

DATE: 26th May 2026. - "Paul's love of the "family" - Colossians 2 v 1-7

*2 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, <sup>2</sup> 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, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup> I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*

At the commencement of chapter 2 Paul is letting the people of Colossae know just how much he cares about them. Written under guidance from Almighty God, Paul would have had absolutely no idea how many billions of people would read his letter to the fledgling church at Colossae. He writes to them "I want you to know". Paul shares with the Colossians directly his aims to strengthen bonds with them and informs them that his "struggle" for the gospel had special reference to them and other Christians in the area too, even though he had not met most of them previously. (The churches in Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis had been founded by his colleague Epaphras).

Jesus is God's secret, an open secret for saving all the world. All of God's treasures are hidden in Jesus. God's secret is expanded to include us, since we are to be in union with Christ (v6). In the absence of sound teaching, distortions of truth will always rush in to fill the vacuum. Paul expressed the hope that his teaching of the believers at Philippi would establish them in the faith firmly enough to enable them to distinguish between Christian doctrine and human philosophies parading as religious teachings. Today, no less than in the first century, Christian education stands as a bulwark against false teaching. Such teaching must be grounded in Christ as Lord of life not on faith in deceptive human teachers.

Consequently, the dominant note in Paul's teaching on prayer is the importance of thanksgiving. No matter what the physical circumstances, thanks for salvation floods out of the Christian life.

In his second letter to the Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 14 we find one of five times in this letter alone where Paul breaks out in praise to God for his participation in the ministry he has been called to.

The purpose of Paul's apostolic mission was that the lives of the Colossian believers would be strengthened. Not just in their faith, important though that was, but also in the unity of the fellowship, of the fellowship within the church group. Being "knit together in love" suggests that the closeness of being "bound together" by Christ centred love would increase the ability to attain full understanding and knowledge.

Given that Paul was less concerned about the need for the Colossian's unity than their instruction in the faith over and against false teaching, then perhaps "taught" or "instructed" is better. Love, in all its breadth then refers to the foundation of the Christian life.

"The riches of full assurance of understanding" the same word for 'riches' is used in chapter 1 verse 27 for spiritual wealth, but here the wealth consists of an informed conviction which results from insight, for example, the ability to distinguish the true from the false. Thus, they will come to a deeper personal knowledge of Christ. Probably, with a sideways glance at the false teaching, Paul encourages the readers to look to Christ as the only "place" where these "treasures of wisdom" are available.

"Hidden" does not mean "concealed" but "deposited" or "stored up". To search for other sources of knowledge apart from Christ is useless.

Now, for the first time the danger facing the church is expressly mentioned. "No one" is used generally meaning "anyone", rather than indicating a particular person who was the source of the false teaching, while the danger might come through arguments that seem to be true but are really false.

Paul is physically absent from the community, if he were present, he would have dealt with this threatening situation in person. However, the Spirit of God has united both him and the Colossians to Christ (1Cor Ch 5 v 3-5). Because both live with Christ, Paul is "present ... in spirit" with them.

He encourages them with the good reports he has heard: the well-ordered Christian behaviour of the community, together with the firmness of their dynamic faith, which was directed to Christ alone, were grounds for the apostle's delight.

These words of praise indicated that the congregation was basically sound and that the false teaching had not made significant progress. Verses six and seven of this chapter summarise the preceding message of this letter and forming the launchpad for Paul to return to his theme of concern regarding the influence of false teachers in the remainder of this care laden letter.

Perhaps the dominant note in Paul's teaching on prayer is the importance of thanksgiving. No matter the physical circumstances, thanks for salvation floods over out of the Christian life.

For just some of Paul's encouragements to give thanks, check out 2 Corinthians Ch1 v11, Ch2 v14, Ch4 v 15, Ch 8 v 16 and Ch9 v11. And then look at your own life and just see the vast number of times the Lord has blessed you, and give Him the thanks and praise due to Him.

Transcript of the presentation given by Deacon Rodney Burge and discussed at the church-based, morning home group on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2026. All scripture is from the ESV Translation.

