

Colossians 2:1-7
Love of the Church – Part 2

1

Introduction

Just as loving parents have goals for their children, so Paul had goals for the church. He lists five of them for which he had struggled.

He desired the Colossians to be strong in heart, united in love, settled in understanding, walking in Christ, and overflowing with gratitude.

2

Colossians 2:1-7

For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. ⁵ For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good* order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. ⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

3

Paul's Motivation

Colossians 2:1

For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh

What motivated Paul was not just a sense of duty, but a deep love for other believers. He wanted God's best for them and he agonized when he heard that others were teaching a false gospel. Like a protective parent he warns the church lest they be deceived.

We also need to be motivated by a strong love for one another. It is easy to fall into the trap of just going through the motions. If we truly love, we will desire God best for others.

4

Strong in Heart

Colossians 2:2a

that their hearts may be encouraged

Paul's love wanted other believers to be strengthened in their inner person. The Greek term "**encouraged**" means "**to call alongside.**" The root word is often translated "helper" and is used to refer to the Holy Spirit. Paul wanted his readers to know truth and that would rely on the Holy Spirit.

5

United in Love

Colossians 2:2b

being knit together in love

Fervent love is the necessary balance to a strong mind. Christianity is not mindless enthusiasm, but neither is it lifeless intellectual orthodoxy.

The Greek term translated "**knit together**" means to unite or bring together. This ties back to the "**heart being encouraged or strengthened**" by defining that heart as **one filled with love**. Believers share a common life with love as its basis. All believers possess the same eternal life, all come to Christ in the same way, and all were placed into the Body of Christ by the same Spirit. The church's unity is not organizational, but organic. Believers are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28; cf. Rom. 10:12).

6

United in Love

Colossians 2:2b

being knit together in love

The key to unity is found in Ephesians 4:3: “**Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**” Preserving the unity the

Spirit has created is accomplished by being **peacemakers**.

Peacemakers love each other. Such love is evident when believers “put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do**” (Col. 3:12–13). That kind of humble, practical love “is the perfect bond of unity” (Col. 3:14). Love is always linked with humility, because only humble people can love.

7

United in Love

Colossians 2:2b

being knit together in love

John also saw **Christ’s offering** of Himself as the supreme example of love: “**By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren**” (1 John 3:16). But since most Christians will not have the opportunity to die for others, John gives a more practical test of love: “Whoever has the world’s goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth” (1 John 3:17–18).

Loving someone is not defined by having warm feelings toward them, but by meeting their needs. Love is first action, then the emotions follow. So the strengthened heart is a heart that has learned to love.

8

Settled in Understanding

Colossians 2:2c

and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,

Paul desires that the Colossians also experience all the **riches** that comes from **full assurance**. Without that assurance, believers cannot enjoy all the blessings that are theirs in Christ. For example, no one can look forward with hope to the blessings of heaven who doubts whether he is going there.

Understanding refers to applying biblical principles to everyday life. It is the exclusive property of Christians because “a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:14).

9

Settled in Understanding

Colossians 2:2c

and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,

When the believer experiences spiritual truth by living it, it becomes truly understood and leads to assurance of his or her salvation. The New Testament, then, concludes that knowing the truth and acting on it leads to **full assurance of understanding**. People often express doubts about their salvation. Their primary problem is not a lack of knowledge, but a failure to apply the truths they know. Truth that finds solid footing in a strong heart and works itself out in love of fellow believers results in deep conviction. That is the basis for assurance.

10

Settled in Understanding

Colossians 2:2c-3

and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

In light of the heresy plaguing them, Paul stresses the need for the Colossians' understanding to include **a true knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.** At the heart of this understanding, they need to have **a settled conviction about Christ's deity and sufficiency.** In **Christ Himself** the hidden God was manifested to mankind. No person can be a Christian without the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the incarnate God. Yet so many Christians who affirm the deity of Christ live as if He were not the One in whom all spiritual sufficiency resides.

11

Settled in Understanding

Colossians 2:3

in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Jesus is the One in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He alone is sufficient. When Paul uses the term "hidden" he is poking at the heretics. It is the term they used for the "hidden knowledge" that they claimed that they had exclusive access to. **Paul is saying that there is no hidden spiritual knowledge necessary to salvation and sanctification outside of Christ.** That wisdom and knowledge is given to all who come to Christ in saving faith. Because Christ is sufficient, there is no need for the writings of any cult, philosophy, or psychology to supplement the Bible. He is the source of all true spiritual knowledge. That knowledge is also crucial to assurance because doubts about Christ's sufficiency bring doubts about His ability to do what He promised.

12

Settled in Understanding

Colossians 2:4

Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

Paul expresses the reason for his concern about knowing Christ when he says, “**Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.**” The basic attack of all false systems throughout history has been to deny either Christ’s deity, His sufficiency to save and sanctify, or both. Any group or person doing so is guilty of teaching “doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1), As preachers of another gospel, they are accursed (Gal. 1:8). Believers need to have a settled conviction about Christ’s deity and sufficiency to be able to withstand the onslaughts of such false teaching.

13

Settled in Understanding

Colossians 2:5

For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good order* and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

Having warned the Colossians to continue to stand firm, Paul rejoices that they are doing so. Although absent in the flesh due to his imprisonment, Paul was present with them in spirit. Their **good order** and the **steadfastness** of their **faith in Christ** caused him to rejoice. Good order and steadfastness are both military terms, perhaps suggested by Paul’s close contact with Roman soldiers during his imprisonment. Good order refers to a line of soldiers drawn up for battle, whereas steadfastness refers to the solidity of a formation of soldiers. Taken together, they express Paul’s joy that individually and collectively the Colossians were standing firm against the attacks of false teaching. His goal for them is that they remain settled in their present true understanding, and not yield to doubt from those attacks.

14

So What ...

Lets put into practice the things that we learned.

- Pay attention to the things you think about. Do they honor God?
- Pay attention to your actions and attitudes. They come out of your heart!
- Pay attention to the things that are going on around you. You are the hands, feet, and voice of Christ.
- Pay attention to your brothers and sisters in Christ who are tired, discouraged, and hurting. How can you show Christ's love to them?
- Pay attention to the foundations of your thinking. Jesus is the key to all things. He alone is sufficient for all that you are seeking. He is God in human flesh and He paid the price for our salvation. There is nothing left to add but to accept His gift of forgiveness.