

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Colossians 1:3-5**.
- B. Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are three beautiful letters, not dealing with too many problems, but giving some of the wonderful elements of the Christian faith.
- C. This morning we want to look at three such elements as spoken through Paul to the brethren in Colossae.

I. FAITH IN CHRIST.

- A. Read scripture text: Col. 1:3-5.
- B. "Faith in Christ" can refer to two things:
 - 1. Initial belief in the existence of Jesus as the Son of God.
 - 2. It is only in Christ that faith works (a maturing faith).
- C. It is this maturing faith of which Paul speaks.
- D. "Faith in Christ" does the following things:
 - 1. We now have greater convictions and understanding (Heb. 11:1).
Example: as children a simple 'yes' or 'no' will do, but as they mature they will want to know why 'yes' or why 'no.' Same as in the Christian life, we can know the whys.
 - 2. We now have a remaking of the mind (Rom. 12:1,2).
The only way to control the body, is to first control the mind.
 - 3. We now have a reconstruction of the conscience and spirit (Eph. 2:10).
Created for good works only in Christ.
- E. Paul has heard of their faith in Christ, which means he knows of their spiritual growth since becoming Christians.

II. LOVE, FOR ALL THE SAINTS.

- A. Paul said that the brethren had love for all the saints, which means all the brethren at Colossae.
- B. Paul spoke (in v.2) of the brethren as being:
 - 1. Saints, that is people dedicated for a purpose.
Every Christian is just as much as saint as the apostles.
 - 2. Faithful, meaning that they were mature or maturing.
The two-talent man was just as faithful as the five-talent man. Faithfulness does not mean perfection, faithfulness (perfection) means maturity (Mt. 5:48; Heb. 6:1; Col. 1:27,28).
- C. Sometimes, our natural reaction to others in showing love is a defense mechanism which erects walls and barriers. Only love can break down these walls:
 - 1. Racial differences.
 - 2. Economic differences.
 - 3. Social differences.
 - 4. Cultural differences.
 - 5. Prejudice about anything else.
- D. And the way to do this, is not by trying to define and redefine love, but by directing love at one person at a time. "I love everybody" is so watered down, it says we don't specifically love anybody. Love was directed, personally to all the saints in Colossae.

III. HOPE, BECAUSE OF FAITH AND LOVE.

- A. Our hope is not in things of this earth and life, but is laid up in heaven.
- B. Our hope is:
 - 1. Rooted and grounded in heaven (Phil. 3:26).

Too many have no real hope because they are rooted and grounded here on the earth.

2. Trusting in the things which we can't see (2Cor. 4:17-18; 1Pet. 1:4).
3. Having the attitude of being with Christ is far better (2Cor. 5:6,8).
- C. This is why we walk by faith and not by sight (2Cor. 5:7).
- D. Because we hope for eternal life in heaven with God, we then exhibit our faith in Christ and love for all the saints. Maybe our degree of faith and love is a barometer of our hope!

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION

- A. Verse 5 also says that this hope was "heard in the word of truth, the gospel" which means that we must first obey the word to let our hope, faith, and love grow in Christ.
- B. Outside of Christ faith cannot grow, love will be restrained, and there is no hope.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.