

Colossians 2:1-5
9/20/20

Open your Bibles, please to Colossians chapter 1. I will read from verse 24 through chapter 2:5

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, ²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

2 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. ⁵ For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. ¹

I read back in to chapter 1 because it is really hard to just pick up section of Scripture in this book and not see it as a whole.... As we move into chapter 2, we are carrying everything that has been taught in chapter 1 with us.....

I did not go back this far, I did not read the whole chapter.....but in chapter 1 verse 4, Paul had heard of their faith in Christ Jesus.... In verse 6 – 7 He was aware that they had heard, understood, and learned about the good news of Christ from Epaphras.... And as they believed the good news, they were aware that according to 12-14 the Father qualified them for an inheritance..... He delivered them from their sin, and he transferred them into the Kingdom of Christ.... **He redeemed them and forgave them**

And, to be sure they understood Christ and his role in salvation, he went on to explain to them the wonder of the Lord Jesus beginning in verse 15..... He is God, the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything in heaven and on earth.....and he reconciled man to God through suffering and dying on a Roman cross..... and, in verse 21 and following, we see that those who have trusted Christ are no longer hostile to God.... they have now been presented before God and they stand before him holy and blameless because the righteousness of Christ has been given to them....

And, then we saw last week that Paul was given a stewardship to make the Word of God fully known.... And he made the word of God fully known by revealing the hidden mystery that the gospel would now be preached to the Gentiles.... and by proclaiming Christ, and by warning and teaching all believers in order to present all believers mature in Christ...

1 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 1:24–2:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

And verse 29 states that he toiled or worked hard and struggled or agonized over this calling... this stewardship... to present every man mature in Christ would take all of his energy, as he taps into or trusts in, or abides in all the grace that God provides for him to fulfill his calling....

And, as we move in to chapter 2, the thought line continues..... just because there is a chapter break does not mean there is a new thought.....the mystery that is mentioned in chapter 1 is stated again in chapter 2 verse 2, “the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ.”

The struggle Paul talks about at the end of chapter 1 continues into chapter 2..... verse 1 states that he “wants them to know how great a struggle he has for them and those in Laodicea and for all who have not seen his face.”

The struggle, the toil, the labor centers on one idea..... that Paul deeply desires that everyone in his care grows in Christ... matures in Christ.... Is perfected in Christ....and that will only happen as the Word of God is made fully known to those in his care.....

Now his mention of those in Laodicea is interesting..... Laodicea is about 10 miles from Colossae and if you turn over to chapter 4 verse 16, notice that Paul wrote a letter to the church in Laodicea along with this one to the Colossians.

“And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ²”

There was a letter to the Colossians and one to the Laodiceans and they were both to be read in both locations.....Most scholars believe that the letter to the Laodiceans was a lost letter.....it is one we do not have..... In any event, these churches were not far from one another, and it just shows Paul’s compassion for all those who are believers in Christ..... He was struggling night and day to bring these men and women in Colossae, in Laodicea, and those who have not seen him face to face to full maturity.....

Now, let me show you first....**why** he struggled so much to help them in their maturity before I show you **how** he helps them.....Verse 4 gives the why of his struggle or the reason why he agonizes over them.... Verse 4 states...

“I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. ³”

Everything Paul has said up to this point is designed for the believers in Colossae to not have their faith shaken....to help them stay rooted and grounded in Christ and His Word....everything Paul has said so far is so these believers would not be deluded with Plausible arguments.....

2 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 4:16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

3 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 2:4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Now, I have mentioned this off and on over the past several weeks..... In this church there was a blending of thoughts and ideas from all manner of outside sources..... there was Greek philosophy, Jewish traditions, asceticism, and angel worship that has begun to influence the believers here.....

notice verse 8

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.⁴”

And, then verse 16

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.”

And verse 18,

“Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,⁵”

The church, as I have said before, is fairly young..... and this group of impressionable believers were being influenced by ideas, philosophies, and religious views that communicated that you need more than Christ.....you need to follow some rules..... you need to avoid certain holidays..... you need to not eat certain things.....you should worship angels.....they are teaching that there is more to the Christian life than just following a man who died on a bloody cross.....

they certainly believed in Jesus, but they were beginning to accept things as true that were not biblical.....that would take them away from Christ....

and, this is why Paul has been so Christ centered in everything he has said so far..... Paul has been saying over and over and over..... NO, NO, NO..... Christ is not only sufficient for salvation, he is all we need for our sanctification.....He authored our faith, He will perfect our faith.....he is the creator and sustainer of all..... and he is sufficient in all things.....

He is telling these Colossian believers that all they need for wisdom, knowledge, and understanding is Christ..... you will never find it outside of Christ.....and those things you are being influenced by rules telling you what to eat or drink.... How you keep or not keep certain holidays... those of you who are being influenced by the philosophies that permeate the culture or by thinking that these ideas are going to help you spiritually..... all of these are going to take you away from Christ.....

this is why Paul toils..... the spiritual lives of these young believers is at stake.....

4 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 2:8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

5 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Col 2:18). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

and what he is toiling over.....what he is struggling over in verse 4 is so these men and women will not be deluded by anyone who comes to them with what he calls plausible arguments.....The word delude means to cleverly deceive or even to cheat.....the term "plausible argument" means "well constructed convincing speech.... it is oration at it's height."

Other translations say, "fine sounding argument or persuasive words..." When you put these together, I think you can define this as deceptive speech that is constructed in a way that sounds very persuasive and convincing but it is not true.

Paul is saying,

"I am struggling and toiling and laboring to make the word of God fully known to you so that you will not be deceived, or convinced or persuaded by the thoughts and ideas of the culture in regards to your maturing in Christ."

Let me say it again.

"I am struggling and toiling and laboring to make the word of God fully known to you so that you will not be deceived, or convinced or persuaded by the thoughts and ideas of the culture in regards to your maturing in Christ."

When I say culture there is a broad application.... I mean religious culture.... Many times false plausible arguments come with an out of context Bible verses attached to them.... Or secular culture.... Psychology, Philosophy, sociology.... There are many things in these areas that confuse Christians....., political culture..... many Christians put all their hope in their candidate or their party...., economic culture..... some think that having money means God is blessing you and not having money is God not blessing you..... others think that having nice things means you are greedy and materialistic...

and, these aren't the only things that influence our thinking....and not every idea in these spheres is wrong.....but we will see in a moment that everything needs to be filtered through the lens of Christ and His Word...

Paul is talking about any thing that takes us away from the main and plain things in Scripture that either draw us away from or minimize Christ....

Young believers are the most vulnerable to these things..... I remember when I first became a Christian, I was in high school working at Shakey's Pizza Parlor..... and was having a conversation with a co-worker about Christ or spiritual things and she told me 2 things that rocked my new faith in Christ....and she had Scripture to support it....

One, eating pork is sin..... and two, having a Christmas tree is sin....(I don't know where her beliefs came from) I'd been a Christian less than a year.....and she argued her point well..... I did not understand how the Old Testament fit in light of the new.... And seeing that a pig had a split hoof and

did not chew the chud.... And you were commanded not to eat it..... I was deluded by her plausible argument....

Until I realized that pepperoni came from a pig..... So I started eating pork again...

With the Christmas tree, she told me to go home and read Jeremiah 10....go ahead and turn there.... I will read from verse 2

“Thus says the Lord:

Learn not the way of the nations,
nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens

because the nations are dismayed at them,

³ for the customs of the peoples are vanity.

A tree from the forest is cut down

and worked with an axe by the hands of a craftsman.

⁴ They decorate it with silver and gold;

they fasten it with hammer and nails

so that it cannot move. ⁶”

What do you think? Sounds like a Christmas tree to me....it is a custom of the people to cut one down, put one up, decorate it with ornaments, even fasten it with a hammer and a nail.....

And if you have a Christmas tree, you are taking away from the Christ of Christmas....., you are more like the material culture around us than being committed to Christ, and instead of spending the money on an idol that will take you time to decorate, money to decorate..... why don't you give your tree money to the church, give it to the poor..... But, to have a tree in your house, to bring an idol in your house..... you are just like the culture...

Plausible argument..... are you convinced? Are you deluded? Are you confused? Are you more spiritual with a tree or without a tree?

Jeremiah is talking to Israelites nearly 2000 years before a Christmas Tree became a festive part of the Christmas season..... I suppose if you pray to your tree, if you offer sacrifices to your tree, if you trust in your tree, if you think a tree is what will bless and keep you this Christmas..... maybe you should not have one....

6 [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Je 10:2–4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

But if you have one, and you decorate it to the glory of God, and you are mindful that Christ is the light of the world and every light flickers throughout the Christmas season, even in the homes of those who do not know Christ..... every light points to Jesus as the light of the world..... praise the Lord, cut down a big tree and decorate it with gusto! don't be deluded by plausible arguments.....

So, Paul is struggling and toiling and laboring for these men and women in Colossae to mature in Christ and to not be deluded confused, or convinced by arguments that sound really good on the surface, but are not biblical, are not true to God's word..... and they will actually take you away from the Lord Jesus.....I may refer to this Christmas tree illustration to make a point later, but let me assure you that ours will be up this year!

now, as we go back to verses 2 and 3, I want you to notice that for them to stay on course or not to be deluded by these plausible arguments, they simply need two things..... **One they need to be unified..... and two, they need more of Christ....I make no apologies for how simplistic that sounds.....**

The first point, unity, comes from the phrase in verse 2, "that their hearts may be encouraged being knit together in love." And, the 2nd point, they need more of Christ comes from the phrase, reaching, "all the riches of full assurance, understanding, and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ....."

Notice, first, the unity that Paul desires.....He begins by stating that he is toiling in order for their hearts to be encouraged, which really has the idea of braced, established, made firm, consoled, and comforted....

And, why would they need to be encourage? Because these false ideas have infiltrated their ranks..... and there are some in the church who are beginning to follow them..... and there are some who are confused.....because their friends are being drawn away by the convincing arguments of others..... and it is hard to refute them because they sound so right.....and they are smart, and they are intimidating, and they can make you feel really dumb when you try to stand for the truth.....

Some people are being made to feel guilty because they decided to put up their Christmas tree, and others are feeling self righteous because they didn't.....

Paul is agonizing over them, he wants to instruct them, warn them teach them... he is praying for them.... He wants their hearts to be encouraged, consoled, comforted.....as they struggle with these false ideas.....

Paul uses the word heart when he is speaking about the very core of an individual..... it is translated not as your heart muscle, rather, it is the seat of your mind, emotions and will.....When Jesus spoke about the heart, he was always referencing who the person really was.... So, when you love the Lord with all your heart, he is meaning everything about who you are....

And Paul's desire is that the very core of those who are in Christ would be encouraged or firmly established or comforted.....as they are knit together in love.... It is the being knit together in love, it is the unity among the believers that will be the greatest encouragement to them.....as they stand against these false philosophies and ideas.....

Isn't "being knit together" a fantastic metaphor for unity in the body of Christ.... Paul uses the same word in verse 19 to describe how the body is knit together through it's joints and ligaments.....

The joints and ligaments in our body are connected to one another in an incredible way..... Especially our knees and shoulders..... ligaments are bands of elastic tissue around your joints that connect bone to bone to give your joints support....

When you think of being knitted together.....picture all of us being individual balls of yarn..... Or picture God as the master knitter, knitting all of us together.....so he is weaving us into a tapestry.....Paul deepest desire is that we would be intertwined or interconnected with one another, in love.....

This phrase, "speaks of intimate relationships and a unity which binds together those who walk in the truth (2:19; Eph. 4:14)." This knitting together in love is first and foremost a love for God that translates into a love for one another.....

this means we cannot miss the corporate aspect of Paul's desire..... we are such an individualistic culture..... and it certainly influences our thinking in the church.....we have the idea that my growth and maturity in Christ is personal....so I don't really need my brothers and sisters in Christ.... I just need me and my Bible.... Or me and Jesus....

That is just not true..... you are part of a body.... You are part of a family.... You are ball of yarn that has been knitted into an afgahn with the believers of Grace fellowship.....You are connected to and with your brothers and sisters in Christ...you need them and they need you.....

Paul is showing that we have a tremendous need for one another in order for us to not get sucked in to believing convincing arguments that aren't true..... .the way for us to battle false teaching is to be united in love against it..... Which would first mean we are patient and kind with one another..... and not arrogant, not demand our own way, but defer to one another with hearts of compassion.....

Sometimes that would require that we speak to one another in love when someone says something that is clearly wrong.... I certainly would have needed someone to straighten me out in regards to the pork and the Christmas tree.... The most loving thing we can do is help one another remain faithful...

God's Word never indicates that our growth is personal.... It always shows our need for each other and our need for unity.....In Ephesians we are told to have unity in the Spirit and unity of faith..... in first Peter, we are to have unity of mind....

And, let me just state the obvious.....we as a church are struggling right now with unity.... It is not just Grace Fellowship..... every church in the country is struggling with unity....

My concern is not every church, it is our church.

We are divided in our views of Covid, our views of whether the news is true or false, our views of politics, divided in our views of governors orders and the constitution... divided in our views on the last days, and our views of masks.... Which has created a division in our church.....

And, please forgive me for stating the obvious..... but most of us only converse or talk with those who are in our camp.....and we don't cross over to the other camp very often.....

I don't want to over apply the book of Colossians because they did not have these issues separating them in the first century..... but, I don't want to under apply it because they did not have our issues, but they had their issues dividing the body....and the answer is the same in the first century as it is in the 21st century

and my desire as a pastor my struggle is for your hearts, our hearts to be knit together in love....

and for that to take place, as we continue with Paul's thought process in the text..... for that to take place, we need a greater knowledge, and a greater understanding of Christ..... according to verse 2 to "reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁷

And, this is my 2nd point.....the phrase "full assurance" means absolutely sure.....complete certainty....." and our complete certainty must be in our full understanding and full knowledge of God's Mystery the Lord Jesus Christ...

Paul points to both the riches of fully understanding and knowing God's mystery, which is Christ..... and also that there are treasures hidden in Christ.... do you see that in verse 3? "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Paul's desire for them, then is two fold..... first that they would fully understand and have a full knowledge of the riches that they have in God's mystery, which is Christ.....and subsequently, they would continue to seek Christ after they received his riches because in Him are hidden more riches..... In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.....

wisdom is how we act or behave..... knowledge is what we know

this is really fascinating..... that when you become a Christian, you have all of Christ..... and, yet, when you become a Christian, you can discover more and more and more of Christ.....As he conforms you, molds you in how to behave with wisdom, and gain more knowledge of who He is...

⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2001). (Col 2:2–3). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

so that you will never fully mine the depths of who He is and what He has done..... and how could you? he is the infinite God..... so you are never done learning about him, never done marveling over him, never done being humbled by who He is and what he has done.....never done learning and experiencing all the treasures that are bound up in Him....

In explaining what is taking place here, one commentator writes, "*But not only are these treasures in Christ, but they are contained in a hidden way. Therefore they do not lie on the surface, but must be sought for earnestly, as men seek for hidden treasure. They are not matters of external observances, such as the false teachers enjoined, but to be apprehended by deep and serious meditation.*"⁸

these truths are apprehended by deep and serious meditation.... We have so many distractions in our lives, we really do not do this anymore..... some of us, when we have a spare moment, we look at our phones for news, for messages, to stalk someone on facebook..... but filling our minds with Christ and thinking on Him throughout the day is almost non – existent.....BUT WE MUST! WE MUST CONTINUE TO SEEK HIM AS HIDDEN TREASURE

If you recall, last week we looked at this mystery because it is first mentioned in chapter 1 verse 26 and 27....and what we noticed was that the mystery Paul was revealing was that the Gentiles were now fellow heirs of all the riches in Christ.....

and, what are those riches? I don't mind going over them again.....Paul has been explaining them throughout chapter 1.... we have already seen from verse 12 on that he qualified the unqualified, he delivered those who were in bondage to sin, he transferred the undeserving into his kingdom, he forgives, he reconciles, he redeems..... He is human, He is divine, He is creator, sustainer, and the mediator between God and man..... He lived a perfect life and died a sacrificial death to purchase our redemption so that we can be holy, blameless, and righteous before God.....by making peace through the blood of His cross.....

Beloved, these are true riches..... riches that will not rust or wear out..... riches that are eternal..... The riches of Christ are the eternal riches that we have stored up for us in glory.....

but one thing I failed to point out last week is the 2nd part of this mystery..... that shows that we do not have to wait until heaven to experience these riches..... it is at the end of verse 27 of chapter 1, and in chapter 2 verse 2..... "the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Listen, one of the other parts of the mystery that was hidden in the past, but now has been revealed is that Christ is in us and we are in Him..... when the Spirit of God came upon the believers at Pentecost, and remained on the believers at Pentecost..... this was the fulfillment of the promises made throughout the Old Testament..... the promises were there, and were hidden.....and finally revealed after Christ died and rose again.....

it was a promise that God would place His Spirit in man, upon man, within man..... Ezekiel 36 states,

⁸ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Col 2:2). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.⁹

This is what Paul meant by part of the mystery was that Christ was now in you, the hope of glory.....the Holy Spirit that now dwells in believers is a down payment for the future riches and future hope we have in Christ.....and it is in Him that All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.....

this is such a slap in the face of the false teachers..... if in Christ and Christ alone are hidden ALL..... ALL..... ALL. the treasures of wisdom and knowledge then there is nothing left, nothing left for any one else..... so there is no wisdom apart from Christ.....

so all of their philosophies, their traditions, their worship of angels, their asceticism, their restrictions on food and outward ceremonies are useless and powerless.....

Christ is all powerful, all glorious, eternal, sustainer, pure, perfect, all knowing, all seeing, and all wise..... so what is left? Paul is telling these Colossians that seeking wisdom and knowledge outside of Christ is a step down not a step up.....there is no wisdom and there is no knowledge apart from Christ.....

Paul's desire for them is something the false teachers could never offer.....false teachers as II Timothy 3:7 points out are always learning, yet never able to come to the truth.....

we, however, have a full assurance of understanding..... and we can spend a lifetime seeking the treasures that are hidden in Christ. It brings us back to Paul making the Word of God fully known.... So we learn more of Christ through preaching, through teaching, studying, meditating on it, praying over it and sharing it with others....

He is in us..... we are in Him.....We have been blessed by his finished work now..... and we are waiting, in hope, for the full riches of his glory when we see Him face to face

So, you should mine the hidden treasures of his wisdom and knowledge..... it takes time, effort, thought, meditation, and work..... If you have ever read stories about professional treasure hunters who look for the treasures of sunken ships around the world..... they dedicate their entire life to find a treasure that is not eternal.....they are obsessed with it..... they give their lives to it.....

And, since Christ is in you and you are in him.... And he is in me... and I am in him..... and we are seeking his eternal riches and treasuresthis should knit us together.... This should bind us together.... This should keep us from hanging on to the things that are dividing us right now....

⁹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2001). (Eze 36:25–27). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

This should move you out of your camp, to minister, talk to, pray for, have a conversation with someone from the other camp.....Since Christ is in you and you are in Him....and the believers around you are in Christ, and we are all knit together.....this unity that we have is eternal..... and is far more significant than your political view..... or what your view of Covid.....

As you mine the depths of the riches and treasures of Christ, may that consume you, may that be what drives you, what influences everything about you....

Reminds me of the chorus, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus"

Which is almost a paraphrase of Col 3.....

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.¹⁰

this is Paul's conclusion as he compares the wisdom and knowledge of Christ to everything else in the world..... seek Him, set your mind on him.... don't get caught up in the mind set of the world

Then, notice his conclusion in verse 5

"For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. ¹¹"

Paul has a real knack for teaching and instructing, then giving out what he expects when he sees the people he is writing to.....

When you leave the house and leave your teen agers at home, and you say, "I am going to be absent or away for a while, but I am already rejoicing in how clean the house will be when I get home...." Paul is giving an expectation in light of what he just taught...

the good order is a military term that is used to describe an array of soldiers..... and the firmness of faith describes something that is solid.....

His expectation is that they will pay attention or fall in line with His instruction.....and instead of a division, instead of being led astray by plausible arguments, he is expecting them to remain faithful

10 [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Col 3:1–4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

11 *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2001). (Col 2:5). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

which means they are knit together in love.... They are rooted and grounded in Christ.... Though there are all manner of thoughts and ideas in the culture swirling around them.....their faith is firm in Christ....

May it be true of us....nothing separates from the love of Christ.... May nothing separate us from the love one another in and through Christ....

This will be one of the 10000 reasons we praise him.....