

# Colossians: The Supremacy of Christ (Col. 1:3-8)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Amen. Amen. Thank you, Brennan and team, for leading us in worship. Good morning, church.! That's decent, but let's just do it one more time. Good morning, church. There we go. We may not be! We may not be athletic and fit like the rest of them out there, but we got spirit, so it is good to be here this morning to begin our week and seeking the Lord and seeking to find ways to bless and serve and encourage one another. We need one another, and so it's important time for us, church, to gather and begin our week this way as our normal rhythm of life. So if you have a copy of the scriptures, go ahead and turn open to Colossians. We began looking at that book last week, kind of gave an overview, and we'll get a little bit further this morning looking at chapter 1, verses 3 through 8, but let me pray for us, and then we will begin our study. So join me.

Father, we love the reminder, the sobering reminder from the psalmist that as he writes, your testimonies are his delight, so much so, even more so than riches. And Lord, we want to have that perspective, that heart posture in life, to be those people that meditate on your precepts, those that fix our eyes on your ways, those that delight in your statutes. And so Lord, this morning, we want to be a people that don't forget the things that you've said, so would you plant them deep into into the recesses of our hearts? Lord, help us to hear your words, your voice. And Father, would you increase our faith this morning for the week ahead? And so we commit our time to you.

We look forward to how you will speak through your word, your spirit. And Lord, we will give you thanks for what you say to us and what you accomplish in each of us because of this time.

So we want our worship to be pleasing to you. And so we give you our hearts this morning in Jesus' name and all God's people said, amen. Well, I think Einstein is credited with giving us the definition of insanity where he says the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

result. And I would say that retrieving the mail falls into the definition of insanity. It falls into that category. It's an exercise, I think, that is just replete with unrealistic expectations.

[ 2 : 5 3 ] We do it over and over again. We go to the mailbox, right? And we think for some reason, if I go down to that little black box at the end of my driveway, I'm going to open that box and I'm going to receive good news. And we do this over and over. We've done this walk a thousand times.

And yet the preponderance of mail that we receive is typically something from somewhere saying that we owe money to someone. And yet we do it over and over again. And then there's that rare occasion when we get maybe we get a magazine that we were looking forward to, or maybe there's a thank you note. And those little moments, I think, keep us coming back to the mailbox. Or maybe it's December when we get all the Christmas cards and we're like, oh, this is good. Let's continue to do that. It sort of gives us mailbox amnesia related to bad news. I try to use that as a little bit of a metaphor this morning to think about the text that we're in. In church leadership, there's a decent amount of bad news that can make its way to one's inbox. But on those rare occasions when there's good news, there's encouraging news, it's wonderful. It fuels your pastors to serve another day.

And so considering where we're at in this text, in this letter, Paul, we know is near the end of his life. He's in prison. And I'm just conjecturing, but I think he could use some good news.

I think he could use some encouraging news. And in fact, he does. He receives some news and he gets it in the form, not as a letter, but in the form of, takes the form of a student that he had taught at Ephesus. Epaphras visits him, brings him, yeah, some difficult, some troubling news of what's happening in Colossae. But along with that, he brings really some good news. He brings a good report. And if you want to give a title to the message this morning, I've entitled it. I don't title all my sermons, but this one's, I've entitled a good report. And so Paul gets a good report from his former student, Epaphras. And it's news that for Paul, it enlivens his spirit.

Some really encouraging news that he receives. So let's read this. And actually, we're going to, as we read this section, Paul is reflecting on the encouraging news that he received in this section. [ 5 : 29 ] So let's read it together, beginning here in verse 3. He writes, We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing, as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth. Just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, he is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. Now, in the Greek, it's interesting, this is just one sentence. Paul has a gift. Maybe you have relatives that can do this. They can just circular breathe and talk and you don't know where the breath happens, and they just continue to give you verbs. And Paul here, he just, this is one sentence. We're only going to look at one sentence this morning. And it takes the form of verses 3 through 8. Now, by saying we, in verse 3, always thank God. We, Paul and

Timothy, we thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you. Now, this is Paul's typical MO in most of his letters, outside of Galatians and 2 Corinthians, he begins with thanksgiving to God for the recipients. He does this to the Romans in Romans 1.8. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. Philippians 1.3, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you. 1 Corinthians 1.4, I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given to you in Christ Jesus.

So, Paul here, he's thanking and he's praying to God for the Colossians. What is he thankful for? He's thankful for evidences of God's grace in their fellowship. And when I say evidences of grace, I'm talking about evidences of God's activity. They're present there within the church, despite some of the challenges. Now, we know, well, I hope, hopefully we know, there's no perfect churches. Okay? I know you have, maybe that's news to a few of you. There's no perfect churches. Churches are filled with people that are becoming like Jesus. If they're in Christ, they're being sanctified. It's progressive. It's progressive. Yet, they're in progress. And so, it's a good reminder from Paul in this section to see the good that's happening in Colossae and to give thanks.

[ 8 : 25 ] It's very easy to, in ministry sometimes, to take a posture of always critiquing. And there's some of us on staff that veer in that direction. Actually, Scott and myself, we are more glass half empty. And so, we need Melissa and Cole who are more glass half full type of, and we balance one another very well that way. And I think Paul here actually models something to us. Hey, we need to give thanks. When we see God at work, we need to give thanks. The enemy loves when all we see is the negative. And because what happens is, it steals the joy. It steals the joy of ministry. And I think it hurts the inertia of ministry. When we give thanks, when we observe where God is at work, it keeps us useful. And ultimately, it honors Him. Okay? So, I think Paul here is actually worshiping the Lord. He's living to the glory of God by giving thanks as he observes these things that are occurring at this church in Colossae. And so, this morning, we're going to consider three evidences of grace that are in this church that are encouraging Paul. And what I want us to do with this this morning is ask the question, is this true of us? And as we consider these three different evidences of God's grace in the church, of the three, where do we need to perhaps give attention? Okay? So, you don't have to take all three. Just pick the one where you feel like, man, this is where I'm struggling or I'm deficient. This is where I need to give some attention. So, that's just my charge for us as we work through this text together, considering these three evidences of grace that Paul is thankful for. And we spot the first one here in verse four, just the first half of it. He says this, since we heard of your faith in Christ

Jesus. Stop. We thank God because we've heard of your faith in Christ Jesus. The first evidence of grace at the Colossian church, there's faith present. There is faith present. And it's not just this sort of general faith. Well, there's just faith. It's very popular today to be a person of faith. faith. It's sort of the praised ideology today. We live in a culture that I think is enchanted with mystery. Faith is seen as a good ingredient of a self-actualized person, an evolved person. So, it's not just this vague notion of just faith in anything. I mean, faith could be placed in a lot of different things, right? You could have faith that you're going to reincarnate someday into a different person. You could have faith that God is in everything. He's in the trees and the plants and the bees. Or you could have faith that maybe God is some universal force, right? I think it's very popular today to hear people credit all the good in their life given to what? To the universe. Oh, I got to

thank the universe for that thing, right? It's just God without a face. It's very interesting. It's very inviting for the world because it's like a higher power, but there's no accountability. You just get to feel like you're connected to something transcendent, but there's no moral accountability. You could have faith in many gods. Or catch this, you could actually have faith in no God at all. And I think it's important to recognize every worldview is based upon faith in something.

[12:37] Sort of an interesting twist. Even the atheist operates in the realm of faith. Now, the atheist is not going to appreciate you pointing this out. I've done this, and I've had individuals respond like, listen, dude, I'm about the facts. No, it's faith. Every worldview, the starting point of every worldview is faith, right? I believe that He is. You believe that He is not. But both of us start with faith. Okay? We can't prove God. We can't prove the negation of God. But which makes more sense?

It was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who created the iconic literary figure Sherlock Holmes. And he's this individual committed to observation of the evidence and then deducing the answer from that. And I think it's a great example because related to worldviews and specifically Christianity, atheism, both systems, examine the evidence and then base belief upon the same data. And the question is, which one is more plausible based upon the evidence?

If I have an empty cookie box in my pantry, am I going to jump to, oh, we must have cookie-eating ghosts in our home? Or am I thinking maybe there's a family member who has a hankering for Oreos?

Maybe it's me, all right? So, which one is more plausible? Even those that say, well, all of this around us formed by a big bang, it doesn't actually explain anything because you don't have a bang without a banger, right? It's just common sense. If I hear a thunk upstairs, it's more likely that my son is chucking a football in the house.

Would never happen. Versus, oh, a mystery noise that spontaneously occurred without agency. Which one is more plausible? Which one makes more sense? It's interesting, the Russian poet, writer, Boris Pasternak, he wrote Dr. Zhivago, he was at least honest with his atheism. He began life convinced that the Russian Revolution was a good thing until he saw what it did to people under the Soviet regime. And at the end of his life, he's credited with saying this, I am an atheist who has lost his faith. I think he's being intellectually honest there. And so we examine the evidence, and we actually have good reason to believe that the gospel is true, that Jesus is indeed God. And I think as we reflect back even, we just got done with Easter at thinking about just the transformation of eyewitnesses that were there, the apostles, many disciples of Jesus, who when he was being crucified, fled the cross. And yet the rest of their lives, they were totally committed to the deity of Jesus and aligning themselves with him. They were scared lambs that lived the rest of their lives as courageous lions. That's encouraging. We've not taken this intellectual leap into the abyss.

[16:46] And the key here when Paul says, hey, I've heard the report that there is faith here. The faith that Paul is celebrating is a faith in the proper object. Okay? The intrinsic value of faith is in the object it is placed in. And the object better hold up.

My daughter, I forget which of them it was when they were very young, and they wanted to get us to Disneyland, they brought their piggy bank out, and they're like, I'm going to take us there. I'm going to get us there. And I don't know if they're three, four years old, and they had like three dollars and change in their piggy bank, and they were so earnest. They're like, man, I'm going to get us. We're going to go to Disneyland. And their faith was placed in the piggy bank. Right? The object didn't hold up.

Now, I have not been to Disneyland in a long time, but I don't think you can use a drinky fountain for three dollars. And yet they were earnest. So the important piece of faith, church, is the object.

For the Christian, we are placing our faith in Jesus, God's revelation of himself in the flesh. That's the object. So when we talk about faith, what we're talking about is we're trusting Jesus.

We're trusting him. We're so persuaded that something is true that we're trusting in it. It's like those window washers that are hanging off the building, and they're willing to sit on that little plank because they're trusting in those ropes as they clean that skyscraper. That's faith.

[18:40] I believe so much that these ropes will hold me. I will sit and lower myself down the building side. Trusting.

The 19th century Scottish missionary, John G. Patton, he was a missionary to the New Heberdries. I don't know if I said that right, but it's modern-day Vanuatu.

But he ministered amongst cannibals. It was a difficult ministry. His wife died after giving birth while they were serving in the field amongst these tribespeople, and then his newborn son passed away. It was a very difficult ministry.

But he was faithful. He was faithful to go back and serve this group of people. And as he's translating Scripture, when he comes to this word believe, he chose a word in their language that would translate, to lean your whole weight upon.

That's what faith is. It's trust. I'm going to lean my whole weight upon. I am trusting that God could forgive me based upon what Jesus did.

[ 19 : 57 ] His actual life, death, and resurrection. Faith, church, is looking at Jesus. It's looking to the cross. And placing all of our eggs in that basket.

I'm betting everything that that's enough to have forgiven my sins. And for me to have peace with Holy God. It's Jesus plus nothing.

We're not diversifying. We're not hedging our bets. We're going for broke. We're saying, I am all in on Jesus plus nothing. And the Bible teaches it's the object of our faith that's everything.

It's everything. John reminds of this in 1 John 5, where he says, verse 12, whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. And so for the Colossians, Paul's encouraged. He's like, man, I get a report that their faith is anchored in the very person of Jesus Christ.

[ 21 : 07 ] He's the Son of God. He died to forgive sinners. And he rose from the grave. And they're believing this. They're trusting that that's enough for their salvation.

For their spiritual deliverance. And maybe you're here this morning, you're like, but Jay, I get it. It's like faith. I just, my faith in Jesus, it's there, but it's small.

It's just this little, it's a mini faith. Must you see faith? Is that enough? Again, the critical piece is the object.

It's not the amount of faith that's essential. It's the object of the faith. I don't know if when you fly, you people watch. Thankful we got Cole and Anna back safely.

They flew a lot. We don't know how, it's a miracle. Like, but it worked. Okay? It's not normal to fly. But you all, a lot of you do it. We need to talk to some people about this.

[ 22 : 14 ] I just, this is a very strange church. We're in love with planes here. At any rate. If you ever fly, you get people watching. There's usually two categories of people, right? There's like people that are frequent flyers.

It's just, they do it all the time. And then there's like your first time flyers. And it's hard to distinguish the two of them because they do the same thing when they get on the plane.

Both of them close their eyes, right? But the frequent flyer, they're out. They're asleep. This is no big thing, right? But then the first time flyer, their eyes are closed.

What are they doing? They're sending up their very last prayer. That's what's going on. You just don't know it. So the question is this.

If these two individuals are on the same flight, which person is more likely to make it to their destination? The guy that's super confident, oh, it's going to happen.

[ 23 : 14 ] Or the individual is like, oh, it's been nice knowing you, right? Which was more likely to get there? Both. Why?

Because it's the plane. It's the pilot that will get them to their destination regardless of their level of confidence as long as they both are willing to step on the plane.

This is an interesting text. It's from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says something, I think, that relates to this reality.

In Matthew 6.30, he says, But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothes you, catch this, oh, you of little faith.

Now, Jesus is not talking about salvation here. I don't want you to, I'm not trying to confuse the issue. But there's something encouraging here as we recognize God's activity is not hindered by our degree of faith.

[ 24 : 19 ] In this passage, he's still the God of providence. Regardless, even for those with small faith. And I think there's a principle here.

There's an application as we think about our salvation. It's not the degree, right? It's the object. For the Colossians, their faith was in Jesus.

And it may have been at many different levels. And yet, what did exist was real. And it encouraged Paul. That's the first evidence of grace. Let's look at the second.

Second part of verse 4. Going back to verse 4. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus. And the love that you have for all the saints.

The love you have for all the saints. So the second evidence of God's activity in the Colossian church is the love that they have for one another. Paul actually mentions this again at the end of this section in verses 7 and 8 where he says, Just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, he is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

[ 25 : 34 ] So not only are these people relating to God correctly, trusting in faith, but their relationship with God is now transforming how they relate to one another.

Catch this? That's the interplay. And it's exactly as it should be. If you get right with God, it should then impact every other relationship for the better.

I had a friend on the west side who I knew before they were a believer, came to faith in Christ, older gentleman, and before he was a believer, he was an adulterous man who's not faithful to his wife. Came to faith in Christ and he ceased all of that activity. He lived all the days I knew him there faithful to his wife. His relationship with God now impacted his personal relationships.

I think Paul the Apostle is a great example of this. He gets right with God, it impacts how he loves people. It transforms. He was there at the stoning of Stephen and now he's being willing to be beaten and stoned and shipwrecked and all the rest to love people.

[ 26 : 54 ] Our relationship with God should then transform every other relationship we have in life. That's the interplay. Now, when we talk about love, this agape, this selfless love, what does it look like?

Well, who's the person that we should look to that embodies agape love? You're a church. What do you say? Jesus. Thank you. That was an easy one. And we have a verse you know well, Mark 10, 45.

It's a great, great definition of love. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. He's not just the priest, he's the sacrifice.

He's the ransom price. So agape love is a love that serves. Jesus didn't come to be served. It's a love that serves. It's a love that sacrifices.

It's a love that's selfless. It's a love that's others-oriented. And it's interesting because when you look at the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, 22, it's the very first fruit of the Spirit.

[ 28 : 06 ] Agape love. You get right with God, this is going to form. It's going to transform the way that you interact with people. I think it's the greatest evidence of faith in a person.

And it's not natural to serve others, to sacrifice for others. That's not our default setting.

It's not how we begin life. If you ever come over to our house, you'll notice something about our house. We're kind of a house that lives by the, kind of the, I don't know, in the spirit of all creatures great and small.

There's like animals of every sort. We're goats and donkey and chickens and rabbits and dogs and, I mean, we got it all.

We're all creatures great and small. There's like 10 chicks in our bathtub right now. In the master bedroom, there's 10 chicks in the bathtub.

[ 29 : 04 ] It's so normal. We got like, we got a barn cat that just had kittens out in the garage. It's like, it's what we do.

But it's interesting, like, observing kittens. They're so cute. I don't think you're supposed to grab and hold them yet, but we do. Nobody call animal control.

But if you watch kittens, they're so selfish. They will do whatever's necessary to get fed and to get warm.

It doesn't matter if their brother or sister is like, it will climb over. Whatever it takes, they will knock you off the food source. You just watch them. They're so selfish.

They're so cute so you don't even care. But they're so selfish. I just think, man, he can be, we're born, we're born selfish kittens.

[ 30 : 06 ] Every kitten for himself. See, I'm trying to make it a metaphor that you're like, I don't want to be a kitten. I'm going to be selfless now, right? See, see what I'm doing? Yeah.

At least for the guys. I'm not going to be a kitten. C.S. Lewis reminds us that it takes a redeemed heart to love with this agape love.

He writes this in the four loves. He says, divine love in the man enables him to love what is not naturally lovable. Lepers, criminals, enemies.

This is where it gets really difficult. The sulky? The superior? The sneering? I was Ubering last night.

I pulled over to the side of the road. I'm waiting for my passenger. I'm in a neighborhood. I'm just parked there. And a car didn't like that I was parked there. Drove by, honked, gave me some, you know, sign language and then some words to follow.

[ 31 : 10 ] And I'm like, and it was like, okay. But in the flesh, you're just like, I want to retaliate. It's not natural to love this way, church.

When you're able to love and be patient with a sulky person, be encouraged. Because it's evidence of God's work in your life.

Faith is legit. Church, love is the expression of faith in the present. And I want us to see that interplay here between faith and love.

Faith is directed towards the past. Look what Christ did for me. And based upon that, I can love today. It's the past. And now it's faith worked out in the present in the form of love.

I look to the cross. I see God and His extravagant care for me. I can now do that for someone else. Victor Hugo almost got it right in Les Mis where he writes, to love another person is to see the face of God.

[ 32 : 21 ] Theologically, it should be reversed. To see the face of God gives us capacity to now love to serve another person. Amen? He was so close.

And church, this is going on in the Colossian church. Paul's encouraged. He's like, this is wonderful. I got good news.

I went to the mailbox. I got this good report. There's faith that's real. There's love that's happening that's real. And church, this is our witness, right? Your love for one another, people will know.

You're my disciples as they observe that. As we love extravagantly, it's part of our testimony. I got to share our adoption story a couple weeks ago with a couple passengers who were just gobsmacked.

They couldn't process like why we would adopt in the large family that we had. They're like, you already had five kids. What? What? They just couldn't process husband and wife and taking them back from the bar.

[ 33 : 27 ] So maybe they weren't fully, but they were just like, what? What? And then it's like, yeah, yeah. God impressed on my wife's heart we could be sacrificial and extravagant and love more.

What? God? Like, it's part of our witness that we would be people that love one another well, that understand that sacrifice is just normal.

It's what Christians do. Not every church behaves in love. Not every church does it well. Maybe you've heard about them or visited them or at least read about churches that were struggling here. We saw that when we did our study in Philippians, Philippians 4.2. I entreat Iodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. There was some unlove that was happening, some strife. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1.11, For it's been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you.

And church, it's just not attractive. And it kills our witness. Right? Jesus has changed my life, but I don't really want to practice hospitality to you.

[ 34 : 40 ] Jesus has changed my life, but I'm still going to be critical of you. I'm still going to complain about you. I'm not going to give you my time.

Time. And maybe when we lack love, church, the issue isn't so much a lack of love, but maybe it's actually a lack of being truly surrendered to Christ.

Right? Because faith and love, they're connected. Or the worst case scenario, faith is completely absent. An attractive church, loving one another, what does it look like?

I think it looks like the unimportant, or the important serving the quote-unquote unimportant. There is no unimportant. But, right, in society we deem certain people, certain groups.

Sometimes in the church it's like, well, they're just children. Right? But I think, man, when you have somebody, I love this. You have an adult, and maybe they're very successful in their career, and they're like, man, I'm going to go and teach some children.

[ 35 : 47 ] That's love. Being a people that not only see those that come in our doors, but say, hey, would you want to, come sit with me. I heard that this morning, so I said, hey, come sit with me.

That's love. It's faith expressed in sacrificial love. In any church where you see believers serving one another, I can just guarantee you, God's at work, because faith is there.

It's being lived out in the present in love. And I entitled the sermon A Good Report. I got a good report on Friday. I was over at Sacred Heart and visiting some folks, and I got to spend some time with Nancy Chappell.

Is Nancy here even? I don't know. Is she here? I didn't see her. Okay, good. Now I can talk about her. That's what happens if you don't show up, you run Bloomsday, I'm talking about some other people, just wait.

I got to sit with Nancy, and she's like, Jay, I just got to tell you, I love our church. Well, I'm like, Nancy, I do too, but why do you love our church?

[ 36 : 54 ] She's like, and she just, she listed off all these people, and I could embarrass you, but she's like, and these folks have been coming, and then I got this person, and then this person even knows medical stuff, and they check the charts for Ray, and then I'm getting, she's, I'm getting cards in the mail from some of the single women in our church, and they're making me cards, and then I'm on the prayer, and you're praying for me, and I got a letter from the staff, and she was just gushing at, she's like, she was blown away by forth.

So, I just want to encourage us, like, we're doing some things right, okay? It's like, I think love is present here, and it was just such a great, just, it refreshed me, like, wow, this is so good, and you guys have been such a blessing to Nancy, so keep it up.

Well, let's finish up here, see the third evidence of grace, look at verses five and six, Paul writes, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of this you have heard before the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world is bearing fruit and increasing, as it also does among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.

The third evidence of grace in the Colossian church is what? It's hope. It's hope. Paul says, because of the hope.

Man, where have we heard that before? Faith? Love? Hope? Not only is faith and love present, but there's hope.

[ 38 : 34 ] What's hope? Think of hope as expectation. Is this just sort of a pipe dream expectation? Is this a long shot? Wishful thinking?

I hope this happens, right? Like, I hope my wife stops buying chickens. I mean, not really.

It's okay, hon. I like the chickens. I don't need a bath. Like, is that a secure hope? Is that a secure hope?

No! Not at all, right? There will be more chickens in our future, right? Right? I'm going to build more nesting boxes for chickens.

I think that's going to happen. Is that a good hope? Oh, yeah. That's a secure hope. Totally. I will be building more structures for animals in my future. Now, our hope in heaven, okay, and when we talk about heaven, it's not this ethereal thing, right?

[ 39 : 37 ] It's a new earth. 2 Peter 3.13 But according to His promise, we are waiting for new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

It's going to be very similar to this, only better, where its righteousness dwells. There's no sin. Guys, I cannot even imagine the transformation of, like, Division Street.

I just, I mean, it will be remarkable. You'll be like, I want to drive that every day. It'll be so good. It's, this is not a false story we tell ourselves to make ourselves feel better.

And I know there's some folks that think, oh, Jay, you talk heaven just because your life's so crummy here. No, it's, it's, it's an assured hope. it's interesting, we have an example in Scripture.

I think we have time for this. The mother of Sisera. Who's Sisera? He's this military commander who oppressed Israel for 20 years. Diabolical, evil, massive military.

[ 40 : 48 ] And the mother of this evil military commander was telling herself a story about her son that wasn't true. Okay? He had already been killed.

But, here's, here's the, the image of her telling herself a false story. Judges 5, verse 28 to 30 says, out of the window she peered. This is Sisera's mother. The mother of Sisera wailed through the lattice.

Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariot? Her wisest princess's answer, indeed, she answers herself.

And this is what she tells herself. Have they not found and divided the spoil? So she's thinking, oh, my son won another great military campaign. Oh, they're dividing the spoil. A womb or two for every man.

Spoil of dyed materials for Sisera. Spoil of dyed materials embroidered. Two pieces of dyed work embroidered for the neck as spoil. Like, the mother is delusional.

[ 41 : 48 ] She's like, oh, that's what's going on. He won this victory. He's bringing back all of this wealth. It's so wonderful. The reality was, that wasn't true. Sisera was rolled in a carpet with a tent peg through his temple.

He was dead as dead gets, but the mother was telling herself a false story to make herself feel better. Heaven for the believer is not that. It is assured.

It's not wishful thinking. It's a secure hope. In fact, Paul writes, it's a hope laid up for you in heaven. Where moth, rust, they can't harm the investment.

Peter says it this way in 1 Peter 1.4, imperishable. It's an inheritance. It's imperishable. Undeified. Unfading. Kept in heaven for you. And church, a biblical hope as we know home, it energizes us that we know we will be with Christ someday.

It motivates us. It alters the way that we live in the present. I think we have missionaries. We just, John Sissek was visiting. I think he knows where his home, future home is, so today, he can live in Indonesia.

[ 43 : 01 ] Walt and Bethany, same thing. They know where home is. They can serve in Indonesia. Biblical hope motivates. It energizes. When we know that we have been forgiven, our past is forgiven, our future is secure, then we have great freedom to live in the present apart from fear.

And I hope you see now the interplay between faith, hope, and love. John says it this way in 1 John 4.18, there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment.

I'm talking about our future. That's been dealt with. And whoever fears has not been perfected in love, we love because he first loved us. That's our past. So love is the expression of my past and my future today.

Faith and hope are the bookends of an abandoned life. A life willing to sacrificially love. I can give my life away.

My past has been dealt with. My future is secure. Right? Faith, hope, now I can invest today and love extravagantly. There's freedom now to give our lives away.

[ 44 : 21 ] To walk in risky faith. I think Patrick is a great example of this. Fifth century, 16-year-old English boy taken as a slave by Celtic warriors.

He then returns to that land, the land of his captors, and gives his life away for the gospel. And he was fueled by faith and hope. Amy Carmichael, another Irish person, Irish woman.

Patrick was English. She was born, 19th century, spending her life in India for 56 years. She was willing to stain her skin with coffee beans in order to blend in and then rescue children from abuse for the rest of her life.

Church, our story, our story is set. This is the good news for us. Right? The prologue's written.

Faith, we've been forgiven. The epilogue has been penned. We know where home is. It's actually a new earth where righteousness dwells. So how will we live our lives today loving, selflessly for one another?

[ 45 : 33 ] These are the evidences of grace that we're at the Colossal Church. And I actually believe they're here as well. And so I would just commend us as you think about those three.

Is there one where I need to give attention? But I hope that out of this you will hear, man, I have been forgiven of much. I know where my home is and that we would all go, man, maybe what we need to respond with is how can we love better today?

Right? Amen? Let's pray. Father, thank you. Thank you for this good report that Paul received.

Lord, thank you for the way that we understand faith, hope, and love.

That hope and faith are essentially the same thing, just pointed in different directions. That faith is just hope directed to the past. And hope is faith directed to the future.

And both of those allow us to simply live well today. And Lord, we want to be your people. Lord, thank you for the testimony that I got to hear from Nancy a couple days ago just that there are people that are loving extravagantly here at Forth.

[ 46 : 47 ] And Father, we count it a privilege to be those sorts of people, your people, doing your work in the lives of one another. And so Lord, maybe this morning it just needs an encouragement that the evidences of grace that we're at Colossae, they're here as well.

And Lord, what a privilege to be your people in Spokane, in the Logan neighborhood. And Lord, we pray that you would continue to be at work here using just ordinary us to advance your kingdom. And we will give you all praise, Jesus. It's in your name we pray. Amen.