narrant word.

And then in which we learned that believers give thanks for one another that believers. Our interested in one another that believers, pray for one another and that believer's labor to serve one. Another First believers give thanks for one another. We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord.

Jesus Christ, praying always for you etc. Why give thanks for one another well because the first place he heard of their faith in Christ Jesus. This faith was not something they produced by an exercise of their wills. Surely they chose to trust in Christ to rest in Christ to belong to Christ to love him.

And yet it was God who gave the grace, by which they were enabled and made to choose. And so he gives thanks for them because they believe God is the author of one another's faith. So when we know other believers, we see people on whom God has done a marvelous work and when God does a marvelous work, the right response to God is to be thankful.

It is a big part of our fellowship that we would be thankful for one. Another helps us to develop that love which covers over a multitude of sins. Speaking of love, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of your love for all the saints, that's one thing.

If someone loves some of the saints who are like them and yet Jesus basically says about that. In Matthew chapter 5. Don't the Gentiles do that. Love those who love them. Are you any better than tax collectors when you do that? And it's not just many of the saints where I'm pretty good with Christians.

There are some of them.

No, They love all the saints. Why? Well, as they love all the saints, it's because they're saints. And so that thankfulness that Paul and Timothy with him expresses to God for them. It's something they also have learned to express to God for others. They've recognized that a believer is holy and set apart to God and so not only someone in whom God has done a gracious work but someone to whom God has joined himself.

Someone with whom God has associated himself. Now, There are situations and people's social circles or someone is sort of an outcast. And then the one who is the most, well liked and maybe something of a leader in the social circle, decides that they are going to bring the outcast along as as one of them as someone who is their friend.

And suddenly everybody is kind of okay with the outcast at least for the leadershaker for the popular. One's sake. Well, this helps us and how we think even of incredibly professing people who are often not acting like believers. If we have reason for rebuke or charges or whatever, we can start by coming to them, privately, follow Matthew, 18, etc, and maybe they'll be exposed.

But if there really isn't anything chargeable per se, just very partially sanctified. Then one of the things that we can do is we could say, This is a baptized member of the church, which means God has put his sign up on them and associated himself with them and called them.

Holy like he calls the children of believers. Holy and first Corinthians 7 and treats them. As if both parents were believers. Even if just one parent is a believer. And so God, we are to not despise them for the sake of one unbelieving parent. Well, If the Lord has set someone apart as holy and called them saint, and I've been willing to identify himself with them, Then we can love them, then we can be thankful for them.

And if it's turns out that they're inward spiritual condition is not does not match their external condition. Yet God was pleased to associate with himself with them for a time and we are to love them. If one of the apostles somehow could have known that Judas was reprobate, He still would not have had Good cause to treat Judas poorly or differently.

Jesus himself washed. Jesus's feet. Jesus himself served to just the supper before Judas went and did what he did. And so they love all the saints. So the apostles thankful for them because of their faith and because of their love and because of their hope these three things that remain faith, hope and love that belong to all believers, So verse 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.

Okay, So we give thanks for believers, We pray for believers. He says praying, always for you in verse 3 and we picked up verse 9 to open that up a little bit For this reason. We also since the day, we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with all sorry.

Be felt be filled with the knowledge of be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. So we pray for one another, we don't just give thanks for one for one another. Why? Because believers in this world still have work to do and especially to have done in them.

And so if we love one another, if we give, thanks for one another, we need to pray for one another God is still doing. He has begun a gracious work and so we thank God for that part, but he is going to complete that gracious work on the day of Christ Jesus.

He, I've been confident of this that he who began a good work in. You will be faithful to complete it or to perfect it in the day of Christ. Jesus. And so we respond to the beginning with thankfulness and he's done so far with thankfulness and we respond to God's continuing work in one another and prayer.

So we give thanks and we pray. And therefore, for praying, we want to hear about one. Another Now remembering what has happened before? But the which you heard before in the word of the truth, which of the gospel, they're thinking about what is happening in them. Now, which is come to you as it has an also 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, as you also learned from a pathras, our dear fellow servant who is a faithful ministers Christ, to near behalf who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

And so they remember Paul. And Timothy remember the work that was done in Colosse, all they were there but they're interested in the ongoing work, They wanted to know from the pathress. Do they continue in the grace in which they began? And the perforce said, yes, They do. Love all the saints and there is love as the Spirit.

Describes love. We all should care about how one another are doing wants to hear from one another So forth. So we give thanks for one another. We pray for one another. We want to hear about one another. So, we are inquire about one another, and we serve one another, not only may, we participate in the work of God by praying, but he's given each of us a role that role might just be praying and not forsaking the assembly and attending well upon the means of grace for ourselves, both in public, and in the home.

So that we are growing, which is an encouragement to other believers, shunning worldliness in ourselves so that we don't become an occasion by which our brothers and sisters are bogged down and made spiritually. Sluggish and worldliness being careful about the things that we talk about wanting to talk in such a way that will help others grow in Christ, etc.

And then there are those who have other rules parents with their children. For instance, elders in the church and not only Therefore, We did Paul and Timothy proclaimed to them. The truth of the gospel. As he was talking about in verse 5, not only did Epaphras continue teaching them, the gospel as it says in verse 7.

But this letter itself is a service of the Apostle writing to them words and here inspired words that the spiritual used to grow them in the grace and knowledge of Christ. And so we want to build one another up not just here of them and and give thanks for them and pray for them but to be careful in our own lives.

And in our interactions with them, that we act in such a way that participates in this work of grace, that God has begun a note, the apostle doesn't just give. Thanks to God. He tells them that he gives thanks to God for them. That encouragement is a big part of what he is doing.

Here is good for us to to tell one another, you know, I think God for you. That's very apostolic. Should probably do it more with my dear wife and my dear children and more congregation, but that's one of the reasons that we read the Bible. The Lord uses it to remind us and even to work in us because it's a means of his grace.

So it's asking to do that work. That's right.

Thank you, Father, for this portion of your word and what you show us. How believers relates to one another and build one. Another up, give us thankfulness to you. Give us an, I torts that work which you do in our brothers and sisters like a stankful for what we see, give us that confidence that you are still working and will complete it in Grant to us therefore to be prayerful for what you are still doing and continue to do.

Pray that you would give us love for all the saints precisely, because you've set them apart to yourself, grant to us to see them as joined to you, so that we might love them for your sake and help us to live in such a way, that not only honors you, But seeing how you love and are zealous for your work, in those whom you are saving, help us to live in a way that loves them and serves them.

And builds them up in the faith as well. Grant their spirits blessing upon your word to use this portion of it to conform us to Christ. In his name, we ask it. Amen.