

“The Victorious Gospel”
Colossians 1:6-7
(Preached at Trinity, November 26, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Verses 3-8** are a single sentence in which Paul expresses his heart for the Colossian church. He began in **Verse 3** by expressing his great gratitude to God for their faith in Christ and love for all the saints. Paul is expressing his great gratitude for their Christian salvation. Their faith was built upon the Gospel which they heard, the word of truth upon which their hope was laid up in heaven.
2. Paul expressed his gratitude to God because their salvation was God's work. The Gospel is God's way and it was going forth as the power of God unto salvation.
Colossians 1:6 NAU - "just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard of *it* and understood the grace of God in truth;"
3. Epaphras brought them the Gospel of Christ and the Holy Spirit opened their understanding. Paul was declaring that this work of grace that had occurred in them was also taking place throughout the whole world. The Gospel was bearing fruit, the unstoppable power of God unto salvation.
Paul was witnessing this in his own lifetime. Before his conversion, Christianity was a minor sect, a small group of followers of Christ. He saw it as heresy and had determined to end it.
Acts 8:3 NAU - "But Saul *began* ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison."
But it could not be stopped. Christianity was spreading rapidly. Soon, Paul himself was arrested by the power of the Gospel and became one of the greatest evangelists in the history of the church.
4. The Gospel goes forth into the world as an unstoppable force. The success of the Gospel has never been in doubt. God has chosen a multitude unto salvation from every kindred, tribe, and nation. Not a single one will be left behind. From the beginning Jesus taught that His Kingdom would explode upon the earth. He described it in the Parable of the Leaven.
Matthew 13:33 NAS - "He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened."
 - A. Leaven or yeast is a microscopic fungus that reproduces and is capable of converting sugar or carbohydrates into alcohol and carbon dioxide. A tiny speck can infect the entire loaf.
 - B. The Kingdom began small – through the Gospel it would fill the earth.

- C. John saw a vision of the multitude:
Revelation 7:9 NAU - "I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands"
5. This is what Paul is saying in **Verse 6**. The same Gospel that had come powerfully upon the Colossians is the same Gospel going forth into all the world and like a mighty harvest, the fruitfulness continues to increase.
6. This morning, I want to set this before you. We'll look at it from two perspectives:
- I. The Power of the Gospel Declared
 - II. The Power of the Gospel Displayed
- I. The Power of the Gospel Declared
- A. Before His ascension Jesus told His Apostles to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit - the power behind His redeeming grace.
Acts 1:8 NAU - "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
 1. Divine power has been unleashed on the world by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church
 2. The Holy Spirit is the mighty power through which the Kingdom is being expanded
Verse 8 – "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"
 3. The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration; the author of faith and repentance—the sovereign power of God unto salvation.
 4. Jesus told them that by the power of the Holy Spirit the Gospel would go forth into the world – from Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria. In other words, Jesus was declaring that the Gospel would continue moving outward, unceasing until it covered the earth.
 5. In the Great Commission Jesus declared that the missionary work of the church would have worldwide ramifications.
Matthew 28:19 NAU - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit"
 - B. This great expansion of the kingdom through the Gospel was foretold in the Old Covenant.
 1. God's ultimate fulfillment of His covenant with Abraham is fulfilled through Christ and His church through the power of the Gospel. The offspring of Abraham would be too many to count.
Genesis 22:17-18 NAU - "indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."
 - a. The ultimate offspring of Abraham is a spiritual seed. God has promised a spiritual seed to his people today. They shall be fruitful.

Spurgeon: "Just as in Egypt he multiplied the people exceedingly, so will he increase the number of his saints upon the earth; not only shall the faithful be blessed with converts, and so with a spiritual seed; but those who are their spiritual children shall become fruitful also, and thus the multitude of the elect shall be accomplished; God shall increase the people, and shall increase the joy." (Psa. 115:14)

- b. God promised Israel great increase. This promise is fulfilled through the church.

Paul told the Galatians that the true seed of Abraham are those who share the faith of Abraham. These are the people of God. This is the fruit of the Gospel

Galatians 3:7 NAU - "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."

Galatians 3:9 NAU - "So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."

Galatians 3:29 NAU - "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

2. This great increase of the church through the Gospel was prophesied by Isaiah

Isaiah 60:2-3 NAU - "For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you. ³ "Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising."

Isaiah 11:6-9 NAU - "For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea."

- a. Those who hold to the postmillennial position of eschatology use these passages to support their view that the earth will ultimately be fully Christianized. The fulfilment of these passages does not require that all the earth be brought under the power of the Gospel. But they do speak of the worldwide spread of the Gospel.

- b. Nor do these verses declare that one generation will experience a greater filling of the earth than others.

Joseph Alexander (son of Archibald Alexander) – "This passage is descriptive of the reign of the Messiah, not at any one period, but as a whole."¹

- c. The Gospel has swept across the face of the earth. Our Lord's words, "and even to the remotest part of the earth" has been and is continuing to be fulfilled.

3. The City of Zion would draw a great multitude from every nation - even the Gentiles would come to the light of Christ.

Isaiah 60:3-4 NAU - "Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. ⁴ "Lift up your eyes round about and see; They all gather together, they come to you."

- a. The word for "nations" refers to the non-Hebrew nations – the Gentiles

¹ Alexander, Joseph A., *Commentary on Isaiah*, (Grand Rapids: Kregal Publications, 1992) page 255.

- b. The Messiah would be a Light to the Gentiles
- c. This is the great mystery that would finally be revealed in Christ
Romans 11:25 NAU - "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;"
Ephesians 3:5-6 NAU - "as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶ *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel"

II. The power of the Gospel displayed

Colossians 1:5-6 NAU - "you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel ⁶ which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing"

The fruit of the Gospel is both the fruit of its own increase as it spreads throughout the earth as well as the fruit it produces in those who are saved.

- A. The Gospel is continually bearing increase – the harvest is indeed plentiful
 - 1. Christianity was not to be a Jewish sect localized in Jerusalem. God's promise to Abraham had a worldwide fulfillment - **Genesis 22:18 NAU** - "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed"
 - 2. The Gospel is continuing to fill the earth
 - a. Paul says the Gospel is fruitful. It draws our minds back to God's words to Adam, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth"
This is precisely what the Gospel is doing. It is being fruitful and filling the earth.
 - b. It is the mighty power of God unto salvation
We can go forth with confidence. It will accomplish God's purpose.
 - 3. In our world terribly corrupted by sin where many wonder how mankind can possibly survive, the Gospel shines forth. God has a purpose that is being accomplished.
 - a. We must see through heavenly eyes. The Gospel cannot be stopped.
 - b. Does it seem that no one today is interested in the Gospel? Are you discouraged that Christianity is being assaulted at ever increasing rates?
The Gospel cannot be stopped!
- B. The Gospel is bears the fruit of God's transforming grace upon those who are being saved.
Colossians 1:10 NAU - "so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;"
 - In the hopeless division of humanity the Gospel unites.
 - In the unending display of hatred in the human heart the Gospel transforms
 - It overcomes pride with the grace of humility, selfishness with generosity.
Only the Gospel can tame the tongue.

1. The Gospel always comes with life-changing power
1 Thessalonians 1:5-7 NAU - "for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia."
2. The Gospel always bears fruit. Fruit is the evidence that the Gospel has accomplished its work.
Matthew 13:23 NAS - "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."
Matthew 7:16-20 NAU - "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? ¹⁷ "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹ "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ "So then, you will know them by their fruits."

Conclusion:

1. What marvelous confidence the Gospel brings us in life.
 From outward observation it would seem that evil is prevailing. Who can turn the tide of corruption? The Gospel cannot be stopped.
 Are you marching forth with courage and confidence? Are you maintaining the heart of a Gospel soldier? Are you the only Christian at your place of employment? Do you believe that the Gospel is too weak to sweep across the entire office.
2. Are you disappointed at the apparent weakness of the church today? The Gospel continues to be transforming. Don't be fooled into embracing a fruitless Gospel.
3. The all powerful Gospel remains unchanged. It remains powerful and prevailing.