

## Sermon or Lesson: Colossians 1:5-6 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: The Gospel Is Intended To Bear Fruit

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever prepared for your absence by setting up that things are to be done using an effective particular method or tool, and then when you returned, you discovered that your preparations were ignored, which resulted in a mess that would have been avoided if your preparations had been implemented in your absence? Even though this kind of adverse scenario occurs frequently in life, to the contrary, in God's program sometimes what He has prepared gets implemented as He intends, and then consequently, fantastic results are produced. Let's study a true-life example of this that occurred with the Colossians.

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READ: Colossians 1:5-6, with vv.3-4, 7-8 for context

### BACKGROUND:

- - From the authority directly given to him by God, Paul is writing authoritatively to the believers in Colosse, as well as to all believers today. (v.1)
- - It is the will of God that believers read, study, learn, and fully implement in their lives the teachings in the Book of Colossians. (vv.1-2)
- - Having faith in Jesus as the Christ is intended by God to produce an accompanying having "love... for all the saints" that is empowered extraordinarily by the Spirit of God - if believers collaborate appropriately with the Spirit. (vv.4,8)
- - Having faith in Jesus as the Christ, accompanied by having "love... for all the saints", are commendable and a source of inspiration and encouragement for ministry workers. (vv.4,8-9)

[Lesson Question: Using the support of other corresponding verses in Scriptures, define what the "gospel" is. And then from Colossians 1:4-5 regarding the example of the Colossian believers, what can be concluded about the role that God intends for the gospel to accomplish?]

SECTION POINT: God intends that faith in Jesus as the Christ, and accompanying 'love for all the saints', are to be produced through the gospel.

- - The Colossian believers had commendable "faith in Christ Jesus" and "love... for all the saints". (v.4)
- - This commendable faith and love originated from the gospel, which they already heard when it came to them. (vv.5-6)
- - Therefore, having faith in Jesus as the Christ, accompanied by having "love... for all the saints", are results that God intends are to be produced "through" the gospel. (v.5, Strong's #1223)
- - The "gospel" is "good news" - a message about how God has provided a way for humans to avoid being eternally punished for our sins. (v.5, Strong's #2098)
- - To be allowed entry into heaven, God requires each of us humans to personally possess comprehensive sinlessness or perfect righteousness. (Romans 3:10-20)
- - However, none of us intrinsically possess this perfect righteousness because we **"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"** - **Romans 3:23**, in other words we

are corrupted by our sins and thereby deficient of this perfect righteousness that God requires for us to enter His glory in heaven. (Romans 3:10,23)

- - Consequently, the sins we commit condemn us to eternal punishment in hell, which is an extremely serious predicament that automatically applies to each of us humans when we are born. (John 3:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

- - But, **"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" - John 3:16.**

- - God sent His perfect Son, Jesus the Christ, the sinless God-man, to endure the punishment for our sins through His torturous death on the cross - a substitute to atone for the eternal punishment that we all deserve and are proceeding towards. (Romans 3:24-25)

- - Through this sacrificial action of Jesus, followed by His resurrection from the dead on the third day, we humans now can have access to His perfect righteousness that is sufficient to fully and irrevocably pardon us from our impending eternal punishment in hell. (Romans 3:21-22a,24)

- - This is the 'gospel' - the 'good news' of the righteousness from God that "now... has been made known" and instituted by God through Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:21-22)

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[Lesson Question: From Colossians 1:6-8 regarding the example of the Colossian believers, what else can be concluded about the role that God intends for the gospel to accomplish?]

SECTION POINT: God also intends that other spiritual dynamics are to be produced through the gospel.

- - Even though the 'gospel' has been instituted by God, notice, however, that God requires a distinct response to this gospel from each human - a committing of oneself to faith in Christ Jesus, which comes through the "hearing", "learning", and "understanding" the gospel - "the word of truth" about "this righteousness from God [that] comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe". (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Colossians 1:5-7; Romans 3:22)

- - The Colossian believers responded in faith to this "word of truth, the gospel" that was preached to them. (vv.5-6a)

- - The Colossian believers did not merely hear the gospel, but they "learned" it, "understood" it, and then they each believed it for themselves, personally. (v.7, Strong's #3129; v.4)

- - Additionally, they learned and "understood God's grace in all its truth" - that God was extending to them "grace" or favor that none of us humans deserve, which is being rescued or saved from the condemnation that we do deserve to eternal punishment for our sins. (vv.6-7)

- - The Colossian believers learned and understood the reality of the predicament of proceeding towards eternal punishment in hell, and the truth of God's grace within the gospel through which permanent pardon can be acquired - by means of placing one's faith in Christ Jesus.

- - They heard and understood the gospel and God's grace from the day it was taught to them, suggesting they did not subsequently waver or succumb to doubt about the various doctrinal aspects of the gospel. (v.6)

- - They clung to the gospel, and it was "bearing fruit" in them, specifically cited here - their commendable faith in Christ Jesus and their commendable love for each other. (vv.6,4)

- - By implication, the "gospel was bearing fruit" among the Colossian believers and growing them in their faith because they were receptive, teachable, and willing spiritually. (v.6)
  - - Furthermore, they were making significant progress in maturing in the faith because they had "faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for them in heaven" - in other words, their perspective on life had been reoriented to focus on the eternal things of the next life in heaven rather than to focus on the temporal things of this life on earth. (v.5)
  - - Motivated by the "hope that is stored up for [them] in heaven" that the gospel generated in them, the Colossian believers put their faith into action actively, intentionally, and daily - living the gospel, the truth, and the Word of God. (vv.4-6)
  - - The gospel has been designed by God to produce this type of response from us humans - to bear fruit like that of the Colossian believers and thereupon advance and spread "all over the world". (v.6)
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BIG IDEA: God intends for the "gospel" to "bear fruit" in the lives of people "all over the world", like it was doing in the lives of the Colossian believers.

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#### APPLICATIONS:

- - So, now that the gospel "has come to you" (v.6) -- "you have already heard" it (v.5) and "you learned it" today (v.7), being herein explained so that you "understand God's grace in all its truth" (v.6), -- are you ready to respond to the gospel?
- - Are you ready to place "your faith in Christ Jesus" (v.4)? Now? [PAUSE - give them a few moments to process this invitation.]
- - If so, you can do that from where you are sitting, [PAUSE], right now, [PAUSE], in your heart to God, [PAUSE], genuinely committing yourself to faith in Christ Jesus, [PAUSE], that He paid the penalty for your sins through His torturous death on the cross, [PAUSE], that He rose from the dead on the third day, [PAUSE], and that the perfect righteousness of the God-man Christ Jesus now buys you eternal life in heaven, with no eternal punishment, [PAUSE].
- - For those of you who have previously placed your faith in Christ Jesus, has the gospel been bearing fruit in your life? Do a self-evaluation right now, and be honest with yourself.
- - Have you been responding to the gospel and the word of truth that has come to you? If not, why not?
- - Have you been receptive, teachable, and willing spiritually, being eager to learn, understand, and live the gospel, the truth, and the Word of God? If not, why not?
- - Have you been learning what the gospel is? (vv.5-6)
- - Have you been learning the truth about God? (v.6)
- - Have you been learning the truth about God's grace? (v.6)
- - Have you been growing in the faith, making significant progress in maturing in the faith?
- - Have you developed a love for the Word of God - love to hear it, love to understand it, love to apply it, love to share it?

- - Have you developed a love to have the Word of God taught to you by Bible teachers, pastors, and other "faithful ministers of Christ" (v.7)? If so, have you told them that? Specifically? By your consistent attendance?
  - - Do you genuinely and visibly recognize, respect, and honor those ministers who truly and directly teach the Word of God to you?
  - - Do you intentionally watch for and capitalize on opportunities to minister to other people through teaching the Word of God to them - like Epaphras did with the Colossians - faithfully ministering to other people verbally with the truth about God, loving them so much that you courageously open your mouth and speak the gospel and the Word of God to them?
  
  - - Can we say that the gospel is frequently being presented, bearing fruit, and growing in our church? If not, why not?
  - - Can we say that our church is verbally teaching the gospel outside our doors to our community and to other places in the world? If not, why not?
  - - Can we say that our church is verbally teaching God's grace outside our doors to our community so that it is being heard, learned, and understood by other people in our community? If not, why not?
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[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - Without disclosing any information that could be used to identify specific churches or persons, discuss, analyze, and theorize why the gospel does not bear fruit and produce spiritual growth in many churches.
  - - Discuss, analyze, and theorize what could be added to the programs of this church that would facilitate and enhance the gospel bearing more fruit and producing more spiritual growth in this church. Formulate a concise, reasonable, and practical recommendation, and then invite your church leaders to your group for you to present that recommendation to them.
  - - What are you personally willing to start doing immediately to be tangibly involved in the teaching of the gospel and the Word of God outside our church doors in our community or other places in the world? Be specific, honest, and genuinely committed in your answer to this question.]
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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