

First Things First

The first thing Christians should focus on in times of trouble is:

- “Who” Jesus Christ is IN us.
- “What” Jesus Christ is doing through us.
- “How” Jesus Christ brought the gospel message to us.

1. Who Jesus Christ is IN them/us:

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. Col 1:1-2

Paul is building within the family of God unity among believers.

All of us are unified through our faith in Christ.

We all have our different personalities; we all have our different life experiences; we all have our different circumstances – but Jesus Christ lives in each of us and unites us through the Gospel Message.

2. What Jesus Christ is doing through them/us.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints Col 1:3-4

Verse 4: “we heard of your love for all the saints,”

The Greek word for “love” is AGAPE:

- Agape love starts with how God loves us.
- The agape love of God is always seen by what God does for us.
- The agape love of God is not based on how we want God to love us, but on how God knows what is best for us.

We know that God loves us because God’s love is displayed most clearly at the cross.

“God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4–5, ESV).

We did not deserve such a sacrifice, “but God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Agape love, as modeled by Christ, is NOT based on feelings; rather, it is a determined act of the will, a joyful resolve to put the welfare of others above our own.

Paul gives thanks to God for the way these Christian brothers and sisters (agape) loved each other within the body of Christ. This is one of the main ways God works through us.

- ❖ But how do we continue in our faith and love when there is so much pressure for us to conform to the world around us? How can we rise above the pressure of cultural influences?

Paul says in verse 5 the key is the “**Hope of Heaven**”:

What is the HOPE that is stored up in heaven for us?

What is the goal of every single Christ?”

Though you have not seen him (Jesus Christ), you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1Peter 1:8-9

When we focus on the fact that God saved me from my sin, that he freed me from my past, and that he promises to give me eternal life --- then we are able to rise above all the challenges of this life and truly love others the way God has called us to love them.

3. How Jesus Christ brought the Gospel message to them/us.

“All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. Col 1:6-8

- ❖ They had heard the gospel message, the story of Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and ascension from a friend!
- All of you here are believers because someone shared the love of Jesus Christ with you.
- Now Christ, who lives in you, wants to bring the same gospel message to others through you.