

COMMENDING VIRTUE (Col. 1:1-8)

Summary

SUMMARY

Introduction & Greeting

- I. The Definition of These Virtues
 - A. Faith: Faith is that which makes present to us Christ Himself, along with all the blessings and benefits He has purchased for us.
 - B. Hope: The hope of the Christian, of everlasting life, and sinless bliss in the presence of Christ and the Father, is an absolute certainty that has already been granted to us as heirs of the kingdom, “Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” (Gal. 4:7)
 - C. Love: To love is to delight in and desire what is lovable; supremely God, secondarily neighbor. The greatest example of this love is found in the incarnation of our Lord, who for us and for our salvation became us that we might be brought into His everlasting presence...
- II. The Ordering of These Virtues
 - A. In our text: Faith first, love second, hope third.
 - B. Reasons for the order: Faith comes first, not because it is the most important. Faith comes first, not because it merits the love and hope that come after. Faith comes first because it is the means by which we receive Christ — who is the fulness of love and the definition of our hope.
- III. The Source of These Virtues
 - A. The Ultimate source, God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Paul does three things that tip us off as to the ultimate source of faith, love, and hope: (1) he thanks the Father, (2) he declares the Son, and (3) he proclaims the Holy Spirit.
 - B. The Mediating source, Christ/the Gospel: It is the gospel that reveals God and His saving purpose to us. The “hope” that we have in Christ comes to us through the gospel. This hope is “of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.” (v. 5) Apart from the gospel, we could not know God savingly.
 - C. The Instrumental source, the Gospel minister: The minister of the gospel is the ordinary means of proclaiming the gospel to sinners. The Colossian church learned the “truth of the gospel” from Epaphras. We read in v. 7, “As you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf...” As Romans 10:14 says, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

Conclusion