

A sermon “Bearing Fruit & Growing”
From Colossians 1:1–14
Preached by Rev. Peter Blank
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Introduction

There’s a book out called *The World According to Elvis* (2003). It’s full of little-known facts about the King of Rock and Roll. It’s a book you may want to rush out to purchase for yourself. For example, did you know Elvis was disappointed when he got a guitar for his eleventh birthday? He really wanted a bike. I get it—sometimes the gift we get isn’t the one we expected, but it’s the one that shapes our life.

One thing in the book stuck with me: When Elvis died, he was reading a book titled *A Scientific Search for the Face of Jesus*. Now, that says something. At the end of all the lights and noise, he was looking for something deeper. Maybe, someone.

Aren’t we all? At some level, we’re all searching for the face of Jesus—for his presence, his truth, his comfort.

This morning, we turn to Paul’s letter to the Colossians. The Apostle Paul never met these believers, but he loved them. And he wanted them to know: they were already bearing fruit. They were already growing. Not because life was easy—but because Jesus was real and present in their midst.

And friends, in this moment—amid floodwaters and legislative battles, wars, amid personal grief and collective uncertainty—we need to hear that same word. You are not forgotten. The gospel is still bearing fruit. You are still growing.

I. Faith, Love, and Hope Are Growing Among You

“We always thank God... because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.” (vv. 3–5)

What a trio: faith, love, and hope. This is how Paul measures spiritual health. Not by how big the budget is or how many seats are full, but by how faith, love, and hope are showing up.

In recent days, we’ve seen flood images from Texas—homes under water, over 120 dead as of Saturday, 173 missing as of Saturday, families displaced, whole communities reeling from devastating floods. It’s heartbreaking.

But I also saw something else: people lining up with food and blankets, boats volunteers to search for the living and the dead. There are churches opening their doors, neighbors caring for neighbors. That’s love. That’s faith made visible. That’s hope refusing to sink.

And right here in our church, in our town, I see it too. Quiet acts of kindness. Shared prayers. Meals delivered. A steady commitment to one another, even when life is hard.

That's the fruit Paul is talking about. Faith that roots us. Love that binds us. Hope that pulls us forward.

II. The Gospel Bears Fruit Everywhere

"...just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world..." (v. 6)

The gospel isn't stagnant. It's not locked in the first century. It's still alive and moving. The good news of Jesus Christ is bearing fruit—not just in hearts, but in communities, in systems, in how we care for one another.

This past week, the so-called "Big Beautiful Bill" passed through Congress. Some hailed it as a bold step forward. It promises major investments in infrastructure, housing, climate resilience, and social support. But the truth is—like most legislation—it's a mixed bag.

There's beauty in the vision: a nation trying to care for its most vulnerable, to build wisely for the future, to strengthen the foundations. But many also worry: Will the money reach those who need it most? Will small towns like ours see any of the benefit? Will it do more than pad the already-powerful?

That's where we come in.

Because the gospel doesn't wait for perfect policy. It bears fruit wherever people live out the love of Christ. And sometimes that looks like holding our leaders accountable. Sometimes it means filling the gap where government falls short—feeding the hungry, housing the unhoused, walking with the weary.

You see, Paul wasn't writing to lawmakers or emperors. He was writing to a church—a gathering of ordinary people—saying, You are part of what God is doing in the world!

So whether the bill fulfills its promise or not, we keep sowing seeds of mercy, justice, and compassion. That's gospel fruit. That's the kingdom of God taking root in real life.

The war in Gaza rages on between Israel and Hamas. While I am fully aware of Israel being God's people, what Israel is doing is not behavior fitting a loving God. This is a land grab and an extinction attempt by Israel. Yes, this my opinion.

It's here that we come in. We can speak to the against the bombing of innocent people, firing into the lines of hungry food lines. These actions are not the actions of God's people. These values are not God's values to love and save.

The words from the movie, *Starman* (1984), an alien lands on Earth. He is asked, "What have you learned about human beings?" "I have learned," he answered, "that when things are at their worst, you are at your best!" I believe he is right!

III. A Prayer for Strength and Wisdom

“...that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will... being strengthened with all power... so that you may have great endurance and patience...” (vv. 9–11)

What a prayer. Paul’s not asking for life to be easy. He’s asking for endurance. For wisdom. For the strength to keep going.

Some of you know exactly why that matters. You’ve been carrying heavy burdens—family struggles, financial strain, health worries, or just sheer exhaustion.

But you’re still here. Still faithful. Still growing.

Paul’s prayer is for you: That you may be strengthened with all power according to God’s glorious might—not so you can win awards or impress your neighbors, but so you can endure with patience and keep walking with joy.

Conclusion

Friends, here’s the good news: You are already bearing fruit. Even if it’s slow. Even if it’s hidden. Even if it doesn’t feel like much.

You are growing. The roots are deeper than you think.

Yes, the world is heavy. There are floods and political divides and personal heartbreaks. But Jesus is still present. The Spirit is still moving. And the gospel is still bearing fruit—in Texas, in Congress, in your neighborhood, and in this church.

So keep planting seeds. Keep showing up in faith. Keep loving one another.

And trust that what God has begun in you, God will bring to completion.

Amen.