

1st Above All

Colossians

Week 7 – Colossians 2:1-7

Connected In Jesus Christ

Purpose: God's People who are redeemed and reconciled will live life Connected in Jesus Christ and Connected into the Body of Christ.

Call to Worship (Stand)

Read

Colossians 2:1-7 ESV

1 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.

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.

Pray

Loving Father, you have given us faith to believe in Jesus Christ, and you have made us your children. We are grateful for your kind work to save. Now, we ask you to protect us, grow us into Christlikeness, and live as people who have are rich in Christ and blessed to have family!

Sermon

Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

Opening Idea

The Story of Two House Builders

A dynamic storm affects an area with great power and force. Two house builders experience the same storm with different outcomes. Both houses are built with planning, careful work, specifically selected materials, and on purposefully picked land. As the storm ravaged the area, it brought hurricane force wind and rushing waters, both with incredible power. Although both men experience the same storm in similar ways, one man's house was destroyed while the other man's house endured. What was the difference? The foundation was the difference. One

man built his house on a foundation laid upon sand while the other man built his house on a foundation laid upon bedrock.

Jesus tells this story while preaching His Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 7:24-27). He shares this story to encourage and warn people to hear His words and live according to them. This is the underlying idea to what Paul writes to the Colossian saints. They will need grace and peace, to worship God with thanksgiving, to walk in a worthy way, to live under Christ as 1st Over All, to live as reconciled people, and to make Christ known. Let's continue reading Paul's letter to the saints in Colossae and pray for God to work in us!

Read

Colossians 2:1-7 ESV

(SLIDE 2) **1** 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.

(SLIDE 3) **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.

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.

Series Graphic (SLIDE 4)

Notes on Colossians 2:1-7

Sacred and Purposeful Struggle (v. 1-2)

1 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,

In chapter one of this letter (v. 24 & 29), Paul writes that he is suffering and laboring. His strong effort is from the calling he has received from God. What Paul is working toward is to see God's people, especially the Colossians, grow into maturity and presented to God. There is a general idea with Paul's struggle that he is struggle for the Body of Christ, the Church Universal. Here, he writes that he is struggle in a great way and that he is struggling specifically for the Colossians and for the Laodiceans. This is a unique addition to the content of this letter. We know that Paul "toils" and is "struggling". At this point in the letter, Paul writes to clearly reinforce that he has struggled greatly for the Christians in Colossae, but Paul includes a broader group for whom he has struggled. He includes the saints in Laodicea and any believer who has not seen him in person. Three things to know with this statement. First, Paul does not think that

in order for a believer to have faith, be saved, or to grow, that he is the only one who can help. That is contrary to what Paul writes in other letters (I Cor. 1:11-17). God commissions and sends Paul to preach Jesus Christ crucified, salvation in Him, and repentance with forgiveness. So, it isn't ego or a "god complex" for Paul, but it is a desire to fulfill the calling God has given Paul. Second, Paul's concern and struggle isn't just for the Colossian saints, but it is also for the believers in Laodicea. Laodicea was a neighboring city that seems to have a close connection. That connection might be in the person of Epaphras. Epaphras was essential to the Colossian believers hearing of Christ, of faith, being taught, and growing to live by faith. Epaphras was also a representative on behalf of the believers in Colossae to Paul as he told Paul of what God was doing in Colossae and what the Colossians were doing in response to God. Epaphras is also working in Laodicea. It can be thought that he is doing similar things in Laodicea that he is doing in Colossae. As Epaphras struggles, suffers, and toils so does Paul. Their struggle isn't necessarily one in action, but one in spirit and emotions. Paul and Epaphras pray, long, and hope for God to bring the believers in Colossae and Laodicea to maturity. Finally, Paul struggles for others alongside the Colossians and the Laodiceans. Paul qualifies the others as anyone who has not seen him in person. This is again about Paul wanting to fulfill his commission from God than it is about Paul's ego. The reader can see that there is a diverse geography to Paul's calling and struggle, but it is also diverse temporally. Paul struggles to carry out his calling and disciples people in all places and for all times. There is a two part aspect to the writings of Paul. One, Paul can carry out his commission and send letters to places he may never go. Two, Paul's letters will be preserved, transcribed, and shared for thousands of years until Christ returns for His bride, the Church, who is mature to stand before God and united with Christ for eternity.

Encouragement to Live in Christ (v. 2-3)

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.

Paul continues revealing his struggle. Paul longs to encourage the hearts of God's people, uniting them together in the love of Christ and for each other, and to grow greatly to understand what they have been given in Christ and to live in assurance knowing that Christ lives in them and that they live in Christ. Christ is the priceless and precious treasure for the believer and in Him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Believers have been given all that they need in Jesus Christ and they will spend the rest of their lives growing to know God more, love God more, grow to be more like Christ, obey God more, and share God more. The believer's fulfillment and sufficiency in life are in Christ, therefore live in Him! This fulfilled life includes having a heart that is encouraged, being grafted into a community of people who belong to God and living confidently because of who God is and what Christ has fully accomplished. The believer belongs to God and God is their God. They are secure for eternity.

Protected In Christ (v. 4)

4 I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

This can be understood as the possible focus of the letter. Remember that the hymn about Jesus Christ is the apex of the letter (Col. 1:15-20), but here we read why Paul was commissioned to write this letter. It appears that Epaphras brought word that false teachers have spoken into the fellowship bringing confusion or disruption. It may be that, similar to the Corinthian believers, the Colossian believers have tried to unite idolatry and the faith, teaching falsely and fooling people to live by dead ways, looking like dead people. Whatever it is, Paul has written that they will need grace and peace, to worship in gratitude, live in a worthy way, make Christ first over all, live reconciled, and make Christ known. Why are these things important and why has Paul emphasized these things up to this point in the letter? He has done this to set the believer upon a firm foundation of faith and knowledge to stand and live while also cultivating the soil of their hearts and minds to receive good and faithful teaching to produce the fruit of the Spirit through them. Paul doesn't want them to be conned or fooled by arguments that would cause them to think differently, rely upon their own strength, not know God fully, or doubt God's work through Jesus Christ. The claims that people will make will not likely be complete nonsense or easily identified lies, but the arguments and claims are rooted in partial truths and false evidence. The best way to defend against this type of work is to know the truth. The greatest protection a believer can have against false teaching is Christ. Living in Christ as first over all does a work on the believer to shape their heart, soul, and mind so that as they hear false teaching, the Holy Spirit points it out in light of the truth and the believer catches the false teaching before it can infect their heart, their mind, and their actions. All teachers have theology problems. All shepherds will shepherd poorly. All preachers will stumble. Protection is found in Christ and rooted in His Word.

We Live in A Connected Body (v. 5)

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.

With the stated risk above, Paul reveals that it is God's will and for the believers' benefit for God's sons and daughters to lie in spiritual connection with one another. Paul reveals this life in this sentence. He is not there with the Colossians or the Laodiceans. Paul is in Rome under arrest, yet there is a connection. This isn't a connection rooted in feelings. Feelings falter and fade. This isn't a connection rooted in supplies. Supplies run out and dry up. This connection is rooted in the Holy Spirit. He works to unite God's people in Christ, and it is the Holy Spirit's commission to help God's people live united in God and in unity and harmony with each other. The Holy Spirit is the one who will continually work, speak into, create desire, and empower the

son and daughter to live connected in the Body of Christ. Paul longs to rejoice and worship God in thanksgiving in seeing and hearing how the saints are healthily living by the Spirit and growing to live by the faith they have been given in Christ. This is a vital aspect of a believer's life. We are part of the Body of Christ. It is a spiritual work while also manifesting in connected lives. It is seen and experienced in the fellowship of a congregation, but while also finding fulfillment beyond the wall of a single church or the borders of a state or nation. All believers live connected in the Body of Christ.

The Saint Lives in Christ (v. 6-7)

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.

Paul completes this section of the letter with a directive. As the life of the believer flourishes in living by the faith and in Christ, live that way. The key to this directive goes back to a fundamental truth. Don't strive to live in Christ by your own strength and work. It was the work of the Holy Spirit that gave you Jesus Christ, that is, He gave you faith to believe in Christ alone and to bring you to repentance leading to forgiveness. Therefore, just as you depended upon the Holy Spirit to give you Christ, depend upon the Holy Spirit and petition for Him to work in you to live in Christ. This is not an academic exercise or working to know more things. Growing in knowledge and familiarity with God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) roots God's children in Christ, builds the son and daughter up to become like Christ in their heart, soul, mind, and actions, sets them firm in faith and the life that is empowered by faith, and causes the son and daughter to be grateful people who worship God in thanksgiving. The saint will look completely different than the world around them, look less like their old self, and they will look more and more like Christ as they live in Him. The saint deepens their roots in the foundation of Christ and grows to not be fooled by attractive and persuasion teaching that leads people astray.

God's People Are Connected In Jesus Christ (SLIDE 5)

Connected Into Christ (SLIDE 6)

He Has Connected Us into Himself

Rooted in Truth (nourished and strengthened)

Protected from Deception and Lies

Connected Into the Body of Christ (SLIDE 7)

He Connects Us Together

Blessed Community
Being Built Up Together

We Will Live as “Connected In” People (SLIDE 8)

Encouraged (Spiritual Work in Us and To Endure)

“Knit” Together (In Christ and with Each Other)

Rich in Christ (Known & Knowing, Provided For, Eternal Inheritance)

Protected (From Deception and For Eternity)

Flourishing in Christ (rooted and built up)

Abounding in Thanksgiving (Empowered Worship)

Read

Jeremiah 17:7-8 ESV (SLIDE 9)

7 “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

Series Graphic (SLIDE 10)