



Colossians 1:1-14

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SANCTITY OF LIFE

Today, we join with those who love and value human life to mourn the tragedy and violent legacy of abortion on this nation, to re-state our biblical conviction that all life is valuable, created in the image of God, and worthy of human rights and protections, and to recommit ourselves to stand against abortion and further the cause of life, including helping those who are currently under the temptation of the devil to get an abortion or restoring those who are under the shame of having a pastor abortion.

Jesus told us part of His mission while on the earth: **Jhn 10:10 NKJV - 10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

Abortion can be only one of two things:

- Either abortion is (A) a life-giving, joy-enhancing gift from God that brings forth an abundance of peace, hope, and increasing faith, or (B) it's a cleverly designed lie of Satan that robs people of peace, joy, and hope, ends up taking life instead of giving it, eroding the human conscience in the process.
- I think it's evident by the fruit of the abortion industry and the lives it has impacted that it is the ladder, a tool of death from the thief and murderer, Satan.

The abortion industry echoes the voice of Satan from the Garden of Eden:

- Did God really say that children are a blessing from the Lord? That child will hinder you from achieving all your dreams and be a ball and chain around your life. Just silently and conveniently get rid of it!

- Did God really say, "I formed you in the womb?" That's not a person in there; it's a zygote, an embryo, and a lifeless clump of cells that can be removed without any moral consequences.
- Did God really say that sin would lead to death, shame, guilt, and regret? No, you'll be independent, strong, and free.
- Did God really say that your body belongs to Him as your creator and king? No, your body belongs to you. You are your own god; your body is your choice!

I'm confused as to why Christians can't see the obvious fingerprints of Satan on the Abortion industry and practice.

Today, we pray for an end to the wicked practice in our nation, but we also compassionately pray for all of the victims, many who were deceived as Eve was in the Garden, only to realize that the fruit they bit into was full of poison. There are countless women who need to heal from undergoing an abortion. There are many women who need help to understand that abortion is not their only, and certainly not their best, option for the baby that is growing inside of them.

So a feww things:

1. First, Grace Dahlgren is the regional leader of an organization called **Her Plan**. "Her PLAN connects and grows the pro-life safety net of life-affirming resources (Providers and Organizations) across 7 different Categories of Care to support pregnant and parenting women and her family."

The QR code is a FREE app of over 5,000 (and growing) life affirming resources across 29 states to support women choosing life!

I encourage you to stop by their table on your way out to see how you can get involved.

2. In addition, we have some women who want to help those who have had an abortion and need to process and heal through that decision. If you fall into that category, we recognize it is a very personal and sensitive subject. On the screen, there is a **QR code where you can receive information about Found & Woven** post-abortive counseling and care. Study starting February 18. You can also talk to one of these women at the Her Plan table after service.

3. Thirdly, our church has become and official House of Refuge with Love Life, an organization on the front lines of the abortion battle. This means that a pregnant woman can contact our church as a house of refuge, receive a baby shower, helpful resources, and most importantly, loving community to help them walk through their pregnancy. We have a statement as part of the Love Life family that I'd like to share with you regarding this:

HOUSE OF REFUGE

Grace Calvary Chapel is a House of Refuge; this applies to everyone in this church or people you know who need a place of Refuge.

Here's what we believe: If you find yourself in an unplanned pregnancy, please know that being pregnant is not a sin, and the child you carry is not a punishment; it is a blessing. God is knitting this child in your womb. You may have made a sinful decision that led to this pregnancy, or you may have even been sinned against, but we want you to know you are loved, and we will do whatever it takes to help you carry and care for this precious child before and after birth. We can never support or encourage a woman to have an abortion because the child you carry is made in the image of God and is intrinsically valuable and loved by God.

You need to know how we will respond.

Here's what we won't do: This church family will not gossip about you, shame you, or abandon you. This is a House of Refuge, and we will not allow the family of God to harm one another with words or actions contrary to the Love of God as revealed in his Word.

Here's what we will do: We will do everything in our power to remove whatever obstacles stand in the way of you having this child. There are people in this church ready to mentor you, throw you a baby shower, and connect you with resources inside and outside of our church (local pregnancy care center). We will also hold men accountable for living out their calling to provide and protect women and children. Finally, if you have ever had an abortion in your past, we want you to know that abortion is not an unforgivable sin. Whoever confesses and forsakes their sin finds mercy. If you have never gone through a post-abortion Bible study, we will be happy to connect you to one so that you can walk in complete healing and freedom.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Col 1:1 NKJV - Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

Col 1:2 NKJV - To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION

Apostle by the will of God – Being an apostle was not a career move for Paul. He couldn't do anything else because God's will drove him to be what He was.

- God calls us all to different, various stations in life. But wherever you find yourself, make sure you can say with confidence that you are what you are “By the will of God.”

Saints and faithful brethren:

- **This is not two separate groups of people but two descriptions of the same group of people.**
- Paul saw the believers in Colossae as saints and faithful.

SAINTS:

- He's not talking about little statues [image] of dead people that you pray to on a wall.
- He's not talking about the football team [image].
- **Saints – set apart ones.** That's all of those who have been called and set apart by Christ. That's all of us!
- Religion has made a saint a position that can be attained through human goodness, but in reality it something that given by the merit of God's goodness.

Dual Placement: **IN** Christ and **IN** Colossae - all Christians are in two places at once and therefore need to live lives that reflect that reality. You can't be so "IN the world" that you lose sight of your greater identity IN Christ. Likewise, you can't make being "IN Christ" an excuse to bow out of the you responsibilities in the place you are living. Those who are truly in Christ will bring Christ to the place in the world where they find themselves.

Grace and peace – in that order. You will never experience God's peace until you first experience His grace.

PAUL'S APOSTOLIC PRAYER

Col 1:3 NKJV - We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

- The words "We give thanks" mean so much more when you consider the state Paul was in while writing this. Being imprisoned, one might start off with, "I'm really struggling, physically tired, and uncertain about my future," but Paul starts off with, "we give thanks."
- This should challenge us, that regardless of our worldly circumstances, our eternal reality should give us an attitude of gratitude. It's been rightly said, ***"When we pause to think, we'll find cause to thank."***

Then Paul tells the church that he is "praying always for them..."

- When you read the Pauline epistles, you can only end with one of two conclusions regarding Paul and prayer: Paul was ***either a liar, or he was a prayer***. I believe that it was the latter. Paul's heart bled for the church as an apostle, but even more, as a shepherd. He was burdened by their struggles, broken over their sin, and deeply connected to their pain. He felt their heartache, worried about their spiritual condition and was personally concerned with their spiritual growth. What did he do as a result? He spent many sleepless nights and early mornings praying for them. Some by name, others just in general. For the people he knew personally and those he didn't, he wrestled, battled, and interceded before God on their behalf.
- Paul's example of this in the scriptures is constantly challenging me.
 - ***To the Romans, Paul says, "without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers..."***
 - ***To the Corinthians, he writes, "I thank God always on your behalf..."***
 - ***To the Ephesians, he writes, "I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers..."***
 - ***To the Philippians, "I am... always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy..."***
 - ***Colossians, "We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you..."***
 - ***Thessalonians, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers..."***
 - ***To Timothy, a young pastor, and son in the faith, "...without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day..."***
 - ***He says the same thing to Philemon.***

According to Acts 6:4, part of the job description of the elder/pastor is to ***commit themselves to prayer along with the ministry of the word.***

- ***While Pastors need to be good leaders and overseers, they don't need to be effective CEOs, incredible visionaries, or ultra-charismatic personalities, but what they do need to have is worn Bibles and worn knees.***

In the next 11 verses, Paul talks about the essence of the gospel. You see, the great thing about the gospel is that after it saves us, the message continues to work in us. We will look at three things concerning the gospel:

- **The Operation of the gospel**
- **The Overflow of the gospel**
- **The Outcomes of the gospel**

1 The Operation of the Gospel

A. THE GOSPEL KEEPS THINGS SIMPLE

[Col 1:4-5 NKJV] 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

You might recognize three crucial words that Paul uses to describe how the gospel operates within the life of the believer. The gospel saves us, but it also shapes us in three ways:

- 1. FAITH - in Christ**
- 2. LOVE - for all the saints**
- 3. HOPE - of heaven**

These three elements are so important that Paul goes as far as to say in 1 Corinthians 13 - **[1Co 13:13 NKJV] 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**

QUOTE

“**A healthy and fruitful church is not built upon what the church organization does for the people, but by people who are trusting in Jesus, loving each other, and living for the hope of heaven.**”

Pastor Josh

APPLICATION

Sometimes, it's so easy to get wrapped up in our theological pursuits that we forget the simplicity of what the gospel is to produce in our lives.

- **Love:** Regarding love, I'd encourage you to attend our Wednesday night service as we study that topic in depth. But we see Christ clearly; the gospel produces agape, selfless love in us that pours out of us unto others.
- **Faith: Pistis** - to be fully persuaded, to trust to the point of obedience. In other words, when you see the gospel clearly, and your heart is opened to its reality, you learn that Jesus can be trusted and obeyed, and that becomes the tenor and tone of your new life. You're no longer the one holding the reigns and calling the shots. There's a new King on the throne of your heart, and your life reflects a submission and assurance that He can be trusted.
- **Hope:** A hope that is laid up in heaven. I've heard criticism from some progressive teachers that evangelical Christians talk about Heaven too much and forget that they still live on Earth. But the Bible seems clear to me that the more heavenly-minded you are, the more earthly good you become.
 - When you are convinced that there is eternal life in a perfect creation, with a new and perfected body, you tend to view this life in it's appropriate place:
 - Your treasures don't become idols, but rather tools to use for God's eternal purposes.
 - You hold loosely to your worldly agendas because you recognize that this life is the shortest part of the entire story.
 - You aren't easily intimidated by what you might lose or who you might offend as you stand for Christ now because you realist that your eternal life is already secured in eternity.
 - **[1Pe 1:3-5 NKJV] 3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven**

for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

B. OPERATION: THE GOSPEL IS ALWAYS AT WORK

Col 1:6 NKJV - which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;

Col 1:7 NKJV - as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,

Col 1:8 NKJV - who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

APPLICATION

The gospel has gone out, come to you, and is bearing fruit.

Through Paul's ministry, and subsequently, those who carried the gospel after being saved through his preaching, the gospel went out to all the known world in less than 40 years. How? There was no TV, Internet, phones, radio, or modern transportation. There were no seminaries, church buildings, denominational programs, missions boards, or hefty bank accounts.

How did the gospel spread the entire known world? As I read the book of Acts, I see two essential ingredients: A church that was...

- **Dependant on the Holy Spirit's Power**
- **Dedicated to Jesus' Mission**

Now, I'm not discounting any of these other tools and resources God has blessed us with, but think about it! There were no church grand openings and no servant dream teams. All that existed were a bunch of new Christians who found something in the risen Jesus worth living and dying for. Because of that, they couldn't keep their mouths shut.

- Statistically speaking, 90% of the people in this room have never shared their faith with another person.
- Yes, you preach the gospel with your life, but you also have to use your mouth. Paul asks the question in Romans 10: **“How shall they believe unless they hear...”**
- **EXAMPLE:** When I was fishing once with my brother, we rescued a pelican with a fishing line around its beak. He was pretty mad when we grabbed him, but he was utterly harmless and defenseless. How many Christians are harmless to the kingdom of darkness because they have their mouths tied shut?

THE GOSPEL IS ALWAYS BEARING FRUIT

Jesus, full of grace and truth (John 1:14) - The grace of God is frequently manipulated. The grace of God is at the center of the gospel, but ion truth it bears fruit.

- Grace is not an excuse to sin. That isn't truth.
 - **[Rom 6:1-2 NKJV] 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**
- Neither is grace earned. Grace isn't dependent on your performance.
 - **[Tit 3:5 NKJV] 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,**

EPAPHRAS

His name means lovely.

- Servant and fellow minister - ministry = servanthood.
- He was a servant in prayer (4:12)
- Your love in the Spirit - they didn't know Paul in the flesh but loved him in the spirit. The Spirit connects Christians in love beyond their physical knowledge of each other.

2 The Overflow of the Gospel

BIBLE PASSAGE

Colossians 1:9-11 (NKJV - New King James Version)

⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

A. THE GOSPEL OPENS OUR SPIRITUAL EYES TO GOD'S WILL (9)

I'll make a statement that some of you may not believe: **"It is God's desire for you to know His will."**

This doesn't mean that God is always going to lay out his entire plan for our lives in a nice step-by-step program. Many times for us His will is unfolding, which means it must be continuously pursued and sought after. This keeps us dependent on Him and walking in faith. The second step is often not revealed until after you've taken the first step.

- Example: ABRAHAM - God to a land I will show you...
- EXAMPLE: Acts 8: Phillip was part of a great outpouring of salvation and God's Spirit. The next thing you know, God tells him to go to Gaza in the middle of the desert. There are no further instructions or reasons given, just go to the middle of the desert.

He gets there and sees a chariot, and the second instruction comes: “Go join yourself with the chariot.”

- God wants us to know His will! Often, we don’t know it because we lack spiritual discernment and wisdom. There is no better place to be in life than in the center of God’s will, but consider this: Why would God reveal His unknown will to me if I’m not obeying His known will? In other words, there are already things that we KNOW from scripture are His will for us, and if we refuse to heed those things, we should not expect to get God’s leading for the rest of our lives.
 - **1 Thess. 4:3-8 - Sexual purity and holiness**
 - **1 Thess. 5:16-18 - Rejoicing, praying, and giving of thanks**
 - **1 Peter 2:15 - Doing good to silence foolish accusations**
 - **1 Peter 4:1-2 - No longer live according to sinful desires of the flesh**
 - **Ephesians 5:17-18 - to redeem the time in these evil days**

As we obey what we know, we become spiritually in tune with the more nuanced leading of the Holy Spirit.

- EXAMPLE: You and my wife have something in common. You both know what I chose to tell you. The difference? I tell my wife things I would never tell you. Why? Because I have an intimate and close relationship with her that I could never have with anyone else.
- Christians, the closer you walk with Jesus, the clearer His voice will become.

The greater the obedience, the greater the intimacy. The greater the intimacy, the greater the understanding!

BIBLE PASSAGE

Col 1:10 NKJV - that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Col 1:11 NKJV - strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

B. THE GOSPEL PRODUCES SPIRITUAL CONSISTENCY AND GROWTH

The purpose and outcome of knowing God's will is not so that I might live my destiny, accomplish my dreams, and experience all my life's worldly ambitions. The purpose of knowing God's will is that:

- **I HONOR the Lord (walking worthy)**
- **I PLEASE the Lord**
- **I SERVE the Lord (fruitful in every good work)**
- **I KNOW the Lord (increasing in the knowledge of God)**

As Paul continues his prayer for the believers, notice two things: He uses the active voice for these two verses & he uses all-encompassing terms:

- Notice the words: Fully, every and all. What does this imply? That Jesus deserves nothing less than all of me.

Worthy of the Lord

- Not that we are trying to become worthy, but we want to represent the family name well

Fully pleasing Him:

- Our attitude should not be, "God exists to fully please me," but rather, "I exist to fully please and glorify him."
- I'm convinced that Christians who understand their identity in Christ and grasp the fullness of what He's done for them don't need more religious rules to follow. Rules are for those who are not internally motivated because they have still not come to a realization of who Jesus is and what He's done.
- When you love someone, you don't want to please them out of duty, but rather desire.
 - **Those with a purely religious-based relationship with Christ hear "fully please Him" and ask, "Oh, great, what do I have to give up now as part of my duty?"**
 - **Those who are living in the life of the gospel and the power of the Spirit hear it and ask, "Oh Great! What can I lay on the altar to become more like Christ?"**

Fruitful in every good work: In other words, your Christian life has a purpose to glorify God through obedient actions.

The only way to remain fruitful if you are a branch is to be connected to the source, to the vine.

John 15:5 - "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

Increasing in the knowledge of God

- I hate to break it to you, and I don't mean to offend you, but you and I DON'T know everything there is to know about God!
- 1 Peter tells us that we must constantly add to our faith. The Christian life is a constant process of growing, building, and learning.
 - If you find yourself board with God, it's not because you've figured it all out. It's because It's time for you to go to the next level, and your flesh isn't sure if it wants to take that step.

Strengthened with all might according to HIS power for all patience and longsuffering with joy.

- Finding Patience, perseverance, and joy in the midst of trials and suffering is possible only through God's grace and the Holy Spirit's supply of His strength.
- We need the supernatural empowerment of God to get us through our trials with joy in our lives.

[Jas 1:2-4 NKJV] [2] My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. [4] But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

[Rom 5:3-5 NKJV] [3] And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; [4] and perseverance, character; and character, hope. [5] Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

3 The Outcomes of the Gospel

BIBLE PASSAGE**Colossians 1:12-14 (NKJV - New King James Version)**

¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

A.) THROUGH THE GOSPEL, GOD HAS QUALIFIED US

But it's the kind of the qualified like my daughter is qualified to catch fish, but only really because Grandpa, the seasoned fisherman, caught it for her.

The next time someone asks you why you're going to heaven, you can biblically answer that it's because you're qualified. Just don't forget to add that you are not qualified based on your own merit or performance, but by the perfect life and sacrifice of Jesus.

Qualified – hikanoō (he-ka-na-o) – to make sufficient, render fit.

By nature, we are not fit for heaven, but God has made us fit for heaven by cleansing us of our sins through His sacrifice on the cross.

[Rom 8:2-4 NKJV] [2] For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. [3] For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, [4] that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

B.) THROUGH THE GOSPEL, GOD HAS DELIVERED US

Col 1:13 NKJV - He has delivered us from the power of darkness...

There is no question about it when you look at this world... darkness has power.

“There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan.” (C.S. Lewis)

- ***But greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world!***
- The power of darkness has no power against the all-powerful God.

Has – past tense. This was done the moment we placed our faith in Christ. Our identities changed.

[Eph 5:8-14 NKJV] [8] For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light [9] (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), [10] finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. [11] And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. [12] For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. [13] But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. [14] Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."

C.) THROUGH THE GOSPEL, GOD HAS CONVEYED US

and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

Conveyed had a special significance in the ancient world. When one empire conquered another, the custom was to take the population of the defeated empire and transfer it lock, stock, and barrel to the conqueror's land. It is in this that Paul says we have been conveyed into God's kingdom. Everything we have, everything we are now, belongs to Him.

In other words, Christ's work is a COMPLETE work. He didn't simply open the prison doors and let us out to be independent, autonomous creatures. He delivered us out of the prison

cell and then led us into a kingdom. We are still subjects to a king, but instead of that king being sin, self, and Satan, now the king is Jesus.

D.) THROUGH THE GOSPEL, GOD HAS FORGIVEN AND REDEEMED US

Col 1:14 NKJV - in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Redemption – liberation procured by the payment of a ransom.

- In a US court, when a defendant doesn't want to testify to his own guilt, he pleads the 5th.
- In order for our guilt to be removed from before God, we have to plead the blood of Christ that paid the ransom price for our freedom from Satan and sin.

Forgiveness – A casting away. Sins have a way of sticking with us, engrained in our minds, always bringing forth guilt and shame. But God has chosen to be forgetful.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Micah 7:19 (ESV - English Standard Version)

¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us;
he will tread our iniquities underfoot.

You will cast all our sins
into the depths of the sea.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Romans 4:7-8 (ESV - English Standard Version)

⁷ "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;

⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

APPLICATION

NOTE: as the previous 2 verses were in the active voice implying our part, these verses are in the passive voice implying that these are things that are done to us by God. He has qualified us because we cannot qualify ourselves, He has delivered and conveyed us because we cannot deliver ourselves and He has redeemed and forgiven us because we could not wash our own sin away.
