

# The Hope of Glory

An Exposition of Colossians

May 31, 2020

*Sermon 2: Giving Thanks for the Hope of Glory*  
*Colossians 1:3-8*

**Opening Illustration:** What does God have to say to us today? What can He possibly offer in our times? Look around. We are living in days of Covid Confusion (no matter what side of any argument you are on), Racism and rioting...chaos in the streets of many of our cities and rage in the hearts of many of our brothers and sisters in Christ. If there was any time for us to look to the Lord Jesus Christ and thank Him for our hope of glory, it is now. Today it is as important as ever to remember that this world is not our home, this state of sin is not our eternity, this unrest cannot possibly disrupt our eternal rest. We have an absolute confidence in future blessedness. Let's take a while to explore these things in God's word.

What do you say? Teaching our kids to say "thank you." Why is it that we have to continually remind our kids, when they are little, to say "Thank you"? Why is it so important that we do? Appreciation is a very important thing, and this is so especially in our relationship to God. Biblical Christianity is the celebration of God's provision for our deepest need. Even apart from that, everything that we do enjoy and the capacity to enjoy it in the first place comes from God.

## I. Introduction

### A. This morning, we will begin to address the following questions:

1. How should we respond to the Lord for the hope of glory?
2. Does the hope of glory really do anything? Does it have any effect on us?
3. How do we reach people with the hope of glory?
4. What exactly is the gospel, the message of the hope of glory?
  - a) Perhaps this is the most important question.
  - b) How on Earth can we share a gospel we don't know and point others to something that we cannot define?

### B. My prayer for you this morning is that:

1. If you are already a believer, that this passage will fan the flames of your excitement for Christ, or perhaps rekindle an excitement that once existed, but now has faded.
2. If you are not already a believer, that this passage will stir within you an appetite for the glorious grace of God as seen in the word of truth, the gospel.
3. That everyone who hears this would be stirred to give thanks to the Lord.
  - a) I want us to strive to avoid the error referred to in **Romans 1:21**, "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
  - b) The Lord deserves gratitude from everyone. He is gracious to everyone.
    - (1) **Matthew 5:45** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

## II. Giving Thanks for the Hope of Glory. vv. 3-5

### A. We give thanks to a specific person for the hope of glory. (v. 3a)

1. This book (in essence) begins where we must always begin: with the praise of God.
2. The verb "give thanks" (eucaristew) is the main verb of the passage.
3. Why on Earth would Paul give thanks to God?

**ILL:** If you bought someone a birthday present and they turned around and thanked somebody else for it, wouldn't that irk you a little bit? I can only envision one scenario in which this would be appropriate. This would be appropriate if a parent buys a present for their child to give to another child. If I buy a present for my child to give another child and that other child thanks my child, then great. Is that what is happening here? Did the Colossians do something for God (something that He couldn't do for Himself) and then let Paul thank Him? Certainly not!

Mh genoito! No. Paul thanks God because God was worthy of being thanked for whatever Paul goes on to thank Him for.

- a) Why not thank the Colossians?
- b) Why not thank Epaphras, the one who brought the gospel to the Colossians?
- c) Because everything wonderful about the Colossians was given to them by God.

**Point:** Does this mean that Paul is ignoring or diminishing the faith or love of the Colossians? Of course not. Quite the contrary. Paul is celebrating the faith of the Colossians by thanking God for it. How would you react if somebody came up and said, “Your commitment to the Lord is so encouraging to me. I praise God for you!” Would you say, “Now, why thank Him if I am the one that encouraged you?” Of course not. You’d be afraid of lightning. ☺

#### **B. We give thanks in prayer for the hope of glory. (v. 3b)**

1. Notice that the way Paul expresses his appreciation to God for the Colossians is by praying for the Colossians.
  - a) “Praying” explains how Paul gives thanks for the Colossians.

**Application point:** Let me encourage you to do this! When people pop up in your mind fondly, pray for them. Ask God to preserve them, strengthen them, etc. We will get into this, Lord willing, next week.

2. Notice that Paul does this “constantly”—What does he mean by that?
  - a) What he can’t mean
    - (1) He cannot mean that he does nothing else but pray for the Colossians. Obviously, he must sleep and think about other things.
  - b) What he means
    - (1) He means that he prays very regularly (“all the time”) for the Colossians.
    - (2) He means that this prayer is not just a one-time thing. It is continual.

#### **C. We give thanks for what is produced by the hope of glory (v. 4).**

**ILL:** One of the first churches I ever went to was the kind of church that seemed to really only want to see professions of faith. There was a lot to love about that. The down side of that for this particular church, though, was that as soon as somebody made a profession of faith, they were immediately dropped and told to get to work winning souls. It was as if conversion (making a decision) was the end of the process instead of the beginning. Don’t get me wrong, here. I really want to see people get saved, but conversion is only the beginning. Paul didn’t STOP praying for the Colossians when they got saved. In a sense, he STARTED praying for them when they got saved.

1. The hope of glory produces an upward focus: “faith in Christ Jesus”
  - a) The gospel (the hope of glory) produces a God-centeredness, a perspective of focus on God.
  - b) Compare Colossians 3:1-4
2. The hope of glory produces an outward focus: “love for all the saints.”

#### **D. We give thanks because of the provision of the hope of glory (v. 5).**

1. What does this mean?
  - a) It means that our rejoicing in your eager anticipation of future glory drives us to pray for you.
2. Notice that this hope is in heaven.
  - a) This is to remind the people that this world is not our home.
    - (1) **1 Peter 1:1; 2:11** we are referred to as “aliens” here.
  - b) This is to remind the people that this world is not our hope.
    - (1) **1 Corinthians 15:19** If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.
  - c) This is to remind the people that this world should not be our focus.
    - (1) Again, compare **Colossians 3:1-4**

### **III. The Gospel and the Hope of Glory (vv. 6-8).**

#### **A. These verses are an elaboration upon vv. 3-5.**

1. The purpose here is to further illustrate what the gospel is.

2. Paul seems unable to resist the urge to elaborate on the word “gospel” at the end of verse 5.

**B. What does Paul say about the gospel here?**

1. The gospel is what gives you this hope of glory.
2. The gospel is changing the world.

**ILL:** We need to be reminded of this, especially in our time and culture. We live in an ever-increasingly secular culture, and it may be easy to think that the gospel is “failing” or that it “doesn’t work”. No, my friends. The gospel never fails. The gospel always works, regardless of what we see around us in this culture. Even now, especially now, all over the world, people are coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel may be more cross-cultural than it has been in the past. The seeming number of those who hold to and proclaim the gospel may seem to be dwindling, but God is still in control and souls (and lives) are still being saved every day.

- a) We should expect for the gospel to seem strange to many.
  - (1) **1 Corinthians 1:18** For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
3. The gospel is changing you.
  - a) **Philippians 1:6** *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
4. The gospel is being spread by faithful teachers.

**IV. Conclusions**

**A. We must be very clear as to what the gospel calls us to.**

1. We must have and pursue a constant attitude of gratitude.
  - a) To believe the gospel itself is to believe that God has done something for you in Jesus.
  - b) To respond to this gospel is itself an act of gratitude.

**B. We must be very clear as to what the gospel produces in us.**

1. We should expect that if we have the hope of glory that we will see:
  - a) Genuine faith in Jesus.
  - b) Genuine love for others.

**C. We must be very clear as to what the gospel is!**

1. We will definitely be coming back to this in future weeks.
2. Invitation