

9. Christ is Enough

Colossians 2:1-5

We must not let the chapter divisions drive our interpretation and understanding of scripture.

Chapter numbers and verse numbers are not inspired, they were added later by editors for reference to help readers find their place.

Verses 1-5 of chapter 2 are a paragraph, and this paragraph is connected to the context of previous chapter ...

... Paul is leading up to the exhortations that he will start in verse 6 of this second chapter.

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, 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. ⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. ⁵ 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. (Col. 2:1-5)

As you can see Paul is using his own ministry as the topic of this paragraph.

... specifically, his struggle on behalf of both the Colossians and Laodicean church.

In 1:29 Paul says that he is “laboring” and here he says he is “struggling”. ... it is the same word.

... that is what thematically links these 2 paragraphs.

So, here in the first verse of chapter 2 Paul is saying:

- “I want you to know I am exerting myself (agonizing) greatly for you”

So, verse 1 is the theme of the paragraph

Verse 2 Paul tells us that the goal of his struggle is that they will have STABLE faith and he tell them 3 steps toward having this kind of faith.

In verse 3-5 Paul takes his exhortation one step further because he doesn't just want their faith to be strong, he wants it to be OVERCOMING faith ...

... and Paul give us three things that make up overcoming faith.

1. Three Steps toward STABLE Faith

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,

Purpose of Paul's great struggle: *that their hearts may be encouraged*

being knit together in love - this is a Participle of means-means by which their hearts are encouraged:

full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ - Genitive of Source-the source of why they are knit together in love:

These are the 3 things needed for stable faith ...

... let's look at the last one first.

In order for your faith to be stable you need:

- **Full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of Christ (Source)**

There is no question that sometimes life (responsibilities/burdens/duties) can be overwhelming.

Today we will end our service singing that wonderful hymn "It is Well with My Soul."

Some of us know the story behind this great song, and some of us don't ... but for the sake of time I'll remind you that he wrote this song in response to the tragic death of his children financial ruin.

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

How was it that Horatio Spafford's faith remained intact and stable after such devastating losses?

The simple answer is that he had the full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of Christ
...

Here is what Horatio Spafford understood and knew about Christ:

My sin oh the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin not in part but the whole
Is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more
Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Oh My soul

When life is tearing you apart ...

... when feelings of pride, ego, and anger eat away at you because you aren't "living your best life."

... when your earthly relationships suddenly to become unstable ... or uncertain

Rather than lose all hope you need to remember the everlasting hope you have in Jesus.

If you have ever been to the land of Israel, then you have seen the great plains that run adjacent to the Jordan River and extend through the Valley of Jezreel between Nazareth and Megiddo ...

Each of those great valleys and plains are surrounded by mountain ranges.

In Psalm 121 the psalmist imagines getting caught by the enemy out in the middle of one of those great plains ...

The psalmist says, "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence come my help?"

Then after asking the question the psalmist answers, it ...

² My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. ³ He will not let my foot be moved; he who keeps me will not slumber.⁴ Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. ⁵ The LORD is my keeper (Ps. 121:2-5)

Our help doesn't come from the hills... it come from the Lord!

Let me ask you, where do your eyes turn when the things of life overwhelm you?

The world tells us to look to government, money, success, and insurance ..

No! When life becomes unbearable, your eyes should turn to Christ in full assurance of the understanding and knowledge that you are His and He will keep you.

No matter what you are facing Jesus Christ is always enough!

- **Loving community of faith (means)**

The phrase “being knit together in love” describes the means through which their encouragement comes.

In fact, Paul told the Corinthian church exactly what love looks like, when it's lived out in the church.

⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.⁸ Love never ends. (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

- **Encouragement (purpose)**

Because of Christ's work of grace in our hearts we are knit together in love and this is how we experience mutual edification and encouragement.

Let me ask you a question:

What happens to people when they lose hope? They give up.

Why do people lose hope? Because they become discouraged.

We need to be encouraged ... and we need to be encouragers.

... Now I didn't say flatterers there is a world of difference between flattery and encouragement.

The word here in verse 2 for encouragement is **parakaleo**.

It is used to describe giving comfort, exhortation, and strengthening.

Paul in other places gives us two additional elements of encouragement ...

Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, (1 Thess. 5:11)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

When you encourage someone, you are **building them up**, highlighting the evidence of God's grace in them ...

... according to Paul in 2 Corinthians you are doing for others **what God has done for you**.

We all need this from time to time!

Dean Merrill relates the story of a man in his church who gave this testimony one Sunday morning.

This man had been kicked out of his profession as a lawyer over a false accusation and the only job he could get was hauling dry bags of concrete up to the 5th level of a construction site.

Instead of a soft office chair and soothing piped in music in the office hallways he was doing back breaking work listening to the profanity of construction workers ...

... he was made the butt of a lot of jokes over the accusations and the loss of his career as a lawyer.

... and if any girl walked by the construction site, she immediately became the object of rude and profane remarks.

But he kept working, simply because he had no other way to take care of his family

... but after 3 long and painful weeks, he just couldn't take anymore

One morning he decided, "I'll work until break time and then I'm going to quit and go home.

However, shortly before break the foremen came around with the weekly paychecks ...

... as the foreman was handing him his pay he said, "Hey, there's a woman working in the front office who knows you. She says she takes care of your kids sometimes."

"Who?" He asked, and the foreman named a woman who sometimes volunteered in the nursery of the church where he and his family went.

The foreman left and went about his business.

The discouraged construction worker opened his pay envelope and along with his check he found this handwritten note:

"When one part of the body of Christ suffers, we all suffer with it. Just wanted you to know that I'm praying for you these days."

He stared at the note, astonished.

He had no idea the lady from the nursery worked for this company ... and here at his lowest hour she gave him the strength to pick up another back of concrete and keep working.

We think ministry is large crowds, big offerings, and popularity ... not so.

... You are never more alone than when you are by yourself in a large crowd.

Listen: Large crowds can be inspirational, but the Church is supposed to be transformational.

Here Paul shows us that what we need, if we want stable faith, is the **knowledge of Christ**, the **love of a godly community**, and the **encouragement of one another**.

2. Three Steps into OVERCOMING Faith

which is Christ,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

In Colossae and Laodicea these false teachers were making the claim that they had access to higher wisdom and esoteric knowledge ...

... and Paul says, **WRONG**, you can't go any higher than Christ.

The treasure of wisdom and knowledge is found in only one place ... the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says I want your faith to be stable—he uses the word firm in verse 5 ...

... Paul says I want your faith to be **stable** so that your faith will **overcome** the ... (here is how he says it) ...

... that no one will delude (or deceive) you with plausible (or persuasive) arguments.

The Greek word for **delude** means to cheat by using false logic.

[This word is found in the Papyri and is used of a keeper of the state library who would use partial information, or information taken out of context, to draw and erroneous conclusion.]

- For example, when I was being trained by Terminix my trainer found a piece of wood out in the yard that had termites in it. (Like ants, termites are everywhere but many homeowners don't know that.) My trainer used that piece of wood instill fear in the homeowner and convince them to purchase a treatment they didn't need.

The Greek word for **plausible** is an idiom that means to “talk somebody into something.”

[This word is found in the papyri in a court case where it records where someone used persuasive words to convince the court to let them keep what they had stolen.]

- Terence Dickson broke into a house, robbed it and then made his escape through the garage only to find the steel door from the house locked behind him and the garage door opener was broken. He ended up being trapped for eight days with only a case of Pepsi and a bag of dry dog food to sustain him. When the homeowner came home, he was arrested. However, Mr. Dickson lawyer sued the homeowner for imprisonment and the jury awarded Mr. Dickson 500K for mental anguish.

Many people stumble in their Christian walk because they are listening and believing in the false teachings of preachers who twist truth and then use it to talk people into believing the very opposite of what God's Word explicitly teaches.

Paul says, don't let this happen to you ... I want you to have overcoming faith.

... and then Paul gives three things needed for overcoming faith.

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (Col. 2:6-7)

- Walk in Christ
- Rooted in Christ
- Built up in Christ

- **Walk in Christ—total submission**

Walking in Christ Jesus is nothing less than **total submission** to His lordship.

Christ calls us to obedience, not so that we can earn our salvation, but so that we will be far away from that which is dangerous and destructive.

- **Rooted in Christ—completely dependent**

To be **rooted in Christ Jesus** is to be **completely dependent** upon Him for life and strength.

... in fact, this is the only way we can be a fruitful Christian

“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. (Jn. 15:5)

- **Built up in Christ—wholly established**

To be **built up in Christ Jesus** is to be **wholly established** by Him

Just as **only** Jesus Christ can save a person, **only** Christ can build up or mature a person.

Paul says if you have these three things: you will be *established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving*

Do you see it? ... Overcoming faith is Christ centered faith.

Every appetite we have, the more we feed and try to satisfy that appetite, the more that appetite grows and so we are never satisfied.

The glutton/drug addict/drun kard/power hungry/workaholic/sloth will always want more

... food/drugs/alcohol/power/work/sleep

You see, no matter what the world offers you, it is never enough, and it will never satisfy.

But Christ is always sufficient ... Christ is always enough.

Thomas Brooks the old puritan said it this way:

Christ hath in Himself all power to defend you, all wisdom to direct you, all mercy to pardon you, all grace to enrich you, all righteousness to clothe you, all goodness to supply you, and all gladness to crown you.

No matter **where** you are at, no matter **what** you are going through, no matter **who** you are ... Christ is Enough!