

## Jesus Is Enough

Our topic for today is: **Jesus is enough.** The text is from Colossians 1:1-23

I remember when we bought our current house about 8 years ago. Like every other first time home buyer, we looked around with our agent for a house. I never knew how hard it was to make a choice about a house. We looked at all kinds of houses: detached, semi detached, freehold and condos. We looked at different neighbourhoods. We looked at older houses and newer houses. We considered and compared the prices of various houses. We talked to friends. We had lots of info. We finally settled on a house we liked, and we were going to put down an offer, but our realtor told us that the house had sold. We were disappointed.

And we started the process again. By this time, we had learned a few lessons. Here's one of them. Once we found a house, we liked we will put down an offer immediately. (Thankfully, there was no bidding war then as it is now). And so, our realtor told us about a house that was in our price range. We went to see it and we fell in love with it. It was in a good neighbourhood. It was fenced. The basement was mostly finished. It had a wide deck. We put an offer on it and we got it. The closing date was still a few months away and we could hardly wait. I drove around the area quite a few times in those months just anticipating.

When we finally got the house, we moved in. We loved it and it had many of the things we wanted. But as the months went by, I started feeling somehow. I was feeling that the house is not enough. I noticed somethings I didn't like. They were not terrible things at all. But I started thinking to myself. *Why did we settle for this house? Maybe we should have looked at more houses.* I started noticing things in other people's houses that our house didn't have.

**Do you ever have that feeling?** That something you have is not enough. You need to add to it. And so you begin to explore other options, other possibilities hoping to find something better. But when you do, you still find something you do not like. The feeling of 'not being enough' never seem to go away. You question everything. You think through everything trying to find another way or what's enough. It's a strange and annoying feeling.

For me, what helped me to deal with this '*not enough*' mentality was that I told myself. "*Toyosi, we have bought a house. It's a lot of money. There are great things about this house and that is why we bought it.*" I needed to stop being in the 'looking for house' mood and enter into 'I'm gonna love this amazing house' mood. I had to remind myself the good things that I cherished about this house that made me like in it in the first place. It's been a great house to live in so far.

I think when it comes to our relationship with Jesus, we need to do the same I did that helped me settle in this house. That is—to recall the reasons we still love him and follow him despite the odds. That is important because it is so easy for us to forget. It is so easy for us to drift away and listen to other voices or philosophies or ideologies for meaning and purpose in our lives. As you know, it is a reality today that people are deconstructing their faith and loosing their faith. They are questioning their faith. And while some rediscover their faith others drift away completely. And that is sad.

Now it is not a bad thing people to struggle in their faith. The believers in the early church experienced that struggle as well. Many of Paul's letters to the church were written to help and encourage and strengthen the faith of people who found themselves in that situation. In those letters he acknowledged their struggles and helped to strengthen their faith in Jesus.

And you see, sometimes the best way to deal with your struggles with doubt or confusion about God about Jesus is to remind yourself why you believe in him. To dig deep into him again and ignore all the other voices that keep pulling you apart. Like I had to do with my struggle with our house. **Reminding ourselves about who Jesus is, helps more than we realize in those circumstances.**

And this is what Paul did for the church in Colossae through the letter he wrote to them. These believers were dealing with false doctrines within their community that were causing them to doubt God and the message of hope that Jesus brings. Paul wrote to encourage them that the message they heard about Jesus was enough to carry them through.

Basically, this what he told them: *When you have Jesus, you have all that you need to find meaning and fulfillment in life. Jesus is enough.*

So this morning I want to talk about four things based on the text we read today that reminds us and helps us to know that Jesus is enough.

First one, **Paul reminds us about our identity --** Who we are and who's we are. In verse 2, he says **2 To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.**

Now, on one level this is just a greeting, a formal way of starting a letter and Paul usually starts this way in his letters. But on another level, this is more than a greeting. Paul is reminding them about their identity—that they belong to God. He calls them *God's holy and faithful people*. That is not usually how we see ourselves. We often look at ourselves from the perspective of our failure, our weakness and sin. And that is true. But God looks at us based on the performance of Jesus on our behalf. And that is an amazing to think about.

So here is the question: *What do you think God thinks about you?* I guess the answer depends a lot on your experience of him, perception of him, what you've been told about him etc. But in this text, here is what God thinks about you—holy and faithful.

This is who we are. We need to constantly remind ourselves who we are and who's we are. *I am loved, I am accepted in the beloved. I am forgiven. God looks at me and you with love and favor. God's grace and peace is over my life.*

By greeting them this way, Paul is reminding them about what God thinks about them and what he thinks about us too. God comes to us in peace and not in war. He comes to us with an attitude that says, *"I want you, I love you, I am at peace with you even though you struggle sometimes, I am more than enough for you. I understand your weaknesses, but I love you and I am here to help you become all I intend for you to be."* You see, this is the Father's posture towards us. It is a gracious posture. It is a posture that invites us to come closer and discover all that God has to offer through Jesus.

Next: **He reminds us about the hope we have in Jesus.** In verse 3-5 he says: **3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel 6 that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.**

He says their faith and love is springing from the hope that they have. Hope here is not wishful thinking. It's not daydreaming about something. It's not fantasy, it's not a fairy tale. Hope here is a substance. It is a reality you can bank on. **Here, hope is the person of Jesus himself.** To know Jesus and believe in what he has done for you, is to know that you are not hopeless in any given situation. That's the hope the good news of the gospel brings to us. And that is certainly what it brought for these believers.

Friends, this is the hope we too have in Jesus. When we know Jesus and stay with Jesus, he satisfies the deepest longing of our heart. He gives us hope beyond our circumstances. Because that hope is not dependent on external factors. It is not dependent on how you feel at a given moment. This hope in Christ gives you a reason to sing when you have no other reason to sing. It gives you a reason to hope when you are feeling hopeless. You have that hope in you as a follower of Jesus. It is a living hope that keeps you going. So meditate on it, reflect on it. Don't let any situation or circumstance take it away from you. Jesus is enough and the hope that he offers is enough to last for eternity.

Moving on. **Paul prays that we might know and follow God's will.** He said, *9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

One of the reasons we struggle in our faith and fall for all kinds of doctrines like these believers, is that we struggle to know God—who he is. We struggle to know how exactly we should follow him. How do we deal with questions we don't have answers for? How do we know that we are truly saved? how do we cope in times of suffering? how do we live out our faith in a hostile environment? How do we best worship God? etc. We look for answers anywhere we can find them.

However, Paul reminds us here that when we struggle this way, we can pray. We can ask God to fill us with the knowledge of his will. We can ask him for wisdom and understanding. We can ask him to flood us with the light of the truth about Jesus and what he has done for us. We can pray to have strength to endure in the midst of our adversity. Strength to keep forging ahead. Strength not to give in to the pressure of the world to conform to its ways. Strength to keep holding on to Jesus and what we know about him.

I want to encourage you to pray this prayer in Colossians over yourselves, your families and over your church community. It is a powerful prayer. It is a good prayer to pray to help strengthen your faith in Jesus especially in times when you are weak. It is a prayer that is grounded in the truth of what Jesus has done for us. So, pray it.

Moving on. **Paul reminds us to hold Jesus in high regard because he is everything we need.** In verse 15, he says: *15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church;*

*he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

In short, Paul is saying: when you have Jesus, you have it all. He is the full expression of our deepest hopes and dreams. In other words, if there is anything you need so bad in your life, it can be summed up in this person: **Jesus**. Seek Jesus and you will find everything you need in life. You will find meaning in life. You will find purpose in life. Seek Jesus, he is the source of all that you are hoping for.

You know it says at the beginning of verse 15 that Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. What that means is this: If you really want to know what God is like and who he is, don't do it just by reading the OT. (You will be confused). Don't do it just by hearing what other people have said about him or thought about him, don't even do it just based on your own perceptions and experience of him. Instead, if you really want to know what God is like, and particularly, what he thinks about you, look at Jesus and study him.

Study how he came to earth in a humble way, study how he was so much like us yet different in other ways. Study how he treated people like you and me with care and compassion and how he was always on the side of the poor and marginalized people of his day. Study how he brought hope to people like the woman caught in adultery, or the woman with five previous husbands, or Zacchaeus the tax collector. Study how he spoke truth with authority and rebuked the powers of his day who were using their authority to oppress people rather than bring hope to people.

Study how he laid down his life on the cross and said, *'Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.'* Study how he rose from the dead and gave power and authority to his friends who were so scared and terrified after he died. And then study how they changed the world and proclaimed the gospel and brought hope to many people. And then, reflect on how he is at work in your own life today. How he loves you, how he has forgiven you and how he is changing you from the inside out.

As you do this, you find out what God is really like and what he thinks about you. You will find out that Jesus truly satisfies. He is all you need. He is enough.

This is the truth Paul invited the Colossian church to be grounded in and this is the truth God is inviting us to be grounded in as well.

Finally, in verse 23. **He tells us to stand firm in Jesus**. He tells us not to be moved from the hope that we have in good news of Jesus. He encourages us to keep growing in his love. Keep being faithful and bearing fruits that show that you belong to him. Do not give in to distracting voices that are clamouring for your attention. Do not give in to any voice that take you away from Jesus.

In the story I told you about our house. You see, it's just a house. There are other houses that are equally good and may even have many other things our current house does not have. And it is okay to move from a house to another house that have more things than the one you currently own.

But when it comes to Jesus, there are no other options anywhere. All you need is in him. Jesus—is it. He is our hope. He is our light. **He is the one that holds all things together. He is the one who has**

**called us to himself.** Remove him from your life and everything falls apart. Put him at the center of your life and you'll see him restoring your life back again.

So as I close, friends, Jesus—is it. He is enough. He tells us who we are. He gives us hope beyond this life. We can pray and ask him to help us know him more. He is the one who holds us together. And he is more than enough.