

Week 5

Reconciled to Jesus

Colossians 1:24

Do not take from this that Jesus' suffering was inadequate and Paul had to add to it. The suffering of Paul and other ministers conformed them to the image of Christ, even to His suffering. There is a sense in which the suffering of Christ continues today in His body the church. We are to expect affliction and not let our hearts be troubled. How is this possible? By trusting Christ in the small sufferings we build our faith and patience or endurance and as we do this our endurance grows stronger and we can endure more suffering and our soul is cleansed of self and pride and we grow more like Christ.

Colossians 1:25-27

Paul gives us a definition of what a preacher or a minister is to be doing and that is preaching the Word of God, and there is no greater responsibility than this. Paul also said he was to go to the Gentiles, very offensive to the Jewish people. They considered themselves to be set apart and indeed they had been especially chosen by God to produce from their race our Messiah. Paul went to the Jews first, but he was rejected, they didn't want to hear about a suffering Messiah, they wanted someone to save them from the Romans.

What was this mystery, which was hidden in times past but now, revealed? This word mystery is not referring to something mysterious but something secret. The Greek word is "mysterion" which means secret or hidden. Refuting the Gnostic cult again, Paul tells that God has made the secret available to Jews and Gentiles, that is everyone can know the secret "Christ lives in you". Jews and Gentiles can have that oneness in Christ's body because God had planned from the beginning of time to have Christ live in the heart of each person who believes in Him. Believers are in Christ and Christ is in believers and we will all share eternal life in the presence of His glory.

This is not secret knowledge for a special group, as the Gnostics had falsely taught, it is for everyone who desires to know it.

Colossian 1:28-29

Epaphrus and Tychicus, who served the Colossian church under Paul is the reference. They were all telling the same good news about Jesus, Who is at present indwelling them as well as all the Colossian believers, and you and me. We are all one body with hope and a future.

The NASB says Paul was admonishing, which means warning and teaching everyone who wanted to know so that everyone will be complete in Christ when He returns. Paul says he was seeking God's wisdom in all his work and striving. He was working hard to help bring these believers to maturity, give them the truth of God's inerrant word and keep them from error so that they would be complete, and mature. His work was made more difficult because of persecution, people questioning his qualifications, wrong teachings from false teachers. He wrote long letters, he traveled and suffered hardship; he was imprisoned because of his work for Christ. Notice, this was not a self help exercise, Paul makes sure here we understand that Christ's power is a mighty force within him to supply supernatural power to finish this work and also for us so that we can move forward in our Christian walk.

Colossians 2:1

Paul is not only concerned with believers he knows, his friends or family but also with these from Colossae and Laodicea, who he has never met.

No doubt the false teachings we have discussed were a concern for him, but also these were real people with real problems; families with all the difficulties of child raising and relationships, no doubt there were elderly and sick, all who were struggling to know Christ and grow up in faith. And of course, there were those with unsaved family and friends, all these were Paul's concern.

Colossians 2:2-3

Here is the crux of the matter. Paul is saying here that all true believers have received Christ and are joined together because of the faith they hold in common. Paul is praying that the Colossian believers will be knit together, experience oneness. This word "knit" together is a Greek verb with the idea of being joined together in affection, to have the same opinion, to put together. So Paul prays that they would be encouraged as they were becoming closer in their relationships, all being convinced of the same truths. Those truths were of great value or wealth, because they were gaining the great wealth of the knowledge and understanding of Christ Himself.

Paul said Jesus is God's mystery and why not. What could be more unexpected than God becoming a man, who lived and ministered and then took the sin and suffering of the entire world for all time upon Himself and died the death we deserve as punishment for our sin. The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. Christ is God's secret, revealed to all of us. Remember the Gnostics were saying that there was secret knowledge only for a few special people. Paul tells the truth about this; Christ is the secret and He is for all and in all.

If you have not received Christ, this oneness is impossible. If you are trying to work your way to heaven by piling up good deeds, giving money, etc., you will feel anything but knit together with your fellow church members. You might feel competitive; you might feel sorry for those who can't do things as well as you, perhaps even self-righteous. You might feel intimidated by those who give more money or do more work at the church. You will not be looking up at Christ but across the room at other church members.

Did you notice that wisdom is found in only one place or person? Wisdom is found in Christ and notice how much, all wisdom. There is no wisdom outside of Jesus. 1 Corinthians tells us that the wisdom of men is foolishness to God, but not only that, but the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but to those who are saved it is the power of God. If your heart is rejoicing because of Jesus and His cross, the bible says this is a sign of salvation. If you are listening to talk about Jesus dying on the cross and you are thinking, "how ridiculous, unsophisticated, dumb", it is a sign you are perishing. This is not my opinion; it is what the bible says. We also learn there that in our own wisdom we cannot find God, but wisdom must be revealed it cannot be gained any other way.

Colossians 2:4

Have you ever been deceived by persuasive argument? It's something to be very careful about. The Colossians believers already knew what they needed to know to be saved, they already knew the One they needed to know who would give them eternal life. They needed to grow up into spiritual maturity that way no one would be able to deceive them with persuasive arguments. False teachers can sound really good because what they tell you usually has a little kernel of truth and it is presented to sound very logical. However, if you know the truth, the truth will make you free, that is if you know Jesus, He will make you free from being deceived. If you are being persuaded by doctrine that sounds logical but doesn't fit what the bible teaches. Stop, ask God to give you wisdom, He will do it.

Colossians 2:5

Why didn't Paul go to visit the believers in Colossae? Remember, he was in prison in Rome. He was encouraged to hear they were staying faithful and how were they doing that? Paul referred to their good discipline, what did he mean? Good discipline in the Christian life is doing all the things we know we should do. They were meeting together, they were studying the scriptures, they were calling good teachers to guide them, and they were avoiding false doctrine.

What did Paul mean by stability of faith?

The definition of faith is: leaning your entire personality on Jesus in absolute confidence in His power and wisdom. Paul was rejoicing that the Colossians were not giving in to the false doctrine and corrupt culture around them.

Colossians 2:6

The Colossians had accepted Jesus as their Savior and also as their LORD. That means they wanted His will for their lives. Do you want His will for your life or are you determined to have your own way? Remember "walk" is referring to daily life so if you have received Jesus as Savior, follow and obey Him.

Colossians 2:7

Paul changes the endurance metaphor now and talks about being firmly rooted. This is an important point. Most of us are gardeners or farmers and we know the importance of strong roots to a plant and also how those roots need to be firm in the soil. You have no doubt seen huge trees, especially in the Park that fall over in a heavy rain or wind. Some of those trees are sitting on top of rock. When high water or wind comes along they are easily knocked over because they have not been firmly rooted. They look beautiful, just like all the other trees, but they are very fragile because they are not firmly rooted.

Let's not forget "overflowing with gratitude". Do you have a grateful heart or do you take sunshine, water, shelter, and food for granted. I urge you to begin to thank God daily for all His provision for you.

Colossians 2:8

Paul is strongly warning about the effect of believing heresy. Notice what he called it, empty, what a contrast with his description of the 'fullness' of Christ. False teaching is empty and can never offer you the wonderful peace of the fullness of Christ. Paul is not condemning education or learning, he was a very well educated man, he is condemning false philosophy which is deceptive because it keeps people from truth. I was just reminded here of Romans 1:18, where Paul said "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." There are men who know the truth and suppress it, just like those Jewish leaders who knew Jesus was the Messiah but didn't want to bow to Him. So there are two kinds of deceptions; one is the person who is purposely deceiving and the other is the person who is himself deceived. You must live that disciplined life to avoid both of them.

Colossians 2:9

Here it is again the word "fullness' of Deity as opposed to the emptiness of heresy. The word fullness we have discussed before and it is the Greek word 'pleroma', which means abundance or completeness. Jesus is completely God. God's nature in human form, Jesus, Emanuel, God with us. Jesus is not another deity along with God, He is not less than God.

Colossians 2:10

Because Jesus is completely God, He can fill me abundantly with the Holy Spirit and I can be completed. Jesus can completely remove your emptiness and fill you with Himself and all the abundance of the spiritual gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. There is nothing lacking when you have a relationship with God. You don't have to look anywhere else; Jesus is the unique source of knowledge and power for the Christian life.