

## Colossians 2:1-5, "Encouraging Weary Hearts"

Years ago, when I was General Manager of a hardwood flooring business...I was in Charlotte trying to get to an architect's office at 9 am. The office was in downtown Charlotte. You can't get to downtown Charlotte at 9 am from Wilkes County unless you leave the house at 5:30 because the traffic is so bad... And then there's driving in downtown Charlotte? Back then all we had were these:



MAPS! What are those? Do you think it helped? NOPE and here's why...



There are so many one-way streets. I could see where I wanted to go...but, I couldn't get there and I got so frustrated. I was about to miss my appointment, when I saw a guy on a bike...he was a food delivery guy...like this guy...

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and I rolled down my window and I said, “How do you get to such and such architect’s office?” He said, “Yeah...that one is a hard one to get to.” He pulled out a pen and literally drew on a napkin exactly how to get to that office and he told me...you can’t park on the street, but you can go into this public parking lot and find a place there...it’s right beside of the architect’s office.”

**What do you think I felt at that moment? THANKFUL... Encouraged! Relieved!**

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The title of today’s message is: **“Encouraging Weary Hearts.”**

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Church I want to tell you what will wear you out...it’s going down the wrong road of life. You’ll wear yourself out if miss the Detour sign to Jesus...



it will wear you out and eventually you’ll go off the road entirely...because the bridge is out. LAST WEEK, you’ll remember, how we saw how the Apostle Paul struggling...trying to warn the people of Colossae NOT to go down the wrong road of false teaching. He was imploring them to look only to Jesus...

### **Colossians 1:28**

**<sup>28</sup> Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.**

Now remember, Paul was not in Colossae, but in Rome...in a rented house...chained to a soldier...and yet, he felt such a burden for the people there...he wanted to encourage them to grow to maturity in Christ. And THAT’S EXACTLY how I feel... I’ve told you many times...how I so desperately want us to grow in the Lord and knowing that following the LORD is the real way to have life...MAN...I want us to get this...honestly...as I work on the messages each week and

pray...it's a groaning...it's a groaning because I love you so much and want the best for you and for our families... Paul felt this way. See verse 1...

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### Colossians 2:1-5

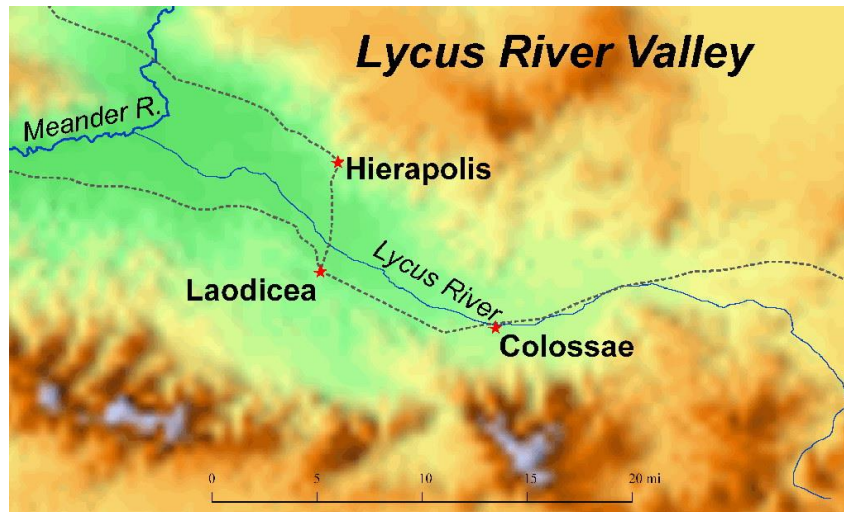
<sup>1</sup>For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, <sup>2</sup>that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of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

Soak this in now...it's this section of Scripture in chapter 2 that is the REAL CRUX of why Paul wrote to the church at Colossae. The Holy Spirit, through Paul teaches that ALL the riches of full assurance and knowledge can be found **in Jesus**...because it's in Jesus that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge can be found. Do you believe that? Jesus said of Himself, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free." Do you believe that? Is this true? You see, this is the question that is central to this entire letter to the Colossians. Remember it...

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Locate Colossae. Go to the Letter F at the top of the map and take your eye down to Colossae. You'll see it's just EAST of the 7 red push pins representing the 7 churches mentioned in the book of the Revelation. All of these churches are in what is called: Asia Minor, or what is today: modern-day Turkey.. You heard the name Laodicea in verse 1...did you catch that a few moments ago...



See Laodicea to the left of Colossae? Notice also a city called Hierapolis just north of Laodicea? All three of these cities were located in what is called the Lycus River Valley and the water flows from right to left on the map or from east to west into the Aegean Sea.

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Laodicea...you know about that city don't you...it's the place where Jesus said that they were WHAT? **Lukewarm**. Here's what's so interesting...Jesus knew all about the water situation in that city. Everyone did! You see, the water from Colossae was cold...the Lycus River was cold...but the waters from Hierapolis from the north were hot, because of natural hot springs located there. The water from Colossae and Hierapolis had to flow through Laodicea to get to the Aegean Sea. So, what do you get when you mix cold water with hot water? Lukewarm water and it was nasty! See it:

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### **Revelation 3:15-17**

<sup>15</sup> "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!<sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.<sup>17</sup> For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

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Folks, the church at Laodicea didn't get it. They thought they were rich...but, Jesus said they were poor and they thought they had NEED OF NOTHING...but, Jesus said they were pitiful, blind and naked. They were so deceived...so self-deluded. How about us here this morning? **How does Jesus see us?** How does Jesus see you? How does He see me? ***Let's be honest, shall we?*** Are you hot or are you cold for Jesus? Are you living passionately for His Kingdom? No guilt-trip here...this is a question of love (knit together in love). Has your love grown cold for Jesus? Think about it...

Did you know there was a letter to the Laodiceans? Just like we have a letter to the Colossians. But, we don't have it...But there was one... Remember why we have this letter. There was a man from Colossae who was led to Christ by the Apostle Paul. His name was Epaphras, and he had gone to the Apostle Paul in Rome looking for help to convince the people NOT to listen to the false teachers.

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### **Colossians 4:12-16**

<sup>12</sup> Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. <sup>13</sup> For I

bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. <sup>14</sup> Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. <sup>15</sup> Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. <sup>16</sup> 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.

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What happened to the church at Laodicea? We aren't told specifically...but we know they died out. And I believe it was because they were LUKEWARM. It seems that cold water wasn't the only thing flowing from Colossae to Laodicea. It seems false teaching was too. Church, listen, false teaching always leads to compromising the truth! Watering it down...taking off the heat... I guess we'll always wonder: Were the Laodiceans poisoned by the Colossians? We'll never know on this side of heaven, but what we do know is that the church at Laodicea made Jesus sick enough to vomit. See it again...

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**Revelation 3:16**

<sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

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**“You make me vomit.”** How much stronger could Jesus have expressed His displeasure? I can't think of a more emphatic statement! You make me vomit! So, let's ask this question: “What does it mean in a practical sense to be: LUKEWARM?” Well, I believe we can answer that question with one hyphenated word: **“Fence-straddler.”** I want you to take a look at the screens...love this meme that I found when I searched for a “Fence-straddler” on the internet...



Listen, a person who won't take a stand or a position for or against anything, they make Jesus sick...because they're trying to ride the fence, but Satan owns the fence...their main goal is not to offend anyone or make anyone upset. They're just lukewarm. **Folks, let me tell you something** if you're that way, it makes Jesus sick. Jesus said in the sermon on the mount: hunger and thirst for righteousness. That's the fervency of Christ! White Hot for Him!

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Jesus cares about how live and He wants us to be HOT! Problem is...when you live HOT in a sin-sick...it's going to be tough sledding...when the world is confronted with the teachings of Jesus, it's going to hurt...because He says: “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” **Repent**...that word steps on toes. Do you use it? We have to in order to lead people to Jesus! They have to repent of their sins in order to be saved.

But church...what's so sad is that we are living in a day and age much like Laodicea. Today we've got entire denominations who are fence-straddlers at best. They have walked away from Jesus and His clear teachings in so many areas so that they can try to be "RELEVANT" to the culture, so as not to offend. They don't want to seem disagreeable. Writer and Pastor Tim Keller says this:

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**"If your god never disagrees with you, you might just be worshiping an idealized version of yourself."** Tim Keller

I believe Keller hit the nail on the head ...so many have gone lukewarm. You know what...when we go lukewarm...we take away the sign



and they're sailing right off the end of the cliff...

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Oh church, the treasure in this life is Jesus and His words...His Knowledge...His Understanding which comes from Scripture! **God wants our hearts to be encouraged...see it...**

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**Colossians 2:2-3**

**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.**

Listen...understand this...if your heart is weary today...might it be that your treasure isn't Jesus...but yourself... Do you have a weary heart today...are you tired of circling streets (like in Charlotte) going the endlessly in circles...never being able to find what you're looking for...oh listen...our power and strength is Jesus...only Jesus! Get off the fence...detour before you meet disaster!

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The church at Colossae had been infiltrated with false teachers who said, "Jesus wasn't enough." And that's what's happening in so many of the mainline protestant denominations today. They've turned into social justice clubs. Christianity in America is becoming so diluted...it's not even Christianity anymore. So many of the old mainline denominations think it's more important to save the earth than save human souls...that it's more important to use the right pronoun than sharing Jesus.. Dr. David Jeremiah, pastor, author and teacher says it this way: See the screens...

“Today there are many churches and Christians who are bent on changing society through government programs, lobbying activities, civil disobedience, and pressure groups. I don’t find any place in the Bible that says that this is the mission of the church of Jesus Christ. The mission of the church is witnessing to lost souls about the redemption provided by the Lord Jesus Christ. This mission is being replaced by those who believe the kingdom of God can be established here and now by our human activities. The mission of the church is to point people to the sufficiency of Jesus, period!” Dr. David Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night*

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I agree...Amen!!!

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There was once an old church in England that had a motto across the front entrance that said this:  
**We Preach Christ Crucified**  
As often happened in England, ivy and vines started to grow over the entrance...and the vines and ivy wound their way over the last word “Crucified,” to where it said:

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### **We Preach Christ**

Well, the ivy continued to grow. And after a few more years, the sign just said:

### **We Preach**

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What? Preach what? Social justice? Save the turtles? Save the climate? How about saving souls! Listen, trying to solve the problems of this world without sharing the necessity of repenting of our sins and calling on Jesus is like trying to drive a car with no gas. The greatest problem for human beings is SIN...never forget that...it’s not hunger, it’s not poverty, it’s not gun control, it’s not gender equality...IT’S SIN...and only Jesus can deliver us from sin. HE IS THE TREASURE! And thus, He is to be our FOCUS...and we’ve got to preach Jesus! We must proclaim and warn...remember from last week:

### **Colossians 1:28**

<sup>28</sup> Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

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We’ve got to warn people...



we’re not to be jerks about it...we give a reason for our hope in gentleness and respect...but listen, eternal souls hang in the balance... are we removing the sign because we don’t want to

offend...we don't to warn...have we grown lukewarm? Oh, it's high time to love so much Jesus that we are warmed with His passage and His heat and fervency to seek and to save that which is lost...OH TO BE HOT AGAIN!

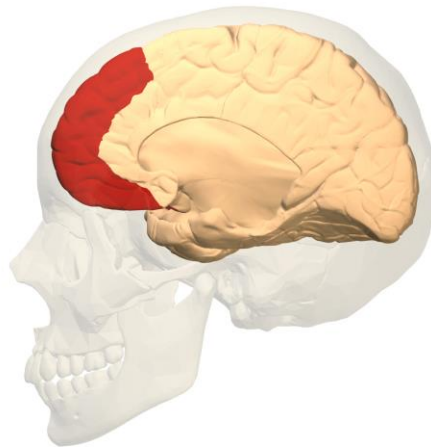
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False teaching destroys by leading to compromise... You see in the mundane of life we can easily forget that there is a battle for our minds and the minds of our children going on right now. It's a battle for Knowledge and Understanding. You see, here's the crux of this letter to the Colossians and it's the crux of the message today... Will we try to live this life living like the world...or will we see Jesus as our treasure and seek Him and proclaim Him, no matter what the consequences are? You see, if you and I try to live this life like the world...that's going to make us weary and our spirits will be grieved...like driving around Charlotte in circles...getting nowhere...

May we never forget...Satan's goal for you and for your family is to keep you from God's truth and His Word, and he's doing a pretty good job of it today. Christians don't read the Bible anymore and we're illiterate in the teachings of Jesus...no wonder we're driving in circles. We're so busy and we're so preoccupied with these things... **Cell phones**. Particularly for our young people. Listen, Satan seeks to **occupy our minds** with mindless, seemingly benign things; yet, the subtle dribble of this world and Satan's worldview and his agenda is creeping into their minds through their eyes and earbuds.

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I read an article this week about smart phones and kids under the age of 13. Experts in child development tell us (are you listening mom and dad) that these things (smart phones) were not designed for them to be on all the time. Listen, a child under the age of 13 has an underdeveloped prefrontal cortex. See the picture...That's the red part of the brain in this image...



This means they can't manage distractions and temptations as well...particularly as it relates to social media. All those likes...and shares...it sends dopamine into the brain and it's very difficult for them to manage without us (the parents) helping them. Mom and dad you better on what they're on and if you're not...you have opened the door to thieves who may steal your children.

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Mom and dad...we've got to monitor these things...not give them to kids too soon. It's too much for their minds... Listen, when you give them a phone too soon, it's like giving them a pair of size 9 shoes when they only wear a 6 would you? That's what giving a cell phone to child is like... Here's the truth...for kids...smartphones are just a form of entertainment. It used to be that phones were used to, I don't know...MAKE PHONE CALLS. ☺



These phones don't make our children smarter or more prepared for life or more able to get a job, as some try to rationalize. And listen...they ARE NOT necessary for healthy social development either. They are a time monopolizer. And here's the thing...social media is so addictive...they can't stop themselves from overdoing it... They get addicted to them... and studies show that the earlier a kid gets addicted to a smartphone, the earlier they can become addicted to other, even more dangerous things.

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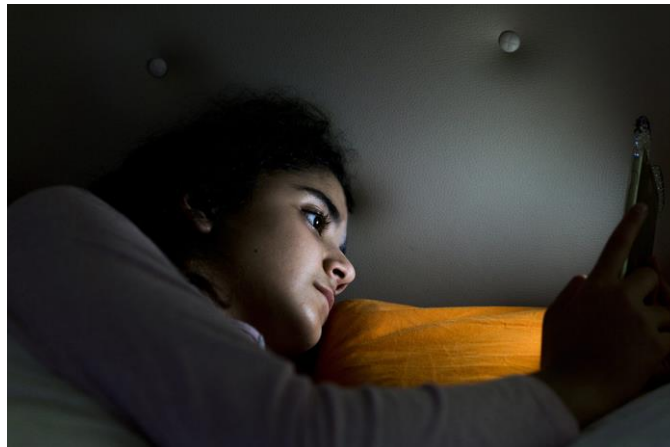
It's sad, but families don't spend much time together anymore. They're all looking at screens...to preoccupied to be families anymore. And so I would suppose to you today that it's not mom and dad who are raising the kids...it's these things... And here's the thing...what are they learning? Are they getting the knowledge of Jesus...His wisdom... Paul told young Timothy:

### **2 Timothy 3:7**

**7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.**

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You know what you find on these things...a lot of the world system, a watered down view of truth... Mom and Dad do you know what's going on... Do you desire for your children to grow to maturity in Christ? Then what are you doing about it ? Mom and Dad, do you have parameters for these? Do they take them to bed with them?



If they do, then I promise you they're not getting enough sleep...because they WILL answer that ding or that buzz...they can't help it...and over time...social media can cause teens to lose connection with their family. It becomes all about the phone and their friends... I'm not saying teens shouldn't have phone...but what about a ten year old? It's too soon...unattended...no parameters...

Mom and dad...are you taking the time to educate yourself in the Word of God...the teachings of Jesus, in whom all the riches of wisdom and knowledge can be found? **That's verse 3...**

### **Colossians 2:3**

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

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There's so much more I could say...but, we don't have time...but, I'll tell you where you can hear more...on our weekly podcast...



Real Time Truth...every Tuesday. This Tuesday we'll be talking about how to have a Spiritual Vision for your family and we'll help you understand how to have one...Subscribe to it on YouTube or Spotify...or just go to our website and go to the Media page and click on the RTT logo.

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You see, here's the point of the message...and we're done. These five verses today have offered to us one simple thought... and it's this: If you and I want to know joy in this life...it's going to come in proportion to your desire for Jesus. It's that simple. In other words, to the degree that you desire to wholeheartedly to follow Jesus and seek Him as your treasure...is to the degree that you're going to know joy in this life. But you can't straddle the fence...



And so, we close with the words of Jesus to the lukewarm church:

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**Revelation 3:18-20**

<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

And that's joy! Are you lukewarm? Jesus says: "If anyone...hears my voice..." that's you... listen to him...because Jesus is like the man on the bicycle...



showing you the way! Follow His directions...because He is the Way!

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