

Colossians 1:1-14

“Speak the Positive”

July 10, 2016

Paul thanks the Lord for the faith and love of the Colossians. Paul tells us that their faith and love spring from their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ through the Cross at Calvary. If I were the Colossians, then I would feel good about Paul and the God we serve when I read the opening of this book of the Bible. Paul is using the Gospel approach. He uses the Law in this Book of the Bible, but Paul starts out with the Gospel.

A gossip puts people down and makes themselves look good at least in their eyes. God calls us not to be gossips. Instead God calls us to put the best construction on things and see the best in people. Likewise, it is hard to put people down when you are giving thanks for the blessings that you see in them as Paul does in our text. Of course this is not an excuse to ignore the sinner's faults. Instead we are called by God to speak the truth in love.

Speaking the truth in love means that we acknowledge that we are sinners and fail to live up to our Savior's expectations. Speaking the truth in love means that we truly want the best for them. Speaking the truth in love means that we truly want to share eternity with them. Therefore our goal is to develop a relationship with them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

I had a person tell me that they refused to forgive the hurt and pain that a pastor caused them. In fact they wanted revenge for the hurt and pain the pastor caused them. I know that whatever we say or do will probably not change them their desire to refuse forgiveness and seek revenge. God asks them to forgive and their desire to take revenge because He forgave us through the Cross at Calvary. Therefore that individual is rejecting God and His Word rather than rejecting me or you. Sadly we take it personally. Sadly we take that personally. That individual needs to work on their relationship with God before they lose it completely. Notice that I said that they need to work on their relationship with God. When we don't have a good relationship with God, we are reluctant to forgive and we are more willing to seek revenge. When we try to work on our unforgiving spirit, we find it hard to do. For we are focused upon the symptom rather than the problem which is our rejection of God and His Word.

Our job in our relationships is to be humble and search for those areas where we have failed. Our job in our relationships is to work on our own faith so that we are able to meet the challenges that life brings our way. Yes, life brings us challenges. I was talking to an individual whose mother refused to have anything to do with her since she was a baby. There are relationships where people will not forgive and allow us to reestablish or redevelop our relationship with them. Give them over to God's undeserved grace and mercy rather than dwell upon the hurt

and the pain that they have brought to our life. Meanwhile forgive them and move on in the relationships that God has blessed us with. That is the problem in our race relationships. Some don't forgive and move on! Some seek revenge as the killing of police in Dallas shows us!

Our text tells us that our lives are a struggle with the dominion of darkness. God's Word tells us that our lives are a struggle against the influence of the devil, the world and our sinful nature. God's Word tells us that we are not of this world now that we are been baptized into our relationship with our Savior Jesus Christ. Ephesians 6 tells us that we need to put on the full armor of God to face the threats thrown at us by our world. It is truly a war out there in our world. The battle is to keep the peace that our God has given to us through the Cross at Calvary.

Humility is one tool that God encourages in us. Patience is another tool that our God encourages in us. In God's kingdom, a day is like a thousand years a thousand years is like a day. Sometimes an answer to our prayer for a relationship does not come until we are in heaven. Sometimes the answer to our prayer never comes because our God will not force those around us to think and act like He or we want them to think and act. We are given the free will to reject God and reject those around us. We pay a price in God's rejection of us. However, our God is always open to reestablishing the relationship with them and us through His undeserved grace and mercy. Therefore our goal is to be a reason that people want

to reestablish a relationship with our God rather than be a reason to stay away from our God. Amen.