

Theme: The transforming, redeeming power of the gospel rests in God's eternal and unchanging truth. That gospel of truth bears its fruit of faith, love and hope in us - and in the whole world.

Introduction: Powerful pen-pals

Background: - A brief history of Colossae and the Letter to them
- A novel form of introduction: Prayers

I. What They Are

A. Set apart by God

1. As Paul was himself - An apostle, speaking on behalf of Jesus
 - By the will of God
2. As are the Colossians
 - a. "Saints/Holy" - term reserved for God's people (Exodus 19:6)
 - b. "Believing/faithful" - firmly committed/steadfast
 - c. "Brothers"
 - Like Timothy
 - One family - "siblings"
 - d. "In Christ"
 - Finding their identity "in Him"
 - e. "In Colossae"
 - Gathered in a particular place
 - Precisely where God wants them

B. Set upon by God

1. Grace
 - Not "Chairein" (greetings) (Acts 15:23; James 1:1)
 - Rather "Charis" – Grace
2. Peace
 - The greeting of the Jewish community "shalom"
 - That which is reserved for God's people
3. From God our Father

II. What They Have (3-8)

A. The Truth

1. Brought to them
 - a. By Epaphras - a faithful minister
 - b. The gospel
 - In all its truth and power
2. Hearing and understanding
3. Bearing fruit
 - In the whole earth and you (Genesis 26:4)
 - As it has for 2000 years

B. Faith - Love - Hope

1. Faith - in Christ Jesus!
 - Not just doctrinal - but living faith
2. Love - for all the saints
 - Giving oneself for others
3. Hope – laid up for you
 - Hope that builds faith and love

- Hope in the "things above"

III. What They Need

A. Knowledge of His will (Filled with it!)

1. Leads to wisdom and understanding (Isaiah 11:2)

- Knowledge of Christ is the key to wisdom and understanding

2. The product of knowledge

a. Bearing fruit

b. Growing in knowledge (Philippians 3:8)

- A circular argument

- With knowledge we walk in faith. As we walk in faith and obedience we are built up in knowledge.

c. Being strengthened (empowered) (11)

- For all endurance?

- And patience

d. Giving thanks to the Father

- He has come full circle

- That they may give thanks as he does

B. What God has done for them

1. Sharing in the inheritance in light

2. Transformation

3. Redemption and forgiveness

How has that happened? You will have to read on.

IV. What We Need Today

A. We need the Truth!

B. We need to know who we are.