

Colossians 1:3-14

(1:3-23 is Paul's thanksgiving and prayer for the church)

1:3 – Words like “pray,” “thanksgiving” and “asking” indicate Paul is praying as he writes these words.

Paul's prayer was (1) continual and in non-typical settings, (2) directed to God, (3) intercessory for others.

1:1-8 is a long sentence in the Greek laced with modifiers. The verbs and pronouns are all plural “we” until verse 1:9. Thanksgiving for the church in Colossae. Even if there are problems, Paul is thankful they have made it this far in the faith. (1 Cor., Romans).

The main verb is “eucharistoumen” or “we are giving thanks” and then two reasons:

1. When we pray for you
2. Because we have heard of your faith

1:4 – Paul was thankful, encouraged by the Colossians Growth

The key modifier here is “because we have heard”...and the sentence continues

The nature of the Colossians Growth:

1. **Faith** – the beginning of the Christian experience. But, Paul is also referring to the practice of their faith. The phrase “faith in Christ Jesus” means Christ Jesus is the realm of where their faith is at, in contrast to “faith unto (into) Christ Jesus” which makes Christ the object of faith. Paul is addressing the sphere of the Colossians faith (it is inside Jesus) and not the object of their faith (faith in the person of Jesus). Obviously, Jesus is also the object of their faith, but Paul is emphasizing the sphere of their faith. This ties in with the “faithful brothers in Christ in Colossae. Paul spoke of faith as:
 - a. “through faith” the means by which a relationship with God is achieved (the conduit, the highway, the means of getting to the relationship)... The Conduit of faith...**receive**
 - b. “on faith” is faith directed to God or based “on” Christ...The Object of the faith...**belief**
 - c. “in faith” is the sphere of the Christian experience...The Sphere of the faith...**works**
2. **Love** – this is “agape” but it also has an article (“the”) so it is “the love” or a specific love. And, it has a target for “the love” which is “all the saints.” This love cannot simply be an abstract concept, but it must be an expression. For agape to exist there has to be a recipient (this may explain the reason for God's act of creation.) This is what Jesus spoke of as the identifying nature of Christians in John 17:20-26, “agape” is the basis for a community of Christians to coexist together. They are not like a pagan community that forms because everyone has needs and can benefit from the others (It-takes-a-village concept), but a community that needs the presence of others to express their nature of giving, of service, of self-less love. This is mature Christianity...
 - a. “agape” speaks of the selfless love that considers others
 - b. “all the saints” indicates this selfless, sacrificial love was active among the believers

3. **Hope** – in 1:5

1:5 – The Colossians Christians are demonstrating maturity – FAITH and LOVE, but the reason for the development of these two is HOPE. Hope is the basis for Christian growth. Because of hope Christians can be confident to:

1. Faith – “on”, “in”, “through” to please, receive and produce for the Lord. (The greatest command Matt 22:36-40 and Mark 12:2-34) Relationship with God is primary. We must love God in order to love people. Many ministries get this turned around...they think it is all about loving people, and they start to serve, honor and worship people...which is a corruption of the principle
2. Love – selfless attention to others

Without hope there is no ability to produce divine faith or divine live in the heart of the common man.

3. Hope –

- a. Hope is a present reality. Our word hope can be used scripturally as subjective such as an attitude, or objectively speaking of a reality that we trust. Here in Colossians hope is objective, a present reality. This word hope also has a modifier “in heaven.” Heaven is the end game, not life here on earth. Thus,
- b. Hope comes from the proclamation of the Word, the Truth, the Gospel. The literal expression is “the word of the truth of the gospel” the NIV translates it “the word of the truth, the gospel.” The stress is on “the truth” which is the Gospel that came to the Colossians. The message is moving and has a life of its own. Isaiah 55:8-11

1:6 – Introduces the subject of “the Gospel” which redirects the sentence.

1:7 – in 1:7-8 “the Gospel” is modified and addresses the basis of their growth

1:9 – the verbs and pronouns become singular here. They have been plural in verse 1:3-8.

1:10

1:11

1:12

1:13

1:14