

## *Giving Thanks to God*

### *Colossians 1:3-14*

God communicates to his church through the written word. He wrote letters that are to be read and taken to heart as the inerrant, inspired Word God to his precious people. He wrote out of love, to give us insight and understanding on how to live for him in a wicked and perverse world. Therefore, it is imperative that we take what he wrote to heart, as the Spirit illumines our minds and hearts to the truth. Paul was passionate for truth. He knew what it was like to be religious without embracing the true meaning of the gospel. He wrote to a church, a small one in a city of little regard, because the gospel of truth was being threatened by liars who were convincing people that they were the enlightened ones who were the true source of God's truth. Paul's response was to give them the only source of truth, God's Word.

**1 Jn. 4:1** *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

- I. Paul starts his letter with a foundational principle that is absolutely necessary for spiritual vitality, and it is having an attitude of thanksgiving toward God and his church. It must be a distinctive characteristic of the Christian life.

Col. 1:3-8; Rom 1:21

- A. Paul's thanksgiving is directed toward God because of the undeniable evidence in the church of the faith and love that has come forth from the hope of eternal life. He is excited to see that their faith relationship with Christ is having a vast impact on their **agape** love for one another.

Col. 1:3-5; 1 Cor. 13:12-12; Gal. 5:5-6

**1 John 4:7** *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God.*

**Gal. 5:6b** *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*

- B.** Paul expresses thanksgiving to God because more and more lives were being changed through the truth of the gospel. He is excited that people were hearing and understanding the truth of God's grace despite the allurements of the evil world system and its ways.

Col. 1:5-8

**Romans 10:13-15** "Everyone who calls not the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

- II.** Paul's prayer for a church based on the truth of the gospel centered on believers living in ways that are worthy of the gospel. God, speaking through Paul, informs all believers that this can only happen through knowing and understanding the truth of His Word.

Col. 1:9-14

**Phil 1:27** Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel.

- A.** Paul understood that a vital church alive in the ways of God is a church that knows and understands God's will. It is a church that places high value on the Word, on Lordship and on faithfulness and love.

Col. 1:9; Rom 12:1-2

- B.** Paul understood that every believer is responsible for living a life worthy of the Lord. Believers, who take that responsibility seriously, bring to the church good works, God's wisdom, God's power, great endurance and patience in fulfilling his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Col. 1:10-14

*Hearing, learning, understanding, knowing – these are fundamentally spiritual activities, if what is learnt is God's will – God's grace – God's truth... Knowing God's will transforms the way you live." Woodhouse*