



Introduction to “Cultivating Hope”

In our mass culture today, words are plentiful and cheap. In the Scriptures, particularly in a letter like this, each word is communicated with great intentionality and purpose. In this study we look at the opening paragraphs of Paul and Timothy's letter to the church in Colossae. It serves us well to read Paul and Timothy's words slowly and carefully. As we do, what we will see is warm encouragement to a congregation who--as we will see later--is in need of it. Paul and Timothy are so glad to hear of this new thriving congregation in Colossae, a congregation that they have not yet met but have heard many good things from Epaphras. The letter launches into great spiritual truths about Jesus, thanksgiving, prayer, and assurance of the Father's saving work. Already we begin to see the authority and rule of Jesus in their

lives. If we believe, these truths begin changing our lives and our hearts in powerful ways as well.

Colossians Focus:

The preeminence (superiority, excellence, distinguished, surpassing nature) of Christ in all of life (1:18).

Part 2: Cultivating Hope

Text: Colossians 1:1-14

1:1-2, Greeting

1:3-8, Thanksgiving

1:9-12, Prayer

1:13-14, The Father's Work

Big Idea: Gospel Hope is ours through faith in Christ and brings spiritual health and growth into our lives; it is cultivated by taking 3 key steps:

From the Sermon (add your own notes here):

1. Learn Spiritual Truth.
Hear it.
Understand it.
2. Walk in Obedience.
Apply effort.
Assess fruit.
3. Live in Christian Community.
Love in the Spirit.
Endure together joyfully.

Getting Started

Why do you think most New Year's resolutions fail?

What is one thing you are hoping for in 2020?

Digging Deeper

1. What does it look like to experience grace and peace in your life? What does it look like to extend grace and peace to others?
2. What have been some spiritual truths that you have learned (either recently or key ones from the past) that have really impacted your faith in Christ and deepened your relationship with God?
3. What are some obstacles for you in learning more about the gospel and understanding God's Word more deeply?
4. Re-read Colossians 1:3-4 and observe the triad of faith, love, and hope. Describe them and how they are related to one another in this passage.
5. What does it mean to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him? (v.10)" Is there a specific area or aspect of your life where you would like prayer for this?
6. Consider the past year. In what ways have you been bearing spiritual fruit? What knowledge of God are you thankful that you have gained?

7. Consider your closest Christian Community (this group/class, another small group, family/friends, entire church, etc). How would you rate it in terms of loving one another? What would growing in love for one another look like?

8. What are some unhelpful things we do as we face trials and suffering? What are some helpful things we do to endure? How might we support one another through our present trials?

Live It Out

Pray: Look again at the text. Much of it is prayer and thanksgiving. Use this passage to pray and pray for one another.

Confess: Who might the Spirit be prompting you to extend some grace and peace to in the week ahead? Perhaps it is someone, like the church in Colassae, whom you do not know very well.

Act: Next time: Report back on: 1) What you have been learning in your spiritual life, 2) How walking in obedience went, and 3) Ways in which you loved others and walked along side them through hardship.