

THANKSGIVING FOR THE CHURCH, PT. 3; COL. 1:6b (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

RECALL FROM LAST TIME, ~ WE SAID THAT ~ AFTER PAUL NOTES THEY FIRST HEARD about our hope when they 1st heard the gospel, ~ he inserts brief discussion about the gospel.

▶▶ And this is what we'll be focusing our attention on ~ for the remainder of this first major section of Colossians, ~ chapter 1: ~ 3-8. ⇒⇒ Vv. 7-8, note re: Ep. ~ included at end of letter.

▶▶ From what Paul says about the gospel in vv. 5b-6, ~ we can make at least 7 observations.

▷▷ Now, ~ I didn't put it ~ in quite those terms last time and had included [verse 7a](#).

↳↳ But since I ended up going back to and expanding on this passage, ~ I refined my thinking ~ on how to look at and present this.

→→ Hopefully, ~ putting it in these terms will be helpful and not confusing to you.

▶▶ Ok, ~ from what Paul says about the gospel in vv. 5b-6, ~ we can make at least 7 observations.

LAST TIME, ~ WE MENTIONED THE FIRST FOUR OBSERVATIONS.

▶▶ 1st, ~ we observed that the gospel means good news.

▷▷ The gospel ~ is the good news ~ that Jesus of Nazareth ~ has solved the problem of sin and death ~ through his death, ~ burial, ~ and resurrection.

▶▶ 2nd, ~ we noted that Paul set forth the essential nature of the gospel: ⇒⇒ abs. truth.

▶▶ 3rd, ~ we observed the significant statement that the gospel came to Colossae.

▷▷ As we said, ~ this illustrates an extremely important scriptural truth. ~ ~ God seeks us. ~ ~ In our unsaved state, ~ we do not seek him. ⇓⇓ 1/9

▶▶ And 4th, ~ we noted that the gospel is for everyone in the whole world. ~~ It is not just for one nation or ethnic group.

▷▷ Again, ~ this does not mean all will be saved.

↪↪ It just simply means that the offer of the gospel is made to all people, ~ not just one nation or ethnic group

AND THAT'S WHERE WE BROKE IT OFF LAST TIME, ~ IN THE MIDDLE OF VERSE 6b.

▶▶ And that's where we'll pick it up today. ~~ But we're not going ~ to go far.

▷▷ We're going to make the next two observations, ~ both of which are in vs. 6b.

CONTINUING IN VS. 6b, ~ FROM WHAT PAUL SAYS ABOUT THE GOSPEL, ~ WE CAN observe ~ that the gospel ~ is alive and bears fruit.

AS INDEED IN THE WHOLE WORLD IT IS BEARING FRUIT.

▶▶ Paul is referring to the living nature of the gospel and its power to produce results. ~~ The results, ~ or fruit, ~ is salvation.

▶▶ In his first epistle, ~ Peter tells us that we "have been born again, ~ not from perishable seed ~ but imperishable," ~ namely, ~ "through the living and enduring word of God."

▷▷ The author of Hebrews declares that "the word of God is living and active."

▶▶ The gospel is the living and enduring word of God.

▶▶ And this tells us that the gospel is not of natural origin ~ but of supernatural origin.

▷▷ Gal. 1:10-12. ~~ NIV ~ I want you to know, ~ brothers and sisters, ~ that the gospel I preached ~ is not of human origin. ~~ I did not receive it from any man, ~ nor was I taught it; ~~ rather, ~ I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. ↴↴ 2/9

AND BEING THE LIVING & ENDURING WORD OF GOD, ~ THE GOSPEL BEARS FRUIT.

▶▶ I.e., ~ it produces salvation in all who call upon Jesus for salvation.

▶▶ Paul declares in [Rom. 1:16](#), ~ that the gospel ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, ~ to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

↳↳ It is not merely a witness to his power ~ but an expression of his power.

▶▶ When the gospel is preached, ~ this is not simply so many words being uttered. ~~ The power of God is at work.

▶▶ More specifically, ~ I would suggest, ~ the gospel is heavily loaded with the power of the Holy Spirit.

▷▷ He works through the message to convict the sinner and then regenerate those who respond positively to the gospel.

▶▶ In [1 Thess. 1:5a](#), ~ Paul says, "our gospel came to you not only in word, ~ but also in power ~ and in the Holy Spirit ~ and with full conviction."

▷▷ His point ~ is not ~ that the gospel was accompanied by mighty works, ~ though this happened.

↳↳ But that the gospel itself ~ is a mighty work.

→→ The Holy Spirit empowers the message ~ and brings it home to people's hearts with deep conviction.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ God's singular purpose in thus exercising his power in the gospel ~ is to change people's lives, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to liberate them from sin, ~ death, ~ and Satan, ~~ and ~ to reconcile them to himself.

↳↳ To put it very succinctly, ~ to save them. ¶¶ 3/9

▶▶ The gospel has power ~ to effect the salvation it announces ~ and ~ to impart the life it promises.

NOW, ~ IT'S EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND ~ THAT JUST BECAUSE THE gospel is the power of God for salvation, ~ people are not automatically saved.

▶▶ If people are to experience the power of God for salvation, ~ they must ~ hear and believe ~ the gospel.

▷▷ Rom. 10:17, ~ LEB ~ Consequently, ~ faith comes by hearing, ~ and hearing through the word about Christ.

▶▶ "For by grace you have been saved through faith," ~ Paul says in Ephesians.

▷▷ Whereas ~ God's grace ~ is the objective source of our salvation, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "through faith" is the subjective means ~ or channel ~ by which one receives God's grace and is saved.

THIS IS IMPORTANT, ~ BECAUSE THE SALVATION THAT WAS PURCHASED BY CHRIST'S death ~ is universal ~ in its provision.

▶▶ But it is not universal ~ in its application.

▶▶ One is not automatically saved because Christ died, ~ but one is saved when one puts their faith in God's gracious provision.

▶▶ Jn. 3:16 points this out.

▷▷ "For God so loved the world, ~ that he gave his only Son ~ [God's gracious provision], ~ that whoever ~ [universal provision, ~ i.e., ~ available to all] ~ ¶¶

↳↳ But one has to believe in Jesus ~ i.e., ~ to apply God's gracious provision to him/herself: ~ ~ ¶¶

→→ "that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." ¶¶ 4/9

BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER IN THE GOSPEL DOESN'T JUST SAVE US.

▶▶It transforms us into new creations.

▶▶Our old natures are fallen ~ and totally infected and corrupted by sin. ~~ And this old nature dominated us prior to salvation.

▶▶Speaking about his, ~ and our sin natures as well, ~ Paul says in [Rom. 7:18a](#), ~ [NIV](#) ~ ¶¶

▷▷For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, ~ that is, ~ in my sinful nature.

▶▶And [Jer. 17:9](#), ~ [NIV](#), ~ speaking of our sin nature, ~ says, ~ ¶¶

▷▷"The heart is deceitful above all things ~ and beyond cure. ~~ Who can understand it?"

↳↳I.e., ~ who can understand just how bad our sin nature is? ~~ On human level, ~ no one.

▶▶Beyond cure, ~ no good dwells, ~ totally infected and corrupted by sin, ~ fallen.

▶▶Our old nature is so bad ~ that God gives us a totally new nature when He saves us.

▷▷God does not reform the old nature. ~~ As Jeremiah says, ~ our old sinful human nature is incurable.

▶▶God the Holy Spirit creates totally new life in believers, ~ enabling a life of God-centered ~ and God-honoring things.

▶▶In [2 Cor. 5:17](#), ~ Paul writes, ~ "Therefore, ~ if anyone is in Christ, ~ he is a new creation. ~~ The old has passed away; ~~ behold, ~ the new has come.

▷▷It's not a remodeling or repairing of the old nature.

↳↳When we are born again, ~ we become a totally new person in Christ. ¶¶ 5/9

▶▶ And in Ezek. 36:26, ~ God says, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "And I will give you a new heart, ~ and a new spirit I will put within you. ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

▷▷ "a new heart" and "a new spirit," ~ which by instinct want to please, ~ to live for, ~ and to serve ~ God.

↳↳ The total opposite ~ of our old nature.

▶▶ And what's more, ~ always more, ~ at our death, ~ or if Jesus returns before then, ~ our sin natures ~ will be eradicated.

▶▶ This is what the gospel does for us. ~ ~ No wonder it's called good news!

BACK TO ~ AND CONTINUING IN ~ VERSE 6b, ~ FROM WHAT PAUL SAYS ABOUT the gospel, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ we can note ~ that the gospel ~ is going out into all the world without restriction.

PAUL SAYS, ~ "AS INDEED IN THE WHOLE WORLD IT IS . . . INCREASING."

▶▶ "increasing" means ~ "to increase, ~ to grow, ~ to spread, ~ to extend."

▶▶ And in this context, ~ it speaks of the outward expansion of the gospel.

▶▶ Remember, ~ the gospel originated with God, ~ and is dependent on Him for its advancement.

▷▷ That's why it advances in the whole world without restriction.

↳↳ That's why it can't be stopped. ¶¶ 6/9

▶▶ And that is the mistake ~ the hostile world makes.

▷▷ They think ~ they're going up against ~ some man-made invention, ~ which is dependent ~ on human beings for its advancement.

▷▷ The advice of Gamaliel to the other Pharisees is instructive here

↳↳ Acts 5:38-39a. ~ "So in the present case I tell you, ~ keep away from these men ~ and let them alone, ~ for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, ~ it will fail; ~ ~ ⚔⚔

→→ but if it is of God, ~ you will not be able to overthrow them. ~ ~ You might even be found opposing God!"

JESUS SAID, ~ "I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, ~ AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT prevail against it."

▶▶ And we see that that's exactly what he was doing, ~ according to Paul.

▷▷ Neither the mighty Roman empire nor Satan ~ could stop the spread of the gospel.

▶▶ After Stephen's martyrdom, ~ a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem.

▷▷ Except for the apostles, ~ the church was scattered throughout all the regions.

▷▷ And what were they doing? ~ ~ Not hiding.

▷▷ Luke says that the believers who were scattered ~

↳↳ preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went.

→→ E.g., ~ ~ Philip went down to Samaria, ~ preached the gospel, ~ and a spiritual awakening broke out.

▶▶ Recall, ~ from our study of Philippians, ~ we noted that Paul's imprisonment ~ ⚔⚔

▷▷ brought the gospel to the very heart of secular political power in Rome.

↳↳ As we also said, ~ even a citadel of Satan ~ can become a center for the gospel.

▶▶ In 2 Tim. ~ 2: ~ 2:8-9, ~ NIV ~ Paul writes, ~ "Remember Jesus Christ, ~ raised from the dead, ~ descended from David. ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ This is my gospel, ~ for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. ~ ~ But God's word ~ is not chained.

▶▶ And it's still true today. ~ ~ Every world government could outlaw Christianity tomorrow.

▷▷ And the second after that happens, ~ he who sits in the heavens will laugh.

↪↪ And go right on building his church.

▶▶ They can lock up the messengers. ~ ~ But they cannot ~ lock up the message.

▷▷ Paul and Silas in Philippi

▷▷ Paul imprisoned in Rome

▶▶ They can even kill and bury the messengers. ~ ~ But they cannot ~ kill & bury message.

▷▷ As we saw in the case of Stephen

▷▷ The body they may kill: ~ ~ God's truth abideth still, ~ His kingdom is forever.

▶▶ Oh yeah, ~ and Satan still cannot stop the spread of the gospel.

BE ENCOURAGED MY FELLOW BELIEVERS, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ no matter how hostile the culture around us gets, ~ they will not ~ stop ~ the spread of the gospel.

▶▶ And the spread of the Gospel ~ is the most important thing.

▷▷ Not ~ our personal comfort. ⇨⇨ Not ~ our personal rights. ⇨⇨ Not ~our personal ~ anything. ¶¶ 8/9

▶▶ Satan and the world ~ will not ~ stop ~ the spread of the gospel.

▶▶ Jesus will continue to build his church until it's completed.

▷▷ Nothing and no one ~ will stand in his way ~ or ~ prevent him from completing it.

↳↳ And then ~ he will return, ~ bring the curtain down on human history, ~ and set up His eternal kingdom.

▶▶ This is my Father's world, ~ O let me ne'er forget ~ That though the wrong seems oft so strong, ~ God is the Ruler yet.

▷▷ This is my Father's world, ~ The battle is not done; ~ Jesus who died shall be satisfied, ~ And earth and heaven be one.

CONCLUSION.

THE GOOD NEWS IS GOING OUT ALL OVER THE WORLD WITHOUT RESTRICTION.

▶▶ And it is constantly changing lives, ~ bringing people into the kingdom "from every tribe and language and people and nation."

▷▷ To God be the glory.

LET'S PRAY 9/9