

COL 2:1 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,

1. "For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf"

- "thelo" [**th**eh loh] means "wish, will." It is used here with the meaning "I want you."
- "How greatly I have agonized for you" - McCord
- "How strenuous are my exertions for you" - NEB
 - a. The Greek is "agon" [ah **gohn**] meaning "struggle, toil, conflict"
 - 1) The verb form "agonizomai" [ah goh nee zah mi] means "to struggle, to fight, to contend."
 - 2) See this word in Colossians 1:29

COL 1:29 And for this purpose also I labor, **striving** according to His power, which mightily works within me.

- b. It may be used in the sense of "agonized."
 - c. He was very concerned about their welfare, and was doing all he could to make sure they continued in the faith.
 - d. In prison he was agonizing in prayer and concern for the saints in Colossae and Laodicea.
2. "and for those who are at Laodicea" - Christians at Laodicea are mentioned 3 other times in this epistle.

COL 4:13 For I bear him witness that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

COL 4:15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house.

COL 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.

- a. Laodicea was a little south of Colossae.
 - b. Paul was also very concerned about their welfare.
3. "and for all those who have not personally seen my face" - "have never set eyes on me" - NEB
- a. See notes - chapter 1a
 - b. It appears he did not personally establish the church at Colossae, at Laodicea and perhaps some of the other churches in that area.
 - c. He may have met some of them, but it is likely that most of them had been converted by his co-workers.

COL 2:2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, 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,

- “to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ” - KJV. The words “of the Father,” are omitted by the best Greek manuscripts.
1. “that their hearts may be encouraged” - “My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart” - NIV
 - a. “parakaleo” [pah rah kah **leh** oh] - “comfort, encourage, confirm, establish.”
 - b. Any of these meanings make good sense in this verse.
 - c. It could be rendered “be encouraged, be comforted, be confirmed, be established.”
 2. “having been knit together in love” - Eph. 3:17, 18
 - “being bound to one another by love” - TCNT
 - “united by love” - Gspd
 - “being joined together in love” - Marshall
 3. “and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding”
 - a. Lit. “and for all riches of the full assurance of understanding”
 - b. “in a rich and full understanding of God’s mystery in Christ” - McCord
 - c. “ploutos” [**ploo** tahs] - “riches, wealth.”
 4. “resulting in a true [full] knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself”
 - “resulting” is from “eis” [ace] meaning “for.” “for a true knowledge”
 - “in a rich and full understanding of God’s mystery in Christ” - McCord
 - “epignosis” [eh **pig** noh sis] means “knowledge, true knowledge, full knowledge.” It is used to mean “all” or “full” knowledge of “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” - See Col. 2:3.
 - a. “God’s mystery” is “Christ Himself.”
 - b. God revealed that both Jews and Gentiles can be saved and united in one body [the church] through Christ.
 - c. “A true knowledge of God’s mystery” is to trust and obey God’s Son - Jesus Christ.
 - d. All, not some, of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are contained in Christ.

COL 2:3 in whom [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

1. “in whom [Christ] are hidden [hidden] all the treasures”
 - a. In Christ are “all the treasures” that men longed to have, but are not found outside of Christ.

- b. Paul is speaking the spiritual treasures in Christ.
 - c. These were once concealed, but have been unfolded to those who believe in Christ.
2. “of [divine] wisdom and knowledge” - This is a reference to the true knowledge and blessings in Christ - not to the traditions and so-called knowledge of the false teachers.

COL 2:4 I say this in order that no one may delude [mislead, beguile] you with persuasive argument [speech].

1. “I say this in order that no one may delude you” - There is always a danger of being deluded.
 2. “with persuasive argument” - False teachers can be very persuasive in their arguments.
- “pithanologia” [pee thah nah lah gee ah] - “persuasive speech”
 - a. Some have become quite skilled in their innocent appearance and deceptive words. (Matt. 7:15; 2 Cor. 11:13-15).

MAT 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

2CO 11:13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

2CO 11:14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

2CO 11:15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

- b. There is a great danger today that false teachers disguise themselves “in sheep’s clothing” and deceive us by their false humility or boastfulness.
- c.. By their skillful deception and appearance they easily deceive the weak and even those stronger in faith.

COL 2:5 For even though I am absent in body [in the flesh], nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline [order, orderliness] and the stability [firmness, steadfastness] of your faith in Christ.

- “taksis” [tahk sis] means “order.” It is a military term speaking of the orderly array of soldiers.
 - Paul was observing the “order” and “discipline” of the Roman soldiers.
1. “For even though I am absent in body” - He was far away in a Roman prison.
 - a. It does not appear he had ever seen them or at least most of them.
 - b. Paul could not be certain if he would ever see them.
 - c. He was still very concerned about them.
 2. “nevertheless I am with you in spirit” - Though separated from them bodily, they were constantly on his mind and in his prayers.
 - a. His “spirit” was with them.
 - 1) Paul indicated he was present with Christians at Corinth “in spirit” though he was in Ephesus at the time. (1 Cor. 5:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:8).

2) The word “spirit” is the antithesis of flesh and refers to Paul’s human spirit.

3) The “spirit” is the immortal part of man, and it is also the thinking part of man. (1 Cor. 2:11).

1CO 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

b. Even in prison he was doing things that would strengthened the church there.

c. He was writing this epistle to encourage and help them.

d. He also sent people to minister to them.

3. “rejoicing to see your good discipline [order] and the stability of your faith in Christ”

a. He rejoices because of their “faith in Christ.”

b. He speaks of their “good discipline and the stability” of their faith in Christ.

COL 2:6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk [live] in Him,

1. “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord” - These brethren had received Christ as “Lord.”

a. They had submitted to Christ’s authority [Lordship] and had been buried with Him in baptism. (Col. 2:12).

b. They were seeking to live for Jesus in their daily lives. See Phil. 1:21; Gal. 3:20.

c. The church, as a whole, was faithful and true to the doctrine [teaching] it had been taught.

d. This does not mean there was no danger, and they could let down the guard.

e. It is vital that we receive Christ as Lord as well as Savior. (Acts 2:36).

f. Jesus is called “Lord” many times in this epistle. (Col. 1:3, 10; 2:6; 3:13, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24; 4:7, 17).

2. “so walk in Him”

a. “walk” means “to live.”

b. “walk” is a word Paul used most often in his writings.

1) “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4; 8:4).

ROM 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

ROM 8:4 in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

2) “walk by faith” (2 Cor. 5:7).

2CO 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight—

3) “walk by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16, 25).

GAL 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

GAL 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

4) “we should walk in them [good works] - (Eph. 2:10).

EPH 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

5) “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called”

EPH 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, The idea is to “live up to your calling”

6) “walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind” (Eph. 4:17).

EPH 4:17 This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

7) “walk in love” (Eph. 5:2).

EPH 5:2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

8) “walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

EPH 5:8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light

9) “Careful [look carefully] how you walk” (Eph. 5:15).

EPH 5:15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,

10) “walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Phil. 3:17).

PHI 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. “pattern” is from “tupos” [too pahs] - “pattern, example”

11) “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” (Col. 1:10).

COL 1:10 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;\

12) “walk in a manner worthy of the God” (1 Thess. 2:12).

1TH 2:12 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

13) “how you ought to walk and please God” (1 Thess. 4:1).

1TH 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more.

COL 2:7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing [abounding] with gratitude [thanksgiving].

1. “having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith”
 - a. “Having the roots of your faith being firmly planted in Him, and continually building yourselves up in Him” - Wey.
 - b. Their faith would not be easily overturned since they had been so well established in their faith.
2. “just as you were instructed” - They had been well taught by Epaphras and others who had instructed them.
3. “and overflowing with gratitude” - The fact they were deeply rooted in faith and daily enjoying fellowship in Jesus led to an overflowing of gratitude.

The Fullness of Christ

2:8-10

COL 2:8 See to it [take care, be on guard] that no one takes you captive [enslave you] through philosophy and empty deception [deceit], according to [after] the tradition of men, according to [after] the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to [after] Christ.

1. “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception”
 - “Be careful that nobody spoils your faith through intellectualism and high-sound nonsense” - Philips
 - Don’t let anyone plunder you” - This is a warning against giving up their freedom in Christ and being enslaved by the world and its false teachings.
 - Lit. “Look you lest there shall be anyone robbing you” - Marshall
 - a. There was a danger of being carried off into captivity by the false teachers.
 - b. Some wished to take away [rob] their freedom and enslave them to false teaching and to immoral living.
2. “according to the tradition of men” - “paradosis” [pah rah dah sis] - “tradition, something handed down” - “Tradition” can be used in a good sense.

2TH 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.

- a. Jesus warned against the traditions [precepts] of men. (Matt. 15:9).

MAT 15:9 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' "

- b. The Old Testament also warned against it. (Prov. 14:12; Isa. 55:8, 9).

PRO 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

ISA 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.

ISA 55:9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

3. “according to the elementary principles of the world”

- a. “elementary” is from “stoicheion” [stoi **kay** ahn] - “first principles, elementary, elements” - “after worldly elements” - McCord.
- b. This word appears several times in the New Testament. (2 Pet. 3:10, 12, Gal 4:3,9; Col. 2:8, 10; Heb. 5:13).
- c. Paul used this word in the Galatian epistle. (Gal. 4:3, 9).

GAL 4:3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.

GAL 4:9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

- d. This word “elementary” referred to obeying the Law of Moses (Gal. 4:10), and returning to their pagan life.
- e. It seems to refer to the elementary teachings of the Jews and perhaps others.
- f. In Peter 3:10, 12 reference is made to the even the minute particles or elements that make up the universe.
- g. “built on men’s thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said” - Taylor

4. “rather than according to Christ”

- a. It is vital that believers listen to Christ. (Matt. 17:5; Heb. 1:2).
- b. The teachings of men lead to ruin, and must be rejected.

COL 2:9 For in Him all the fulness of Deity [all of God] dwells in bodily form,

1. “For in Him all the fulness of Deity” - The words “all the fulness” mean Jesus was “Deity.”
 - a. He was not just a man or a good man or a prophet, but He was Deity. (Jn. 1:1-3; 10:30; 14:9; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3; Phil. 2:5-11).
 - b. He was the One prophesied in the Old Testament. (Isa. 9:6-7; Mic. 5:2).
2. “dwells in bodily form” - Jesus was “Deity” incarnate. (Jn. 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16).
3. Christ was Deity in flesh from birth to His ascension.

COL 2:10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule [rulers] and authority;

1. “and in Him you have been made complete”- The word “complete” is not explained, but means they had come into a saving relationship with Jesus.
 - a. Without Christ they would be incomplete and lost.
 - b. They were a part of the “one body” of which Jesus is “Head” and the “one body” for which Jesus died. (Eph. 5:23, 25).
 - c. The book of Colossians makes it clear these brethren had been redeemed by Jesus and were in His kingdom. (Col. 1:13).

- d. Here are a few other references in this epistle indicating their saved condition. (Col. 1:5, 14, 22; 2:12, 13; 3:12).
 - e. This was not an unconditional salvation. (Col. 1:23).
 - f. Salvation can be lost if one turns away from God and His teachings. (1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 5:4; Heb. 3:12; 6:4-6).
2. “and He is the head over all rule and authority” - Jesus is the One above all.
- a. He now reigns as King at the right hand of God. (Acts 2:32-36).
 - b. He has absolute authority. (Jn. 17:2; Matt. 28:18).
 - c. The majority then and now do not submit to this authority, but one day they will. (Phil. 2:9-11).

PHI 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
PHI 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,
PHI 2:11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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