



Colossians - Chapter 1 v 24 to 2 v 5

United in love

Paul has spoken to the Colossians on a personal level and assured them of his love and prayers – always a good place to start (1:1 to 14). As an absentee apostle, he is anxious to build a relationship with his readers. He follows that with one of the great statements about the person of Jesus (1:15 to 23). Those two relationships form the basis of what Paul needs to teach this church. He is introducing himself to a group of people who do not know him personally.

Paul talks about his suffering and his calling as an apostle and his concern for them

- He suffers for them (1:24)
- His commission is for them (1:25)
- He struggles for them (2:1)

Paul is trying to build their confidence in him but, more importantly, their confidence in the truth of the gospel

Talk about times where your confidence in the gospel has weakened.

Perhaps you have been tempted to doubt the truth about Jesus.

Maybe you have been tempted to follow another way (just like the Colossians) – what brought you back?

Paul's passion is to make the truth known. For years it has been mystery (v26) – but now God has made it known to all people including the Gentiles (v27). He wants them to know 'riches of the glory of his majesty which is Christ in you the hope of glory (v27) .

Do we truly believe this message is lifesaving?

How should we set about telling others what it means to be 'in Christ'?

Paul also gives more detail about his message and what it contains. He talks about 'warning and teaching' (v28) and he also talks about 'proclaiming him'. It is clear our message is about a person not an ideology.

Do we get worried when we talk about Jesus? Do we fear rejection by friends or family?

Would we ever 'warn' someone about the consequences of ignoring the message?

Are we convinced that knowing the message would be of great benefit to anyone we tell even if they reject it when we first tell them?

Paul then makes his purpose clear. He knows he needs wisdom to best communicate the message (v28) but his aim is to create mature believers (v28). Anyone who is continuously taught a subject becomes more mature in their understanding of that material. So 'teaching and warning' another person is a long-term project – not a one-off conversation.

Share any experience of long-term engagements with people about the gospel.

Have you found it difficult or frustrating?

Can you remember times when you had conversations and the penny dropped?

The last verse of the chapter is challenging. Paul talks about 'toil' and 'energy'. It doesn't sound as if gospel business is easy even for the great apostle.

Is this something we should be serious about? Should we pray for someone and really make an effort to help them trust Jesus?
Or should we just take the opportunities as they arise in the normal events of daily life?
Is helping someone finding the 'hope of glory' (eternal life) sufficient motivation for us?

The start of chapter 2 is a reminder of Paul's concerns for this young church. He clearly wants his letter to go beyond Colossae as he mentions the close-by Laodicea (See Revelation 3) and any others 'who have not seen' his face. He moves on to show how they should be in community

- Their hearts may be encouraged
- They are to be knit together in love
- To have all the riches of assured understanding
- The knowledge of God's mystery in Christ

Paul wants them to have the full package. He wants to see them encouraged by being a loving community. But he wants them to understand their faith and what Jesus Christ has done for them.

How important is a 'loving community' to you?
How is it expressed in your relationships?
Are their bits of the teaching on the Christian faith you find difficult to understand?

Again, Paul states his purpose. He does not want them to be 'deluded by beguiling speech'. That scenario has been around since the garden of Eden – 'did God really say ...?'

What kind of statements affect your certainty of the Christian faith?
Where is the 'beguiling speech' coming from today?

Paul rounds off with another statement of his support for these believers and he commends them again for their 'good order' and 'firmness' of their faith

What do you understand by 'good order'? What does it look like today?
How important is encouragement in keeping your faith firm?
Why not offer one another some words of encouragement?

THE DOWNLOAD VERSE

This passage is all about developing and growing in the context of a Christian group like Download

'.....their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'

This is what Jesus wants for you and Download is a place where you can experience this. He wants you to experience a loving community where you can learn more about God and his 'riches'.

Take some time this week to ***THANK HIM for Download***