

FBC Service Sunday July 13, 2025, Colossians 1:3-8 Thank God for the Gospel!

“We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people

—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you.

In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.

You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.” — Colossians 1:3–8

Intro: Slide 1 – A Message from Colossians 1:3-8

Today we gather around one of the most powerful expressions of gratitude found in the New Testament.

In Colossians 1:3–8, the apostle Paul opens his letter not with critique, but with thanksgiving—thanksgiving for a church rooted in faith, abounding in love, and bearing fruit through the Gospel.

These verses pulse with hope and assurance, reminding us that the Gospel is not just good news—it’s transformative news.

Paul’s words are not just ancient encouragements; they’re timeless truths. He points us to a Gospel that travels across oceans, cultures, generations—and still produces life wherever it is received.

And here’s the heart of today’s message: we don’t just thank God for what the Gospel does; **we thank Him for what the Gospel is**—a gift of grace, a source of truth, and the foundation of our eternal hope.

So this morning, as we open our hearts and the Scriptures, let’s reflect on why the Gospel deserves our deepest gratitude. Let’s remember how it reached us, shaped us, and continues to sustain us.

Let’s thank God—not just for the message—but for the miracle of the Gospel in our lives. **Let’s dive in.**

The gospel is the heart of the message about Christ and indeed the theme of the whole Bible.

The Old Testament prepares us for the message of the gospel, the four gospels in the New Testament present the life, death and resurrection of Christ which are at the heart of the gospel, and then the rest of the New Testament explains what the gospel means for us today.

The gospel is at the centre of the Bible and is the foundational message for the church to proclaim with boldness, and for every believer who wants to live a life that honours God.

Slide 2 – We Thank God When We Pray for You

Paul begins the letter with a prayer of thanks for the wonderful, amazing, glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. *“We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.”* Verse 3

He thanks God for fellow believers as he prays for them and sees them growing in grace.

He says this is something that he always does. In other words, this was the regular pattern of his prayers, praying for the Colossians, and thanking God for them. **What a template for all of us!**

Is there anything more encouraging than when someone says they are praying for you?

Nothing warms and encourages my heart more than to hear my church family tell me they are praying for me.

Paul begins with thanks and encouragement and so should we. It's a good reminder to us that we should be full of thanksgiving and encouragement to other people around us.

These words are even more amazing when you remember that Paul had never even met the people at Colosse, and yet he still spent so much time praying for them!

Which raises the question: how much of our prayer life is marked by thanking God for other believers and for what God is doing in their lives?

As we break down this prayer, we find four simple instructions for us concerning the gospel.

Slide 3: Four Reasons to Thank God

- 1) Thank God for the Gospel
- 2) Thank God for the work of the gospel in fellow believers.
- 3) Thank God for the work of the gospel around the world.
- 4) Thank God for those who shared the gospel with you.

Slide 4 - Thank God for the Gospel

Paul's opening words in Colossians are a masterclass in gospel-centred thankfulness. He doesn't just thank God for blessings—he thanks God for the gospel's work in people, in the world, and in his own story.

He begins not with correction or instruction, **but with thanksgiving**—and not just for people, but for the message that changed them: the glorious gospel of Christ.

It's not just a message we believe once; it's the foundation we live from daily.

Paul opens with gratitude—not for stuff, not for circumstances, **but for the gospel**. The good news about Jesus Christ—His life, death, and resurrection—has arrived in Colossae.

That's the news that changed everything. **And it still changes everything today for God is still in the business of changing lives.**

We live in an age of endless clickbait headlines, and short-lived trends. But the gospel isn't just another piece of information. It's the truth that endures.

It doesn't grow stale, it doesn't expire, and it doesn't shift with culture.

It brings hope that is stored up in heaven—a hope that anchors us beyond this life.

So ask yourself: When was the last time you simply thanked God for the gospel? For the undeserved grace that found you, rescued you, forgave you, and gave you eternal hope?

In a world of noise, we must never forget to be grateful for the most important message we've ever received.

I sincerely pray we'll never lose that sense of awe and wonder of the life transforming message of the gospel, that it will not become just background noise in our spiritual lives.

Slide 5 - Thank God for the Work of the Gospel in Fellow Believers

Paul not only thanks God for the believers at Colosse **but he states a very specific reason why he thanks God for them.** *“Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints.”* (Colossians 1:4)

Why does Paul thank God for the Colossians? Because he has heard about two things –**their faith in Christ Jesus and their love for other believers.**

In our churches today, are we looking for and celebrating the work of the gospel in each other? Or are we more likely to criticize, compare, and compete?

The evidence of grace in others should cause us to give thanks. Think of the quiet servant who prays faithfully. The young believer growing in boldness. The family walking through grief with peace. These are not small things—**they are miracles of grace.** Loving God's Word, God's work and God's people.

Don't just look at what's wrong in the church. Thank God for what's right and give Him the glory.

The gospel always produces fruit—it transforms people. **It turns selfish hearts into serving hearts.** It creates faith toward Christ and love toward others.

The Christian faith focuses first of all on a person rather than a set of doctrines.

Paul describes their love as a love for all the saints. There is no discrimination here. **Broaden.**

Christ died for all believers, and so we love other believers. **If Christ died for all, how can you possibly choose to love some and not others?**

And where does this faith and love come from? Paul says this faith and love spring from the hope of the gospel. the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for us in heaven.

Faith and love spring from hope. This is not some wishy-washy hope like when we say, “I hope so,” but this is the certain hope of eternal life with God in heaven. Hope is a powerful motivator.

The Christian life always looks back to the cross of Christ, but it also looks forward.

Paul says this hope *“is stored up for you in heaven.”* (Colossians 1:5) This is a word that means “laid up or reserved.” In a word, it's safe. No one will ever storm the gates of heaven and take away your hope.

That hope is safe and secure, stored up for you in heaven.

Slide 6 - Thank God for the Work of the Gospel Around the World

Paul writes: *“The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world.”* **verse 6**

What a beautiful reminder: God is not only at work here—He’s working everywhere. **The gospel is a global gospel.** It’s not limited by geography, ethnicity, language, or politics. While kingdoms rise and fall, the kingdom of God is quietly expanding, soul by soul.

Because the gospel is not just an individual matter or a local phenomenon.

No, our God is too big and Jesus is too great for a local gospel. The gospel has global implications and impact.

The gospel has universal application. **It’s for the whole world**, and wherever it has spread, it bears fruit and grows.

I like what Warren Wiersbe says about the gospel:

“The Word of God is the only seed that can be planted anywhere in the world and bear fruit.” We may scatter the seed, but God alone is the one who makes it grow.

The gospel bears fruit when people hear and understand God’s grace in all its truth. Look at the rest of verse 6. *“just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.”*

What an encouragement this must have been to the Colossians. The gospel seed has been doing its work in them from the start.

But when did this great work begin in them? Since two things took place.

1) they heard the gospel,

2) they understood it. It’s good to hear the gospel, **but hearing is not enough.** It’s possible to hear and yet still not believe.

It’s not until we hear the gospel and understand God’s grace that the gospel begins to bear fruit in our lives. **God’s grace is God’s unmerited, undeserved favour given to us in Christ.**

His grace is very different from the legalism that the false teachers were peddling in Colosse.

In our generation, more people have access to the gospel than ever before.


In closed countries, underground churches thrive. In refugee camps, hope is taking root.

In cities and villages, Christ is still being proclaimed.

It’s so easy isn’t it to become inward-focused. But Paul lifts our eyes to see that the same gospel that transformed us is also transforming others across the globe.

Have you thanked God for what He's doing outside our congregation? Outside our country?

And more personally: Being a part of that global mission through your prayers, giving, and going?

 **Encouragement:** At times we may feel small or isolated, but we're part of a global movement of grace. Thank God the gospel is alive in every corner of the earth.

Slide 7 - Thank God for Those Who Shared the Gospel with You

Paul ends this section by mentioning Epaphras who was the one who first shared the gospel with the Colossians.

Paul calls him “*our dear fellow servant*,” one who joined with Paul in his work. Paul had a strong sense of partnership with those who ministered together with him for the gospel. Epaphras was also called “*a faithful minister of Christ*.” **A minister is not necessarily a pastor.**

A minister is anyone who serves or ministers to the needs of others, and Epaphras was a faithful minister of Christ. **What a wonderful word of testimony!** Wouldn't you want someone like Paul to call you a faithful minister of Christ?

Paul tells the Colossians that this is the gospel that “**has come to you.**” Someone must bring it. We rarely discover the truth necessary for salvation on our own or through observing nature or even through conscience within.

Most testimonies we hear indicate someone shared the truth of the gospel with us and planted the seed in our lives.

The gospel does not come to us in a vacuum. Everyone learns the gospel from someone. The Colossians learned it from Epaphras. **How about you? Who did you learn the gospel from?**

Who first shared with you the good news about Jesus Christ?

Behind almost every believer is someone who was faithful to share the gospel. It might've been a parent, a pastor, a friend, a Sunday school teacher, or even a stranger. **Who was your Epaphras?**

Whoever it was, thank God – right now – for those who shared with gospel with you. Thank God for those who shared Christ with you so that you could know forgiveness for your sins and receive the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God uses people to spread His message. **And He often uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things—** people who speak up, step out, and share Christ with someone else.

Which leads naturally to the question: who will learn the gospel from us? Someone shared the gospel with you.

With whom will you share the gospel?

Who is waiting for you to be their Epaphras?

Who needs to hear the gospel from your lips, see it in your life, and encounter it through your love?

Let's not only thank God for those who shared the gospel with us—but let's be that person for someone else.

Slide 8 - Living in Gratitude, Living on Mission

Conclusion: Thank God for the gospel! Thank God for the life-changing, God-honouring, Jesus-exalting gospel of Christ. Paul did. And remember he did it while he was still in prison!

The gospel is still the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. It has the power to change lives both now and for all eternity.

So thank God for the gospel.

Thank God for the work of the gospel in fellow believers.

Thank God for the global impact of the gospel around the world.

Thank God for the faithful messengers who brought it to you.

Thank God for the transformation it brings in others.

Now, the baton is in our hands.

Let our lives say, "Thank you, Lord," by living for His glory and for the spread of His gospel.

Don't let our gratitude stop at thanksgiving—let it move us to action.

Slide 9 – Reflect and Respond

Take a moment to reflect on the message. Ask the Lord to intensify your prayers and support for all those precious believers engaged in ministry for Christ around the world and here at FBC.

Slide 10 – Prayer of Thanksgiving

Prayer: "Lord thank You for the gospel that saved us, the believers who inspire us, the global church that reminds us we're not alone, and the faithful voices who first told us about Jesus.

May we never lose our wonder. **Amen**