

## The Supremacy of Christ and the Fruit of Gospel Hope Gospel Hope and Life Changing Knowledge: Colossians 1:9-14

### Scripture:

#### Colossians 1:9–14:

*[9] 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, [10] 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; [11] being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; [12] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. [13] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

### Let's Pray.

#### Introduction:

If you were here last week or joined us on the livestream you know that the elders started in on a 12-week series on the book of Colossians entitled “**The Supremacy of Christ and the Fruit of Gospel Hope.**”

As we opened this series, I started by walking us through the background and opening 8 verses of this book. And as we unpacked the background and opening verses some important points emerged that help us to understand why Paul wrote to this church and what he is trying to communicate.

1. We learned that Epaphras came to Paul while he was in prison in Rome and told him that there were false teachers and teachings that were tempting the Colossian believers to put their hope in something besides Christ. **Things like human works, visions, angel worship, abstaining from food, human philosophies and traditions, etc...**
2. We learned that despite these threats Paul was thanking God for their genuine faith and love for all the saints.
3. Because of this false teaching, he found it necessary to reminded them that their faith in God and love for his people was only possible because of the **eternal hope that comes through the finished work of Christ on the cross, the gospel.**

**Meaning, that only “eternal hope”, or what I called “Gospel Hope,” can produce lasting fruit in our lives, God’s kingdom, and in the world.**

Lasting fruit isn’t found in protests, vaccines, politics, another form of spirituality, or by trying harder to be better. **It is only found in Christ.**

This is why I ended the message with a call to each of us. **That we would make the message of Christ or “Gospel hope” our most passionate message in our homes, workplaces, communities, and online.**

But it would be really easy to stop there wouldn't it. We are very comfortable saying, **“only Jesus can save and change people, so go tell them about him.”**

Or if you wanted to get real fancy you might say, **“Only Gospel Hope proclaimed can produce a Gospel hope lived.”** But do you ever stop yourself and ask the question, **“What the heck does that mean?”**

**“Paul, you're your talking about this “Gospel hope” changing us and bearing fruit in our lives, but how does that actually happen? And what is that supposed to look like?”**

Here's the cool thing. Paul isn't silent about these questions. He knew that the Colossians were being tempted to find spiritual fullness in **human philosophies, knowledge, and works apart from Christ.**

So, he takes the foundation of Gospel hope that he laid out in verse 3-8, and in verses 9-14 shows them that spiritual fullness and real life change begin with a life-changing knowledge of God and his will.

**Second**, because the Colossians were being tempted to find knowledge apart from Christ, he points them back to the purpose of this life-changing knowledge, God's pleasure.

**Finally**, he ends by laying out the tangible fruit that should come from this life-changing knowledge. **That fruit being good works, joy-filled endurance, and worship.**

And this morning as we walk through what Paul is trying to communicate to this church we we will be confronted with the following questions:

- A.) Has my life been transformed by the knowledge and wisdom of God?"
- B.) Is my life driven by a desire to please God?
- C.) Are the fruits of this life-changing gospel knowledge actually evident in my life?

And it is my hope that we, as God's people would experience the fullness of all that God has for us through Christ, and that our “Gospel hope” would not just be seen in the words we say, but in the reality of the lives we live. **So, our first point for this morning is this:**

## **1. Genuine Gospel hope should produce life changing knowledge. (V. 9)**

Colossians 1:9:

*[9] 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,*

The apostle Paul, after thanking God for the Gospel hope that he sees bearing fruit and growing in the lives of the Colossians, starts this section with the two little words, “**And so...**” And these two little words “**And so...**” are best understood as meaning, “**For this reason.**”

The reason Paul is praying for these things and believes that they should exist in the lives of the Colossians is because, according to Epaphras, they have heard the gospel, they have received the gospel, and the gospel is bearing fruit in their lives. **They have a “genuine Gospel hope.”**

And if they have a genuine Gospel hope Paul believes and prays **that they would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.**

This isn’t some mystical knowledge or wisdom that the false teachers are offering through human philosophies, traditions, or visions. Nor is this only head knowledge.

**This knowledge that Paul is talking about is full of wisdom and understanding. Meaning, that it is a deep and full heart knowledge of who God is and his will for his people, that produces within us a desire to follow him.**

**It’s a knowledge that changes the very core of our desires and affections.** This is the type of knowledge that Paul is calling the Colossians and us to be “filled up” with. **It is transformational life changing knowledge.**

In fact, Paul echoes this same idea in Romans 12:2 when he writes:

***Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.***

Now, as good evangelicals, we believe that this type of knowledge comes from **the Word of God.** And most of us would hopefully agree with the EFCA statement of Faith which says this about the Bible:

**“As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.”**

My hope is that most of you are saying to yourself, “yes I agree with this.” If not, see me after service. But the thing that we often forget and the thing which I feel like the EFCA statement on the Bible misses is the reality that Bible is more than just a litmus test for right and wrong and it is more than just a set of rules to be obeyed.

The Bible is meant to be God's love story to his people that not only teaches us information about God and what he desires, but **by the power of the Holy Spirit** it is meant to change the very core of what we love, treasure, and seek after.

This is the kind of knowledge that the apostle Paul wants the Colossians to be filled with because it is the only kind of knowledge that will lead to a transformed and changed life.

But my question is: **Do we actually go to the scriptures looking to be transformed? Do we actually believe that God's word can transform us?**

My fear is that many of us, if we were honest with ourselves, would say no, we don't go to the scriptures looking to be transformed. And I unfortunately believe this is true because research supports this conclusion.

According to a study done by LifeWay Research in 2019, only %36 percent of evangelicals said they read their Bible on a regular basis.

**Let that sink in %36.**

Why is that?

I believe this happens because we come to God's word like it's a textbook. We come wanting to learn information: **Information about God, information to help us live a good life, information that helps us to make good decisions, and information that makes us feel good about our eternity.**

But I don't think we often come to God's word with the anticipation, and I will even say desire, of being transformed. We read it because we are supposed to, we read it to get some helpful information, but we don't often read it with the desire to be changed.

And yet God's word continually screams the reality that what God is after through his Word is transformation. As Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16:

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

*[16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

Or as Jesus writes in John 15:11:

*[11] These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

Paul's point is that the scriptures make us complete and Jesus's point is that his words, the very words of God, bring a fullness of Joy.

They both believe and anticipate the reality that God's Word will and should transform our minds, hearts, desires, and affections. **They see the Word of God as life changing knowledge.**

So my encouragement and call to everyone in this room, and everyone who will listen to this online, is to change how we read and think about God's Word. Let's stop going to it just for information.

Instead let's begin to read it, meditate on it, and pray it with the anticipation and hope that God, through Christ, will use it to not only to teach us his will, but to transform our very affections and desires that we truly would know God and desire to follow him above all other things.

**This brings us to our next point which answers the why? Why should we want to be transformed by God's life changing word in the first place?**

## **2. The purpose of life changing knowledge is God's pleasure (V. 10a)**

Colossians 1:10a:

*[10a] so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him:*

Paul now takes this life transforming and affection changing knowledge that is given to us by God through his word and connects it with the goal and purpose of that knowledge, which is to honor God and please him.

Meaning, that we seek after life changing desire transforming knowledge so that we can not only know God, but can live in a way **that honors him and pleases him**. This is important for two reasons.

One, it's important for the Colossians to understand that the empty human knowledge of the false teachers doesn't honor God or bring him pleasure.

Two, God's honor and pleasure are at the heart of his purpose for us and his creation. As Psalm 104:31 says:

*[31] May the glory of the LORD endure forever;  
may the LORD rejoice in his works,*

The psalmist is making the point that God rejoices or takes pleasure in what he has made, because they bring him honor and reflect his glory.

This is also the same idea that Paul is trying to communicate to the Philippian church in Philippians 2:13 when he writes:

*[13] for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

God's creation was and is created for the purpose of bringing him pleasure. Which means, that we as his people were also created to live a life that brings him pleasure.

But living a life that honors God and pleases him, is only made possible, as Paul says, when God's Word takes root in our hearts and transforms our very thoughts, desires, and actions.

This is why Paul writes the word "so as..." or "so that..." in Colossians 1:10. He makes a God honoring and God pleasing live dependent upon our hearts being transformed life changing knowledge of his word.

Now for some of us, that might not feel very exciting. I'm suspecting that God's pleasure might not be that thing that gets us out of bed in the morning. But here is the question, if God's pleasure is at the heart of his purpose for creation and for us, **why isn't it the thing that consumes us the most?**

And I believe the answer is simple. It is because we have forgotten that our pleasure and joy are intimately connected to God's pleasure and joy.

Let's look back at John 15 and now read verse 8-11:

*[8] By this my Father is **glorified**, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. [9] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. [10] If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. [11] These things I have spoken to you, that **my joy** may be in you, and that **your joy may be full**.*

The God the Father is glorified when we bear fruit follow him. In turn God the Son, who is full of joy, says that if we glorify the Father, which will ultimately bring him pleasure, then we will be filled with joy.

Or as the Westminster catechism says: **The chief end (purpose) of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.**

**When we live a life that glorifies God, we bring him pleasure.**

**And when we bring him pleasure, we in turn receive our greatest joy and pleasure.**

**Let me give you an illustration from my life:**

As many of you remember my dad passed away in March of 2017. Many of you also know that my dad wasn't the greatest person in the world. Now he wasn't the worst dad I could have gotten, but for most of my life he was an alcoholic, was angry, and was absent.

But despite those realities, when I was a kid growing up there was no other person that I wanted approval from more than him. I think I can probably count on one hand the number of times my dad told me he was proud of me. And each time he did, it filled me with joy and delight because that was the thing I was longing for and living for.

It's no different with God. The thing that the human heart longs for is the fulfilment and pleasure that come from our God saying well done good and faithful servant, I am pleased with you.

So when we seek after God, when we open his word to know his will and be transformed by it, rejoice in the truth that God is using it so that you and I can live in a way that honors him and brings him pleasure. And when we bring him pleasure and as a result, we will find and receive our greatest pleasure and joy. As Psalm 16:11 says:

**[11] You make known to me the path of life;  
in your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

### **3. The fruit of life changing knowledge**

Colossians 1:10-14

*[10] 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; [11] being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; [12] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. [13] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*

Now, here is where we get into the practical aspects of these verses. What should a transformed life look like that honors and pleases God. In essence the question is: What should be the tangible fruit of this life changing knowledge in our lives?

And Paul in this portion of the letter gives the Colossians three basic things that should be evident in their lives.

God Pleasing Works:

Paul writes in verse 10b:

***bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;***

Paul's point is that real life changing knowledge doesn't just stay inside of us. It isn't just a theory or a philosophy that we talk about, but it results in a life does good to and for others.

But it's not just about doing "good for goodness sake" as it says in the song "Santa clause is coming to town." No, we do good works for a different reason. As Jesus says in Matthew 5:16:

*[16] In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

**We live our lives and do good to and for others so that they will turn to Jesus and God will be glorified.** Wow. Let the weight of that rest upon you.

Now, I don't have time to spell out what all these good works are, but I will ask you to do one simple thing:

Think about the things (**works**) that you do on a moment by moment basis: Are they causing people to turn to Christ and are they bringing glory to your father in heaven? Because if there not, they are not pleasing in his site. **This is a weighty truth and something that I encourage all of us to think about and take seriously.**

The fruit of a life transformed by God's word is God honoring, God pleasing good works.

The second fruit of life changing knowledge is:

God Pleasing Endurance:

Colossians 1:11 says:

*[11] being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;*

We as Christians talk about enduring hard all the time. Whether it's the coronavirus pandemic, racial tensions, wayward kids, marriage issues, job lose, money issues, health issues, you name it. We often are just trying to get through it.

But the type of endurance that the apostle Paul is talking about is more than just getting through the hard of life. And to be honest many of us, myself included don't even understand what hard is. **I get the sniffles and you would think my life is over.**

What Paul has in mind here is a Holy Spirit empowered endurance that boldly and gladly clings to Christ when everything else around us seems to be crumbling. It's the kind of endurance the Colossians need to stand up under false teaching, persecution, and every other hard that this life can throw at it. **And it is the kind of endurance that is marked by joy.**

Now take a minute and think about the situations you are currently facing. Some are probably more sever than others, but think about everything you are dealing with on a daily basis and ask yourself this:



Would the people around you say that you are someone that endures trials with joy, or are you gritting your teeth and getting through them?

Wherever you are on this spectrum I want to encourage you to seek and pray, by God's Spirit to become someone that joyfully clings to Christ and endures every single situation with a rock-solid confidence in Him. **Honor and please God in how you endure.**

Lastly, the third fruit of life changing knowledge is:

God Pleasing Worship:

Colossians 1:12-14 says:

*[12] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. [13] He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, [14] in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

This is where Paul brings us all the way back around to **Gospel hope**. This gospel that he talked about in verse 3-5, if it has taken root in us should produce a life transforming knowledge of God and his Word, that enables us to glorify God and please him with Christ-centered works and joy-filled endurance.

But this life changing Gospel knowledge and hope should produce one more thing. It should produce Christ-exalting, God Pleasing gratitude and worship. Why?

Because all that Paul has told the Colossians and us in these verses is only made possible because of the finished work of Christ who has bought for us the forgiveness of sins, has brought us from death to life, and has made us heirs with Christ who will experience the riches of his kingdom forever.

We didn't earn any of it, and all of it has been given to us freely by Christ and through Christ. And this should produce nothing short of an unceasing thanksgiving and awe in our hearts and in our lives.

So I want to close this morning with a question and a call. The question is this:

Do you have a genuine blood bought gospel hope? Have you been bought by Christ, saved by Christ, and do you believe that you will one day share in the eternal inheritance of his saints?

If so, then the call is to pursue the life giving, life transforming knowledge that he gives so that you can live every moment of your life, in a way that shows the world his supreme greatness so that he would be pleased and your joy would be filled to the full.

**Let's Pray.**