

**Let's open our bibles to - as we continue our study, slowly, steadily in this wonderful book. And I read, Colossians 2:1-2** *For I want you to know what a great conflict (what a great fight I'm putting up for you) I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, [2] that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,*

**Our Subject.** Antidotes or the reversal of backsliding. And attaining full Assurance of understanding, that our minds may rest confidently upon God.

The Apostle Paul is looking at the problems surrounding the church at Colosse. The threat of erosion of the faith, the threat of mixing man's opinions with the truth, and of their spirituality, growth in the Lord, growth in Holiness, growth in commitment. He speaks the truth in love to them, But not only to them we should also take it for us. *Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

How will they grow in all things, how will they become more spiritual and mature believers? We read in *1Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

**Paul is saying I want you to know.** Know how I'm agonizing or 'striving for you.' How much I care for you – He was always lifting them up in prayer; He says I do not cease to pray for you. **We see His care in Ch1v24** *I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, He rejoices because of what those sufferings are accomplishing among the people of God. Paul weighed up his sufferings and if they contributed towards eternal fruit, He was glad if it resulted in people being redeemed there was Joy. He was willing to make any self-sacrifice if it resulted in the saving of people, and causing them to grow in the Lord. Although he had not yet been to Colosse. He carried them in his heart, **they were on his heart like a mother has her sick child constantly upon her heart.***

Paul's sufferings must have been extremely difficult and painful with nothing to enjoy about them. Yet He rejoiced because he could see the wonderful fruit of hearts being changed, and souls being redeemed.

**Our first heading; why was Paul so concerned for them.** The great **conflict** he had for them. He '**Agonises**' for them to keep the Gospel pure to keep their Christian lives pure.

Even from the Roman prison He writes this letter, with a heart concerned for them. He is more concerned for them than for that which he is suffering in the prison. He understood the threat and danger to them by **A sect of pharisees had risen up, 'The Judaizers'** *or those who would impose upon Christians the yoke of the ceremonial law:* saying it is necessary to be circumcised and commanded them to keep the Law of Moses. **In Acts 15** we see Paul's visit to Jerusalem, which showed His great concern for them to stand for the truth of the Gospel. He speaks up, proclaiming the clear Gospel of grace, **He says to those wrong teachers,** why do you want to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples that you nor your fathers could bear?

**He clearly proclaimed,** *But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, in the same manner as they."* Acts 15:11 Paul is saying don't you believe, what we preached, ETERNAL life by **grace only,** Through grace only, through the undeserved favor and mercy This Grace is how these here are saved.

**Their spiritual well-being and growth was influenced by what they heard.**

Paul *fought for the truth, he contested to win the prize,* He did this by always proclaiming the pure truth of the Gospel.

He was concerned because of the Judaizers who would **come and try to get and win the ear of the people to persuade them.** saying, what you believe is no use to you, what you need is to return and come back to the rites and ceremonies of the ancient Jewish church. **They taught,** *'unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses you cannot be saved.'* Acts 15:1

**We see these deceivers were very persuasive** *Colossians 2:4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.* Words that sound very good and plausible. We are warned *Colossians 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

Deception comes through tradition of men, basic principles of this world and not according to Christ. **Not according to the Holy Scripture.** Deception comes by covertness Focusing on and putting great value on earthly things or material things rather than on Spiritual things. \* maybe add – Im not saying don't worry about material things that we need. But the key is found in *Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* First God, my effort and labour for righteousness. *John 6:27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."*

**Let me come back** to Colossians 2:2 that *their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,*

**It's about the heart-** that your hearts may be encouraged. Our **inner life**, Your **real life**. Sadly, in today's modern age there seems to be more emphasis upon things we can handle and touch and own, material prosperity. But Paul's concern here is that their **hearts** may be **encouraged** it means comforted, it means set aside for holiness. A stronger meaning that comes through is that your hearts may be urged, urged to follow Christ fully. When we read of the Heart – it means the centre of all physical and spiritual life, It's the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions. **If the heart is right everything is right.**

**Attaining to all riches in full assurance and understanding.** To the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ. This mystery and treasure is hidden in Christ. We cannot see or understand until Christ gives us understanding. It is His treasure and wisdom. Our hearts are encouraged and strengthened, the heart is established in faith as it is **taught and nourished** by the **Eternal word of God** and the Glad tidings of the Gospel.

**It is God's word that makes us wise**, His word that imparts wisdom to our lives- His word grants light to our paths. He gives us not just his Written Word but Knowledge and understanding so that we can be **Rooted and grounded in Gods word**. Daily reading Gods Word, Daily drawing strength by being rooted in Him. Daily being changed from glory to glory. **Rooted and grounded in Gods word** is **An antidote so strong to backsliding**. It's the way to be steadfast and sure. There is great safety in going back to first principles.

Especially when we live in a world where we are constantly bombarded with doubt and questioning s of the truth. Multitudes of people all saying, Christ Jesus is not the greatest, there are many great people how can you say Christ is the greatest. Or He is not divine, how can you say He has risen. Or He is the only way. Even if they weave together a very convincing argument using big words and grand arguments sounding very plausible. We reject what they say because we are rooted and grounded in god's word. \* when I was young maybe 12 or 14 I went to a friend's house to spend the night my friends father invited me to his church. He said you need to come our church is the only ways you can hope to be saved. As I child I knew the word of God and said *John 14:6 Jesus ssaid, I*

*am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* Do you know he had no answer.

**Isn't that what the Judaizers** said, Christ is not enough, saying you can't be saved unless you have the circumcision of Moses.

**To be steadfast we look at the written word** which is settled forever in heaven which is inspired and infallible, which is sharper than any two edged sword . On this alone is my faith built. To build on anything else is foolishness its sand and when the storm comes it will certainly collapse.

Look at **Colossians 2:9-10 (NKJV)** *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; [10] and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.*

Everything needed is in Him alone. We are complete in Him. He alone has accomplished our salvation. No outward marks can earn salvation. **Colossians 2:11 (NKJV)** *In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.*

The next verse speaks of being buried with Him in Baptism But the focus is on that we are RAISED with Him through Faith by the working of God, who raised Jesus from the dead.

We understand that we were all dead in trespasses and sins. That all of us had uncircumcised hearts. BUT HE made us alive together with Him. Having forgiven all our *trespasses*. (*a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness*) and **sins** (*to wander from the law of God, violate God's law, to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour*)

**How did Christ make us Alive?** Here lies another great Antidote to backsliding and assurance. This is the heart of the gospel. PENAL SUBSTITUTION.

Most people will have some intellectual understanding, some head knowledge which is good, yet only truly helps when it goes from the head to the heart. Many have knowledge that Jesus died upon the cross for sinners. They may even know a scripture. Yet it seems their lives show forth no grace, no fruit, no beauty of our saviour. Christ can't be recognised and seen in their daily life. But they know Christ died for sinners.

**But its more than a head knowledge.** It is an understanding of how lost we are without Christ. How hopeless we are without Christ. That **I have** an uncircumcised heart full of sin. That I am under the wrath of God because of my sin. Many fail to see the consequence or wages of sin. Which is eternal death.

Separation from God forever, separation from light forever and condemned to darkness forever, separation from the possibility of peace being made. No Hope only torment weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is what sinners deserve! **BUT Jesus Christ came** – Grace opened my understanding showed me my great need, then showed me the answer. I realise HE died on the **cross for Me**. He **took my sin** and nailed it to the cross, **He died in my place**. It should have been me to suffer and die. But Jesus suffered and died in my place. He took My sin and nailed it to the cross. In verse 14 Paul puts it so clearly. **Colossians 2:14** *blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.*

God's grace in the free forgiveness of all our trespasses. Our debt of sin paid fully - our debtor's bond of obligation is cancelled and torn to pieces, so that there is no remembrance or evidence of the debt.

**What an assurance - How vital to understand** - Christ DIED FOR ME – in my place, He disarmed principalities and powers. It's not simply head knowledge. **Rather our hearts are melted by Christs Love** for us for what He accomplished for us when we didn't deserve any goodness. **It's not a vague view of Calvary**, it's a deep understanding which brings full assurance and confidence. I see the details, He suffered for me took my punishment. He took my guilt, The Father smote Him instead of me. Then I understand the Righteous indignation of the Holy God is satisfied and His anger is turned away. **There may be someone who says, I've never thought of my salvation like this in those plain terms.** But you must if you are **to see the full riches**, if you are to see how much has been done for you, if you are to see the real treasure of salvation.

**When the Gospel truth is real to us** it disarms all accusing principalities, disarms all doubts. It's a powerful antidote to backsliding. I realize how much, I realise the depth and fullness of what has been done, I realise how much, it cost Him, I see something of His great love toward us. *We love him, because he first loved us.* My Love for Him makes me never want to let go. I also realise it was God alone who opened my eyes and ears to see and hear. He showed me, showed me what was hidden, showed me what was secret. He showed me not in my head but in my heart. He has done this in me, what a great assurance I Have that He cares for me.

**We must ask ourselves** – do I grasp the depth and wonder of what has been done for me. The riches of the glory revealed to believers. Do I deeply appreciate what God did for me, Do I understand the tremendous cost to Christ.

This knowing and understanding is - **yet another antidote to error, to wonder and be in awe at His goodness.** To praise for this eternal gift. This deep gratitude will generate Loyalty and commitment. Devotion to the Lord. I think of the scriptures *John 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.* Love for the Lord promotes obedience to His ways. Love for the Lord always creates submission to Him yieldedness. **Such a person will not easily be shaken by error.** They will be concerned with pleasing God.

What a vast difference from the ones who just sit in Church enjoying the message, and one hour later the message is gone from their mind. I remember when years ago people used to take notes of the message, they would reflect upon the things that spoke to them. They would be diligent to pray over what they heard, They would reflected upon the points, maybe a promise, or a doctrine, By doing so they became stable in their minds. They didn't just hear and forget. They took Gods word very seriously and attached great value to it. **They were rooted and built up in Him Established in the faith abounded in truth** with thanksgiving. (Col 2:7)

We have seen the **Apostle Pauls great concern** We have seen Gods word and His promises, and having an understanding of His word is a rich Antidote to backsliding. **Understanding will always generate deeper gratitude and love for the Lord.** Love will producing greater obedience greater steadfastness. Greater commitment to hold fast and never let Go. What strength and an unfailing antidote to the tricks of the devil. And a strong protection from all the wrong teaching around.

**We close asking ourselves.** - Have we come to the understanding of what Christ has done. Not in our heads only, but are our hearts melted! Have we understood how lost we are without Christ. Have we understood the great price that Jesus Christ paid. Is my heart flooded with gratitude for what he has done. If not, did I understand, have my eyes been opened to see. Or could it be that satan has so blinded us that we don't really care at all.