

2/17/19 - Col. 1:1-8 - "Participants in the Gospel"

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[0 : 00] I just wanted to kind of set the context of the book for a minute before we dive into reading a scripture, because what good would it be to just dive into scripture without actually seeing what was the need of this book?

And so, the book of Colossians, just like many epistles, was written by Paul. And this is one of his prison epistles written in the book, in the time frame of about 60 to 62 A.D.

He was in prison in Rome. Colossians 4, chapter 4, verse 3 mentions this. He's a prisoner in Rome. The founding church of this Colossian church was Epiphra.

And during this time period, it was primarily made up of Gentile believers, but also started to get mixed in with a mixture of Jewish believers as well.

With both of these cultures, it kind of brought like this mix of different systems and practices into one. It actually started morphing itself into something like a pseudo-belief that was going on.

[1 : 16] For the Jews, it brought about like illegalism in this church. Man-made tradition. In chapter 2, verse 8, it mentions about that.

The necessity of circumcision for salvation. Yeah, we'll get into that. We'll hold off on that message for chapter 2. But the observance of ceremonial rituals, like dietary laws, festivals, sabbaths, and strong asceticisms.

The abstinence of like sensual pleasures. Chapter 2 also speaks about that. But then also the Gentile rituals as well created like a pagan mysticism.

Like they were bringing into the church like this worship of angels. And in actually chapter 2, verse 8, speaks of this as that they were actually worshiping fallen angels, which is bad news for them.

Cosmic powers, worshiping cosmic powers, worshiping mystical experiences. There's a hybrid of Jews and Gentiles that began to form here.

[2 : 33] Built upon mystical visions. Entering in as chapter 2, verse 18 says, they were entering into what they have seen. And obviously, just like many of these epistles, it was addressing the heresy known as Gnosticism.

And I always like to bring in other people's impression of Gnosticism. And MacArthur, John MacArthur, is going to join us this morning as he defines Gnosticism as held that God is good, but matter is evil.

That Jesus Christ was merely one of a series of descendants from God and being less than God. A belief that led them to deny his true humanity.

And that there's a secret, there's a higher knowledge above Scripture that is necessary for enlightenment. That there's something hidden.

And the Gnostics were a group of people that thought they had the secrets. And that anybody else who believed in that Jesus stuff that the apostles were proclaiming was not following God properly.

[3 : 46] So Paul brings a cure to this church before we dive into here. And he brings the cure. He's bringing the church back to true doctrine in this book of Colossians.

Which is rooted deeply in Christ and who Christ is. Who is supreme over all creation. And who also had full atonement on the cross.

That sinners that are purchased by the cross of Christ was paid in full. There was nothing left out. That the purchase of sinners and being reconciled with God was a payment in full.

And this letter is to root the church of Colossae to not man-made philosophy. But solely upon him where all wisdom and knowledge are found.

I could geek out and talk about all the doctrine and everything that's going to be coming up. But we'll just take it piece by piece throughout the upcoming weeks. So at this time, let's pray and ask

God to obviously reveal His word to us this morning.

[4 : 55] And to come under, submit ourselves to the authority of His word. Which is so important for today. And teach what the Bible teaches. And not what we want to teach.

So let's pray. Join with me in prayer. Father, we thank you for a book that honestly in many of our homes, if we want to be real, collects dust.

Father, we pray at this time that you begin to do a work within us that begins with your word proclaims.

Father, show us this Colossian church. Show us for who they are, what they were doing. What was going on at this time in this book of Colossians.

We pray that the essence of what Paul was preaching in this book can come to life. That the truth may be exposed to us.

[6 : 07] Not to add or to take away from this word. But Father, to root ourselves deep within the meaning that was originally intended in this book.

Let us not take for granted this book that we have in our hands, in our possession this morning. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

My mouth has been extremely dry, so I'm going to probably run out of coffee. Coffee's still hot back there. I just got a thumbs up from Tim. Let's dive into the reading of his word.

Starting out in Colossians chapter 1, verse 1. It says, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God and Timothy, our brother.

To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae, grace to you and peace from God our Father. Father, we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.

[7 : 26] Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love that you have for all the saints. Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

Of this you have heard before in the word of truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing, as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

Just as you learned it from Epiphra, our beloved fellow servant, he is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf. And has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Just looking at this text as it is on this page, it's good to kind of look at it from a standpoint of how words are set up and how they're built upon, especially with Paul's writing.

I love Paul's writing. It seems like he's kind of systematic, chronological. He's kind of a logical writer. And it's no coincidence that some of these words in here were created even with like a run-on sentence.

[8 : 43] Things like that are definitely clues that there's something that this text is trying to communicate. When you see a run-on sentence, like a purposeful one, not one that you might see on like a Facebook post of mine or something that I unintentionally have a run-on sentence.

But Paul, there's a reason that there's a flow of thought that he doesn't stop. He doesn't separate the flow of thought. And in so doing, he keeps that thought to be centered upon a certain theme that he's trying to push forward, a collective idea and thought.

It's something that we can observe and something to get in the habit of when we approach God's Word. It's a literary context, how it's structured here. And in studying, obviously, you'd have to really study the text.

But when you get into this, there's actually a chiasm within these verses, 1 through 8, that build upon two parallel thoughts that point an emphasis on a main idea, an objective that is trying to be communicated in this text.

The first point I want to talk about today in this text is in verse 1 through 4.

[9 : 58] It's thankfulness with credible evidence. As verse 1 says, Here Paul addresses, In this passage of four verses, The church of Colossae with great thanksgiving.

And this is actually an introductory section. The introductory section doesn't end at verse 8. It actually continues to 14. But this section, 1 through 8, is a thanksgiving section.

And next week, we're going to be studying the prayer section of this introduction of this letter. And as we study, you're going to pick up on different themes and components that are going to pop up over the next several weeks.

That are going to set the pace for the entire epistle from chapter 1 to chapter 4. We have on here rooted, watered, and growing.

Because these are themes that are going to pop up. There's going to be themes, elements that are rooting us in like the supremacy of Christ over all creation. Over all living things.

[11 : 36] But watered through not only just the beginning of our saving faith in Christ. But the ongoing faith of trusting Him. And growing.

As it is observable for all believers. Even in this verse. Saying, love. The love that is seen. That you see there's something going. There's something stirring within this church in particular.

Verse 1 says, Immediately Paul establishes his authority of this epistle.

Which is very helpful to us. Because we want to figure out who writes these books. Hebrews is still a mystery. But Paul clearly says and he defines, I am writing to this church.

And it's not just him writing. It's by authority that's given to the apostolic body of this day. To put these words. They are inspired words.

[12 : 37] He's giving the authority over this message. And his calling is not of his own. But it is of Christ. Verse 2 says, To the saints and the faithful brothers in Christ.

At Colossae. Grace to you and peace from God our Father. When we hear saints, All sorts of things can probably come to our minds. Especially we live in a very, very Catholic area.

There's a lot of Catholic churches. And when you think of saints, You think of, The last thing you think about are you, Believers in Christ sometimes. Because there's so much emphasis on these guys you see on stained glass windows.

You see created statues and things like that. You hear about them. You hear people praying to them. You hear people praising them.

But this is common even today. This should be common. I'll put it that way. To address even those who trust in Christ today as saints. Because this signifies his audience here.

[13 : 46] It's a group of individuals set apart. At the moment that they put their trust in Christ. That there's no big hats required for this title of saint.

There's no robe. Though it is optional. I'm still waiting for mine after my ordination. Hint, hint.

Shame. But saint is sometimes a thing that you never really think about us being saints.

This is the audience that Paul is writing to. The saints of Colossae. And likewise, just as believers, we are believers. We are saints in Christ.

And being in Christ, Paul highlights the unifying object of this group. Of being saints. It's the source of their unity to be among this group of people. This church.

This church. The people gather. Not a building. It has nothing to do with a building. The church is a group of people in the New Testament. It's due to the basis of their faith in Christ.

[14 : 51] They're no longer blood relatives to their family members. But they are grafted. This group of people are grafted as saints together. United into God's new family.

This new family. An eternal family. Verse 3 continues. We always thank God, the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.

I always find it odd how all these letters from Paul have so much joy in them.

If you consider Paul in this letter and him thanking God for somebody else, imagine he's in a prison cell writing this letter in a prison in Rome.

Thanking God here. And expressing joy in many of his epistles. Expressing joy because of things that are being reported to him.

[15 : 59] Could you imagine people coming to you in prison like, hey, this is going on, this is going on, this is going on. And you being just so invigorated by the movement of the gospel within these churches.

That despite being behind bars, being hungry, probably being tired, being cold, being uncomfortable for that matter. And just having a joy that is unending for the gospel movement and work within churches.

His love for God's people was amazing. Absolutely amazing. But his thankfulness for, his thankfulness to God, the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He mentions in here, which is a key component, that if you're just reading over it and you don't look at this. He's actually talking, he's actually originating who God, who Christ is. Being from the Father, sonship.

In this remark, Paul establishes the divine heritage of Jesus Christ being that of the Father. Verse 3 says, we always thank God, the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[17:06] This highlights the two persons of the Trinity. You don't want to pass too quickly over that. God, the Father, and God, the Son. This is the informing of his thankfulness.

And it draws the identity of Christ being rooted in the Father to enforce his divinity. And we're going to be talking about, you're going to see Lord Jesus Christ.

You're going to see lordship throughout this entire study. If you stick with us through the next several weeks in this book, you're going to see this theme of lordship coming out as a main theme. And verse 4, since we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for the saints. There is cause for praise in Paul.

There is cause for praise. At this point, we find out that he's thanking God, the Father, not only because of the reports of their faith, but also because of their love.

[18:07] So faith, in a proper context, can be identified as God's relationship to us because saving faith is a gift from God, that God helps us understand the gospel.

When we see faith here, we understand that it is saving faith, which is a gift, an act of God. And this is faith established in Christ, as verse 4 speaks about.

Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus. Romans 5.1 talks about this faith. It says, Therefore, since you have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. So there are reports of faith within this Colossian church. But there's also reports of this love that's going on, that this is to be understood as God's relationship working through us to one another.

[19:16] And in the Colossian church, to one another of the saints of this church. And just as we studied through the entire book of 1 John over the last several months, we know that at this point, love for one another is the greatest testimony of those who belong in Christ.

Our love, by the way we love, is the greatest testimony of who belongs to Christ. The saints.

And it's not obligatory love. It's not, you know, something that is painful. But it's something that flows from our adoration, from the very love that we receive from Christ, that it spills out, and it flows out to one another naturally.

Charitable love for the saints. This also binds. When we get into chapter 3, Colossians 3, 14, we'll speak of this love binding. And above all these things, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

And this chapter will be a testimony of the church established. It binds us together in perfect harmony. So this is obviously a church leader here who is clearly excited, despite his circumstances, about the reports that he's hearing about Epiphra's church in Colossae.

[20:39] We clearly see the source of Paul's thanksgiving. But there's something missing at this point. Because we have two parallel imperatives in this text right now, faith and love being reported back for the saints in Christ.

But we need to continue to read to see where these two imperatives are stemming from, where the source of this is coming from. So the second point here is going to be the message, the means, and the measure of hope.

Verse 5 says, and the love that, okay, so in verse 4, I'll just continue from that because it's kind of odd.

You can't just pick up right there. But since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, verse 5, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel. There once lived an atheist man.

[21:51] His name was John Paul Sartre. And little before a month that he was about to die, this atheist was very adamant against any religion, any fixed religion set of beliefs.

And he strongly resisted the reality of death that was approaching him. And he'd often say to himself, I know I shall die in hope.

And then obviously, as this time for him approached closer and closer to death, he began to utter in sadness, reframing from his original thought, feeling the end, feeling no hope.

He stated in regrets, but hope needs a foundation from this atheist. In Christ, we have hope that has a foundation.

And it's actually, in fact, considered a cornerstone, as Scripture alludes to. It is the hope of this world, the only hope of this world. The only hope of this world is the hope of the next church.

[23 : 22] And as saints in Christ, being ambassadors on this earth to bring as many people, tell as many people as possible of this good news, in so doing, taking everyone possible with us.

Every possible one with us. Here we see clearly that hope is defined by what is laid up for the saints.

In verse 4, in heaven for us. An inheritance, a crown. Next week, we're going to be talking about this inheritance more. But in 1 Peter 1.4, it says, this inheritance, this is unimperishable.

It's undefiled. It's unfading. It's kept in heaven for us. Something set aside for us. And this hope that's laid up in heaven for us is also spoken about as a crown.

In 2 Timothy 4, 7 through 8, when Paul says, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day.

[24 : 34] And not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing. This hope is the very essence of all manifestation of faith and love.

Those two imperatives that were spoken about, that were being reported to him, in which the very essence of this hope is rooted in, as verse 5 says, the gospel.

A blood-bought message for the sinner. This is the source of life Paul describes in Ephesians 1, 13. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

The message which was heard was no ordinary message. This message this morning is no ordinary message. This message releases shackles. It releases chains.

[25 : 34] It breaks addictions. It changes marriages. It changes lives. It breaks down walls between mankind and a holy God.

And the word of truth here is something that the Old Testament writers looked forward to in faith. Romans 4, 16-17 say, that is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring, not only to the adherent of the law, but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

As it is written, he then quotes, Paul quotes Genesis 17, I have made you the father of many nations in the presence of God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

The apostles had experienced this word of truth. The writers of the Old Testament could only forecast and see forward to something coming and in faith that they would believe in this promised Messiah that would answer every question, that would reveal to the world God's redeeming power and crushing the head of the serpent as what was prophesied in Genesis.

Jesus. This challenged the Jews and the Gentile traditions at this time in the church of Colossae, the very traditions that Christ fulfilled in verse 6.

[27 : 21] When we get into verse 6, it says, which has come. It has come. There's no more waiting for this message. There's nothing, there's no more continuing this set of beliefs, these traditions.

That Christ has come. This is the substance of the message and not just the message seen but the message heard. Get this, church.

The message heard, the vocal proclamation of the good news stemming from this book. If you can consider the gospel message as like a literal geographically placed well, just a deep dug well in the ground, the writers of the Old Testament searched.

They anticipated this well that would be found someday. They hoped in this well to come someday. They had faith in this well to be found someday. And how often we speak of this well in the same light of those in the Old Testament as if the life-giving water that is drawn from this well is something so far and distant from reality that when people, when you hear from people of this life, life that comes from the source of this well, the gospel message, that it seems just so far off from reality that because we're not experiencing that water, when people are saying, come, draw water, there is life in this message.

[29 : 07] There is life to be, your life can be transformed through this message. Christ has made it possible to tap into this well.

Christ is the well. He is living water. He is living water. And this life begins with the message of the gospel, the hope, as verse 5 speaks about, which we tap into not only on Sunday mornings.

If we're doing that, we're missing something. This is something that is available to us and it should be a constant routine and a discipline in our lives to be tapping in, drawing water, getting our fill,

nourishing ourselves throughout the week, not just Sunday mornings.

And this is the well that nourishes our souls. This is a well that satisfies. This is a well that never runs dry. And all those who drink and experience the life which comes from this well are changed and set apart saints.

The well has come. Looking at it from this side of history, we look back on Christ being made, come in flesh, His incarnation.

[30 : 31] But it's not such a distant message. It's here today and it still has transformative work. And Christian hope is that which is rooted in the gospel. A message proclaimed and expressed through enduring faith and unending love for one another, as verse 4 spoke about.

all life in Christ reside within the message of Christ. This is the source of life which roots, which grows, which produces fruit.

And the final point this morning is unrestricted growth and a movement of this hope. in verse 6, it picks up saying, which has come, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing, as it also does among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

just as you learned it from Epiphra, our beloved fellow servant, he is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us of your love in the Spirit.

Because of the believer's faith and love in the hope of eternal life within the proclaimed message of the gospel, you see I'm logically starting, you know, building this up. now, the understanding of this new life is expressed through substantial evidence of bearing fruit and an increased growth.

[32 : 20] Verse 6 said, the gospel which has come to you and indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing, as it also does among you since the day you heard it.

and understood the grace of truth, the grace of God in truth. Notice the past tense in this passage here, the has come past tense that there is no waiting any longer for the Colossian church.

Epiphra, the faithful minister in verse 7 was used to plant this seed of the gospel. It had nothing to do with him. He's simply just a planter. He's proclaiming the gospel message.

He's planting the seed of life and watered it faithfully week after week, gathering after gathering, whatever that looked like in the church of Colossae. It's the job of any faithful minister of the gospel. people. But growth cannot be prevented if all aspects of growth are intact. When's the last time you ever heard of watering a seed?

[33 : 39] Like, we'll just, I know, you know, like a healthy seed. We'll say every component is intact in this mention of a seed. It's a healthy seed. And when you pour water on that, what is the, has anybody ever seen a seed reject its natural instinct to sprout?

sprout. If you have the right components going on, you can't, no matter how hard you try, if you water the seed, it's going to sprout.

A true green thumb knows that there's two needs for a seed to grow. It must be fed, it must be nourished, and it must have the proper environment to grow.

In a seed's case, it would be temperature and location, having a source of light. And what is the first thing to sprout from this seed?

It's roots. Isn't this exactly how it is for the seed planted within all of us from the message of Jesus Christ, the very minute that we heard the message and it implanted a seed within our hearts, within our souls, to take root.

[35 : 05] We not only hear, I must say that there is a difference between just simply hearing and actually listening. Because I can hear my kids screaming and fighting with each other very well and very easily.

We can hear a lot of things. but this verse actually keys in that there is something going on with this hearing. This verse mentions, hear it and understood, in so doing, listening to the message of the gospel.

When our attention is dedicated to what is heard and we listen, we understand. Are you listening to the message of the gospel this morning?

All Christian life and maturity is built upon not only hearing but also understanding. Many people probably have come in and out of churches here, other churches around the area, and they get their fill on.

They just come and attend, they hear. But something happens, church, when we listen, when we have an action of understanding and it produces fruit in our lives, the grace of God in truth.

[36 : 24] The only response that the seed God has placed in our hearts is not only bearing fruit but it's also increasing. It's the sprout of an oak tree.

Oak trees don't start out big and massive as they grow for hundreds of years. But the sprout of a simple oak tree is fragile. It begins out as weak and feeble.

But after years of growth, the roots take deep foundation in the soil. That the strongest storm that comes cannot uproot or lift or move this oak tree.

That over years of growing and this process of being nourished through those deep roots, that the girth of this tree is so massive that the strongest wind cannot break its trunk.

Paul's application in the mentioning of this grace of God is the center of the gospel message. The grace of God is the centrality of the gospel message.

[37 : 34] And the grace of God is God's gift to us. Undeserving sinners destined to hell without his grace. And him giving us the complete opposite of what we deserve, church.

The grace of God. Though it is important that while we understand the grace of God, we also have to understand the wrath of God.

We can't just be all grace. We have to have the balancement because in so doing, we miss the message of the gospel, the power of the gospel, the power of the cross. So looking back from the first glance, the first grace extended to Adam and Eve in the garden, the penalty for touching the tree, the knowledge of good and evil, for eating of it, he said, surely you will die.

But these two individuals, by the grace of God, were allowed, were covered. There's a lot of meaning in that text, and we'll get into that in the fall. But man, the grace of God was displayed from even the garden that they were even to have life and walk out of the garden.

And the grace of God continued throughout all redemptive history in the gospel. And to the wrath of God poured out on the cross on our behalf.

[39 : 01] So it is to understand that the grace of God in truth, as this verse talks about, is the fullness of God's grace sparing those sinners and taking the wrath upon himself.

This is what the cross did for us. In this, we now have peace with God. We spoke on Romans 5, 1-2. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him we have obtained access by faith into grace in which we stand and rejoice in the hope and glory of God. The gospel message, church, is where the grace of God and the wrath of God unite in Christ.

And we saw it fully displayed on the cross. And this is the hope of all creation since, which we have been separated since the fall of Genesis, being separated from God, the grace of God and the wrath of God fulfilled on the cross of Christ.

And so redeeming, purchasing, our sins laid upon the cross, laid upon Christ, suffering the death that we deserve. And as we conclude our time this morning, we met a man, the green thumb, in this case, the seed planter, Epaphras, in Colossians.

[40 : 34] It says in verse 7, just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, he's a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

We finally meet the man behind the message, the seed planter of this church. And we don't know a whole lot about Epaphras here, but we do know that he is a beloved, an endeared fellow servant of Paul, another instrument used by God.

And as Paul comes to the end of his thanksgiving address to this church in Colossae, he highlights Epaphras' faithfulness to the Colossian church. See the past tense here. It has been a faithfulness, it's been a process with this church.

Obviously a seed doesn't turn into a massive oak tree overnight, it takes time for that to grow.

Here's a reminder that spiritually growing and vibrant church is due to faithful preaching of God's word.

Amen? In season and out of season, whether we feel like it or if we don't feel like it, comes to faithfully preaching and coming under the teaching of his scriptures.

[42 : 02] Being dedicated to his word roots us in our convictions, what we believe. We'll bring about a vibrant culture in a church of what is seen and heard about here in this church in Colossians.

And it takes time, just as we've been observing the past tense, consider this past tense, it takes time, patience, intentionality, it takes another conversation with somebody, it takes another prayer

for somebody, it takes another just simple praying for one another to create this.

It takes hearing that guy up there preaching the gospel again up on stage, again and again and again, hearing it and allowing that to transform your life.

God's love. And this is not as Paul is addressing Epiphra's faithfulness, it's not yoking the church to a mortal man, an infallible man, but actually yoking the church to Christ because you belong to Christ, you're a Christ's church.

So as we come to a close today, we live in a culture so fixated on immediate solutions and to problem solving very quickly.

[43 : 26] Google is definitely a source of our go-to need for answers. We see churches and systems being set up with pragmatic systems to keep our attention and our focus.

The lights, the cameras, the action. Now if there's anything to boast about being immediate, we know that the moment you place your trust in Christ, that you're immediately grafted into the family, that there's a seed planted within you, that you are set apart at that moment for eternity.

However, the fruit produced hence forth after you put your trust and faith in Jesus Christ is a timely endeavor and investment.

It is an investment because faith alone does not save us. The whole letter of this Thanksgiving address from Paul to this church is highlighting the credible evidence that is being reported of true saving faith, which is producing fruit, and it's increasing in this church.

It's something that looks far different than the world. So if you are not in Christ this morning, this is good news to you. That Christ has come to make this extremely easy for you.

[44 : 43] It is about Christ. It's about your faith in Christ. That there's no rituals anymore. That there's no sort of systematic ways of working our way, of being a good person.

No matter how many grandmas you walk across the street, you're not going to earn your way to heaven. It's because of the cross of Christ and putting your faith in Jesus Christ alone that we are saved.

And if you are here this morning and this is new to you, let's talk about it. Because we got a long journey to embark on. And if you are in Christ, the truth is this morning for you that results may vary at different times, different time periods in the life of the church and different phases in life.

That there is a beauty and a victory in this process, in our faith. The growing and the strength that we desire as Christians is contingent upon how much we're willing to put in and sacrifice to the Lord.

It's pretty cool how those words just kind of hit me this morning. Surrender. This is what we're talking about. How much you're willing to put in. You know, often in business and things like that, there's something as ROI, return on investment.

[46 : 00] And, you know, I do see that this is a reality of the Christian faith. That there is something to be known about this return on investment.

That in a Christian life, there is great return on investment. That if you surrender to the Lord, if you surrender your time in the morning, man, if you get up in the morning, the first thing that you do is get on your knees and pray for your family.

Pray for your kids. Pray for your parents. Pray for your brothers and your sisters. Pray for our church. If the first thing you do is hit the floor, sisters in Christ, women, and so doing the same, if we're surrendering ourselves, investing in this daily, not just on Sunday mornings, but daily, there is great return.

And you will see this as increasing and bearing fruit. But how often, we spoke about a well here this morning, how often we don't draw continually from this well.

It doesn't make any logical sense. If this is the answer of all hope and the solution to all problems and the road map to how God desires us to live our lives, it's available to us.

[47 : 29] All we have to do is draw. And how often we get in seasons where we're like crawling to this well, dying of thirst.

And it's like self-inflicted thirst. Because we've just deprived ourselves of the very thing that nourishes our faith. How often we think of this church gathering on Sunday mornings as just an optional endeavor.

Like, well, I just don't feel like going to church today. Church is not just when you need your fill.

It's an ongoing fill throughout the week as well. And how often our charity needs to drive our actions towards one another.

That we can see this love binding us together as a church, as saints in Christ. Bearing fruit because we're drawing from this well. Because we have that seed that's being nourished.

[48 : 36] That we're allowing ourselves to be watered by his word daily. There's no possible way to be a hearer of the gospel without unifying a response of the gospel.

hearing and doing communicate this understanding. And this is the purpose of Christ's mission to redeem sinners to himself. Not only of our doing, but not of our doing at all.

But all because of God's grace. And while there's no such thing as a perfect church, there is such thing as a healthy church. And this is cause for much thanksgiving to God for the word, for the work that he's doing here right now in our church.

So while I pray for that this healthy church here in our midst at Youngstown Metro Church makes Jesus big. That we reveal a community that is distinguished.

That is set apart of saints. That are bought with a price. That are sanctified. That are united in love. I pray that we are centered upon his word.

[49 : 54] The word of truth. The gospel in verse five that we spoke about today. Expressed through our faith in Christ and our love for each other rooted in the hope of the gospel.

Church, what substantial evidence are we revealing of this hope today? And what are we going to do about the revealing hope of tomorrow? tomorrow? Please join me in prayer.

Father, we thank you for a time where we can just be encouraged by your word, by your scripture here. Father, that we can observe Paul's thankfulness for the work that you were doing in the church of Colossae.

And that, Father, my only hope and my only prayer is that through the faithful preaching of your word in season and out of season within this church body, that this source of life is flown out into the members of this church, the saints of this church.

Father, that this church is marked by being set apart, that we are truth bearers in our actions, through our faith, through our love for one another, that rest upon the hope, and this hope may increase and it may bear more fruits.

[51 : 30] Father, my only prayer is that you bear fruit in this church. church, let Christ be known through this church. And I pray this in Jesus' name, the highest name above all creation.

Amen. Please stand up.