

▼ "Rooted, Grounded, and Running in Christ" - Colossians, Part 3

▼ Colossians 1:21-23

"21 Although you were at one time estranged from God and enemies in your minds because of your evil deeds, you also 22 he has now reconciled through Christ's death in his physical body. He did this in order to present you holy and without blemish or reproach in his sight—23 provided that you persist in faith, established, steadfast, and not shifting from the hope generated by the gospel that you heard. This gospel has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and I, Paul, have become its servant."

- 1. David most recently preached through this passage, and I intend to return to it at the end of the message. Note the conditional: "The promise of blamelessness is, therefore, not unconditional. If the Colossians allow outsiders to dislodge them from their foundation in the gospel—what they had heard and received from Epaphras—they will find themselves removed from their hope. Therefore, they need to be planted ever more deeply in the faith that they first heard preached and which is preached throughout the world, lest they become like the seed in the shallow earth that bursts into bloom but then quickly withers and dies under persecution (Mark 4:16-17) - David Garland

▼ Colossians 1:24

"24 I rejoice now in the midst of my sufferings for your sake, and for my part I am filling up in my own person what is still lacking with regard to the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of his body, which is the Church."

- 1. This is a most difficult verse, and a heavy theological one. If you are interested in its meaning, I would be glad to send you a 3-4 page discourse that explains it very well written by Douglas Moo. Basically, I believe Paul is saying that his apostolic sufferings/efforts are serving the people of God and advancing the gospel of God. Our suffering is powerful in that way, so suffer well, like Diane Stewart did. Good suffering propels the good news with good power.

▼ Colossians 1:25-29

"25 I have become a servant of the Church by virtue of the commission God gave me with regard to you, to declare fully the word of God—26 the mystery kept secret for ages and generations past but now disclosed to God's people. 27 For God chose to divulge to his people how great are the glorious riches of this mystery displayed among the Gentiles, which is Christ within you, your hope of glory. 28 It is this Christ that we proclaim as we admonish and teach everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 To achieve this I toil and strive with the energy that Christ powerfully generates within me."

- 1. Paul is a servant of the good news, of the Body of Christ, and of Christ Himself. A good model for us.
- 2. CHRIST IN US IS THE HOPE OF GLORY. THE GLORIOUS HOPE. HOW IS CHRIST IN US? HIS WORDS AND HIS POWER/PRESENCE. (see below)
- 3. Vs. 28, "mature in Christ." "Perfect" is too strong, "mature" too weak...to be teleios is the "complete and undivided way in which a person, with all one's positive and negative attributes, is oriented toward God or toward Christ." - Moo Commentary. This goal is what Paul TOILS AND STRIVES TOWARDS WITH ALL OF HIS ENERGY. Perhaps parents, church leaders and friends should also have this goal. Work-Fighting. (agonizomai)

▼ Colossians 2:1-3

"1 For I want you to know how strenuously I am striving for you, for those at Laodicea and all who have not seen me personally, 2 that they may be welded together in love and

their hearts (WE VIEW HEARTS AS EMOTIONS. THE GREEKS - THE CENTER OF PERSONALITY - SOURCE OF THINKING AND EMOTION) may be encouraged also that they may gain the full wealth of assurance that is brought by understanding and come to a deeper knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ. 3 For in him all God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored up."

- 1. Paul is greatly fighting/contending/sporting for people in the Body of Christ to be welded (united) together in love, their mind/soul/body being encouraged, that they would have full assurance of Christ - the source of all wisdom and knowledge. (Which the Greeks passionately pursued in the way our culture pursues scientific and economic advancement.) There seems to be a real connection between our being welded together in love and coming to full assurance in Christ. At the very least, Paul says he is greatly fighting for those things in followers of Jesus. Note that this also seems to be his definition of maturity 1. Welded in love, fully encouraged/assured and deep knowledge of Jesus.
- 2. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? IN APPLICATION? "Christ is the one in whom is to be found all that one needs in order to understand spiritual reality and to lead a life pleasing to God." - Moo How do we ACTUALLY look to Christ? How do we have faith in somebody who we can't see? (Abrianna question) #1 We PERSIST in listening to His words in faith. #2 When we do that, we believe and confess and He enters in and dwells within us.
- Romans 10:8-17
"8 This is the message of faith that we proclaim: 9 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation...13 For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. 14 But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? [...] 17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ."

▼ Colossians 2:4-8

"4 I am telling you this so that no one may delude you by persuasive argument. 5 For though I am physically absent, yet I am spiritually present with you and delighted to see your orderliness and the stability of your faith in Christ. 6 So just as you received the Messiah, Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, 7 firmly rooted and now being built up in him, becoming established in the faith, as you have been taught, and overflowing with gratitude. 8 Take care that no one carries you off as spoil by an empty, deceptive philosophy derived from human tradition and centered on the elemental spirits of the universe, but not based on Christ."

- call back to verse 23, You will be presented holy and blameless before God the Father as judge "provided that you persist in faith, established, steadfast, and not shifting from the hope generated by the gospel that you heard. This gospel has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and I, Paul, have become its servant."
- Consider: "Paul would clearly want his words here to be taken with great seriousness. He wants to confront the Colossians with the reality that their eventual salvation depends on their remaining faithful to Christ and to the true gospel. Only by continuing in their faith can they hope to find a favorable verdict from God on the day of judgment. We have in this verse, then, a real warning. This warning, along with many similar ones, presents the 'human responsibility' side in the biblical portrayal of final salvation. God does, indeed, by his grace and through his Spirit, work to preserve his people so that they will be vindicated in the judgment; but, at the same time, God's people are responsible to persevere in their faith if they expect to see that vindication." - Douglas J. Moo, Calvinist

▼ What matters most in a race? The start, the middle, or crossing the finish line? Who can answer such a question - THEY ARE ALL CRUCIAL.

- Galatians 2:2
"I went up according to a revelation and presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles—but privately to those recognized as leaders—so that I might not be running, or have run the race, in vain."

- Hebrews 12:1
"Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us..."
- 1 Corinthians 9:24
"Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize."
- 2 Timothy 4:7
"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
- THIS - This is how we must teach and train and disciple and parent. We are overfocused in Christendom now - and in the last 200 years - on "making decisions for Christ." The beginning of the race. The Bible does not overfocus on that, but on the entire race.
- Acts 14:21-22
"21 After they had evangelized that town and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, 'It is necessary to pass through many troubles on our way into the kingdom of God.'"
- "Ever since I started pastoring, I think this has been the main question that haunts me. What is a Christian? What is a simple, straight forward, easy-to-understand answer that makes use of all biblical data? For me, it is Jesus' gate and path analogy. Being a Christian is a being a follower of Jesus. You start following at the gate, continue following as you walk along the path, and at the end of the path of perseverance is life. So for me, it is easy to say that while I celebrate the finished work of Christ on the cross and the underserved, grace-filled, regenerative work of the Holy Spirit at my conversion, there is a very real sense in which my salvation is an ongoing process culminating in glorification, provided of course that I hold fast to the gospel. Isn't that what Paul is saying?"
 - Bill Mounce, author of Greek Grammars.
 - Son of Robert Mounce, author of Greek grammars.
 - Calvinist.
- JESUS is the GATE, The Door - and the WAY. Put another way, Jesus is the Alpha and Omega - the beginning and the end.

▼ Closing

- 2 Timothy 4:1-8
"1 I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and because of His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear something new. 4 They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths. 5 But as for you, be serious about everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time for my departure is close. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 There is reserved for me in the future the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved His appearing."