



10/22/26

So... I know I shared with you that we lost our sweet Toby about 6 weeks ago. I can't believe how fast time flies. So many people have shared stories with me of their own sadness in the loss of a sweet pet. They just really are such a wonderful part of the family. Well, hopefully in the next several weeks we'll be bringing home a new furry addition to our family. We'll get to meet him next week. He's 5 weeks old right now. So hopefully by Thanksgiving we'll be starting the fun routine of potty training. Someone told us potty training a puppy in the winter is easier because they don't like the cold. Let's hope that person is right. 🤔

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Colossians 2:1-10

As I look at this passage, again I see the tie between "the war is on" with "community of love." It makes me think of the military pledge, "No man left behind." This life on earth is a war... a war that we can confidently trust has already been won. But just as the Israelites had been promised that the Promised Land would be theirs but still had to fight the enemies who tried to stop them, we're called to take our stand in this battle. Just like them, we can fight with confidence because when God says it, it is. So yes, this life IS a war, and we as a Kingdom Outpost are all on the same side. Part of the way we fight IS by being a community of love, united in Christ.

In all honesty, I have had this passage memorized for several years, but I saw something today that I've never grasped before... something that shows the importance of the community of love. I don't know if it's because we live in America or if this is just how man is, but it's so easy for me to think of my relationship with God as JUST being individual... like I'm an only child in a way... knowing He has other kids but not always seeing how important they are in the family dynamic. But God is my Father and He has a lot of kids!!! Just like it does something to my heart when I see how close my kids are with each other, I know God loves when His kids are close... not banding together for mutiny... but united together with Him in love. O Lord, please open my eyes to what else I've been missing in this passage. There's ALWAYS more to learn!

Praise Your name!

Vs. 1-3 ~ "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, 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, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

This first part is a reminder to me that Paul had never met this church at Colossae. As far as I know, he never did get to go. I also see that they would pass his letters on to other churches... like Laodicea and others. These letters were read in THE CHURCHES. They were written to the believers in THE CHURCHES.

Paul said he struggled for them. The Greek word for struggle is agón, like agony. Why did he struggle like that? He wanted their hearts to be encouraged. Paul knew how easy it is to drift away from the Lord or to be discouraged because of the battle.

The first chapter tells me that Paul prayed for them and yet here I see that he still struggled for them. I think that's because Paul understood that our relationship with God is mutual. Philippians 2:12-13 calls us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure." God will always be faithful to work in me, but will I be faithful to work out my salvation as I learn to walk with Him? Paul loved these people so much that he struggled for them. He wanted them to experience the fullness of a relationship with the Lord.

He said he wanted their hearts to be encouraged, "being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ." Whoa! This is what I had never realized before. Our hearts will not be fully encouraged, and we will not experience all the riches of full assurance or the knowledge of God's mystery UNLESS we are "knit together in love." How much am I missing out on by not loving ALL the saints in Christ as fully as He wants me to?

God wants His kids to be intertwined with Him and with each other... like a fully functional, loving family. He understands that we're not yet perfected in holiness, but that's the pursuit He wants us to have.

When we're united in love... LOVE... agape... sacrificial, unconditional, unfading, affectionate love for one another because we know that God loves us this way... then we become RICH. Rich with what? Something more priceless than money can buy. We become rich with full assurance... being absolutely secure and completely convinced that God is who He says He is, that we get to KNOW God and the mystery of who He is... That mystery is found in Jesus.

Jesus opens a treasure chest for us. In that treasure chest is hidden all wisdom and all knowledge. I cannot have wisdom or knowledge apart from Jesus. And I need to be in loving unity with my brothers and sisters in Christ in order to experience the full wealth of God's

treasures hidden in Jesus. Does that matter to me? Do I say, "What I have is adequate, and I don't need more"? Would I say that about anything else?

How many rich people continue to pursue making more money because enough is never enough? O Lord, let me be GREEDY for the treasures found in Jesus!!! Let me pursue unity and true fellowship with my spiritual FAMILY. Let me never say, "I just wish I could live alone on an island with Jesus and leave the rest of the people behind." And let me never say, "I want to be with some of the people and ignore the rest, and my relationship with Jesus is a nice to have but not a necessity. I'll see Him when I get to heaven. Until then, I'll fit Him in where I can." O Lord, let me greedy for You, and help me to live the motto, "No man left behind."

Vs. 4-5 ~ "I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. 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."

Why did Paul want us to have this full assurance of faith as we are united in love? Because we are in a war. The enemy does not sit back and leave us alone. He is out to get us, and he will use "plausible arguments" to take us down. Just like he did with Eve in the Garden of Eden, he will whisper words that make sense but are lies. Part of the reason we need to be with other believers in a community of love is to help us not get caught up into the enemy's lies.

I see in vs. 5 that Paul wasn't saying these believers HAD gotten caught up in lies, but that he was encouraging and exhorting them so that they wouldn't. As he said in 1 Corinthians 10:12, "Let he that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." Watch out. The enemy is always either attacking or waiting for an opportunity to attack by any means necessary.

But Paul was actually really excited about their faith... and their "good order." I understand the faith part. What's the good order? They understood the role of leadership in the church and how the elders led and how each person in the church used his or her God given gifts to serve. People weren't fighting for position, but humbly serving as God had called them.

It is a supernatural, divine culture that can all look to see where God wants them to serve and then serve there. When we're not serving according to God's supernatural, divine plan, some will try to find ways to be in higher positions of authority... and some will not serve at all, seeing church as a "check the box" experience. Ephesians 4:16 says that when we're growing up in Christ, "the whole body (the church), joined and held together by EVERY joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." What a beautiful picture of what God's Kingdom Outpost can be! O Lord, please help our church to be that more and more!!!

Vs. 6-7 ~ "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

Therefore, in light of the fact that we DO have the mysteries found in Christ and that we CAN be deluded with plausible arguments, walk IN Jesus as you are saved IN Christ. I didn't

beat down the door and tell Jesus that He must rescue me, and I certainly didn't rescue myself from the domain of darkness. I RECEIVED Christ Jesus in faith... so walk in Him in faith. Be rooted in Him. Then build on the foundation of my faith in Him. Be established in my faith... holding fast and standing firm in Him. This is what Paul taught. This is what all the true disciples of Jesus teach. And this leads to abounding gratitude. Why? Because ALL that I have... salvation, the mysteries found in Jesus, unity in love, assurance of my faith... ALL of that is a generous gift of God, not based on anything I've done but based on His generous heart. My job is to walk in what I already have. Praise God, I don't have to walk in order to receive it. The love and salvation of God are already mine!

Vs. 8-10 ~ "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority."

And now we're back to battle talk. There are those who use plausible words of wisdom. There are those who start throwing different philosophies around, possibly in the name of understanding better. There are those who literally just lie. They follow human tradition, fueled by evil spirit of the world that don't align with Jesus in any way... but they will try to make it sound like they do. Liars and deceivers don't announce their intentions. They use manipulation and flattery and control and whatever else they can. I don't need to study all their tactics. I need to study JESUS.

Jesus is not lacking in any way. He is on His throne. All the fullness of God is displayed in His life in every way. Jesus is the head of all rule and authority, and at the name of Jesus every knee WILL bow to Him as Lord... even the knees that don't want to. Jesus is the one who fills me. Walk with Him. Stay close to Him. Keep my eyes on Him. He will be the one to help me through whatever opposition I face. And lock arms with other believers who call on Him from a pure heart so that we can encourage each other with the truth of His word. We are in a war, and we fight as a community of love.