**Colossians 2**

**Notes**

**Context**

This chapter follows the high Christology of Col 1 (see 1:13-20). It also introduces the thought of opposition against the believers (2:4).

**Divisions**

2:1-5

2:6-7

2:8-23

**2:1-5**

The beginning section of Col 2 – Paul talks about **A struggle worth having in the Church**

What are some things that are worth it for you? Work, planning, insurance, saving, taking a detour, read bible, vacation, eating habits, practice. Maybe you relate to the struggle of an athlete - get up early, train, eat right towards the goal of good health; or the struggle of a student to study, read towards the ultimate goal of graduation, preparation, knowledge, and wisdom.

In this letter, Paul was describing what a struggle for him that was worth it

Remember, when Paul wrote the letter to the church in Colossae, he was writing from a prison cell. Picture him chained to a soldier and writing about struggle. But that isn’t the struggle to which he is referring …

The word Paul used for struggle describes an ***effort towards a desirable goal***

We learn two remarkable things about Paul’s struggle

1. Paul’s struggle isn’t even for himself
2. In fact, it is for people he has never even met!

Paul is modeling for us a struggle worth having in the church

NOTE - Vs. 1 “a GREAT struggle”

Question: How much would you struggle for someone you don’t know?

* Cf. 2:1, 5 and 1:4 – he seems not to have met most of them

When Paul uses this word, “struggle” – he’s not talking about pain or facing difficulty

CONTEXT - In the immediate context, Paul was explaining the struggle that he has for himself (1:29 – same word)

* He began by talking about his suffering, but that was not his struggle
* Then, he talks about the Mystery of the Gospel – Gentiles can be saved
* In our preaching, we warn EVERY man and teach EVERY man – you can be complete in Christ
  + That’s the nature of my struggle (striving, but according to HIS power)!
  + Paul, says, that’s **MY** struggle for ME
* Now, here’s the struggle I have for **YOU**
* This is a Vicarious struggle. ***The ultimate example of vicarious suffering is Christ!***

I want you to know this …

* This is a need I see that you have (I want you to know this)
* But, it’s not just for YOU
  + Laodicea – all Everyone who has not seen my face
  + Undoubtedly, because those who HAVE seen his face – he told them this face to face

The **word** that he uses there for struggle is where we get our word, “Agony.” It is a term from athletics. It referred to a person struggling to win the prize. Interesting, our English word, Agony has a negative connotation (pain) – originally, it referred to the effort to reach a positive outcome. Paul said – I am agonizing to reach this positive outcome for YOU!

* Jesus said in Luke 13:24 – make every effort (agonize) to enter by the narrow Gate
* 1Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
* 2Tim. 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
* Heb. 12:1   Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us

**Paul’s use of σύν in Colossians**

1:7 - A Servant With

1:17 - by Him all things stand with

2:5 - I am with you

2:12 - buried with;

- raised with

2:13 - made alive with

2:19 - bound together with the body

2:20 - Died with

3:1 - raised with

3:3 - hidden with

3:4 - revealed with

3:9 - laid aside old self with ...

3:14 - held together with peace

4:7 - slave with

4:10 - a prisoner with

4:11 - a worker with ...

PAUL’S STRUGGLE

Paul’s struggle seems to have been in prayer – I am agonizing for you. Have you ever agonized for someone in prayer? (Child, spouse, loved one)? For Paul, there was an agonizing taking place in his prayer. That’s the kind of struggle we need more of in the church

Proverbs 2:1–8, for instance, includes many of the key words that Paul uses in this and related contexts in Colossians; and “treasures” is among them (we note parallel words in the LXX):

My son, if you accept my words and store up (*krypsēs;* “hide”; cf. v. 3) my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom (*sophia;* cf. v. 3) and applying your heart (*kardia;* cf. v. 2) to understanding—indeed, if you call out for insight (*sophia;* cf. v. 3) and cry aloud for understanding (*synesis;* cf. v. 2), and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure (*thēsauros;* cf. v. 3), then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge (*epignōsis;* cf. v. 2) of God. For the Lord gives wisdom (*sophia;* cf. v. 2); from his mouth come knowledge (*gnōsis*; cf. v. 3) and understanding (*synesis;* cf. v. 2). He holds success in store (*thēsaurizō;* cf. v. 3) for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**The Kind of Struggle we need more of in the church**

1. **We need more struggling in the church for Encouragement**

Words:

1. The use of *gar*, “for” suggests the connection of 2:1 to 1:29.
2. The use of the aorist passive subjunctive of παρακαλέω can mean ‘to be strengthened,’ ‘filled with courage,’ ‘encouraged,’ ‘comforted.’
   * Same word from which word “comforter” Jesus used to describe the work and person of the Holy Spirit (15/16)
   * One who comes along side to exhort, comfort, etc.
3. ἵνα indicates purpose - I have a great struggle for them in order that their hearts may be strengthened/comforted.

The key to understanding Paul’s use of παρακαλέω is that it was something that he wanted for their hearts! I want your hearts to be persuaded, encouraged, comforted.

Ill. Barnabas; Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 1:6) – “he often refreshed me.”

At a minimum, Paul is showing us the importance of going our of our way to encourage others

***Their encouragement is worth your struggle!***

1. **We need more struggle in the church for Unity**

To be **knit** together in the Love of Christ

Believers are to be joined together in love

Ps. 133:1 - how good & pleasant it is for brothers to dwell-unity

Eph 4:3 – striving for unity

***The unity of the church is worth our struggle!***

1. **We need more struggle in the church for Assurance**

Col 2:2 – until we reach the riches …

* lit “unto all the riches”

- vs. 3 - in **Him** are hidden all the treasures of wisdom

- all the answers to life’s questions …

Exp. This verse borrows the verb from the previous phrase “knit together” unto:

1. Full assurance of understanding
2. Knowledge of mystery of God (Father & Son)

- See 1:27 - The mystery is Christ in you is the hope of glory!

=> in whom are ***hidden*** all ***treasures*** of wisdom and knowledge

TO the knowledge – maturity; growth. ***I’m convinced we are becoming a generation that’s high on spirituality, but low of spiritual maturity***. Paul prayed in Eph. 4:15 That we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.

Wealth – comes from full assurance of understanding

Ill. Greek – “thesaurus.” This is where we get our English word, “Thesaurus” – a storehouse; treasury. He is the storehouse of **Wisdom** and **Knowledge**

Ill. Today, on internet, there are over a billion websites. Every second, there are 40,000 searches on Google, 2 million emails are sent, and 6000 Tweets are Tweeted. People are hungry for information and knowledge!  But, In HIM are hidden all the treasures!

***Has it ever occurred to you that nothing ever occurred to God?***

All knowledge is hidden in Him. This is what Paul was describing in vs. 2 – “The mystery” (cf. 1:27) is Christ in you is the hope of glory!Not only that – Paul prays that they would have assurance of this mystery. That you may KNOW!

The assurance is worth the struggle!

1. **We need more struggle in the church for Discernment**

Vs. 4 is a picture of much of what is happening today

Not everything said about God is OF God

Paul said I am telling you all this so that you not dissuaded

- so you not deceived!

I tend to see the de in vs. 4 and the gar in vs. 5 as continuing what Paul hopes to see

* These in vs. 4 and 5 – DO seem to be results of 1-3, but still what Paul hopes to see

“So that” - Another hina clause – in order that …

They were under attack! By fine-sounding arguments …

Here is where we get an indication of false teachers in the church. They are trying to deceive the believers with well-crafted, but false arguments; persuasive sounding. Plausible arguments - that’s what Satan did to Eve; Job’s friends.

The antidote for such false teaching is the “cogent proof” of Christ’s absolute supremacy and exclusivity. The contrast with “body” would naturally suggest that “spirit” *(pneuma)* refers to the human spirit.

Plato, followed by Aristotle and Epictetus, contrasts this kind of “persuasion” with “wisdom.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Because there are a lot of deceivers out there! And, they may speak ***persuasive words***

Ill. 2 Tim 4:3 - time will come when they not endure sound doctrine

1. **We need more struggle in the church for Discipleship**

**NOTE** contrast between those he has not seen (2:1) and what he “sees” in 2:5

Here, Paul talking about a steady growth in their faith. ***I’m convinced we are becoming a generation that’s high on spirituality, but low of spiritual maturity.***

Ill. Eph. 4:15 – That we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ

Note, also, the gar in vs. 5 – further connecting it with vs. 1. Paired with vs. 5 – this provides the logical break in this first section. This is what I wish to see …. It expresses his motivation; reason. I think the rejoicing here is anticipatory – I WILL see. Connects with vs. 4 – I don’t want anyone to deceive you—I WANT to SEE

Vs. 5 - Good order (NASB = discipline!) & Steadfastness

If one guy in a line is out of step, there is disorder. But, what if we are out of step in the church?

Ill. Sailor marching out of step at royal wedding Prince Harry and Meghan Markle

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.thesun.co.uk/news/6334974/royal-wedding-procession-sailor-out-of-time/amp>

* Soldier awkwardly; comically out of step
* Almost comes to a stop; pained expression on his face
* Watched by 1 billion people –

***He was out of step!***

Paul prayed that we would not get out of step!

That they would have **Good order**. Good order is a military term; like the marching of a mature believer in Christ. That they would be **Steadfast** = established, firm, unwavering; not discouraged, dissuaded or defeated

***To remain in step & steadfast in an unsteady time is a mark of a spiritually maturing believer!***

There is an interesting reciprocal relationship here:

* 1:28 – Christ IN you
* 2:5 – You IN Christ

Those are the struggles Paul had for them. They are struggle worth having.

**2:6-7**

This section is about **Walking in Him**

The awesome high Christology of Chapter 1 – spills over into chapter 2:2-3. Then, 6-7 summarize the entire message of the book. So, Walk IN Him.

These two verses really summarize the content of entire letter

The book of Colossians has a repeated refrain related to our walk in Christ: ***Walk Worthy*** (1:10); ***Walk in Wisdom*** (4:5). Then in 2:6-7 – ***As you have received Christ, walk in Him***

Text gives clues on how do that. The passage contains 1 imperative with 5 instructions …

**Imperative** = Vs. 6 – **Walk IN Him**

**Instructions =** Vs. 7 – 5 instructions on **HOW**

1. **Walking in Him Means We Grow Deep in the Word**That’s the starting point!

Ill. Jesus said, the man who hears My Words and acts on them is like a man who dug deep and laid foundation on rock … ***What roots are to a tree and a foundation is to a building – the Word of God is to your faith***

Ill. Matt 13 - Jesus told parable about man who planted seed and some fell on shallow soil

2. **Walking in Him Means We are Being Built Strong in Him**

The first two images seem to flow together – rooted deep and built up: One is a metaphor from agriculture; the other from construction. Rooted deep like a tree; built up like a house

This word carries the idea continual building; progress. There is a clear process - being built up in Him!

Paul used phrase, ***being built*** 2 other times –

* **Eph. 2:22** - You also are ***being built*** together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
* **1 Pet. 2:5** - You also, as living stones, are ***being built*** up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1. **Walking in Him Means We Stand Steady in Faith**

That word ‟established” means to make stable => nothing can shake it!

Ill. Eph. 6:13 - Having done all to stand – stand!

1. **Walking in Him Means Our Course is Straight**

‟As you have been taught . . .” Following the instructions in God’s Word. It describes a person who is grounded in their faith and staying on course.

Ill. Ps. 119:11 – How can a young man keep His way pure?

Ps. 119:105 - Thy Word is lamp to my feet and light to my path

5. **Walking in Him Means We Will Spill Over in Gratitude**

This last word describes the end result of walking in Him

“Abounding …” The word literally means ‟to cause to super-abound!”Ill. David said – Ps. 23 – You anoint … My cup runs over!

Abounding in what? **Gratitude!**

=> they will be spilling over with gratitudeThankfulness is a theme of Paul’s in this letter

* 1:3; 2:6; 3:15, 17; 4:2

Exp. ***As you have received Him*** … so **WALK**!

**2:8-23**

These verses illustrate how those principles apply in our lives

1. ***Don’t let anyone Deceive you*** (8)

This word, *sulagogeo* comes from word “to take captive.” Don’t be led astray by false theology

Because, **All fullness dwells in Him**

HOW are you cheated –

1. Philosophy and empty deceit
2. Traditions of men (based on the world and NOT Christ)

Don’t be misled, the substance is all In Him

In Him

vs. 9 – In Him - All the fullness

vs. 10 – In Him - You are complete in Him

vs. 11 – “and who” (carries the idea of “in Him”) you were circumcised

vs. 12 – “with Him” you were buried in baptism

vs. 13 – “with Him” – He made you alive with Him

vs. 14 – “He Himself” – He, Himself, nailed it to the cross

vs. 15 – “through Him” – He triumphed over them by Him

* Vs. 16 – “Therefore”

1. ***Don’t let anyone Judge you*** (16)

Don’t let others persuade you that those things are the substance of faith

* Those things are only a shadow …

**The substance is in Christ**

1. ***Don’t let anyone Cheat you (out of your reward)*** (18)

CSB – “disqualify;” NAS – “defraud”

Lit – to serve as judge over you; decide a case against you

They would be cheating you out of a reward …

The reward is being able to live free in Christ

Vs. 23 – all these things have an appearance of wisdom … but aren’t wise

1. Douglas J. Moo, [*The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntccolphm?ref=Bible.Col2.3&off=2207&ctx=ent+wisdom+tradition~.+Proverbs+2:1%E2%80%938%2c+fo), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. Davids, [*Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon.*](https://ref.ly/logosres/cstonecm70eph?ref=Bible.Col2.4&off=0&ctx=+cryptic+statement.%0a~2:4+well-crafted+arg), vol. 16 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 264. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)