

Col 1v1-14 CCH Kids Spot 13SEP20

[verse we started with} So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness Col 2:6,7

There was once a little **oak** tree who had recently grown from a tiny **acorn**. His name was Olly. He was now a small chap just a few centimetres high, and longed to grow as big as his **dad** the mighty Oak at the foot of the garden.

So he asked his friends the **badger** the **squirrel** and the **owl** what he needed to do to grow.

"Aha", said the badger, "you need this new potion I saw down at the garden centre- "Grow for it". It's full of chemicals and additives and apparently you'll be a giant in no time".

"What like Olive the olive tree?" the little oak replied, "we know what happened to her" and he glanced mournfully over to the compost heap where Olive was graciously decomposing.

"No no" butted in the **squirrel**, "you need to ask the gardener to fix a few pine cones on you, then you'll grow as big as a pine tree". There was a pause... "I'm not sure that's going to work" said the little oak.

But the **owl** who was very wise, paused and looked into his **laptop**, simply asked him a question. "What did you need to sprout from an acorn at the start?" The little oak scratched his treetop and didn't know, so he asked the Owl to look it up on google. "The answer is, water, air, nutrients and sunshine".

So what are you going to need to grow more? "Erm, more water, air, nutrients and sunshine?"

"Exactly" said the owl. **"Stick with what you started with"**.

This Fun little story explains something v important for followers of Jesus.

We must stick with what (or rather who) we started with.

Kids, how do you become a Christian? This verse tells how to start. The answer is Jesus: "Receive Jesus Christ as Lord". you make him the King of your life.

But how do you go on? How do you grow? The answer is Jesus: "continue to live your lives in him".

This is a great verse, which gives the adults a great intro into our new book Colossians. It's also a verse that we'll come back to with the kids, in a song that we are going to learn later in term.

If you listen carefully to the welcome video on our website you'll hear Hannah Casey's voice saying this. "Jesus is the way into the Christian life and Jesus is the way on in the Christian life". That's a great summary of what we are going to see this term in Colossians.

Stick with what you started with.

Stick with Jesus. Let's pray.

Col 1v1-14 CCH Sermon 13SEP20

- **v10b** *"bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God"*
- PRAY
- **"Mind the Gap"**
 - It's a familiar phrase from the London Underground
 - But it could also describe our Christian lives.
 - It doesn't matter how long you have been a Christian, you soon discover that there's a gap between where you are and where you want to be. You find yourself saying things ...
 - Is this all there is? I long for more. I long to experience God more. I wish my relationship with God was as real as w/ the people around me.
 - Some Christians seem so on fire for Jesus, and I feel like I'm bumbling along coldly in 2nd gear- barely a Christian at all.
 - Or to change the analogy my spiritual internet speed feels barely off zero whereas others have a fibre connection. I want more, I want to grow.
 - I long to be
 - more patient with my kids or my spouse
 - to be less grumpy at work
 - to meet challenges with faith and not with fear
 - Sadly there's a gap.
 - But **mind** the gap. Be careful. It's great that you want to grow. It's great that you want to cross this gap to greater growth and maturity. We all do. But it's possible at this point to make a grave misstep.
 - Like Olly the Oak tree, how are you going to get to be where you want to be?
 - The Colossians had started well, but they were in danger of taking the wrong turn in their longing for more.
 - Instead of sticking with what they started with- Jesus Christ, they were in danger of moving on to very plausible but fake spiritualities and spiritual shortcuts that actually would take them away from Jesus.
 - So this book is going to be so relevant for us, to make sure we **stick with Jesus** (the title of this series).
 - He's not just for Christianity day 1, he's for Christianity day 101, 10,001.
- Now today we are going to look at the first **14** verses. Title ready steady grow.
- In this we have the **3 things** you often got at the start of a letter in those days
 - AN INTRODUCTION
 - A THANKSGIVING
 - A PRAYER

1) INTRODUCTION to a letter of real gospel encouragement.

- A bit like an email today
- A first century letter would have
 - from
 - to
 - and for us a topic About.or in their case a greeting
- FROM...
 - The letter is from Paul and Timothy his sidekick who you can read about in Acts who became a pastor and actually received two letters himself from Paul.
 - It's not just small print that word apostle.
 - It means that Paul writes with real authority.
 - As we long to grow to maturity, we want an authorised guide, so that we don't make a mis step.
 - Hence the heading, *REAL* gospel encouragement.
 - Paul is not some spiritual cowboy.
 - He was validated w/ a spiritual "checkatrade" authorisation by Jesus himself
 - *REAL* Christian encouragement.
 - This is why we want to stay so close to the Bible's teaching. It's safe.
- And TO?
- the Colossians? Well they are just like us.
 - Colossae was a normal sized town in modern day Turkey.
 - Colossae is on a junction of major roads, and on a river. Does that remind you of anywhere? They are just like us.
 - Incidentally it was completely destroyed in an earthquake only a couple of decades after Paul wrote this letter.
 - Holy people. That doesn't mean they are superior or mysterious. It means they are saints, Christians. Normal people who are trying to following Jesus. Faithful brothers and sisters like you and me.
 - And I love their twin addresses:
 - In Colossae.
 - in Christ.
 - Did you know that you live in Huntingdon and Heaven!
- **Greeting** Grace and Peace- it's going to be a letter of authentic Christian experience.
- Do you see how helpful this letter is going to be for us this term?
 - FROM PAUL and Timothy, so it's authentic Christianity.
 - TO normal Christians like us.
 - Telling us about GRACE and PEACE from God. Two things that though would have started any letter, but are exactly what we need today in this Covid season of fear and anxiety.
- Make a date with Paul and his friends the Colossians every Sunday morning at 10.30

because this is going to be : **a source of real gospel encouragement.**

2) THANKSGIVING for evidence of a real gospel start. v3-8

- Paul and Timothy got to hear about God's work in them, and they praise God.
- As I re-read this prayer of thanksgiving, look at the key building blocks, I'll put them up on the screen as we go.
- v3-6a
 - Faith Love Hope Gospel
- Let's look at these in the order in which they happened and the links. They are the marks of anyone who makes a real start with Jesus.
- **GOSPEL**. First they hear the gospel.
 - They heard the good news of Jesus Christ.
 - It was a local- **Epaphras** v7 perhaps on business in nearby Ephesus. Many years before, he happened to be there when Paul was preaching, and he heard the good news.
 - E heard there's a God in the universe, who has a Son, Jesus Christ, who he sent into the world to rescue us by dying physically on a cross just 25 years ago for them, 2000 years ago for us. And by his Spirit Jesus calls people from all backgrounds into a wonderful friendship through a wonderful rescue for a wonderful future.
 - That like that prodigal son and his brother, whoever you are and whatever you've done, you can come home to God through Jesus.
 - Well Epaphras came home to God through Jesus, and he walked back up the valley, with this same good news. And he passed it on faithfully.
- And people in Colossae received it and became real Christians.
- But what happens when you hear the gospel?
- Answer the triad of Faith, Hope and Love.
- But what's interesting here is which one comes first.
- "The faith and love that spring from the **hope**".

The gospel is all about a wonderful future.

- Often when I'm at my in laws, I pull the famous diary of Samuel Pepys off the shelf and turn to 10th October 1667.
- Not the moment when he witnessed the Fire of London (1666)
- It's the moment the next year when he returns from London to his father's house in Brampton- the first house on the left as you come into the village for a cuppa with Ronnie & Chits!
- In the garden of that house was laid up for him, his gold!
- Thousands of gold coins. He had hid them during the plague
- And he digs them out (with a bit of trouble) with his father.
- Well it's the same word in verse 5. Stored up for you in heaven.
 - Except stored up is not gold beyond your wildest dreams, but far better.
 - Meeting the wonderful servant King Jesus who welcomes you
 - to a world without cancer, covid or crying.
 - to perfect relationships without the spoiling of sin or selfishness
 - to being with God forever
- The gospel is about a future hope
 - The best is yet to come.
 - Real Christianity is marked by HOPE.

- That's not flimsy hope that the bus will come, or even that a COvid vaccine will be found (as much as we pray for that).
- But on something
 - far more wonderful
 - and far more needed
 - and far more certain! HEAVEN!
- And from hope spring faith and love.
- When you hear the gospel message about the future that is
 - not because you deserved it,
 - but because Jesus died in your place.
 - you start to trust Jesus Christ, and reach out your hand and put it in his.
 - And not only faith,
- but LOVE grows as well
 - Because you discover that you haven't been rescued as a solo orphan child,
 - but you've been adopted into a whole family of others just like you who you begin to love.
 - Hope knits you into a family with a shared destination, who start loving one another.
- Well Paul hasn't met these guys, but news has reached him of the 3 diagnostics that mark a real start in the Christian life.
- Faith, Hope and Love.
- And since these are a work of God, he thanks God for them.
- And I thank God for each of you. Because v6 this is happening all over the world, and in Huntingdon!
 - It's a miracle that any of us are Christians.
 - We can't see Jesus.
 - Many people think we are mad.
 - Following him doesn't even make this life easier.
- It makes it more wonderful to have Jesus with us, but it doesn't exempt us from
 - sickness or depression or marriage difficulties.
- But I've seen faith, hope and love in this Church, and I thank God for the marks of genuine Christians who have started well.
- And if you are tuning in this morning, but you don't have faith in Jesus, you don't have hope in the future, and you don't really love other Christians (you aren't very bothered by them), you know what you need to start the Christian life.
- Start with the message of Jesus, the gospel. It's all the way through this book.
 - You need to come to Jesus.
 - And you need to cast your sin on him.
- And you need to ask Jesus (who is King of Kings) to be your king from now on.

But for those who HAVE made a start, what now? How does Olly the Oak Tree grow?

- Artificial spiritual additives , a new regime of disciplined practices?
- High Octane religious experiences?

Let's move to the

3) PRAYER- for growth in real gospel understanding

- Now at this point, we are going to try something interactive, and see if it works.
 - I'm sorry this won't work if you are watching on youtube this morning-
 - Next week join Zoom for the full experience!
 - We're going to do a poll.
 - Johnny is going to put on the screen a question and 6 options, and I'd like you to vote!
 - POLL! **how many things does Paul pray for for the Colossians?**
 - Read POLL, and then
 - Read Passage.
- **V9-14**
 - **Answers?**
 - **My Answer- one!**
- Let me show you how I got that.
- Look carefully at the language in v9.
- He's praying for a knowledge of God's will and then everything else follows!
- V9 Does it mean that he's praying that they'd know God's will for their lives in some sort of **guidance** way- who to marry, where to live, which job to take next.
 - That's not wrong.
 - We were praying for guidance to find a place to meet for church in recent days.
 - But if you search for the phrase "God's will" in Paul's writing you will see that it's bigger than that. It's about grasping his will for us in Jesus.
 - finding our place in the gospel of Jesus
 - and living a godly life in Jesus.
 - living a grateful life in Jesus.
- So Paul is praying that God will give these Colossians a greater insight into the gospel of Jesus Christ. He's praying for gospel understanding. That we see the gleaming diamond of the gospel for that it is.
- not just something in their **heads**. but in their **hearts**.
 - A spiritual wisdom and understanding that the Holy Spirit brings.
- This is the one thing he prays for. This is the one thing **they** need. This is the one thing **we** need.
- Are you clear what Paul is praying for? *It's deep spiritual understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and our place in it.*
- Hence the title: **PRAYER for growth in gospel understanding**
 - It's not just non-Christians who need to understand the gospel at the start.
 - It's **Christians** who need to go on understanding the gospel more each day.
 - The gospel is like a **diamond** with so many different beautiful facets.
 - So it will never be boring.
 - The scriptures describe who Jesus is, and what he's done in so many fascinating different ways.

- It's like an **ocean** that We will never get to bottom of, there's always more to learn.
- But as Pastor Tim Keller calls it we need a "touch on the heart".
 - When he's preaching about Jesus, he prays that the Holy Spirit will open people's hearts to grasp something of the gospel in a deeper way.
 - Not necessarily something new.
 - But a deep sense of the good news of Jesus FOR YOU!
 - A touch on the heart.
 - That's what I'm praying for the church this term as we study Colossians.
 - That's what I long for myself
 - That's what I long for my family.
 - A deep gospel understanding.
 - col 2:6,7
- You see if we only grasped more deeply how wonderful Jesus is, and how beautiful the gospel is, so many **consequences** would flow in our lives.

and we see this in the rest of the verses.

Look at the language of v9-10

Here are five areas that flow... (I'll put them on the ppt)

- 1) **Godliness**... v10. If I only grasp how much God loves me in Jesus, that Jesus has rescued me from the ocean of sin, why would I want to dive into it again when I'm out with my mates, or flicking through the TV channels. Instead I'll want to live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every good way.
- 2) Being **Fruitfulness**. V10. If I'm so clear and dependent on Jesus and my relationship with him, that like the branch in the Vine, the life of Jesus will be flowing through me, and I'll be more fruitful (perhaps more patient, more evangelistic) in my relationships with my work colleagues.
- 3) **Growing in knowing God**. V10 end. As I grow in gospel understanding, I actually grow in knowing God, because I come to know the God who saved me.
- 4) **perseverance** v11. This is classic. Would you like God's amazing power to be at work in your life? What might it look like- extraordinary boldness, incredible miracles. Actually endurance and patience. Keeping on keeping on. That's what I need, through this Covid pandemic. Well it comes from gospel understanding.
- 5) **Thankfulness** v12. Am I a grumpy, slightly critical cynical person? Well the more I bathe in the ocean of the gospel of God's grace, the more joyful and grateful I will be. Because (meditate on these amazing truths every day this week): v12 and 13.

Do you see What these Colossian Christians need, and what we need is not a new regime of spirituality, a load of rules or a dazzling fresh experience that will guarantee you belong to an elite class of superChristians.

It's very reassuring. What you need is simply a deeper knowledge of your friend Jesus who you started with!

So dear brothers and sisters, stick with who you started with. STICK WITH JESUS.

- **That's what Paul prays for them.**
- **And that's what we pray for one another.**

As you start this new term, however long you have been a Christian, what do you need?

IS your spiritual internet speed running slow. Don't add to it a new connection to rules or religion or something else.

Fill it up with more of Jesus and the gospel.

And next week he's going to blow our minds with who Jesus is.

But meanwhile, Pray for me, for one another, for yourself

for a filling with the knowledge of his will through all wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.

PRAY.

he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.