

Colossians 2:1-7
Love of the Church – Part 3

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

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).

7

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.

8

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.

9

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.

10

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 or 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.

11

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.

12

Walking in Christ

Colossians 2:6-7a

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.

Therefore, builds on the exhortations Paul has said in verses 2–5. The Colossians have received Christ Jesus the Lord, they have settled convictions about His deity and sufficiency, and are standing firm against the attacks of false teachers, so they must continue to **walk in Him**. The familiar term **walk** refers to daily conduct. In this context it means primarily to continue believing the truth about Christ, not allowing their Christology to waver.

In broader terms, however, walking in Christ means living in union with Him. It means to maintain a lifestyle patterned after His. “The one who says he abides in Him,” the apostle John writes, “ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked” (1 John 2:6). When faced with the dilemmas that confront Christians in their daily lives, the guideline should be, “What would Jesus do in this situation?”

13

Walking in Christ

Colossians 2:6-7a

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.

Like a tree with deep roots in rich soil, believers have been **firmly rooted** in Christ. That eternal planting took place at salvation. Christ then became the source of our spiritual nourishment, growth, and fruit. As we walk in Christ, we are **now being built up in Him**. That means we are to be more and more like Jesus Christ. “**Being built up**” indicates a continuous action.

Being firmly rooted in Christ and growing in Him results in believers being **established** in their **faith**. The tense of the word “**established**” indicates that **it is God who will establish believers**. Having such a firm foundation for faith based on walking in Christ is imperative for a healthy Christian life (cf. Rom. 16:25; 2 Thess. 2:16–17; 1 Pet. 5:10; Jude 24).

14

Abounding in Thanksgiving

Colossians 2:7b

Abounding in it with thanksgiving.

“Abounding” carries the idea of continually overflowing. Believers who are firmly rooted in Christ, being built up in Him, and established in their faith, will overflow with gratitude to God. “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15). A grateful heart for all God has given us in Christ will further strengthen our grip on the truth.

15

So What ...

Praise completes the circle in which the blessings that flow to us from God return to Him in the form of our praise and adoration.

- By taking in the truth of the Word, you get a strong mind.
- By living out those truths, you receive full assurance that Christ is who He claimed to be.
- Assured of truth, you can appropriate the riches in Christ so you will walk in Him.
 - As you walk in Christ, you will grow in Him and become established in your faith.
 - As a result, you will give praise to God.

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