

A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF COLLOSSIANS

Understanding Jesus



WEEK 4 STUDY GUIDE

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Monday, January 30, 2023

Read: Colossians 1: 24-2:7

Scripture Verse: *"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church;" Colossians 1:24*

Today's Thought:

The apostle Paul wanted once again to strengthen the faith of the Christians of Colossae and those of Laodicea by communicating to them the sufferings he is enduring for them. In a word, the sufferings he endured for the Church. Remember that at the very beginning of the chapter we told you that he was in prison while he was writing the Epistle to the Colossians. Prison is not an ideal and pleasant place to think and write. He was deprived of his freedom for the cause of the gospel and that of the church. He had gone to jail for a good cause. He never made his imprisonment a burden; he did not lament his fate; he has not denied the name of him for whom he was in prison. On the contrary, in verse 24 which we are now studying, he says: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings because of you."

The apostle realized that he was suffering for a worthy and just cause. Therefore, the apostle, despite his sufferings, rejoiced. Paul alluded to the sufferings of Christ his Savior. If Christ, though he did not commit sin, suffered at the hands of the wicked for our salvation (Matthew 26:67), how much more should I, a proven sinner, suffer for righteousness. He recognized that it was worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. He realized that the sufferings of the present time cannot be compared with the glory to come. The apostle trusted in the promises of God. He rejoiced because of his faith and the living hope he has in Jesus Christ. Faith and hope in Jesus produces perseverance in affliction. Where does this joy, this strength and this consolation come from?

The apostle explains it in 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, that we may comfort those who are in trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we abundantly share in the sufferings of Christ, so our comfort abounds through Christ." The apostle did not hide from us the secret of his joy, of his rejoicing and of his consolation. It is true that his

physical body is imprisoned, but they could not imprison his relationship with his God who is the springing source of his joy. From these flows his joy, his strength and his consolation. He found healing for his saddened and afflicted heart and tormented soul in Jesus Christ his Savior.

Despite the problems, the difficulties, the torments he encountered, these things could not extinguish the flame of joy and gladness that shone within him. Thanks to this ineffable joy that he found in Jesus Christ, he was able to encourage and console the Christians of Colossae and those of Laodicea who were in sufferings like his own.

If Paul, despite his suffering, rejoiced in the Lord and encouraged the Christians of Colossae to rejoice in the Lord, we Christians today are not different from them. Despite the problems and circumstances in which we find ourselves, we must rejoice in the Lord. Instead of bowing down to the problems and persecutions of all kinds that we face today, we must instead count the blessings of God.

Brothers and sisters, always rejoice in the Lord who always keeps his promises, and his mercies to you are not at an end. "Furthermore, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! I don't mind writing the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you." Philippians 3:1.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your word today. I know that sins, guilt can bring me down; but I know your mercy can get me on my feet again and fill me with a song of joy. Lord, I bring to you all the broken pieces of my life, in your mercy put them back together for your glory. Lord, I rejoice in forgiveness, love, peace you bring into my heart.

- Why was Paul imprisoned?
- Why does Paul rejoice during his sufferings?
- Where does this joy come from?
- What did Paul ask of the Christians in Colossae?
- What should be your attitude amid suffering?
- Where can you find the strength and the energy to be happy?

Further Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Read: Colossians 1:24-2:7

Scripture Verse: *“Whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ; whereunto I labor also, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” Colossians 1: 28-29*

Today's Thought:

In verse 24 of this same chapter, we saw the apostle's joy in suffering and the inexhaustible source of his joy in suffering. We have also seen how he used this joy in suffering to encourage, comfort and strengthen the Christians of Colossae and Laodicea in their faith in Christ. In this study we will see how, in his sufferings, the apostle was a source of testimony, and how he drew from Jesus all his strength and energy to accomplish his work.

In verses 26 and 27, the apostle Paul views Jesus Christ as the mystery hidden from time immemorial but now revealed to those who accept him as Savior. During sufferings, the apostle communicates to the Christians of Colossae this truth, "Jesus is the revelation of God." Thus, Christ dwells in them and in their midst is a wealth of God, proof of their living hope. What immense grace! It is this Jesus whom we saw in verses 14 to 18 who dwells in them. He is the image of the invisible God, the one in whom all things were created: thrones, dignities, dominions, authorities, head of the body of the Church, etc. It is this Jesus who lives in them and who is in their midst.

The apostle announces Christ to the Christians of Colossae in all his greatness as the Son of God, his divinity manifested in creation, the Head of creation, he in whom the fullness of the Divinity dwells, the reconciler of all things and of sinners with God, the head of the body of the Church. It is he who was in them. What more did they need? Paul wanted them to understand that, despite his imprisonment and his sufferings, it was in him that he found the sufficient strength and the energy to live his life piously and to encourage them to also live the Christian life piously without diverting from their hope.

Therefore, if they wanted to add anything else to their faith, that is folly and will also diminish their hope in Christ. Thus, the testimony, the teachings of the apostle are also valid for us Christians today. We need to

know that Christ lives and dwells in us and is in our midst. Whatever the circumstances, we need to know that Jesus Christ is enough and that he can give us the strength and energy to live for him. Indeed, if we feel overwhelmed, disturbed, discouraged, tired, depressed, stressed, disoriented, abandoned, now, we can ask Him to energize us. We have nothing to fear; Christ has already paid our debts on the cross. What more do we need? The wish of my heart for you: "May this Christ therefore dwell in you and fill your heart with faith, peace, joy, love and hope to patiently await his glorious day."

Lord, my comforter, thank you for your word today. I humble myself under your mighty hand. Lord, I do believe you will lift me up in due time. I cast all my anxiety, depression, condemnation, shame or grief on you. I know you will care for me. Thank you, Lord, my provider!

- How did Paul introduce Jesus to the Christians in Colossae?
- Who is the head of the church?
- What do Christians today need to know?
- What can you do in times of crisis?

Further Reading: Ephesians 3:13-19

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Read: Colossians 1:24-2:7

Scripture Verse: *“For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ,” Colossians 2:1-2*

Today's Thought:

In the last verses of chapter 1, we saw that Paul presented Jesus Christ to the Christians of Colossae as the revealed mystery of God. Besides creation, Jesus Christ is God's ultimate revelation to man. It was in Jesus Christ that he found the strength and the energy necessary to live his life piously and to encourage them to live the Christian life piously too, without turning away from their hope.

In chapter 2:2 the apostle's earnest desire is that their hearts be filled with comfort as he himself is comforted in Christ Jesus. The apostle wants them to come to the perfect knowledge of the revealed mystery of God, namely the risen Christ. To come to know Christ, according to the apostle, is to live in his love and to be enriched by a full understanding of his word. The apostle, in his battles for the Christians of Colossae, asks God to comfort them in their affliction, that they would have a firm conviction in their faith in Jesus Christ and that they turn neither to the left nor to the right, that they have the spirit, the soul and the body converged on Jesus who is the source of all grace and comfort. This consolation is possible in the love and knowledge of the word of God. The apostle knows well why he leads this fight in their favor. So, he fights this fight so that they are united in love.

The apostle speaks not only of brotherly love but also that they be immersed in the love of Christ which is the source of true love. The love of Christ is what will bring brotherly love. We love because Christ first loved us. (1 John 4:19). The apostle was also fighting so that the Christians of Colossae would have the full understanding to know Christ. A full knowledge of Christ is to serve him with love from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. The apostle Paul leads the fight so that they remain in perseverance, so that they keep faith in their hope in Jesus Christ and a good conscience. This conscience or this intelligence, some have lost it, and they have been shipwrecked in relation to faith. Paul wanted to open the eyes of their intelligence. So, he is not

referring to human intelligence but rather to the supernatural understanding that God grants to those who are in Christ. In other words, the apostle prays for them to have discernment of the word of God. Let them cling to the true word as it has been taught, that they may exhort others according to sound doctrine and refute contradictions. May they not be floating Christians, carried away by all the winds of doctrine, by the deceit of men, by their craftiness in the means of seduction.

The battles led by the apostle are also for us. It is this fight that we are also leading for you. This is the fight you must fight every day because victory is for those who fight tirelessly.

My prayers for you are that you will be comforted, encouraged, established and strengthened in Christ and in his word. May you be united in love for one another and in him who is the source of true love, namely Christ our supreme head. Finally, that you have all the riches of a full supernatural understanding to discern the truth which is Jesus Christ and to do his will.

- According to the apostle, what does it mean: “to know Jesus”?
- What did the apostle ask for the Christians of Colossae in his fight?
- Why did the apostle fight this fight?
- What does it mean: “a full knowledge of Christ”?

Further Reading: Ephesians 4:17-24

Thursday, February 2, 2023

Read: Colossians 1:24–2:7

Scripture Verse: *“For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, enjoying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.” Colossians 2:5*

Today’s Thought:

In the previous study we saw the battle that Paul fought for the Christians in Colossae and those in Laodicea. We have seen that he prayed that their hearts would be filled with comfort, united in love, and enriched with full understanding. The apostle’s fight was worth fighting because the danger was imminent. It was a good fight that he led in favor of the Christians of Colossae. Don’t forget that he was fighting this fight while he was in prison. It was a fight that he waged from a distance in prayer. He said, “For though I am absent in body, I am with you in spirit.” Spiritually, Christians are linked because we have the same master and we drink from the same source, we carry out the same struggle every day.

The apostle sustained them in prayer; he shared his sorrows, pains and sufferings. Likewise, he rejoiced with them in their spiritual success. In this verse, the apostle rejoiced in two fundamental elements that he found in the life of the Christians of Colossae and those of Laodicea. The good order that reigns among them and the firmness of their faith. Despite the force and pressure that the false teachers exerted on them, they lived in order and discipline, and they were firm in their faith. The apostle appreciated the spiritual maturity of the Christians of Colossae in matters of discipline and firmness of faith. In terms of faith, they didn’t care too much about the things of the world. They applied this teaching: “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If someone loves the world, the love for the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life does not come from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but he who does the will of God lives forever.” 1 John 2:15–17. They didn’t want to be caught in the snares of the devil. Their faith in Christ was the object of their thought; they leaned on Christ. They would not turn away from him who had saved them and brought them to God; they had remained firm in their faith in Jesus.

Nevertheless, the enemy sought to deceive them with false teachings. The apostle on his side encouraged them to maintain the good order

which reigns among them and the firm faith which they have in Christ because the devil does not sleep. They had to be very vigilant not to fall prey to their adversary.

Brothers and sisters, we must also imitate the good order that reigned among the Christians of Colossae, and we must have firm faith in Jesus Christ because, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against dominions, against authorities, against the princes of this world of darkness, against evil spirits in the heavenly places." So, we must be disciplined, purposeful in our walk with God and have a sense of responsibility. Let us warn ourselves against the terrible danger which threatens us in our walk with God.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your word. Help me to be a disciplined, determined and responsible Christian so that I can live well for you. Let nothing stand in the way of my relationship with you.

- What are the two fundamental elements which rejoiced the heart of the apostle?
- How was the faith of the Christians in Colossae?
- How should our faith in Jesus Christ be despite the bad circumstances of life?

Further Reading: Ephesians, 6:10-13

Friday, February 3, 2023

Read: Colossians 1:24-2:7

Scripture Verse: *“As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” Colossians 2:6-7*

Today's Thought:

Have you ever taken the time to contemplate a giant tree? A giant tree catches the eye with the beauty of its facades and the harmony of its branches and green leaves. In addition, trees provide physical and mental well-being, they provide rest and privacy, they are essential to the urban ecosystem, they increase air quality, but also increase property values. Observing a gigantic tree that occupies the air space, does not the idea of its foundations come to your mind? The tree, whatever its size, is supported in the ground by its roots. Let's look at the root system of trees to learn lessons to build our relationship with God.

In botany, the roots are the underground organ of a plant used to fix it to the ground and to draw the water and nutrients necessary for its development. There are three main types of roots:

- * Pivot: Anchoring the tree to the ground.
- * Creeping roots: nutritional contribution of the tree.
- * Lateral (oblique) branching roots: support and nourish the tree.

By plunging their ramifications into the ground, the roots act as an anchor for the tree. In addition, they oppose the sinking of the tree under the effect of external constraints such as bad weather. On the other hand, the life of a tree depends on its roots, just as the life of the Christian depends on his faith and his anchorage in Christ and the application of his word.

So, the tree needs to cling to the ground by means of its roots, to take its nutrients, its humidity, its support in order to grow. We too, being Christians, must therefore progress in Christ, be rooted ourselves in Christ, establish ourselves and fix ourselves firmly on him in order to live a life in conformity with his will. We must live in intimacy and communion with Christ. Because it is from him that we have movement and being. In him we have eternal life. To be like Jesus and to glorify him must be the goal of our existence. For all this to be possible, we must nourish ourselves, energize ourselves, renew ourselves constantly in the word of God, in fraternity, in the breaking of bread and in prayers (Acts 2:42).

As the tree takes root in the ground to draw everything it needs to grow and withstand the storm, we too must take root in Christ and in his word to be firm and resist the attacks of the devil. It is from Christ and from the ever deeper, more real and more intimate knowledge of his Person and of his love that will enable us to resist the adverse events of life, such as: worries, anxiety, depression, hatred, addiction to alcohol and drugs, immorality and temptations of all kinds. For Jesus himself said in John 15:4-5 "Abide in me, as I also abide in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. You cannot bear fruit unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." Apart from Jesus, our life has no meaning.

So, our lives, our destiny, our future, our hope must be enclosed in Jesus. We must progress, be rooted, grounded, strengthened by faith in Jesus Christ so that the enemy cannot tear us away. I encourage you to build your life in his word, to fight harder, to stay stronger and to move forward each day in him.

Lord, as the tree needs roots (pivoting, creeping and lateral) to stand on the ground and feed, help me to cling to you and your word for good spiritual health. Lord, help me therefore to progress in you, be rooted in you, established and fixed firmly in your word in order to live a life in conformity with your will. Lord, when I feel lost, alone, forgotten, broken, depressed, anxious, frightened, overwhelmed by the weight of life, in your mercy, nourish me, energize me, renew me constantly in your word.

- What is the importance of the root of the trees?
- Compared to the roots of the trees, what unites us in Jesus Christ?
- Why should the Christian cling to Christ?
- How should we nourish, energize and renew ourselves?

Further Reading: John 15: 1-7

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord." Psalms 122:1

*Oh look! Today is Friday! Saturday and Sunday are coming!
Don't forget your appointment with your Lord in his house!*

NOTES



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