

# **The Real Deal**

**Colossians 1:3-8**

3 We always thank God, the Father of our  
Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,  
4 since we heard of your faith in Christ  
Jesus and of the love that you have for all  
the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up  
for you in heaven.

Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

# **The real deal**

1. You saints are the real deal.
2. The message you heard is the real deal.
3. Your minister is the real deal.
4. Your God is the real deal.

# 1. You saints are the real deal.

4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

## Three marks of real spiritual life:

- a. your **faith** in Christ Jesus
- b. the **love** that you have for all the saints
- c. because of the **hope** laid up for you in heaven

# **“your faith in Christ Jesus”**

- Followers of non-Christian faiths don't count on the real Savior, don't know the real God, and don't have real life.
- Churchgoers who put faith in rituals, works, disciplines, or doctrinal systems, or look to spirit beings or experiences beyond Christ, don't have real life. Faith in duct tape.
- Trusting the Person of Jesus the Messiah (Christ) marks you as alive and “in Christ.”

# **“the love that you have for all the saints”**

- By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:35)
- Love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again (1 Peter 1:22-23)
- We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. (1 John 3:14)

# “because of the hope laid up for you in heaven”

- In this context, *hope* is not just a feeling in your heart but riches awaiting you in heaven.
- In my Father’s house are many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you.  
(John 14:2) He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven for you. (1 Peter 1:3-4)

# **“because of the hope laid up for you in heaven”**

- Heavenly riches motivate faith in Christ and love for the saints (Abraham, Moses, Jesus)
- Heavenly hope transforms your life on earth and rescues you from slavery to worldliness.
- A heart set on this life and on this world’s pleasures does not have real life.
- A heart set on your heavenly inheritance is a heart that is really alive in Christ.

# **What to value in a church**

- faith in Christ Jesus (not self-help)
- love for all the saints (not just activities)
- hope in heaven (not just your best life now)

# Signs that God chose you

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, 3 remembering before our God and Father your work of **faith** and labor of **love** and steadfastness of **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because **our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.** (1 Thess. 1:2-5)

# The real deal

1. You saints are the real deal. Three signs:
  - a. your **faith** in Christ Jesus
  - b. the **love** that you have for all the saints
  - c. because of the **hope** laid up for you in heaven
- 2. The message you heard is the real deal.**
3. Your minister is the real deal.
4. Your God is the real deal.

## **2. The message you heard is the real deal.**

Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth...

•**the word of the truth:** facts stated plainly, not just one among many religions, but the truth; not just an impression but the word

## **2. The message you heard is the real deal.**

- **the word of the truth:** facts stated plainly
- **the gospel:** good news, saving power

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16)

...the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Cor 4:4)

## **2. The message you heard is the real deal.**

- **the word of the truth:** facts stated plainly
  - **the gospel:** good news, power for salvation
  - **which has come to you:** word comes near
- “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:8-9)

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- **the word of the truth:** facts stated plainly
- **the gospel:** good news, power for salvation
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- **as indeed in the whole world:** universal,  
not just something that “works for me,” not  
just a local thing, not just a Jewish thing, not  
just white man’s religion

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does among you: the seed must be good**
- you heard it and understood: not just felt**
- the grace of God in truth: objective gift**

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### **3. Your minister is the real deal.**

7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

•**our beloved fellow servant:** on Paul's team

**A banyan tree may be huge and impressive.**



- **Nothing grows under a banyan tree.**
- **Some leaders create something huge and control it, but don't share leadership or produce other leaders.**





- Banana trees are smaller and less impressive than banyans.
- Banana trees produce fruit and reproduce other banana trees.
- Leaders are to produce fruit and reproduce other leaders.

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- **our beloved fellow servant:** on Paul's team
- **faithful minister of Christ:** His agenda

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- **our beloved fellow servant:** on Paul's team
- **faithful minister of Christ:** His agenda
- **on your behalf:** helping others, not himself
- **has made known to us your love in the Spirit:** eager to see good and and report it

### **3. Your minister is the real deal.**

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, **always struggling on your behalf in his prayers**, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has **worked hard for you** and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. (Col 4:12-13)

Epaphras, **my fellow prisoner** in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you (Philemon 1:23)

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## **4. Your God is the real deal.**

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...

a. Their faith, love, and hope are cause for thanks to God, for these all come from Him.

b. The message they heard and understood was news of “the grace of God in truth.”

c. Their founder Epaphras, as God’s “servant,” was directed by God, and as “a minister of Christ,” was energized by Jesus.

# **Real thanks for the real deal**

We thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying for you...

giving thanks to the Father (1:12) abounding in thanksgiving (2:7) And be thankful. (3:15) with thankfulness in your hearts to God (3:16) do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (3:17) Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. (4:2)