

INTRODUCTION.

WE FIND THE FIRST MAIN SECTION OF COLOSSIANS IN ~ 1: ~ 3-8.

▶▶It's a paragraph in which Paul expresses gratitude for these believers ~ ¶¶

▷▷and then expands on his statement of gratitude.

↳↳Let's just jump right in.

IN VERSE 3a, ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ "WE ALWAYS THANK GOD, ~ THE FATHER OF OUR Lord Jesus Christ."

SINCE IT WAS WHILE PRAYING FOR THEM ~ WHEN HE THANKED GOD, ~ HE IS NO doubt implying ~ that he is thanking the Lord for them ~ ¶¶

▶▶and ~ for what the Lord had done ~ and was doing ~ in their lives.

▶▶We just recently talked about being thankful for our fellow believers.

▷▷And here we have a reminder.

IN VERSE 3b, ~ PAUL TELLS THE BELIEVERS IN COLOSSAE ~ THAT HE GIVES thanks for them when he prays for them.

TWO OBSERVATIONS HERE.

1st, ~ OBSERVE, ~ "WHEN" ~ NOT "IF" ~ WE PRAY FOR YOU.

▶▶He definitely prayed for them. ¶¶ 1/13

▶▶ And we see from [verse 9b](#) ~ that it was ongoing ~ and not sporadic ~ prayer for them.

▷▷ He says, ~ ["we have not ceased to pray for you."](#)

↳↳ He constantly prayed for believers.

↳↳ We see it here ~ and we also saw it in Ephesians and Philippians.

▶▶ Constant intercessory prayer for fellow believers.

▷▷ Paul was a model for us ~ when it comes to intercessory prayer.

▶▶ Note Paul's exhortation to us regarding prayer ~ in his passage on spiritual warfare.

▷▷ [Eph. ~ 6: ~ 18.](#) ~ he calls us ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to pray ["at all times in the Spirit, ~ with all prayer and supplication. ~ ~ ¶¶](#)

→→ ["To that end, ~ keep alert with all perseverance, ~ making supplication for all the saints."](#)

▶▶ Our natural tendency, ~ I would suggest, ~ is to focus ~ mostly or ~ totally ~ on our own concerns.

▷▷ Paul turns us away from that thinking ~ by telling us ~ to remember our fellow believers in our prayers.

▶▶ Another tendency we have, ~ I would submit to you ~ is to limit most of our praying ~ to prayers for people in crisis, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ e.g., ~ with health problems ~ or ~ in the midst of other kinds of difficulties.

▶▶ But Paul calls upon us ~ to be engaged in intercessory prayer for our brothers and sisters in Christ ~ ["at all times."](#)

▷▷ The phrase ~ ["praying at all times"](#) ~ does not mean ~ "always saying prayers."

↳↳ The phrase can also be translated ~ ["at every opportunity."](#) ¶¶ 2/13

▶▶IOW, ~ prayer in the believer's life is not just an option for occasional emergencies.

▷▷"praying at every opportunity" means that prayer is to become a habit for us.

↳↳Specifically for what we are talking about, ~ ¶¶

→→intercessory prayer for our fellow believers ~ is to become a routine part ~ of our daily lives.

THE 2nd OBSERVATION FROM VERSE 3b.

▶▶Observe Paul's ~ outward ~ focus.

▶▶Remember, ~ Paul was imprisoned, ~ chained to a Roman guard, ~ facing trial before Nero.

▷▷And yet, ~ he wasn't focused solely on himself and his problems.

↳↳He was ~ outward ~ and not ~ inward ~ focused.

→→David displayed a similar attitude in [Ps. 3](#).

▶▶Would it be safe to say ~ that our tendency ~ is to be ~ inward focused, ~ self-centered?

▷▷As new creations in Christ, ~ my . . . , ~ ¶¶

↳↳we are to be outward focused, ~ others-centered.

▶▶Recall from Philipians, ~ Paul called on us ~ to "count others more significant than [ourselves]."

▷▷Counting our brothers and sisters in Christ more significant than ourselves ~

↳↳means ~ that we put them above ourselves in priority.

→→They come first. ~ We come last. ~ We give them ~ the place of honor.

↳↳Their needs and concerns take precedence over our own. ¶¶ 3/13

▶▶ Also from Philippians, ~ remember, ~ Paul said, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Let each of you look ~ not ~ only to his own interests, ~ but also ~ to the interests of others."

▷▷ It's important to understand ~ that it's not ~ that believers ~ are not ~ to look out for our own needs and concerns.

↳↳ Paul says ~ "look not only" ~ to our own needs. ~ "only" is a key word here.

▷▷ But we are not to make our needs and concerns ~ a priority ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to the exclusion of our fellow believers' needs and concerns.

▷▷ Our sphere of concern ~ should be ~ broader ~ than ourselves, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and should include the needs and concerns ~ of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

IN VS. 4, ~ PAUL TELLS THEM WHY HE GIVES THANKS. ⇨⇨ WERE 2 REASONS.

FIRST, ~ IT WAS BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH.

▶▶ "faith" here ~ can be looked at as faithfulness.

▶▶ And it can be rendered, ~ "because we have heard of your faithfulness to Jesus."

▷▷ Paul mentioned their faithfulness in [verse 2](#), ~ and now thanks the Lord for their faithfulness.

▶▶ As we noted last time, ~ in light of the rise of false teaching, ~ this was very encouraging,

▷▷ We will see that there were some problems within the church ~ ¶¶

↳↳ of at least some of these believers following some error. ~ ~ [2:20](#).

▷▷ But, ~ from what Paul says, ~ the church largely stayed ~ united in ~ and faithful to ~ sound doctrine and godly living. ¶¶ [4/13](#)

▶▶Of course, ~ staying united in and faithful to sound doctrine and godly living ~ is just another way of saying that these believers were staying loyal to Jesus.

▶▶Based on the overall theme of Colossians, ~ ¶¶

▷▷I would suggest ~ that the implication here ~ is that false teaching tempts believers ~ to become disloyal to Jesus.

I WANT TO EXPAND ON THIS FOR A FEW MINUTES.

▶▶A good way to test if a Bible teaching is false, ~ is to answer this question: ~~ Does this teaching draw me to Jesus ~ or away from Jesus?

▷▷Deut. 13:1-3a, ~ "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you ~ and gives you a sign or a wonder, ~~ and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, ~ ¶¶

↳↳and if he says, ~ 'Let us go after other gods,' ~ which you have not known, ~ 'and let us serve them,' ~~ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams.

▷▷And Jer. ~ 23: ~ 32, ~ "Behold, ~ I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, ~ declares the Lord, ~ and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, ~ when I did not send them or charge them. ~~ So they do not profit this people at all, declares the Lord.

▶▶So, ~ if a Bible teaching draws us away from Jesus, ~ it is a false teaching.

▷▷A genuine preacher or teacher ~ will always ~ point to and draw people to ~ Jesus.

BUT ~ FALSE TEACHING ~ IS NOT THE ONLY THING ~ THAT TEMPTS US TO BECOME disloyal to Jesus.

▶▶The world is constantly tempting us ~ to turn our backs on Jesus.

▷▷There is always the danger ~ of falling in love with this present world ~ and abandoning the Lord. ¶¶ 5/13

▷▷ Demas, ~ one of Paul's coworkers, ~ is a case in point. ~ We'll come back to him at the end of the letter.

↳↳ Here I'll just mention him in passing as an illustration.

↳↳ In 2 Tim. ~ 4: ~ 10a, ~ Paul writes, ~ "For Demas, ~ in love with this present world, ~ has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica."

▶▶ And of course ~ our sin nature and the spiritual forces of evil ~ are always trying to get us ~ to veer away from Jesus.

▶▶ So there is a great need for us ~ to stay vigilant, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ so we're not caught off guard by these forces ~ and be led astray ~ and become disloyal to Jesus.

THE SECOND REASON PAUL GAVE THANKS TO GOD ~ FOR THE BELIEVERS IN Colossae ~ was because of their love for all the saints.

▶▶ Notice the word "the." ~ "the love that you have for all the saints."

▷▷ IOW, ~ this is not just any kind of love. ~ It is a specific love.

▷▷ The Greek word for "love" here ~ denotes caring love, ~ the love that counts no sacrifice too great for the one loved.

▶▶ In brief, ~ we could define it as ~ Christ-like love.

▷▷ Because it's the love that Jesus has for us.

▷▷ The love that Jesus has for us, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ the love that took him to the cross to die for our sins ~ is the love they had for their fellow believers.

▶▶ And notice the comprehensive nature of this. ~ Paul gave God thanks for them ~ because of the Christ-like love they had "for all the saints." ¶¶ 6/13

▷▷No believer was left out. ~ Their Christ-like love was directed to each and every believer.

▶▶And all believers ~ are to have this type of love for all other believers.

▶▶Jesus gave us the command to love one another in His upper room discourse.

▷▷Three times within the same teaching Jesus gave us this commandment.

↪↪Jn. 13:34, ~ "A new commandment I give to you, ~ that you love one another: ~
just as I have loved you, ~ you also are to love one another."

↪↪Jn. 15:12, ~ "This is my commandment, ~ that you love one another as I have loved you."

↪↪Jn. 15:17, ~ LEB ~ "These things I command you: ~ that you love one another."

▷▷The repetition shows the importance of the commandment.

▶▶And in every instance, ~ Jesus is talking about the same kind of love that Paul is talking about ~ in Col. ~ 3: ~ 4, ~ which Jesus defines for us

▶▶We are to love every one, ~ absolutely no believer is to be left out, ~ ¶¶

▷▷we are to love ~ every one ~ of our brothers and sisters in Christ ~ with Christ-like love.

THE CHURCH IN COLOSSAE ~ STANDS AS A MODEL ~ FOR US TO EMULATE, ~ ¶¶

▶▶in their loyalty to Jesus ~ and in their Christ-like love for all believers.

IN VERSE 5a, ~ PAUL NOTES THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THEIR LOYALTY AND love.

BECAUSE OF THE HOPE LAID UP FOR YOU IN HEAVEN, ~ HE SAYS. ¶¶ 7/13

▶▶ This hope ~ had ~ a strong, ~ positive influence on their lives, ~ but probably not in the sense ~ of creating their loyalty and love.

▶▶ Most likely, ~ their knowledge and understanding of ~ and focus on ~ this hope ~ ¶¶

▷▷ strengthened their loyalty to Jesus ~ and their Christ-like love for all believers.

BUT, ~ WHAT EXACTLY ~ IS THIS HOPE?

▶▶ Simply put, ~ "the hope" here ~ is the totality ~ of what God has promised the believer ~ at the end of the age and in the life to come.

▷▷ All believers have this hope, ~ and received it the moment of our conversion to Christ.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FOUR EXAMPLES OF WHAT OUR HOPE INCLUDES.

▶▶ 1st, ~ it includes ~ the promise of Jesus' second coming.

▷▷ In Titus ~ 2: ~ 13, ~ Paul writes, ~ "while we wait for the blessed hope, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ [then Paul explains what the "blessed hope" is] ~ the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, ~ Jesus Christ."

▶▶ 2nd, ~ God's promise of our resurrection and glorification ~ is also included in our hope.

▷▷ Phil. ~ 3: ~ 21, ~ tells us that when Jesus returns, ~ He "will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, ~ by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

▶▶ 3rd, ~ our hope includes ~ God's promise of our inheritance.

▷▷ In Ephesians, ~ Paul tells us that through Jesus ~ "we have obtained an inheritance."

▷▷ And in his first epistle, ~ Peter tells us ~ that our inheritance "is imperishable, ~ undefiled, ~ and unfading, ~ kept in heaven for" us. ¶¶ 8/13

▶▶ And 4th, ~ our hope includes ~ God's promise of a new universe.

▷▷ In his second epistle, ~ Peter says that ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "according to [God's] promise ~ we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

NOW, ~ IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that this "hope" ~ is not something ~ uncertain, ~ as if there were no guarantee of receiving it.

▷▷ It is absolutely certain ~ that we will receive our hope, ~

↳↳ that all of what God has promised the believer concerning the future ~ will be fulfilled.

NOTICE CAREFULLY WHAT PAUL SAYS IN VERSE 5a. ~~ "THE HOPE LAID UP FOR YOU IN heaven."

▶▶ "laid up" means ~ "to be laid away, ~ to be reserved, ~ put to one side."

▶▶ Metaphorically, ~ it means ~ "to be reserved for one, ~ awaiting him."

▷▷ And it is talking about being ~ securely ~ reserved.

▶▶ So, ~ what Paul is indicating ~ is that our hope is securely reserved and waiting for us.

▶▶ That's pretty good assurance ~ that we will definitely receive ~ all of what God has promised us at the end of this age and in the life to come.

BUT THERE'S MORE.

▶▶ Notice ~ where ~ our hope is securely reserved. ¶¶ 9/13

▷▷ In heaven, ~ "where neither moth nor rust destroys ~ and where thieves do not break in and steal."

↳↳ In heaven, ~ far out of danger of being lost.

▷▷ This means that ~ absolutely nothing and no one, ~ no circumstance, ~ no human or demonic force, ~ 77

↳↳ can touch ~ or have any kind of effect on ~ our hope.

AND THERE'S EVEN MORE.

▶▶ We already know ~ that our hope ~ is the totality ~ 77

▷▷ of what God has promised the believer at the end of this age and in the life to come.

▶▶ That means ~ our hope is based ~ on God's promises for the future, ~ not man's.

▶▶ A hope based on man's promises for the future ~ has no guarantee of fulfillment, ~ 77

▷▷ and quite often ~ leads to disappointment and discouragement.

▶▶ This is so ~ because people's promises ~ more often than not ~ go unfulfilled for one reason or another.

▷▷ E.g., ~ human beings have no control over the future.

▷▷ And often, ~ to get something in the present, ~ people lie ~ by promising something in the future ~ that they never intend to fulfill.

▶▶ But not so ~ with "the hope" based on God's promises.

▷▷ Every single one ~ of God's promises for our future, ~ are absolutely certain to be fulfilled.

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT? ~~ FOR AT LEAST FOUR REASONS. 77 10/13

▶▶1st, ~ God does not lie.

▷▷Num. ~ 23: ~ 19a, ~ "God is not a man, that he should lie, ~ nor a human being, ~ that he should change his mind"

▶▶2nd, ~ unlike humans, ~ God does control the future.

▷▷Is. ~ 46: ~ 9-10, ~ "remember the former things of old; ~ for I am God, and there is no other; ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳I am God, ~ and there is none like me, ~ declaring the end from the beginning ~ and from ancient times things not yet done, ~ saying, ~ 'My counsel shall stand, ~ and I will accomplish all my purpose.'"

▶▶3rd, ~ God always fulfills his promises.

▷▷Num. ~ 23: ~ 19b, ~ "Has he said, ~ and will he not do it? ~ Or has he spoken, ~ and will he not make it happen?"

▶▶And 4th, ~ God is sovereign and omnipotent, ~ so he has the ability to fulfill his promises.

▷▷In Jer. ~ 32, ~ Jeremiah prays for understanding.

↳↳Note how he begins his prayer. ~ Jer. ~ 32: ~ 17.

→→"Ah, ~ Lord God! ~ It is you ~ who have made the heavens and the earth ~ by your great power and by your outstretched arm! ~ Nothing is too hard for you."

↳↳God begins his response to Jeremiah this way. ~ Jer. ~ 32: ~ 27.

→→"Behold, ~ I am the Lord, ~ the God of all flesh. ~ Is anything too hard for me?"

MY ..., ~ IT IS AN ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY ~ THAT WE WILL RECEIVE OUR HOPE, ~ ¶¶

▶▶that all ~ of what God has promised the believer concerning the future, ~ will be fulfilled.

OK, ~ TO NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FOREST FOR THE TREES. ¶¶ 11/13

THE COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS' ~ KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ~ AND FOCUS
on ~ our hope ~ ¶¶

▶▶ strengthened their loyalty to Jesus ~ and their Christ-like love for all believers.

AND, ~ JUST AS IN THE CASE OF THOSE EARLY BELIEVERS, ~ ¶¶

OUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ~ AND FOCUS ON ~ OUR HOPE ~ WILL have
a strong, ~ positive influence on our lives.

▶▶ As we see in the lives of the believers in Colossae, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ this will strengthen ~ our loyalty to Jesus and our Christ-like love for our fellow
believers.

BUT, ~ YOU GUESSED IT, ~ THERE'S MORE.

▶▶ Our knowledge and understanding of ~ and focus on ~ our hope ~ ¶¶

▷▷ will help us endure the dark valleys of life, ~ even the darkest ones.

▷▷ Why is that? ~~ Because the hope reserved in heaven for us ~ reminds us ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that our sufferings are only "for a little while," ~ as Peter puts it, ~ ¶¶

→→ and that ~ we have a glorious eternal future waiting for us.

▶▶ Additionally, ~ our knowledge and understanding of ~ and focus on ~ our hope ~ ¶¶

▷▷ will help us maintain ~ the cosmic perspective ~ that we discussed some weeks ago.

▷▷ I.e., ~ we will continue to view life ~ ¶¶

↳↳ through the grid ~ of eternity and God's eternal plan ~ and not ~ through the grid ~
of the temporary here-and-now. ¶¶ 12/13

CONCLUSION.

THE HOPE RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR US.

▶▶ My . . . , ~ rest ~ in this. ~ Rejoice ~ in this. ~ Be encouraged ~ by this.

▷▷ Grow in the knowledge and understanding of our hope. ~ And focus on it.

▶▶ And we must never forget, ~ our hope is built on Jesus' blood and righteousness, ~ not our own.

▷▷ To paraphrase Paul, ~ For by grace ~ we have been saved through faith. ~ And this is not our own doing; ~ ↴↴

↴↴ it is the gift of God, ~ not ~ a result of works, ~ so that ~ no one ~ may boast.

LET'S PRAY 13/13