

Col 2:1-10

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, 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.

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Paul gives us a glimpse into who he is. We know from other letters he was an apostle, a missionary, an evangelist and he was a Pastor. Pastor is a word for shepherd.

1 Thess 2:8

8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

He loved the flock.

In Phil 1:7 he said, I have you in my heart.

Paul loved the flock, he loved the Colossian people, and he knew they were in danger.

Would you warn someone if you knew they were in danger?

You would do whatever possible to convince them

- not to go in that direction.

And that's what Paul was doing for the Colossian believers.

Paul first went to the Lord in prayer.

More times than not when someone approaches leadership with a problem,

- we're going to tell that person to pray.

So Paul opens the chapter by telling the Colossians of the great conflict he had for them and for those in Laodicea.

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

In this verse Paul is referring to his inward struggle,

- he wrestled in prayer for the churches

Laodicea was located only a few miles southwest of Colosse.

Jesus would later criticize the believers of Laodicea

- for their lukewarm commitment in Rev 3.

Paul and Epaphras labored fervently for them in prayer.

Paul said he had great conflict over the two churches.

In other words, he had an intense struggle over the churches

- and he faced some strong opposition.

Where does the opposition come from:

1 Peter 5:8

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

To devour is to swallow up as in drinking and it's also to consume by eating.

Have you ever watched a documentary on sea creatures. Some eat others quicker than you can blink your eyes.

That's what Satan does, he waits patiently until the opportune time.

Paul said in 1 Cor 15:54 that death is swallowed up in victory.

Interestingly, Paul had never met the Colossians,

- but he agonized over them in prayer.

I believe that everyone of us is in here

- because someone prayed for us.

Who are you praying into heaven?

In Eph 6 Paul encourages believers to pray for the church,

- that's this church and the church abroad.

Eph 6:18

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints –

Paul's concern for the church was that their hearts may be encouraged.

Col 2:2

2 that their hearts may be encouraged (to comfort - one who comes along to strengthen), 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,

Paul's prayer was that the church would be encouraged by this letter.

He was saying, hey, get together with the brethren and be encouraged.

David and Jonathan, were knit together

- after David took Jonathan's place
- in the valley and slew the giant.

As believers, we become knit together

Prov 18:24

24 A man who has friends must himself be friendly,
But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

The Lord has a way of bringing His people together

- not only to encourage but to bond together

That May mean being knit with people you never thought you'd hang out with.

- Examples:
- Simon the Zealot hanging out with Matthew the tax collector
- Peter the doer hanging out with John the dreamer.

Broken bones are eventually knit together and grow with the body.

The body of Christ should be bound together

- so close that we grow together.

To the Ephesians Paul said to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

- he wanted to write to them as to the spiritual,
- but they were carnal.

The Lord wants unity in the body.

The Lord says that our body is fearfully and wonderfully made.

- The church body is also amazing.

We are to be knit together in love.

In the words of Paul in 1 Cor 13, love never fails.

When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment of all, He said to love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. And the second command is to love your neighbor as yourself.

Psa 133:1

133 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

Paul prays that the church would be knit together in love but he also prays that the church would have the full riches of complete understanding so that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ.

The Greek word for “riches” is “Ploutos.”

It’s the noun that was used of the rich man

It is used of spiritual riches as well

- because the riches we have in Christ
- are of a different kind.

We are to concern ourselves

- with the spiritual riches which are ours in Christ.

When Satan tempted Eve in Gen 3,

- he began with doubt (did God really say,)
- then he continued with denial saying, (You will not surely die.)
- Then he finishes with a delusion, (You will be like God.)

Satan goes after the mind

2 Cor 4:3-4

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Notice that it’s not God that has blinded the minds of the people, it’s Satan.

1 Cor 1:18 says the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.

To the secure in Christ Paul says,
2 Cor 2:15

15 Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those who are perishing.
NLT

Paul prayed that the believers hearts would be encouraged, that they'd be knit together in love and that we'd know the mysteries of Christ,

Paul goes on to say in verse 3 that
In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Paul is speaking of being rich in wisdom and knowledge.

It's God's word that gives wisdom and understanding.

But we won't find them unless we dig for them,

If you want to know the Lord, you have to search,

- Jesus said if you seek me, you will find me.

Interestingly, the Gnostics taught back then

- that if you really wanted to know God
- you had to go thru them to gain that knowledge.

If you lack wisdom and knowledge Solomon wrote in Proverbs:
Prov 2:3-6

3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment,

And lift up your voice for understanding,

4 If you seek her as silver,

And search for her as for hidden treasures;

5 Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,

And find the knowledge of God.

6 For the Lord gives wisdom;

From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;

Paul was concerned for the church that they'd be deceived with persuasive words.

Col 2:4

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

Paul issues three warnings in the next several verses.

- The warning in this verse
- is not to be deceived with persuasive (enticing) words.

In verse 8 he warns to beware lest anyone cheat you

- through philosophy and empty deceit.

In verse 16 he says to let no man judge you.

And in Romans 16 he said to avoid divisive people:

Rom 16:18

18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

The authority doesn't lie in the speaker, the authority lies in the scriptures.

Next, Paul expressed his confidence in them.

Col 2:5

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.

Paul uses here two military terms, order and steadfast.

He was encouraged to see that they were living as they should

- their faith in Christ was strong.

People begin to drift by biting off a little of the world,

- compromising here and there,
- until they're completely gone
- with no desire of returning.

We know from 2 Thess 2:3 there is a great apostasy coming before the end of time.

If you're struggling in your walk, don't wait until it's too late!

Next, Paul moves from his concern to his closing charge in verses 6 & 7.

Col 2:6

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

The one thing Paul says to do, walk in Christ!

- Our walk is to be continual.

Paul said to walk, he didn't say to run.

- When you run, you get tired quicker.
- We are to continue our walk.

When Paul wrote, he often alluded to athletics.

But he also alluded to agriculture at times.

Col 2:7

7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

So Paul starts with his agony and his concerns and he wants them to stay on course.

The Psalmists said:

Ps 1:1-3

1 Blessed is the man
 Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
 Nor stands in the path of sinners,
 Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 And in His law he meditates day and night.
 3 He shall be like a tree
 Planted by the rivers of water,
 That brings forth its fruit in its season,
 Whose leaf also shall not wither;
 And whatever he does shall prosper.

Jer 17:8

8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters,
 Which spreads out its roots by the river,
 And will not fear when heat comes;
 But its leaf will be green,
 And will not be anxious in the year of drought,
 Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

All of these verses speak of trees and being rooted.

As Christians, we're to be rooted deep in our faith

- so that we can stand firm during our trials,
- but we also have to go out
- and share what we've learned.

Paul goes on in verse 7 to say that we are to be built up in Him and established in the faith.

This is an architectural term

- which speaks of laying a foundation
- and building a structure on it.

In Jude 3, Jude exhorted the church

Jude 3

to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

How should we contend for the faith, Paul said in verse 7, "as you have been taught"

Finally, Paul closes verse 7 by saying to abound in it with thanksgiving.

- To abound is a word that Paul uses often.
- It suggests a river overflowing its banks.

When the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 went to draw water, Jesus asked her for a drink. She then questioned His asking for a drink.

Jesus answered:

John 4:1

"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

Not plain water that will quench your thirst for a little while,

- but living water from a well that never runs dry.

Later in John 7 Jesus said if anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink

- He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said,
- out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

He spoke this concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive;

We are to abound with thanksgiving.

As followers of Christ,

- we have so much to look forward to
- and so much to be thankful for.

Warren Wiersbe's summary of verses 1-7.

By reviewing these pictures of spiritual progress, we see how the growing Christian can easily defeat the enemy and not be led astray. If his spiritual roots are deep in Christ, he will not want any other soil. If Christ is his sure foundation, he has no need to move. If he is studying and growing in the Word, he will not be easily enticed by false doctrine. And if his heart is overflowing with thanksgiving, he will not even consider turning from the fullness he has in Christ. A grounded, growing, grateful believer will not be led astray.