

Jesus Over Everything - Hope In Christ

Last week I shared the word that God gave me for the church for 2023 which was The Lion In Me. If you weren't here, I urge you to go listen to it. But the main point of it was this: IF you are born again then Christ is IN YOU. And if Christ is in you, He is a lion, who is victorious and does not retreat from His enemy. And praise is what activates that victory in our lives.

Jesus is not only Savior, but He is Lord. It's when you confess Him as Lord that you are saved. And if He's Lord, He is in charge. You give up your will and desires for His.

So now we're beginning a series on the book of Colossians over the next couple of months. So I encourage you to read it a few times. It's only 4 chapters long. And the theme is the supremacy of Christ...or more simply as I'm calling it: **Jesus Over Everything**.

If He's your Lord, He's got to be over everything in your life! So let's get into Colossians.

Colossians 1:1-2 (NKJV)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote several letters to churches in Asia Minor which we find in the NT. And most of these churches he planted and stayed with for a while as leadership was established. But this church in Colosse is one that he didn't plant or even visit.

Yet he writes to these saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse. This is how Christians should view other bible believing church bodies...we are for one another...grace and peace to you. If you're faithful in Christ, I'm faithful in Christ...we're on the same team even if we worship in different buildings or cities.

Colossians 1:3-4 (NKJV)

We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,
4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints

Paul is thankful for this group of believers that he's never met...why?

1. Their faith in Jesus
2. Their love for all the saints

There's nothing that makes a minister more thankful than seeing these two things in the people of God.

Is your faith in Jesus? And is it evident to others? Do they see it? Do they know it?

This is where it all must come back to...do you believe Jesus is God? That He came to save you? That He rose from the dead? And is that faith, that belief, at the center of all that you think and all that you do?

If it is...faith always has action. And it will be known by your love for all the saints. We're not Catholic, I'm not talking about St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John...I'm talking about other believers.

Most people learn that family is important and they have an allegiance to family above all others. But Jesus said, "Who are my mother and brother? Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

We ought to have a great love for the people of God. They are a spiritual family. People you will spend eternity with. That means forever.

Do you have faith in Jesus? Do you show it by your love for His church?

Colossians 1:5-8 (NKJV)

because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; 7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

Paul said "of which you heard before", like "I'm sure you know this", it all ties back to your hope.

What is hope? It's an expectation of good. You can hope in people or things but they will let you down. Or you can hope in Jesus, who is always good and never fails and will never let you down.

Do you have hope? Do you have an expectation of good?

I have an expectation of good in Jesus. That when I place Jesus Over Everything in my life...He will work in it so that the other pieces begin to fall into place.

You've heard of this before in the word of the truth, the gospel (the good news of Jesus and what He has done) and it is bringing forth fruit!

Paul knows this because his friend Epaphras (the likely founder of the church in Colosse) told about their love in the Spirit. He bragged about his church and now Paul is bragging about him.

We are to be cheerleaders for one another...rooting for success...because we have hope, and expectation of good in Jesus!

Colossians 1:9 (NKJV)

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

For this reason...what reason? This hope they have because of the truth they heard.

Paul prays for them that they may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

If you want to know why I encourage you to read the bible daily, this is why. So you can be filled with the knowledge of His will. What is His will? His desire. Don't you want to know what God wants for you? Don't ask me...it's found in His Word. Ask Him!

First you have to read it. But then Paul goes on to say you need all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This takes it beyond knowledge...and pairs it with the ability to establish godly principles in our lives but also to apply these principles to everyday living.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith is belief or trust in the truth. And faith leads to hope...expectation of good. So if you want more faith in Jesus so you can have more hope in Jesus...it comes by hearing and hearing the word of God.

Why is this all so important? It's not just so you can get in one of these trivia contests and get all the bible category questions right!

Colossians 1:10 (NKJV)

that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

What a tall order...walk worthy of the Lord? I don't think I'm worthy of Jesus.

But it doesn't mean deserving of the Lord, it's more like "that you may live in a way that is **pleasing** to the Lord."

If you know His desire for you and you apply it to your life, it would please Him.

As a parent, when your kids grow up and live in a way that reflects what you taught them, it's pleasing to you. It makes you happy. It makes you proud of them. They heard, received, applied, what you desired for them.

And what comes from that...fruit. Just like it does in our spiritual life. We become fruitful in every good work. That means the goodness of God working **IN US** because of that faith and hope in Christ begins to produce **THROUGH US**.

When it works **IN US**, we begin to see a difference. When it works **THROUGH US**, others begin to see a difference.

James wrote that faith without works is dead. It's not enough to believe. You have to receive so you can begin to produce what you believe through your life.

So we've got to continue to increase in the knowledge of God!

Colossians 1:11 (NKJV)

strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Life is hard. There are days when every one of us needs strength. This is another reason it's important to be filled with the knowledge of God. It strengthens our faith and hope.

It helps to know God's desire for you, that combined with His wisdom for you strengthens you to be able to get through hard days and times. Because it often takes patience and endurance to get through something.

It's hard to do on your own. And you're not supposed to do it on your own!

You need Jesus and the leading of the Holy Spirit. And you need the church and the support of people who have faith in Christ.

I don't need help from people that are not of faith, because I know Jesus has to be at the center of my life. Everything has to point me back to Him. He's not a genie in a bottle, He's Lord of my life because He gave His life for mine and I give my life to Him!

Be strengthened according to His glorious power...You don't have to be strong! You just have to be His. He is strong.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (CSB)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness."

Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me.

Paul sees a church that has faith and loves people. He prays for them to know God's will and how to apply it, to walk worthy of the Lord and produce good fruit, increase in knowledge, be strengthened and have patience...

Colossians 1:12 (NKJV)

giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

God has enabled you to share in an inheritance...the inheritance of the saints in the light.

An inheritance is something that is passed on to you. Something that you take ownership of. It's this ability to live in the light. The light is Christ.

If you belong to Him you have an inheritance in Him.

Colossians 1:13-14 (NKJV)

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

He has delivered us from the power of darkness.

Do you realize that Christ has rescued you? He has rescued you from the authority of the enemy. He has brought you out of darkness and not just from living a life of sin but from a place where you could not see. He has removed the blinders from your eyes so that you can see the hope that you have in Jesus! AND...

He has conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

You've been transferred. You've been removed from one place to another. It changes your situation. It's a departure from where you were.

You've been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, forgiven and free. And transferred into His kingdom.

A kingdom is made of a group of people ruled by a king. Jesus is Lord. He's Lord of all. And He's Lord of a kingdom of His love...one where He saw you in need of a rescue...and died a criminal's death on a cross to pay your debt for sin.

He is good. He is love. Have you received what He's done for you?

You don't have to go up looking for Him. He came down to us when He was born of a virgin. You don't have to go down looking for Him. He came up to us when He defeated the grave.

When you consider these truths.

Do you have hope? Do you have an expectation of good?

And if so, what is your hope in?

Mine is in Jesus. The One who rescued me. And gave me life and life more abundantly.