

EXHORTATION TO LIVE IN CHRIST

Colossians 2:1-7

Jesus loved the church that *He gave His life for it* (Acts 20:28). And Paul loved the church because *he loved Christ* (1 John 4:21). And just as parents love their children and desire to see them successful in life... Paul had this same desire for the Colossian church. He desired to see them *successful* in their *walk* with Christ...especially as they faced the growing *heresy* attacking the church.

I. UNITY IN CHRIST: (vs. 1-2a)

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face (vs. 1)...

Paul's love for the church led him to write this letter to the churches of the Lycus Valley. He wanted them to know of the great struggles he's endured on their behalf and for their sister church in Laodicea ...even though they had not personally seen his face.

Struggle...Gk. *agon*, it's a different form of the same word used in verse 29 to speak of his *striving* in the ministry. We get our English word *agonize* from it.

That their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love (vs. 2a)...

That their hearts may be encouraged...The basic meaning of **encouraged** is *to call alongside...to strengthen and support* (Moses and Aaron; Joshua and Caleb; David and Nathan). In the present context, it could be translated **strengthened** because the Colossians were being *affected by false teachers* and they needed to be *strengthened*. It was Paul's prayer that the church would be *filled with such courage* and that they *could cope with any situation*.

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

~Ephesians 3:16-19

Strong hearts result in a *powerful Christian life*. When believers are *strengthened* by the Holy Spirit...

- **Christ will dwell in their hearts**...He will take up residence in them.
- **They will be rooted and grounded in love**...ingrained in them.
- **They will know the love of Christ**...they will experience God.
- **They will be filled with all the fullness of God**.

That's when Christ will be able to work through them to do *“exceedingly abundantly beyond all they can ask or think”* (Ephesians 3:20).

Having been knit together in love...this speaks of a *fervent love* that is the outflow from a *strong heart*. It defines the *strengthened heart* as *one filled with love*. Not *hard-hearted*...but a *strong heart*.

Knit together means to *unite* or *bring together*. As believers, we share a *common life*, and *love* as the basis of that *life*.

The church's *unity* isn't *organizational*...it's an *organism*...a *living body*. *Unity* isn't *uniformity*. We are all *different*, but with *one single desire*...for God to be *most glorified* through us.

Jesus' *prayed* for the **unity** of the **Body**...the **Church**.

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

~John 17:20-23

Confidence and *strength of conviction*, as well as, *cohesive unity* yield a *full understanding of the truth*...God's Word in *action*.

II. MATURING IN CHRIST: (vs. 2b-3)

And attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself (vs. 2b)...

Paul desired that the Colossians experienced **all the wealth that comes from full assurance of understanding**. When the believer *experiences spiritual truth* by *living it*, it becomes truly *understood* and leads to **assurance** of their *salvation*...and **assurance** of God's *sovereignty*. *Knowing* truth and *acting on it* leads to **full assurance of understanding...insight...discernment...the mind of Christ**.

Many people express *doubts* about their *salvation*. Their primary problem *isn't a lack of knowledge*...but a *failure to apply the truths* that 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**.

In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (vs. 3)...

At the heart of this *understanding*, the believer needs to have a *settled conviction* about Christ's *deity* and *sufficiency*. So many Christians *affirm the deity of Christ*...yet live their lives as if He weren't the One in whom *all spiritual sufficiency resides*. They know Him as **Savior**...but are unwilling to *surrender* to Him as **Lord**.

Jesus is the One in whom is hidden **all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**. He alone is *sufficient*. He is the source of *all true spiritual knowledge*...and that **knowledge** is crucial to *assurance* because *doubts* about Christ's *sufficiency* brings *doubts* about His *ability* to do what He has *promised*.

III. GROUNDED IN CHRIST: (vs. 4-5)

I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument (vs. 4)...

The basic attack of all *false teaching* throughout history has been to *deny* either Christ's *deity*...His *sufficiency to save and sanctify*...or *both*. They will attack *truth* with *persuasive arguments*...*humanistic philosophy*.

It's the same as the *serpent* in the **Garden** saying...*"Did God really say?"*...or when he tempted Jesus while in the *wilderness* by quoting *portions* of Scripture or quoting Scripture *out of context*.

For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ (vs. 5)...

Good discipline and stability...both are *military terms*. **Good discipline** refers to *the front line of soldiers drawn for battle*. Where **stability** refers to the *solidity of the formation of soldiers*. Taken together, they express that the **Colossians** were *standing firm against the attacks of false teaching*. **Paul** encouraged them to *remain settled* in their *true understanding*, and *not yield to any doubt* that may come from those *heretical* and *philosophical* attacks.

IV. WALK IN CHRIST: (vs. 6-7)

These *two verses* conclude what **Paul** began to emphasize back in **Colossians 1:15**...and can be the summary as such. *Divine exaltation* belongs to Christ and Christ alone (**Colossians 1:15-20**)...and in Him is found...

a. **Reconciliation to God (1:21-23)**.

b. **The revelation of the mystery of Christ (1:24-27)**...the Church being made up of both **Jews** and **Gentiles** as *joint heirs* in Christ.

c. **Believers' perfection (1:28-29)**...*complete* in Christ.

d. **Wisdom and knowledge (2:1-5)**.

Therefore, believers should continue to *live in Him* (vs. 6-7).

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him (vs. 6)...

The Christian life *continues* just as it *commenced* (began)...in Christ and Christ alone. **Having received Christ Jesus as Lord**, one must have a conviction about His *deity* and *sufficiency*. This allows the believer to *stand firm* against the attacks of *false teachers*.

So walk in Him...Walk refers to *daily behavior*. In this context, it means to *continue believing the truth about Christ...not wavering in one's belief*. Walking in Christ means *living in union with Him*. It means to *maintain a lifestyle patterned after Him*.

"The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."

~I John 2:4-6

Paul also gave the same kind of *exhortation* to other *churches* and other *believers* that he wrote to...**to walk in Him.**

Having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude (vs. 7)...

- **Firmly rooted...Having been firmly rooted...**Gk. *errizomenoi*, **perfect tense participle**...*action in the here and now*. Like a tree with *deep roots* in *rich soil*, believers have been *firmly rooted* in Christ. That planting took place at *salvation*. Christ then becomes the source of our *spiritual nourishment, growth, and fruit*.
- **Built up...now being built up in Him...**Gk. *epoikodomoumenoi*, **present tense participle**, indicating *continuous action*. As we *walk* in Christ, *studying the word*, believers will grow in His *grace* and *knowledge*, becoming *complete* in Christ. *Edified*.
- **Established...established in your faith...**Gk. *bebaioumenoi*, **passive voice participle**. 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.
- **Grateful...overflowing with gratitude...**Gk. *perisseuontes*...this is the only **participle** in this phrase that is in the **active voice**. It indicates that believers who are **firmly rooted** in Christ...being **built up** in Him...and **established in their faith**...will **overflow with gratitude** to God. A grateful heart for all God has given us in Christ will further strengthen our grip on the truth.

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN: A summary...a progression of growth.

- **By taking in the truth of the Word...believers are strengthened. They develop STRONG HEARTS and STRONG MIND.**
- **By living out those truths...believers receive FULL ASSURANCE that Christ is who He claimed (*and continues to claim*) to be.**
- **Being assured of that...believers can appropriate the riches that are His inheritance to believers, and WALK IN HIM.**
- **As they walk in Him...believers will grow in Him and become ESTABLISHED IN THEIR FAITH.**
- **As a result...they will give PRAISE TO GOD. They will WORSHIP HIM.**