

Paul's Grateful Heart

Colossians 1:1-5

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It was A. W. Tozer who said these words: "We do not preach Christ with a comma after His name, as though waiting for something else. Nor do we preach Christ with a dash after His name, as though leading to something else. But we preach Christ period." I love that. I believe that Paul would agree with what Tozer said, because in the book of Colossians, he's preaching Christ period—nothing more; nothing less than Jesus Christ.

Colossians is one of the most Christ-exalting books of the whole Bible. I want to point out some of the themes that we're going to talk about as we go through the book of Colossians.

In chapter 1, verse 18, we see that Christ is to have preeminence. Paul said, "And He..."—that is, "Christ"—"...is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the..."—and here's our word—"...preeminence." Now he didn't say "prominence"; he said "preeminence." What's the difference? A lot of religions give Jesus Christ a prominent place. In different religions, you find that Jesus is an important person, but only in Biblical Christianity do we find that Jesus Christ is to have preeminence. In other words, there is nothing to be above or higher than Jesus Christ.

The second theme we see through the book of Colossians is Christ's sufficiency. In chapter 2, verses 8-9, Paul is warning them and says, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him..."—that is, "Christ"—"...dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." We're going to be looking at all these verses as we go through Colossians over the next several weeks and months.

Thirdly, we find that believers are complete in Christ. This is the theme that I've taken to title my whole series in Colossians. We're going to look at every chapter, every verse and every phrase and many words as we do this entire epistle. And what we're going to learn is that not only is Christ sufficient, but because we're "in Christ," we are complete in Him. Chapter 2, verse 10, says, "And ye are..."—here are our words—"...complete in Him..."—that is, "Christ"—"...which is the head of all principality and power." You might have noticed the image that we put on the pulpit; we have nautical things [an anchor]. The reason is that in that verse—saying that you are complete in Christ—the word "complete" is a nautical term. It means "ship shape, ready to sail." It actually means you're ship-shape, fully rigged and you're ready to sail. That's the phrase that is used that means you are complete in Christ. So we see Christ's preeminence, Christ's sufficiency and we see that we, in Christ, have everything that we need.

Why did Paul write this letter? Paul wrote it from prison; it is one of the prison epistles. By category, Colossians is known as a prison letter of Paul. At the end of the book of Acts, Paul was in Rome under house arrest awaiting trial. At the same time, he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Philemon was from Colosse, and it's believed that the

church at Colosse actually met in Philemon's home. So he wrote that little epistle about his runaway slave to the man Philemon.

So why did Paul write to them? A man by the name of Epaphras, who was the pastor of the church at Colosse, left Colosse and made the one-hundred-mile journey west to Rome to visit Paul when he was in prison. Epaphras told Paul that the believers in Colosse were in danger of being influenced by false teachers. The church was always under the threat of false teachers. "Satan comes to kill, steal and destroy," and he accomplishes that by his preachers and teachers who are promoting error and heresy. So Paul sits down in his prison with Epaphras and Timothy and pens this letter not only to the Ephesians and to the Philippians and to Philemon but also to the believers at Colosse.

What was the crisis or the heresy or the errors that were threatening them? We can summarize the problem in three things. Number one was Jewish legalism, number two was eastern mysticism and number three was Greek philosophy. This is a loose summary of all the hodgepodge things that are being taught by the false teachers. Many believe that it was the beginning stages of what would develop later in the first or second century into Gnosticism. The word "gnostic" comes from the word "to know." It was a group of people who believe that superior knowledge or deeper knowledge is what we need to really progress spiritually. They had all kinds of false views about Jesus and creation and the Christian life. But at this early stage it was kind of a combination or homogenous synchronism of all these different ideas and religions that are put together.

What Paul is actually saying is that Jesus Christ is enough. In chapter 2, verse 3, he said, "In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Have you ever seen the Coexist bumper sticker? Do you know, by the way, it's getting longer? They're adding more religious groups on that bumper sticker. You know, "Let's coexist." If you knew about these different religions, you would know that they are contradictory to one another. You have one that's pantheistic and one that's monotheistic. They can't both exist; either one is true and the other is not true. But people aren't thinking today.

We live in a culture today that is very pluralistic. "Let's blend it all together." We've abandoned the pursuit of truth or even the idea of truth. We're pragmatic. "It doesn't matter if it's true or not, but does it work?" Think about how stupid that is. "I don't care if it's true or if it's of God. Does it work? Will it change my life? Will it help me?" That's all we care about. And if you go onto a college campus today and interview most college students and ask them, "Do you believe in such a thing as truth?" they'll say "No, I don't." Then if you ask them, "Is that a true statement?" they'll look at you kind of weird. "Is it true that there's no truth?" It's self-contradictory. We've actually come to the point of absurdity in our culture today.

Do you ever watch the news and say, "What are we thinking?!" The problem is we're not thinking. We've abandoned absolute truth. We've abandoned absolute truth and righteousness—a fixed point. We don't have God. We're adrift on a moral sea of no absolutes. Everything's relative. "Let's just be a happy family. Let's just have all religions come together. We should

just all come together and love one another.”

But the Bible is very clear that there is a true God. As I was thinking about this again this week, my heart was so stirred to realize that when we worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the God of the Bible, the God of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—we’re worshipping the true, living and only God. A speech like that sounds divisive today; I could probably get thrown in jail for saying something like that today. You say that on television, and they’ll crucify you. But it’s true.

Let me give you an outline of the book of Colossians. In chapter 1, we have doctrine—Christ’s preeminence is declared; in chapter 2, we’re going to see danger—Christ’s preeminence defended; in chapters 3 and 4, we have duty—Christ’s preeminence demonstrated.

There is an interesting contrast between Ephesians and Colossians. Anyone who studies their Bible knows there are a lot of parallels between Ephesians and Colossians. Both start with doctrine and they both lead to duty. They both have principles and they go into practice. But there is a difference between Ephesians and Colossians. Ephesians focuses on the body of Christ, the church, of which Christ is the head. In Colossians, it’s reversed; the focus is on the head, not the church. Both are important. I love Colossians for the simple fact that its focus is Jesus Christ. All the attention is given to Jesus Christ; that He is preeminent, that He is sufficient, that in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are possessed.

As we begin our study of Colossians, we discover that Paul, though, does not immediately confront the crisis in Colosse, but rather, he begins with two things. Number one is a greeting, verses 1-2, and number two is an expression of gratitude, verses 3-5. Now literally, in the Greek, verses 3-8 is one long sentence, and the entire section deals with Paul’s gratitude. But we’re going to have to expand on that and pick it up next time.

Let’s look at Paul’s greeting in verses 1-2. It says, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy...”—my King James version has “Timotheus.” That’s what his mother called him when he was in trouble. Otherwise it was “Tim, get in here.”—“...to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.” He’s describing in verse 2 the believers at Colosse, and I believe all believers. They’re the “saints.” They’re “faithful brethren in Christ.” They’re “at Colosse.” In verse 2 he says, “Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

There are three things I want you to see about this greeting. Number one, the author; his name is Paul. Just the name “Paul” opens up this vista of what a great man Paul was and what an important role he played in the spread of Christianity. He is first known in the New Testament as “Saul of Tarsus.” He was born a Jew in the Gentile city of Tarsus, and he had both an inherited Jewish background—he was a Hebrew—and he also had Roman citizenship. Probably about the age of 13 he was sent by his parents to Jerusalem to sit at the feet of a very respected rabbi by the name of Gamaliel, and Paul became a rabbi. Paul became a Pharisee. We believe he became a Pharisee; we can’t be dogmatic about it though. But he became a

very strict Jew. After Jesus' death and Resurrection, he became the leader of those who were persecuting the first Christians.

You know the story; Acts 9. He was on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians and to throw them into prison and he met Jesus. He heard a voice as he was struck to the earth. The voice said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? Isn't it hard for you to kick against the goads?" A goad is a long, pointed stick they would use to poke the oxen to get them to move in the fields. He was referring to the Spirit of God Who was convicting Saul. Saul had watched Stephen be martyred, and the Spirit of God used that to convict his heart. Then Saul, trembling, said, "Who are You, Lord, that I may serve You?" And then the voice came back and said what Saul didn't want to hear, "I am Jesus, Whom you persecute." And Saul's thinking, I am dead meat! You are Jesus; I am history! I'm dead, because I hated You, and I persecuted You and now I find out You're my Lord!

So Saul went trembling to Damascus, and Ananias laid hands on him. "Brother Saul, receive the Holy Spirit." Ananias ministered to him, and then Saul was called to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, and his name was changed to Paul. The name "Saul" is Hebrew, and it means "asked for." The name "Paul" means "little." It's a Gentile or Greek name. My middle name is Paul; John Paul Miller. My grandmother used to say to me, "Johnny Paul, you have a great name; live up to it." Paul became the Apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote so much of our New Testament.

Notice Paul's authority: He is "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." The word "apostle" means "one who is sent out" or "commissioned on an errand." Sent out to represent. It would be like our modern ambassadors. We send an ambassador from the United States to another country to represent America, and he speaks with the full authority of America. So an apostle represented Jesus Christ and spoke with full apostolic authority.

Now just a footnote: I don't believe that in this primary sense of the early apostles who wrote Scripture with apostolic authority—I don't believe they exist anymore today. So if you have a church or an organization or a group that claims apostolic succession, that we have an apostle that was actually handed right down from Jesus Christ, that's a dangerous thing. Let me tell you why that's dangerous. What they're trying to do is shift the authority from the Bible, which has apostolic authority, to that individual, who does not. We need to understand that the authority comes from the Scriptures that were written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It doesn't come from some individual who is on earth today. I don't care what position or what power that individual has; there is no human individual on planet earth today who speaks with that apostolic authority. That authority is found in the Bible, the Word of God.

These apostles spoke the truth. And what were the qualifications to be an apostle? You had to experience the risen Christ. You had to have seen Christ or company with Christ. So Paul saw Him on the road to Damascus. He was out in Arabia for three years, and God came to him there and revealed His truths to Paul. Then God commissioned him. Paul said, "I was born out of due time. I'm not fit to be an apostle." But Paul used his apostolic title here, because he's going to be dealing with false teachers; and he wants them in Colosse to understand that what

he's saying has apostolic authority. I'm "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." He was saved and sent by Jesus Christ.

Paul had an associate; his name was Timothy. His name means "one who honors God." He was a traveling companion of Paul. Paul wrote two letters in the New Testament to him: 1 and 2 Timothy. They are pastoral epistles.

Then Paul mentions the readers, verse 2. He calls them "saints," "faithful brethren" who are "in Christ...at Colosse." So there are four ways he characterizes these readers. It's interesting that they were "saints." Do you know that every Christian is a saint? Do you know that if you're a Christian you're a saint? "No, I ain't." I didn't say you lived like a saint. I said, "You are a saint." There's a difference. The goal of the Christian life is to live like saints; it's to be what we are. We are saints.

The words "saint" or "sanctify" or "holy" all come from the same root word. It has a simple meaning; it means actually to be "set apart." It means the "set-apart ones." The word doesn't convey any idea of intrinsic holiness or moral goodness. When I say that you are saints, it doesn't mean that you are living saintly lives. This is the Bible teaching that is called "positional truth." We need to understand this: that the moment you are born again, you are set apart by God. You are considered by God to be holy.

This room that we are meeting in right now—this part of our church building—we call the "sanctuary." I don't like it when they call it the auditorium. It's not an auditorium; it's a sanctuary. Why? Because it's set apart for a purpose. The purpose is to worship God. The saints gather in the sanctuary to study the Scriptures. So the set-apart ones are in a set-apart room to worship God. We don't do bingo in here. We don't have dances in here. We don't have skating parties in here. We don't tear out the pews and have a rodeo in here. This room is a sanctuary, and we're here to worship God. We're here to hear His Word. You, as a Christian, the moment you were saved, you were set apart by God.

Let me give you a synopsis of this concept of sanctification. It started when the Holy Spirit came to you and started convicting you that you are a sinner and you need Jesus Christ. That was the beginning of the sanctifying process of God. Then when you repented of your sins and you believed in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit regenerated you, and you were saved. Thus, God set you apart. Then the Holy Spirit is producing in you, in a life-long process, the likeness of Jesus Christ. So immediately, you were perfectly holy, or sanctified. But in a process practically, as you grow in grace and you yield to the Spirit, you're becoming more and more like Jesus Christ. That's called "sanctification." The final stage of this process is when you get to go to heaven, and you get a new body. You're no longer struggling with sin or temptation. And you're totally sanctified; we call that "glorification." So we are justified, we are being sanctified and one day—future tense—we will be glorified. All of that can be under the heading of sanctification: the work of the Spirit and setting us apart and one day taking us to heaven, when we will be there with Jesus Christ.

Right now, positionally, we are saints, but we are also described, along with the believers in Colosse, as the “faithful brethren.” At least I hope and pray that you are faithful as brethren. The word “faithful” means “steadfast.” These are the same people who Paul just called “saints.” They were faithful or steadfast in their commitment to God, and they were beloved by Paul as brethren. There’s the family of God.

Thirdly—and this is the most important title for them—they are “in Christ.” Notice that in verse 2. That is one of Paul’s favorite terms for the Christian. I don’t think there is anything more important for the Christian than understanding what it means to be “in Christ”; to come to fully understand what it means to be “in Christ.” I can actually guarantee you that when you understand your position in Christ, it’ll transform your life. It’ll transform your walk with God, and it’ll transform your relationship to God; just understanding what it means that “I am now in Christ.”

Ephesians 1:3 says we are now “blessed...with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” In Colossians 2:10 we read that we “are complete in Christ.” We’re ship-shape, fully rigged, ready to sail. In Romans 8:1, it says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”—music to my ears. In Romans 8:39, the last verse—first verse of Romans 8 and last verse of Romans 8—it says nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Praise God for that.

When did we get in Christ? The moment we were saved. Well, who were we in before we were in Christ? In Adam. Every human being is born in Adam. I was holding my new, little, three-week old grandson last week. I’m looking at him and praying that he will open his heart and receive Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, because he was born in Adam. Adam, acting as our federal head, brought sin and death. You know why babies die and people die and human beings die? Because we’re in Adam. We inherited everything that Adam brought into the world: sin, death, separation and his condemnation.

You say, “Well, that doesn’t sound very cool. That sounds very frightening. How do I get out of Adam and get in Christ?” You repent of your sins, you believe in Jesus Christ and you are born again. You are transferred from Adam into Jesus. You are in Christ. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. I happen to believe that is the baptism of the Holy Spirit; that He identifies you with Christ. He takes you out of Adam, and He places you in Christ. Every Christian has been baptized by the Holy Spirit, because it’s the work that happens the moment you are saved: taking you out of Adam and placing you in Christ.

You say, “Well, what about the Spirit-filled life?” Yes, we need to be Spirit-filled Christians. Not every Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit, but I believe every Christian has been baptized by the Holy Spirit, because the moment you were taken out of Adam and placed in Christ, that was the work of the Holy Spirit. You can’t do that. You don’t even have that feeling; you can’t say, “Woo, I just got out of Adam! Awesome!” You don’t feel anything. You have to read your Bible to find out what happened. You have to have an educated mind.

There's so much truth in the New Testament that is true about every Christian, no matter how spiritual they are. Positionally, we are all equal; we are all the same. Positionally, we are all accepted in the beloved. Positionally, none of us can get any more spiritual. Nothing I can do to be more spiritual; nothing I can do to be less spiritual. My position is in Christ. Then I need to be surrendered to the Holy Spirit, be filled with the Holy Spirit and try to live a sanctified life to become more like Christ.

I believe that once you're in Christ, you're always in Christ. Do Christians disagree? Yes. You can be wrong if you want to. I'll love you. I'll accept you. I think you're wrong, but you're my brother in Christ. The Holy Spirit takes you out of Adam and puts you in Christ, and because of that, you can't take yourself out of Christ and back into Adam. What do you have to do to lose your salvation? You have to get out of Christ and go back into Adam. The Holy Spirit's the one Who took you out of Adam and put you in Christ. You can't undo that. That's why Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and Romans 8:39 says there is no separation. Nothing can "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." You're not only in Christ, but you're sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption.

Again, this is such a marvelous concept, and it's so prevalent throughout the book of Colossians. By the time we've completed this series, you're going to understand the sufficiency of Christ and completeness in Him. Then we're going to get into marriage and parenting and being a good employer and a good employee and all the practical, rubber-meets-the-road truth. It's based on doctrine. We need to understand that.

The readers of Paul's letter were also in Colosse. Notice that in verse 2. They were "saints," they were "faithful brethren," they were "in Christ" and they were "at Colosse." Colosse was about 100 miles east of Ephesus, a Roman province of Asia Minor. Today, it's in modern Turkey. I've been to Ephesus a couple of times, but they aren't sure really where the ancient city of Colosse is. In Old Testament times, it was a large, prosperous city, but in New Testament times of Paul, it was kind of small and dying out. It was set in what's called the Lycus Valley. There was a river that ran through it. It was near two other prominent cities: Hierapolis and Laodicea. When you have the seven letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, they are all in the area where Colosse was. Pergamos and Thyatira and all these cities are in this area, which today would be modern Turkey.

Notice the blessing, as we wrap up the greeting, in verse 2. Paul blesses them by saying, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the basic greeting. Grace. It's the Greek greeting of "charis." It means that which is "beautiful and charming." It's a beautiful name for a girl, charis or grace. Grace is unearned, undeserved, unmerited favor. Then Paul used the word shalom or "peace," which is the Hebrew greeting. Grace always comes before peace. You can't know the peace of God unless you're standing in and experiencing the grace of God. Paul only mentions peace twice in the entire epistle; in chapter 1, verse 2; and in chapter 3, verse 15. Colossians 3:15 says, "And let the peace of God..."—or "Christ"—"...rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be

ye thankful.” So Paul mentions the idea of peace again there in chapter 3. So we have the grace of God, we have the peace of God and it comes to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father and God the Son are the source of grace and peace.

Now the second thing we see in chapter 1 in this opening to Paul’s letter is his gratitude in verses 3-5. Paul says, “We give thanks to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, and the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, whereof you heard before the Word of truth of the Gospel.” So he goes from this greeting to this gratitude, and he begins to give thanks.

Again, there is a challenge, because from verse 3 down to verse 8 are all the things that Paul is grateful for, and we want to continue it next time. In the Greek, it’s one long sentence, verses 3-8.

But I want you to notice here that Paul’s gratitude is the dominant theme in chapter 1, verses 3 and 12; in chapter 2, verse 7; chapter 3, verses 15 and 17; and chapter 4, verse 2. He mentions the idea of being thankful and being grateful. Notice in chapter 1, verse 3, “We give thanks,” present tense, ongoing, continually giving thanks. He was thanking God while he was praying, verse 3. This thanksgiving was in Paul’s prayers. And Paul says, “praying always for you” or literally “praying around you.” That Greek phrase “praying around you” literally meant, “I’m praying around you”; “I’m surrounding you in prayer.” Paul was praying for people he didn’t know.

What was Paul thankful for as he prayed for the believers in Colosse? Three things: He was thankful for their faith, verse 4; he was thankful for their love, verse 4; and he was thankful for their hope, verse 5. Faith, hope and love. Paul says, “since the day we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus.” Literally, it’s “the faith of you.” “I’m so thankful for you in Colosse.” And I’m thankful for you, because of your faith in Jesus Christ. Their faith was real, it was practical and the object of their faith was Jesus Christ.

The important thing about faith is not its intensity or the amount of faith. There are some people today who are teaching that you have to have lots of faith. That’s good to have a lot of faith, but the question is: What is your faith in? Did you know that your faith is only as good as the object it’s placed in? If you have faith in government—why are you laughing? If you have faith in government, you get what government can do—squat, very little. If you have faith in man, what do you get? You get what man can do. If you have faith in doctors—thank God for doctors and thank God for government. But when you go to the doctor, guess who your faith needs to be in? Jesus Christ. Although you’re placing faith in the doctor, your faith needs to be in Jesus Christ. He’s the object of your faith. A little faith will take your soul to heaven, if it’s in the right object, Jesus Christ. I hear people say sometimes, “Oh, well, you have so much faith.” In what? What is your faith in?”

I don’t know in California why we’re building higher and higher freeway bridges. There are

earthquakes here! Sometimes when I'm going over a freeway bridge, I'm thinking, Oh, Lord, not now! Not now! It's like punch it! Whew! Praise God! I got over that bridge before the quake hit. What are we thinking? How much faith do you put in that freeway bridge? How much faith do you put in an airplane? You hear stories about pilots getting drunk and taking off in their planes. It's like, I want to give them sobriety tests before we take off on the runway. You have faith in elevators and in food. You go to a restaurant and you can't tell what you're eating, but you eat it anyway. You haven't interviewed the cook or checked out the kitchen. We just exercise faith.

The object of your faith is what's important. I love the fact that Paul says your faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when your faith is in Jesus, you get what Jesus can do. He can save you and heal you. He can strengthen you and provide for you. He'll guide you and take care of you. He'll never disappoint you nor let you down. You must live by faith.

Paul was also thankful for their love, verse 4. "...and of the love which you have to all the saints." Faith in God and love for God's children go together. I've met Christians who say, "I'm a Christian, but I'm not one of those loving kind. I believe in God, but I don't love people. They creep me out. I'm not one of those lovey, smiley, huggy Christians." It's impossible to have faith in God but not love toward God's people. 1 John 3:23 says, "And this is His commandment, 'That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment.'" The word "love" there is the word "agape." "For God so loved the world..."—"agaped" the world. Same word—God's love in us shed abroad in our hearts toward others. Notice in the text, it was a love "to all the saints."

A love "to all the saints" is not easy. Sometimes they bug me. Sometimes they irritate me. But did you know that love is not a feeling? Love is not an emotion. That can follow, but love is a verb; it's an action word. Love seeks the highest good of the object loved. That's why in a marriage relationship, real love doesn't change when that person changes, because it's not rooted in the object that's loved; it's rooted in your heart. And you'll love that person no matter how they act or what they think or what they say or what they do. You don't approve of them in everything, but you love them. In other words, you seek what's best for them; you seek their highest good. It's a commitment you make. Love is not a passing emotion; it's a continuing devotion. It says, "I'm going to love you no matter what happens, no matter what comes down. I'm committed to you. I'm going to seek your highest good."

Then the third thing that Paul was thankful for was hope, verse 5. I love this. The hope, which is the hope of heaven. It's actually "the hope." The article "the" indicates it is a reference to heaven. Christians have the hope of heaven, and the believer's hope is a steadfast assurance. You know you're going to heaven. Notice it's "laid up" or "kept" or "secure." The words mean it's fixed or fastened so it cannot give way and become loose or lost. It's for us and it's in heaven.

And this is also the hope that is found in the Gospel. At the end of verse 5, he said this "hope, which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof you heard before in the Word of the truth of the Gospel." He's going to go on in the next several verses and talk about the Gospel. The Gospel

message is that which joins the hope in the heart to the hope of heaven. That hope must be preached. He says, "You heard it." We must proclaim the Gospel. It is true. It is the Word of truth. And it is centered in a person. That person is Jesus Christ.

And it is good news, not good views. It's good news that God came from heaven and entered through the womb of the Virgin Mary. He led a sinless life in the person of Jesus Christ. He died a voluntary death on the Cross, took our place, paid for our sins and was buried. Three days later, He arose from the dead. He's alive to forgive you and give you the hope of heaven. That's good news. And it should be proclaimed because it's true. Amen.