

OUTLINE Epaphras, a Faithful Servant: Colossians 1:6-8  
Pastor Adam Hall ☞ Dryden First Baptist Church ☞ Nov 7, 2021

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Colossians 1:6-8 ESV

<sup>3</sup> We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup> which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, <sup>7</sup> just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf <sup>8</sup> and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

### Introduction and Review

- How is your commitment, in particular to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ, to the church of Jesus Christ and to the mission of Jesus Christ?

This article by Rickie Jenkins called, “Rising Above The Preference Driven Church”, will help us understand the culture in North America and its lack of commitment!

*“We live in an age where preference rules. Today’s culture values personal choice so highly, it prevents many from committing to real priorities. Fifth marriages, live-in lovers, quick flings often characterize our restless society while commitment is at an all-time low. Sadly, many Christians allow the culture of personal preference to influence their idea of a perfect church. As a result, many treat their church like a beloved spouse during the honeymoon stage, but when the romance wears off they trade up for something new, driven by preferences rather than priorities. Should personal preference be the deciding factor in committing to a local church? The problem with preference is, I look for what satisfies me.”*

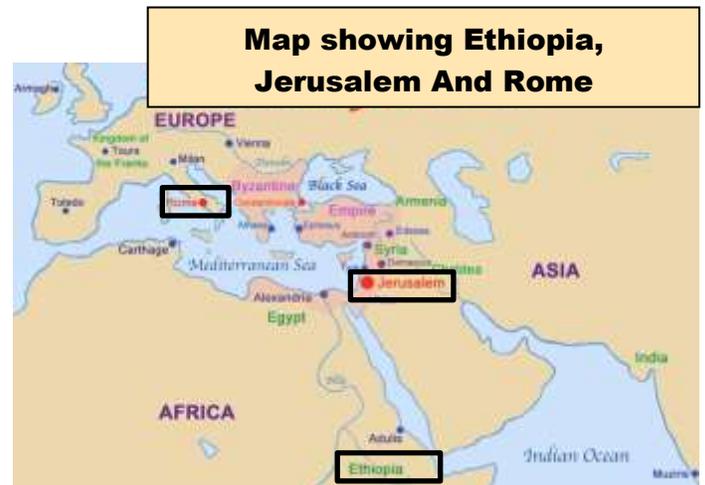
- when we think of Epaphras and his commitment to Jesus Christ, the mission of Jesus Christ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ, we never think that Epaphras was concerned with preferences
- it is thought that Paul focused his attention on the larger cities and he sent others to the smaller centers like Colossae
- so \_\_\_\_\_ was sent to his hometown of Colossae instead of the larger cities, like Ephesus, to preach the gospel
- taking the gospel to your small hometown, in and of itself would have been an act of service and humility
- this is what Epaphras was all about according to the book of \_\_\_\_\_
- Epaphras was a \_\_\_\_\_ thinking about others and not himself
- Lord change our hearts and make us more like this and Lord root out selfishness and pride in our lives!
  
- the book of Colossians is very important because it teaches the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus
- Paul and Timothy wrote this book to \_\_\_\_\_ this church to cherish Jesus above all things
- we know that some were teaching \_\_\_\_\_ gospel: that you must do this or that to be a Christian
- Paul teaches clearly that Jesus is to be \_\_\_\_\_ above any food law or religious celebration
- Paul teaches clearly that fullness of life is found in the person and \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus Christ

- Paul started this book \_\_\_\_\_ thanks to God for the work of God among the Colossians (1:3)
- Paul declared that he had heard of their \_\_\_\_\_ and the love that they had for people (1:4)
- this church had heard the \_\_\_\_\_ gospel through the preaching of Epaphras the truth of the gospel!
- the \_\_\_\_\_ that came to them was the real and powerful gospel

## 1) (1:6) Gospel Growth

(1:6) which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing-- as it also does among you,

- when Paul use “which” he is referring to “the word of \_\_\_\_\_ , the gospel,” (1:5)
- we described this “word of truth, the \_\_\_\_\_ ,” as Paul’s teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ as found in \_\_\_\_\_ 3:21-25
- we cannot \_\_\_\_\_ salvation or righteousness by means of observing the \_\_\_\_\_
- we have all sinned and \_\_\_\_\_ against God and that has put us at \_\_\_\_\_ with God
- we can only receive righteousness or be made right with God through \_\_\_\_\_ in other words, through faith or \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord Jesus Christ
- the work of Christ enables us to \_\_\_\_\_ this righteousness
- Jesus takes the sin of the world and \_\_\_\_\_ the punishment for it and in exchange \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness to those who have received Himself through faith
  
- this “word of \_\_\_\_\_ , the gospel,” had come to the Colossians!
- how did this gospel come to the Colossians?
- the next verse, Colossians 1:8, tells us \_\_\_\_\_ preached this gospel to them!
  
- but this gospel had not just come to Colossae, this \_\_\_\_\_ has come to the whole world
- Paul uses the “whole \_\_\_\_\_ ”, he was not meaning this as we understand it to include every single nation but rather Paul was meaning that the gospel had reached much of the \_\_\_\_\_ Empire
  
- Paul when he writes “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” here refers to the Mediterranean area
- this is long before the time of efficient water, air and land travel
- Paul just could not hop on Air Canada and fly out of Rome in order to preach in Toronto
- you almost need to equate this to those who live in Toronto
- many people in Toronto and other cities do not have a car or the opportunity to travel outside the city
- so all they know is their city centre; that is their world!
- from Jerusalem the gospel has spread to Ethiopia (Acts 8) and even all the way to Rome (Romans)
  
- that is a lot of gospel preaching done by hard working servants of Christ in just a few years!
  
- Paul mentions that the Lord is doing \_\_\_\_\_ things with His gospel! -- a) bearing fruit and b) increasing



- these two words are \_\_\_\_\_ which means God was bearing the fruit and increasing, this work was a \_\_\_\_\_ work and grace of God

a) bearing fruit – this refers to having a productive \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord

- the gospel \_\_\_\_\_ has been planted; we see fruit because of the work of the Holy Spirit

b) increasing – this word means that the gospel is \_\_\_\_\_

- just as Epaphras \_\_\_\_\_ gospel seed and God created fruit bearing and an increase -- it is the same as in the parable of the sower in Mark 4:1-20

- Mark 4:1-20 we read about Jesus teaching how people are like the \_\_\_\_\_ that falls on 4 types of soil!

### Seed on Four Types of Soil – Mark 4:1-20

1) there is the seed that falls upon the \_\_\_\_\_ and it is immediately taken away by Satan (4:15)

2) there is the seed that falls upon the \_\_\_\_\_ ground and after facing trials their faith withers up or they fall away (4:16)

3) there is the seed that falls on the \_\_\_\_\_ ground (4:19) and the seed is choked by the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and desires for other things and these choke the word, making it unfruitful

4) there is the seed that falls on the \_\_\_\_\_ ground and it \_\_\_\_\_ fruit:

**Mark 4:20** But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

- this is the reality of gospel work, you \_\_\_\_\_ the word and you let the Lord do \_\_\_\_\_ work

- sometimes it gets very discouraging when we see so \_\_\_\_\_ fruit!

- we need to remind ourselves it is \_\_\_\_\_ who brings the growth!

- do you remember what \_\_\_\_\_ said to the Corinthians about this topic

**1 Corinthians 3:6-7** I planted, Apollos \_\_\_\_\_, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup> So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who \_\_\_\_\_ the growth.

**since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,**

- this gospel \_\_\_\_\_ and increase was evident in these Colossians!

- the Colossians \_\_\_\_\_ the "\_\_\_\_\_ of truth, the gospel," the gospel in Colossians 1:5

- here Paul says they heard the grace of God and they "\_\_\_\_\_ the grace of God

- the "\_\_\_\_\_ of God in truth" is connected to the "\_\_\_\_\_ of truth, the gospel," in Colossians 1:5

- the gospel of Jesus Christ is \_\_\_\_\_

- if you are going to talk about grace and you are not going to mention the \_\_\_\_\_ and work of the Lord Jesus, then you are not talking about a Biblical definition of \_\_\_\_\_

- when we \_\_\_\_\_ about the grace of God, do we think about the \_\_\_\_\_ and work of the Lord Jesus?

- grace is defined as \_\_\_\_\_ given to people who do not \_\_\_\_\_ it

- and this is what Jesus has done for His people and the \_\_\_\_\_ world

- Jesus dies in \_\_\_\_\_ of sinful people, wiping away their record of sin and declaring or \_\_\_\_\_ them right in the eyes of God

- apart from the grace of God our sins they are many, but through Christ His \_\_\_\_\_ is more!

- the Colossians “understood” this grace!
- this \_\_\_\_\_ is more than just a mental understanding
- this is a \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledgement of your sin and when we make the grace of Jesus Christ our \_\_\_\_\_ treasure!
- you can speak about him and even know lots about Him but this is not the \_\_\_\_\_ understanding that Paul has in mind here
- you understand Jesus because you have \_\_\_\_\_ of him as your personal savior not just knowledge of Jesus as a historical \_\_\_\_\_

## 2) (1:7) Gospel Servant

(1:7) just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf

- this verse gives us information about the \_\_\_\_\_ named Epaphras
  - Epaphras is mentioned \_\_\_ times in the whole of the Bible (Col 1:7 and two references below)
- Colossians 4:12-13** Epaphras, who is \_\_\_\_\_ of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand \_\_\_\_\_ and fully assured in all the will of God. <sup>13</sup> For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.

**Philemon 1:23** Epaphras, my fellow \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you,

- it is thought that Epaphras was \_\_\_\_\_ through the ministry of Paul, likely in the city of Ephesus, and then took the gospel \_\_\_\_\_ to his hometown of Colossae
- but Colossians 1:7 says several other \_\_\_\_\_ about Epaphras

## The Life of Epaphras

### 1) He \_\_\_\_\_ The Gospel

- Epaphras was not like many in our North American church context that have a conversion \_\_\_\_\_ and then never talk about what the Lord has done for them
- many Christians are \_\_\_\_\_ about their faith in Christ, they almost get the “cat has got your tongue” disease when it comes to Jesus Christ
- this was \_\_\_\_\_ Epaphras
- he makes Jesus Christ \_\_\_\_\_ by preaching “the word of \_\_\_\_\_, the gospel,” and “the grace of God” (1:6)
- the ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ was very similar to the ministry of Epaphras

**1 Corinthians 2:2** For I decided to know nothing among you \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ and him crucified.

### 2) He \_\_\_\_\_ Disciples

- Epaphras did not \_\_\_\_\_ these Christians unto themselves
- we \_\_\_\_\_ this from Colossians 4:12-13
- Epaphras labored in \_\_\_\_\_ for these Christians
- Epaphras labored in gospel preaching and discipleship so that they would be \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ
- although it is \_\_\_\_\_ to see conversions and to be used by God to bring someone to the Lord, we must not forget the all-important work of \_\_\_\_\_, and exhortation of believers, so they can \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord

3) He was “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

- this is the word means \_\_\_\_\_
- Epaphras was first loved by the Lord and the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ him
- Epaphras was of course \_\_\_\_\_ by Paul and the Colossian church
- who cannot help but love a \_\_\_\_\_ preacher, pastor and disciple maker that puts others \_\_\_\_\_ himself?

4) He was a “Fellow \_\_\_\_\_”

- literally this word could be translated as “fellow slave”
- this means that the life of Epaphras, just like the life of Paul, was enslaved to Jesus Christ and His work
- but Epaphras was also a slave to the church of Jesus Christ
- the life of Epaphras was given to Jesus Christ and His church

5) He was “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

- Epaphras was not a “fly by night” kind of preacher
- he \_\_\_\_\_ his hometown well by preaching the gospel
- he also served his hometown well by \_\_\_\_\_ in prayer and in discipleship making (teaching, pastoral care)

6) He was a “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

- this is the Greek word for deacon
- a \_\_\_\_\_ is one who \_\_\_\_\_ the congregation
- Paul gives \_\_\_\_\_ to Timothy on this topic of being a \_\_\_\_\_ or a servant of the church of Jesus Christ:

**1 Timothy 4:6** If you put these things before the \_\_\_\_\_, you will be a good \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ Jesus, being \_\_\_\_\_ in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

### 3) (1:8) Gospel Living

**(1:8) and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.**

- Epaphras had communication with Paul and we know this because he “ \_\_\_\_\_ known” to Paul how they were \_\_\_\_\_!

- what did Epaphras \_\_\_\_\_?
- that this congregation had love in the \_\_\_\_\_
- this is the only \_\_\_\_\_ reference to the Holy Spirit in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Colossians
- the Colossians had “ \_\_\_\_\_ in the Spirit” or the Colossians loved life in the Holy Spirit
- here we see that the Colossians were people who \_\_\_\_\_ their lives in the realm and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit

- this “love in the \_\_\_\_\_ Spirit” indicates the love that they showed to the rest of the believers (Colossians 1:5 the love they had for all the \_\_\_\_\_)

- they truly had the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit in their lives

- this “love in the \_\_\_\_\_” was conveyed in several other ways

- here is a \_\_\_\_\_ of some of the other ways we have “\_\_\_\_\_ in the Spirit”:

### Signs of “Love in the Spirit”

#### 1) We Walk According To The Spirit And \_\_\_\_\_ Our Sinful Nature

- we are \_\_\_\_\_ or empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a \_\_\_\_\_ life

- this means that when we are \_\_\_\_\_ by our sinful nature or even Satan we will \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves to the Holy Spirit and therefor \_\_\_\_\_ sinning

- we will also \_\_\_\_\_ our mind with the gospel of grace and \_\_\_\_\_ away from sin and live a life of \_\_\_\_\_

**Galatians 5:16** But I say, \_\_\_\_\_ by the Spirit, and you will \_\_\_\_\_ gratify the desires of the flesh.

#### 2) We \_\_\_\_\_ In The Holy Spirit

- when you pray in the Holy Spirit you are \_\_\_\_\_ upon God and are empowered by God even to pray

- you \_\_\_\_\_ upon God’s Spirit to even give you the \_\_\_\_\_ you should pray

**Ephesians 6:18** praying at \_\_\_\_\_ times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the \_\_\_\_\_,

#### 3) We Use Spiritual Gifts For The Benefit Of The Church

- since the Holy Spirit has given \_\_\_\_\_ gifts to all those who are in Jesus Christ

- we must gather as the \_\_\_\_\_ or gather as believers to use those \_\_\_\_\_ for the building up of the \_\_\_\_\_ and other believers

**1 Corinthians 12:8-11** For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another \_\_\_\_\_ of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the same \_\_\_\_\_, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

- this \_\_\_\_\_ had “love in the Spirit” and thus the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit was evident among them!

### **Application**

#### **1) Do You Have Gospel Growth In Your Life?**

- in order to answer \_\_\_\_\_ to this question you have to be saved

- if God has \_\_\_\_\_ saved you through Jesus Christ you \_\_\_\_\_ have gospel growth

- an old time farmer told me, “there is no bad farm land, just \_\_\_\_\_ farmers”

- we see this here, only the Good Farmer, the \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus and the Holy Spirit, can cause us to grow

- we cannot cause this \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel to grow in our own lives by our own \_\_\_\_\_, it only grows through the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ and His work upon the Cross!

- so the first part of this application is to \_\_\_\_\_ if we are even saved by Christ

- but the next is to make sure we are \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel in our hearts and lives

- at the foundation of every person's \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ is the gospel
- are you \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel in your heart?
- are you \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel to yourself?
- are you preaching the \_\_\_\_\_ to your spouse?
- are you preaching the gospel to your children?
- in Numbers 15 Israel was commanded by God to \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God in their heart by putting the \_\_\_\_\_ of the law and the grace of God before them as \_\_\_\_\_ reminders

**Numbers 15:39-41** And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to where after. <sup>40</sup> So you shall \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ all my commandments, and be holy to your God. <sup>41</sup> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the LORD your God."

- certainly this does apply to us, are we \_\_\_\_\_ this gospel in our hearts and in our minds to be \_\_\_\_\_ of the grace of God in truth – the gospel of the Lord Jesus?

## 2) Let Us \_\_\_ An Epaphras!

- in a world where everyone's preferences are king and are \_\_\_\_\_, let us be a people who are \_\_\_\_\_ servants of the church
- society calls us to focus upon ourselves
- advertising calls us to \_\_\_\_\_ upon ourselves
- even well-meaning people call us to focus upon ourselves
- but Jesus Christ does \_\_\_\_\_!

- Epaphras is just like Timothy as he is described in Philippians

**Philippians 2:20-22** For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely \_\_\_\_\_ for your welfare. <sup>21</sup> For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. <sup>22</sup> But you know Timothy's proven \_\_\_\_\_, how as a son with a father he has \_\_\_\_\_ with me in the gospel.

- let us, because of the \_\_\_\_\_ grace of God given to us, be a people who are \_\_\_\_\_ ministers of Jesus Christ as we \_\_\_\_\_ one another, \_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of Jesus Christ
- finally, since gospel \_\_\_\_\_ is God's work, we need to ask God to \_\_\_\_\_ about gospel growth in our midst
- we need to \_\_\_\_\_ that God would save, deliver and \_\_\_\_\_ people and that they be brought to a \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of Jesus Christ
- will you \_\_\_\_\_ like Epaphras in prayer, word and \_\_\_\_\_ for the glory of Christ?

Colossians 1:9-14

<sup>9</sup> And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. <sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the

