

Lightly Salted

The Seasoned Sweetness of Grace

January 11, 2026



Today we're talking about walking the talk of the sweet and salty glory of grace!

First question of the new year: **Would people buy Jesus, based on your free sample?**



Once upon a time, circa 62^{BC} in ancient Turkey, there was a thriving textile industry in a place called Colossae. And this little hillside city produced a world-renown fine-wool called **Colossinus**. And that shiny, purplish wool brought in a colossal amount of wealth and cultures and spiritual beliefs. It's people were called **Colossians**; and many became Christians. *But*, from the beginning they were bombarded with an onslaught of **self-centered philosophies** and **pseudo spiritual ideologies**, and **they quickly bought the notion of blending their faith with these high-sounding views**. And their faith, once rooted in Christ, was being shot down and diluted by the nonstop barrage of secular beliefs. *Like us. Today.* So, their teacher, a man named **Epaphras**, high-tailed it to Paul – who was under house arrest in Rome – to report Colossae's spiritual warfare, and to send back some much-needed reinforcement. Thus, Paul's letter to the embattled believers of Colossae, who were being blown away by every wind of doctrine.

Grace and peace to you from ... God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... [that you heard about in the Word of truth, the Gospel that ... is bearing fruit and growing ... since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. [And, of course] You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant – Colossians 1:2-7 NIV

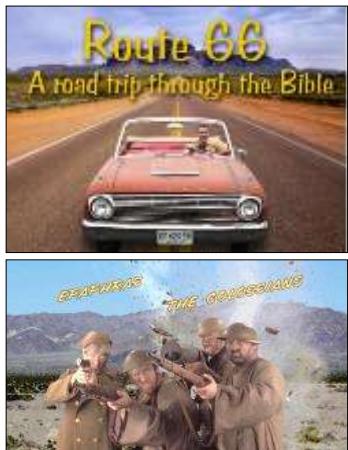
[You gotta] Let your roots grow down into [Christ] and draw up nourishment from Him, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. ... **[And]** Don't let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world – Colossians 2:7-8 NLT

Because, the only way to stand firm and stay true and not be taken captive by talk-show philosophies, pseudo spirituality, and secular self-helpers, is to know and embrace exactly what only God-the-Father has done, and what only Jesus-the-Son can do.

For [the Father] has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into [the light of] the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption [through His blood], [which grants us, by grace] the forgiveness of sins. – Colossians 1:13-14 NIV

And the thing is, **it's an all-or-nothing deal**. Not a lot of room for *blending*. So, **take it or leave it**. But, **don't try to mix and match it**. Because, **if Christ isn't everything, He's nothing**. Because the *Gospel* isn't a *supplement* or an *ingredient* to *improve your life*. It is your *life*. Or it *isn't*.

[Because] In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. – John 1:4 NIV



Colossians is one of my *all-time favorite Route 66 videos*. I decided to pick up *Epaphras* on his way to *Rome* for *reinforcements*. And we took the *warfare theme* to an *absurd level*, with authentic *WWI uniforms, weapons, and a field phone*. And we had a *heyday*.

Humorous side-note. Somebody in Shari's saw me carrying the *props* into the Ark and called the police. I was in my office when Buddy came in and said we were on lockdown, and the police had someone with a rifle trapped in the Ark! Oh the humility of having to approach the cops at the corner of the building, guns drawn. They yelled at me to go back inside – and I had to say, "I think I'm the one you're looking for." We all had a big laugh about it ... except we didn't.

Well, back in *Colossae*, they had another big problem: the strong believers! **The spiritual warriors had little time or tolerance for backsliders and non-believers** and any others they deemed as enemies of the truth – real or imagined. Like us. Today. And since the best defense is a good offense, Paul tackles their offensive lines head on, and reminds them that not only is it not **the loudest and proudest who win the fight for someone's soul, that's who loses it**. So:

Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and ... Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love ... Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts – Colossians 3:12-15 NIV

This is the *appealing apparel* we *begin to don* when the *light of Christ dawns on us*. *Imagine a soldier*, in the *trenches*, trying to *change* into a *clean new uniform* without removing their *muddy old outfit*. **They just try to force the new one over the old**. So, without knowing it, they're making the same mistake by not letting Jesus strip away their *unsuitables*.

But now you must *rid* yourselves of *all* such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language ... [And] Do not *lie* to each other, since *you have taken off* your *old self* with its *practices* and have put *on the new self, which is being renewed* [cuz it's a process] in *knowledge* [and *action*] in the *image* of its *Creator*. – Colossians 3:8-10 NIV

Next time you *misplace* your *grace*, and someone calls you out for not acting like a Christian, just say, "**It's a process!**" Then *imagine* that *soldier* in the *trenches*. I heard the worst, hard-hitting saying: **The worst you treat others is the most you love Jesus**. Ouch. "It's a process!"



When my son was small he was playing in the backyard with a stick. We took it away and warned him of the danger. A little later, he came in the house with a bleeding scrape on his neck. He'd found another stick. Went down the slide with it. The stick stuck and stopped, while he flew forward! Because of his lack of *trust in us* and/or *fear of us* he nearly impaled himself in the process of having fun.

Some believers only fear of God is that He wants 'em to give up all the fun stuff – when in reality, **He just wants to keep us from impaling ourselves**.

True faith isn't a series of **giving-ups**, it's a sequence of **growing-ups**. Maturing. Conquering. Taking ground by trusting in trusting the Lord. And the *more* we become like Jesus, the *more* we become *less interested* in playing with things that can *only* end in pain for ourselves and others.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so *walk in Him, rooted* [grounded] and *built up* [growing] in Him and *established* in the *faith* ... *abounding* in it with *thanksgiving*. [But] Beware lest anyone *cheat* you through *philosophy* and *empty deceit* ... according to the *basic principles of the world*, and *not* according to *Christ*. – Colossians 2:6-8 NKJ

And this *grounding* and *abounding* and *growing* comes *only* from *knowing* and *trusting* and *practicing* His *Word* on the people around you. So:



Let the Word of Christ *dwell* in you *richly* in all *wisdom* ... singing with *grace* in your *hearts* to the Lord. And whatever you *do* in *word* or *deed*, do *all* in the *name* of the Lord Jesus – Colossians 3:16-17 NKJ



Cuz, **He's the Vine and we're the sticks**. So, we gotta be *grounded* and *growing* in *Christ* to *learn* to *stop jabbing* people for *Jesus*. **Accept it, embrace it, and live it ... or don't**. Just don't *deceive* yourself into *thinking* you can be a *mix-and-match* believer. Either *extreme* is *better* in the *long run* than *buying* the *lie* that you can *blend it* or *blend in* with the *world*. But there *is* a *blend* that we're *called* to *mix well* when it comes to *engaging outsiders*. So:



Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; **[How?]** make the most of every opportunity. **[How?]** Let your conversation be always *full of grace*, **[and]** *seasoned with salt*, so that you may know *how* to answer everyone. – Colossians 4:5-6 NIV

So, is your speech full of grace? “Usually ... except when I’m *upset* or *angry*. Then it’s *full assault!*” But *that’s* the *only time* it can *actually* be *grace*. Because, **grace is only grace when you don't want to give it**. And, *that* requires a *selfless compassion*. And *that* requires the *supremacy* of Christ’s *authority* *firmly rooted* and *ruling* from *deep within*. **Sweetness doesn't negate the salt, it just takes the edge off**. So the question isn’t just, “Is what I’m about to say *true*?” but also, “Is this the right amount for this person at this moment?” **The message doesn't change, just the measure in the moment**.

And salt is famously famous for five things: 1) **Making things tastier**. And 2) **Makes folks thirstier**. If the world was a bar, we’d be the free nuts! And 3) **Melting the frozen**. And 4) **Preserving things**. And 5) **Raising blood pressure**. And so, in order to embody those first four, and avoid the fifth, we just need to keep in mind that 1) **A little salt goes a long way**, and 2) **A little of you does too**. Faith can’t be forced. But that doesn’t seem to stop us from trying! But, **we're supposed to be set out for people to sample** as they consider the options for quenching their deepest, darkest needs down here. So, as a *believer*, **are you a sweet and salty sample?** Cuz who doesn’t love *salted caramels*, or *kettle corn*, or *trail mix*, or *chocolate potato chips*, or *honey-roasted nuts*?! Well, likewise:

You are the salt of the earth. – Matthew 5:13 NIV

[And] **Pleasant words are ... sweetness to the soul** – Proverbs 16:24 NKJ

[So] Come and let us walk in the light of the Lord. – Isaiah 2:5 NKJ

And this means war! Spiritual war, with ourselves.

Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. – Romans 13:12 NKJ

The full armor of ... truth ... righteousness ... peace ... faith ... salvation and ... [above all] the Word of God. – Ephesians 6:13-17 NIV

[And] Put to death ... sexual immorality, impurity, [lust], evil desire, and [greed] ... [while keeping in mind that] In these you too once [blindly] walked – Colossians 3:5-7 ESV

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. [So] Walk as children of light – Ephesians 5:8 NKJ

[Which means to] Walk in the light as He is in the light – 1 John 1:7 NKJ

[Which means to] Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ... with grace in your hearts – Colossians 3:16 NKJ



[So you can] Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside – Colossians 4:5 NKJ

[Which means to] Let your speech always be with grace, [kindness and love and listening; and then] seasoned with [a touch of] salt, that you may know [not necessarily what but] how you ought to answer each one. – Colossians 4:6 NKJ

Because the salt of truth is universal, but the grace of respect is individual.

[So] Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit ... according to His glorious might ... of the saints in Light. – Colossians 1:10-12 NAS

[And] Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another. – Mark 9:50 NKJ

For the ear tests words as the tongue tastes food. – Job 34:3 NIV

[So let those who sample you] Taste and see that the Lord is good – Psalm 34:8 NIV

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander ... [and] grow up into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. – 1 Peter 2:1-3 ESV

For the Lord will be your everlasting light – Isaiah 60:20 NKJ

We'll each have our own unique blend – like Chex Mix or caramel corn. But our basic appeal will basically depend on our **command of His Word** and **control of our tongue**. Cuz I can guarantee that everyone you know has a sweet tooth for grace and a serious craving for a touch of salt. And Paul closes his letter to the Colossians, saying:

Epaphras, a servant of Jesus Christ ... always prays for you that you will grow to be spiritually mature and have everything God wants for you. – Colossians 4:12 NCV

And I do too, for you. Cuz it's a process!