

Col Ch 2 Vs 1-7

The Full Assurance of Understanding

Vs 1-7

In 1896 the welterweight boxing champion who's name was Norman "kid" McCoy, was fighting a contender who had the misfortune of being deaf. But once McCoy discovered his opponent's disability, he wasted no time in taking advantage of it. Near the end of the 3rd round McCoy stepped back a pace and pointed to his adversary's corner, and he was indicating to him that the bell had rung. and McCoy's opponent said, "Oh, thank you so much, very civil of you." But the fact of the matter was that the bell hadn't rang at all, and as soon as the boxer had lowered his gloves and turned away, McCoy immediately knocked him out.

There in lies a profound lesson regarding deceivers and being deceived, because so many times that's exactly how those who are deceptive us lure us into letting our guard down, by seeking to assure us that they're really not against us, but rather simply trying to help us out. Trying to aid us in our understanding, bringing us into a more fully developed understanding, and as they win our trust and get us to lower our guard, then BANG!! Comes the left hook that takes us out and causes us to become eschewed in our understanding.

As Paul was writing this letter he knew that the Col believers were being befriended by these deceivers who were seeking to get them to lower their guard. So as to give them a spiritual KO and detour them in their simple love relationship with Jesus Christ and standing firm in Him, and this concerned him, in fact it caused a great struggle in him because he was concerned (as any Pastor would be) for the Lord's sheep.

You see if someone were to ask you to suggest what the most important quality a Pastor or a minister can possess, you might suggest intelligence, or maybe education, leadership ability, boldness, you might say holiness, sincerity, or the ability to articulate the message clearly. Even though I would concur to the fact that all of those are essential components, I think we would do well to recognize that perhaps the most necessary ingredient in the life of any minister of Jesus Christ is love for the body of Christ, the church (MacArthur).

It was love for the church that caused Jesus to be willing to lay down His life, Paul told the Eph elders to, "*shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*" He also told the church in Eph that we as husbands should love our wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.

It was the love of Christ in Paul that gave *him* a deep love for the church as well, and he speaks of the love that he has for all the churches throughout his epistles. He told the Corinthians that *very gladly* he would spend and be spent for their souls, to the Phil he said, "*I have you in my heart.*" It was his love for Christ and love for his brethren (the church) that enabled him to endure such suffering, to Timothy he wrote, "*I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*"

So we recognize the absolutely essential need for any Pastor to be filled with love for Christ and love for the church, and not just the isolated body that they may spend most of their time ministering to. Paul wasn't the Colossians "Pastor" in the direct sense of the word, Epaphras was. But that didn't matter to Paul, it wasn't about "this" pocket of believers or "that" pocket of believers, it was about the church period, it was the body of Christ Paul loved. He knew the command of the Lord, we read in 1 John 4:21 *"And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."*

Paul loved God's people, he was concerned for their spiritual well-being and solidity, he didn't want to see them deceived or hurting, and so he writes here in Ch 2 and says.

Vs1

So apparently Paul had never physically visited Colosse, and so he mentions the fact they had never seen his face in the flesh, but understand that even though they'd never seen him, his authority as an apostle still extended to them. and Even though we've never met the apostle Paul personally (nor will we this side of heaven) his apostolic authority still extends to us as well.

But there was this great inner struggle that was going on in him (which by the way that word "conflict" or "struggle" is the Greek word, "agon" (ag-one') from which comes our word "agony") this is another form of the same word that we saw in vs 29 from which we get our word "agonize" translated there as "striving". But there was this great conflict going on inside this Christian leader and what I want you to see here is that he wanted others to know about it. If this were chronicled after my life it would have to say, *"For I don't want you to know about my great inner conflicts."*

I find that there is a tendency in we as people that when there is a conflict in our lives, especially if it's a big thing, something that's heavy on us or "great" in our lives that so often we don't want anyone else to know about it. and This is especially true it would seem of those in the ministry and church leadership, we're tempted to just sort of clam up and retreat. Not that there's not a time to be quiet, there are many things (probably the greater majority of things) that are best left unsaid, especially if your comments could promote divisive or one sided attitudes in people. But there's also a time to share our struggles or what's going on in our lives. We read in 2 Cor 1:8 where Paul wrote and said, *"For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life."* Now to me this sounds like what was probably one of Paul's most trying times of spiritual warfare and notice what he said, *"we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren of our trouble."* So many times when we're going through what we would consider to be a really tough time, it's our desire that just about everyone we could imagine would remain ignorant of it.

Again leaders seem to be the most prone to that mentality. After all I'm the overseer, I'm the Pastor, I don't want anybody to know that I struggle, or have weakness, and difficulties. But that attitude really doesn't fit the biblical pattern for body life, Paul frequently voiced his heartaches and impossibilities.

When Jesus was going to the Garden of Gethsemane He didn't say, "hey guys, I'll get back with ya later but for now I need to go somewhere alone." He said, sit here and pray, and he took Peter, James and John, and He said, "*My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.*"

You know what I find, can you imagine the encouragement that imparted to those guys when later on in life they would reflect back during their time of struggle and heartache and remember how the Lord wrestled with such issues in His own heart. If I'm always super Christian, then that doesn't display a lot of hope for you does it?

Because you'll be disheartened all the more when *you* struggle because you'll feel like you're the only one who ever deals with certain issues and so you must not be that spiritual or something. and The enemy will drive that like a wedge right down into your heart, but if I'm real to you, if I share with you the fact that, "you know there sometimes I feel like throwing the keys to the church in the ditch and running away never to come back."

Sometimes there are pressures and heartaches in the ministry and in my life that seem to overwhelming for anyone to have to bear, then maybe when you feel weighted down, instead of being discouraged and disheartened, you'll be encouraged and take heart because I know Jeff goes through these things. I know Paul and so many others have gone through such things and the grace of God has always seen them through, so I know His grace is sufficient for me to.
(Read Vs1)

Things can be set in order face to face that can't always be settled from a distance, and this turmoil of his on their behalf was 3 fold.

Vs2-3

1st of all that their hearts may be "encouraged", or maybe your bible says "comforted" it translates either way. It also could just as easily read, that their hearts might be "strengthened" weak and anemic, discouraged and downcast sheep are easy prey for the enemy, they're easy prey for the flesh and for the world. All 3 of which are just looking for an opportunity to eat you up, Paul was anxious to encourage and strengthen them in heart. and The heart in the biblical sense of the word goes well beyond the chief organ of physical life. But rather it stands to represent man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life. (From Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) We read in Prov 4:23 "*Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.*"

You see your emotions respond to what's going on in your heart, and how you're perceiving things in your mind, which then in turn effects your decisions and your actions in life.

That's why Paul wants so intensely to strengthen them in heart, he desires to comfort and encourage them, because whatever it is that fills the heart will inevitably issue itself out in behavior, in the way we act and the things we say.

Jesus said that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks, in other words your words are simply the overflow of what's in your heart. Now we know that ultimately it's the work of the Holy Spirit to comfort and strengthen men's hearts, that's one of His titles, (the parakletos) the Comforter. He's the divine strengthener of the heart, but many times He'll use human instruments in facilitating that work.

Jesus told Peter, *"When you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."* In 1st Thess we read where Paul sent Timothy to them to establish them, and encourage (or strengthen) them concerning their faith. We read in Acts 18:23 that after Paul had spent some time in Antioch, *"he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples."* The bible teaches us that God will gift men whom He calls in such a capacity to teach and strengthen the church. and Paul was such a man; he desired to strengthen and encourage their hearts, that they might be knit together in love.

Now this is the 2nd thing we see here regarding his burden for those who hadn't seen him face to face. and In Short he desires that they would be unified, *"being knit together"* circle that word "together", and what was it that he desired them to be knit together in? Knit together in the things you have in common, finding a common bond in like hobbies and interests, joined together over certain foods and forms of entertainment that you all enjoy. That's not what my bible says; yet how many times do we seek to bond to other people through such means? But the bible says that we're to be knit together (and that word knit speaks of being compacted or united) in love. Jesus said that all the world would know that we were His disciples by our love for one another. By our being like-minded and unified, by our keeping unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, we don't create the unity of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit has already done that, the bible exhorts us to keep the unity of the Spirit, how, what's the bond, peace.

Now I was given some real solid advice one time that revolutionized my life and it was this simple, "you can either be a peacemaker or a peace breaker." But Jesus said that the blessing abides upon the peacemakers. You see peacemakers love each other, and this love evidences itself when we as believers do what we see in ch 3 of this epistle vs 12-13 "put on..." It's this kind of humble and practical love that serves as the bond of unity. and Just as we said last week that humility and joy are inter-related, even so love is always linked with humility as well.

Paul told the Philippians, “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*” Then he went on to demonstrate the love of Christ in doing just that in His becoming a Man in order to suffer the death of the cross not for Himself, but through esteeming others above Himself. Humility is the key that opens the door to love and unity. What are some practical ways that we’re knit together in love? Well, we just read for one by esteeming others better than ourselves, James said, “*If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?*” He’s speaking of works of benevolence motivated by the love of God. Look at 1 John ch 3:16-18.

This is where the rubber meets the road, where positional truth’s are worked out in practical ways in my life, Paul’s inner conflict was one that desired our hearts to be encouraged, love being the arena whereby the encouragement takes place and 3^{rdly} (read last ½ of vs 2) Attaining to all riches of “*the full assurance of understanding*” underline those 5 words there, if you know the truth you’ll recognize the lie. This is why it’s so critical that we be aspiring with all that’s with in us to be rightly dividing the word of truth. Because we want to have the full assurance of understanding, the confidence, the Christ confidence that what we believe and what we assert is accurate. Because if we’re not assured in our understanding of the person of Christ and the mystery of God (we spoke about this mystery briefly last week, Christ in you the hope of glory) then you’ll be like a wave of the sea that’s tossed to and fro and driven back and forth with every new wind of doctrine.

These Col believers were being confronted with a heretical wind of doctrine, but Paul was seeking to encourage them in their understanding of God the Father and God the Son, so that they wouldn’t be moved from what they’d learned and what they’d received. But rather that they’d rest in that blessed assurance that was theirs in Christ, the assurance of understanding, the settled convictions of the person and character and work of God the Father and the Son, the assurance of God’s grace in our lives.

Assurance is a rooting quality; you recall that when Jesus taught, all the people were amazed because He taught as one with authority, not as the scribes. The scribes were all, “Well, Rabbi so and so says this, and Rabbi so and so says that” and they’d never just state the facts, why? Because they weren’t assured in their understanding, but Jesus had the full assurance of understanding therefore He could lay down the bedrock realities of the Kingdom with authority because He knew with settled convictions that the things that He was purporting were true and accurate.

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he said, “*our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.*” and A lack of assurance can be detrimental and immobilizing to your Christian experience, people who aren’t assured of God’s love for them, or aren’t assured of God’s forgiveness or aren’t assured of their salvation, many times become a spiritual nervous wreck, but John tells us that by loving people in practical ways, in deed and in truth that it will assure our hearts before Him. Heb 6:11-12 says, “*And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*” You see lack of assurance many times doesn’t come through a lack of head knowledge, but rather a lack of practical application of that knowledge. That’s another reason why it can be so beneficial to be involved and serving, because it grants you opportunity to apply love and humility and servitude in practical ways and through that God blesses your life and your heart is built up and assured before Him, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

There is no deeper, mystical, elitist insight that pertains to salvation or sanctification outside of Christ, the insight regarding these things maybe hidden, but only to those who are perishing. Because the natural man can’t receive spiritual matters and the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it’s the power of God. There is no wisdom or knowledge that you need to know, that will benefit you in anyway spiritually outside the person of Christ, once you have the Son you have it all.

In the days of the Roman Empire, a certain wealthy senator became estranged from his son. When he died unexpectedly, his will was opened. “Because my son does not appreciate what I’ve done, I leave all of my worldly possessions to my loyal slave, Marcellus. However because I am a man of grace, I bequeath to my son one of my possessions of his choosing.” The testator said to his son, “Sorry, you can only take one of your dad’s possessions, which will it be?” The son responded, “I take Marcellus.” and That’s the idea that’s purported here, when you take Jesus into your life, you get all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, you open your heart to Him you get everything you need.

Vs4

You see this is why it’s so important to have this full assurance of understanding, because there are some smooth talkers out there, and they want to entice you to let down your gloves, and persuade you to believe that there’s more to be obtained than what Christ has to offer. Paul wrote in 2 Cor 11:3 “*I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*”

These deceivers can be so intelligent and articulate that they lure you away from the simplicity that's in Christ and try and add or take away from the reality of His person and His work. He told the Eph elders in Acts 20:30 *“Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”* We read in 1 Tim 4:1-2 *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”* 2 Peter 2:18-19 *“For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption.”* Jude 16 *“These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.”* The proverbs warn against befriending an individual who's always flattering you, it's an indicator that they're gossips. Be careful of people who want to engage you in such a way as to enlighten you with their deeper understanding, and persuasive words and rest assured in your understanding of who God is and who Christ is in your life.

Vs5

It would seem too many people use this as their life motto for coming to church wouldn't it? with you in spirit but absent in the flesh, Paul commends them for their good order and steadfastness of faith in Christ, we serve a God of order who likes things to be orderly and not confusing to people.

Vs6

The walk referring to our daily conduct, and Paul says here quite simply, “as you received, so walk” John told us that if we say that we abide in Christ, then we ought to walk as He walked, in truth, in integrity, with grace and in love. Don't try to overcomplicate things, you received Him by faith, the message was that He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, shed His blood on the cross for your sin, resurrected the 3rd day for your justification and lives today at the right hand of the Father to ever make intercession for the saints. and So if you've received Jesus on such a basis, just walk in that wonderful truth, don't add to the finished work, but rather rest in Him.

Vs7

What are the words to pay attention to in this vs, “rooted”, “built up”, “established” and “abounding” root yourself in the realities of Christ send your roots deep into Him, draw from Him your necessary sustenance. When your roots go down, then you're built up, now a house (speaking of being built up) isn't a living thing, but it requires a solid foundation before it can be “built up.” “Established” speaks of being confirmed.

Peter said make your calling and election sure; this sort of alludes back to the full assurance of understanding. Rooted and built up in Christ, made sure in the faith, not forsaking what you've been taught, and abounding in it, the message of the gospel of the grace of God with thanksgiving. Everyone else tries to convince themselves how wonderful they are, but they are left feeling miserable and empty as they strive for more sophistication and depth. But we can relax in the fact that we're a bunch of wretched sinners, saved by a wonderful Savior, and just walk in the simplicity of that fact with an overwhelming sense of thanksgiving for His love for us and willingness to save a wretch like me.

You know God's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, so if you're here and haven't had the righteousness of Christ accredited to you in heaven, you can walk out of here forgiven this morning. Just receive Christ, and so walk in Him, He loves you so much and it's His desire to give you new life.