

**Colossians - Chapter 1**  
**“Evidences of True Salvation”**  
**Colossians 1:4-8**

**Verse 4-5**

1. Sometimes, you may hear people talk about the “evidences of salvation.”
  - Some religious systems teach that if you are truly saved, you will surely speak in tongues.
  - Some teach that if you are truly saved, you will quickly submit yourself to water baptism.
  - Some teach that if you are truly saved (or want to be saved) you must perform the rules and rituals of that religion.
2. But what did Paul consider to be the evidences of a person's salvation?

**Faith in Christ Jesus** - These people gave evidence that their faith and trust was in a Person (2:5). Some people say, “Just believe! As long as you believe in something, you're fine.” But faith is only as good as its object.

- Faith is not some mysterious leap in the dark. Our faith is rooted in the facts of what Jesus Christ has done and accomplished. Faith that is not rooted in Christ is a faulty faith that will crumble on Judgment Day.

**Love to all the saints** - Over and over again, we see Paul equating true salvation with a love for the saints of God. An inward faith in Christ produces an outward love for people (vs. 8) because God's Holy Spirit dwells within.

- Too many professing believers can't seem to settle down in a local church and develop loving relationships. They are too busy criticizing and finding fault with everybody and everything else.
- The amazing thing is that, many times, these hyper-critical people consider themselves to really have a strong faith. They are a cut above everybody else.
- When you read Paul's epistles, it is quite clear. A true faith in Christ results in a love for the saints of God. Ephesians 1:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Philemon 5

**Heavenly hope** – True believers in Christ are not hopeless. They are filled with a future hope, the hope of heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1). Our eternal hope of heaven is anchored in the hope of glory that resides within us (vs. 27). Our hope is a Person, Jesus Christ! 1 Timothy 1:1

- Our faith in Jesus Christ gives us a hope beyond this brief life on earth. 1 Corinthians 15:19
- People who do not possess a faith in Jesus Christ are hopeless. When they die, that is it. This is why when a person without Christ loses a loved one, there is a hopeless despair. But, not for the believer in Christ. We are filled with hope. It is a sure, steadfast hope that is an anchor of our souls. Hebrews 6:19

3. Notice in verse 5 that the Colossians heard about their heavenly hope when Epaphras had shared the gospel with them. The word “before” probably refers to before these false teachers had crept into the Colossian assembly.
4. There are some who teach that we shouldn't use the hope of eternal life in heaven as a motivator when witnessing to others about Christ. But eternal life is the promise of God, and Paul considered it to be an integral part of the gospel message. Titus 1:2, 3:7
5. Faith, love, and hope: these are the fruits that Paul looked for in the churches that gave evidence of true salvation.

### Verse 6-7

1. The gospel of God's grace had made its way to the Colossians. Paul says, “*The gospel which is come unto you...*” Aren't you thankful for the day the gospel made its way to you?
2. It appears that Epaphras was the man that Paul commissioned and sent to these Colossians with the gospel of grace. Paul calls him his “*dear fellowservant and a faithful minister of Christ.*” What a commendation from the apostle Paul!
3. Notice that our mission field is the world (vs. 6). Paul had such a zeal and fervency. Through preaching, teaching, training, and equipping others, Paul had taken the gospel of grace into “*all the world.*”
4. Isn't it interesting that the vastness of Paul's commission is likened unto the commission that Christ gave the twelve regarding the “*kingdom of heaven*” gospel (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15)? But, they did not succeed in taking it to “*all the world.*”
  - The twelve were to begin with Israel, but Israel rejected the message of the risen Messiah and the coming kingdom. So, God raised up a distinct and separate apostle (Paul), and gave to him the gospel of grace that we preach today. Galatians 1:11-12
  - The twelve recognized that Paul's commission had superseded theirs, so they gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, agreed that Paul's message would go to the nations, and they would confine their message to Israel. Galatians 2:8-9
  - Paul had an “all men,” “every nation” ministry, and fulfilled it faithfully.
5. Paul had learned the secret of working through other faithful men (like Epaphras) and shared that spiritual secret with Timothy. 2 Timothy 2:2
6. The gospel had brought forth fruit in these Colossians. In other words, it had changed their lives. There was the spiritual fruit of faith, love, and hope being evidenced in their lives since they had been saved.
7. Notice the progression that happened in order for them to bear that spiritual fruit:
  - First, they heard the gospel (a believer had to get a burden to bring it to them). vs. 6
  - Second, they learned the gospel (somebody had to explain it to them). vs. 7
  - Third, they knew the gospel (they had to open up their hearts and receive it). vs. 6

- There is a big difference between hearing about Jesus and knowing Jesus. There is a big difference between knowing about His grace, and knowing the grace of God in truth.
8. I love the way Paul defines the gospel (vs. 5) in verse 6. He calls it, “*the grace of God in truth.*”
- This is the gospel we proclaim today. It is the gospel of grace. Epaphras had been trained under Paul and Epaphras was a grace preacher. Paul calls him a faithful minister.
  - No preacher or teacher today can be faithful who doesn't proclaim God's grace.

### Verse 8

1. When Epaphras journeyed to Rome and visited Paul, he told Paul of all the great love in this Colossian church. Remember, this is an evidence of true salvation.
2. Paul identified where this love was coming from. They were loving “*in the Spirit.*”
3. Galatians 5:22 says, “*the fruit of the Spirit is love.*”
  - Before salvation, it is unnatural to love all people (especially those who do us wrong or whom we disagree with). Titus 3:3
  - But, at salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell believers and lead them into a life of love. God's Spirit teaches us to love. cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:8-9
  - After salvation, the only way we can **not** love is if we grieve the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30-32