

Colossians: The Supremacy of Christ

2:1-7 *Be Careful*

This week we're taking a look at the first seven verses of chapter 2, which center around some warnings Paul gives on how to avoid false teaching.

Read Colossians 2:1-7 *(in a few different translations, if possible)*

1. What is the struggle Paul is engaged in? Go back and read 1:28-29 to help figure it out.

▶ How does the knowledge that your pastors struggle, labor, and agonize over your spiritual growth affect you?

2. Remember the reason Paul wrote this letter was to combat heretical teaching which was infiltrating the Church. According to verses 2-4, what did Paul want for these believers?

▶ The result is an encouraged heart, but there are three things which play into their hearts being encouraged in the faith. What are those three things, according to these verses? Discuss them individually.

▶ In verse 4, Paul says that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. Wisdom and knowledge are two distinct yet connected concepts, both existing in Christ...talk about the differences between the two and what they have to do with life in Christ.

So wisdom is important in the life of the believer. So is knowledge. And they both are found in Jesus Christ. Hold that in your mind as we move forward.

Read verses 4 & 5 again.

3. Apparently, whatever the false teaching was being spread was presented as a fairly persuasive argument. Which brings us to a little history lesson for a minute.

At this time in Greek/Roman society, they didn't have Facebook or Twitter...they had something much better: they had **philosophy**. By the time of Colossians, philosophers and philosophy had been around awhile (this is about 60-62 AD; philosophers like Aristotle and Socrates lived about 400 years before, for example) and was the standard system of thought for those who considered themselves educated. (*Philosophy, by definition, is the rational investigation of the truths and principles of being, knowledge, or conduct.*) The Greeks, and later the Romans, would sit for hours discussing their ideas of life, trying to persuade each other with their clever words and mental gymnastics. Philosophy bled into every part of their social life, and as we come to Paul's letter here, it had even seeped into Christianity.

So Paul felt it necessary to warn these believers to not allow smooth talkers to sway them from what they know is the truth.

Now pull that idea of wisdom and knowledge back into the front of your mind. Paul said **in Christ** are all the hidden treasures of knowledge and wisdom—and therefore, when confronted with the idea that true knowledge and wisdom are to be found somewhere else, say, in the foolishness of man's musings, Paul wanted the Colossian believers to reject that idea outright. And apparently they were pretty successful at being able to withstand these assaults—Paul says he's pleased at their stability and control in their faith, even without his presence to help them (verse 5).

▶ Does this kind of thing still happen today? Share some thoughts on where.

▶ What is the lesson for us about listening to "persuasive arguments" or smooth talk that goes against what we know to be the truth of the Gospel?

4. How did you get saved?

Reread verses 6 & 7 below:

*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in **the faith**, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

▶ What does it mean to be *rooted* and *built up* in Christ? (What's the word picture Paul's using? Talk through the word picture and what it looks like in our Christian walk.

▶ Notice the phrase, **the faith**. That term is used of the body of doctrine of the Gospel. Paul uses it to refer to the entirety, the completeness of the work of Christ. What does it mean to be established in **the faith**, as you have been taught? Look up the following verses to help you think through the concept:

Acts 2:22-24 (Peter's sermon at Pentecost)

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

→ What is the Gospel, in a nutshell?

→ Whose work is salvation—yours or God's?

→ How much did you do to accomplish your salvation?

▶ According to the end of verse 7, what's our attitude supposed to be as we live our lives out in Christ?

Next week we'll discuss the warnings Paul gives about trying to trust in something other than God's power for your righteousness...close this lesson in prayer of thanksgiving for the surety we can have in the power of Christ and the truth of the Gospel.