

FBC Service Sunday June 8, 2025, Colossians 2:1-5 Faith Unshaken: The Strength of True Assurance

Prayer: Lord, there are many competing voices vying for our attention. We pray now for ears to hear what Your Spirit would say to us this morning. Settle our minds, quiet our hearts, open them to receive the teaching of Your Word. **For Jesus' sake. Amen.**

Introduction:

Our forefathers loved to sing, “blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.” And “on Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.” That solid ground of assurance was Christ, the firm foundation of their faith and ours.

Yet just as real treasures can be counterfeited, **so can Christian assurance**. Throughout history, deceptive philosophies and false teachings have sought to pull believers away from the truth.

All around us, spiritual counterfeits abound, tempting us to place our confidence in something other than Christ.

In Colossians 2:1-5, Paul speaks to the believers with deep concern, urging them to remain steadfast in true assurance, firmly rooted in Christ alone. Our text today gives us understanding where our assurance comes from, and how to recognize the counterfeits that seek to diminish our faith.

In a world filled with uncertainty, where shifting values and conflicting ideologies often leave people searching for truth, the believer in Christ is called to stand firm. Assurance and confidence are not merely desirable traits, but essential anchors for the Christian life.

Paul understands that doubts and deceptive philosophies can creep in, threatening to shake believers from their foundation in Jesus. So he reminds them that true Christian assurance is not found in worldly wisdom or personal strength—**it's found in Christ alone.**

The question of assurance of one's faith is one of the most important issues in the Bible, and an issue Christians have debated for centuries.

What evidences do I need to have to have assurance?

Paul gives us the building codes for a Christian life that exhibits such an assurance and brings joy to the heart of this beloved pastor. **It's a blueprint for assurance.**

Paul longs for believers to be encouraged in heart and united in love, fully convinced of the treasures found in Christ. This assurance is not based on personal strength, feelings, or worldly wisdom—it's found in Christ Himself. (v. 3)

What does true assurance look like?

- It's rooted in Christ's finished work on the cross. Salvation is not based on our performance but on His grace.

- It's strengthened by knowledge of the truth. The deeper we know Christ, the stronger our confidence becomes.

- It's experienced through unity with other believers. Assurance grows as we walk in love and fellowship with those of likeminded faith.

Unity is essential to the church's health and witness. Satan's strategy is to divide and conquer, and so the first step in protecting God's people is to promote unity in the body of Christ.

Paul also works hard at protecting God's people by always keeping Christ at the centre.

The first thing we see about Paul's purpose for the church **is what's not on his list**. If we were in a focus group trying to describe a strong, mature and vital church we'd probably include such things as:

Diverse Programmes

Spacious Buildings . . . plenty of parking

Large Attendance in Worship

Powerful Preaching

A certain Style of Worship

I believed that once. Supposedly these were the things that were the keys to vibrant congregations. The literature is full of the things church growth **"experts"** point to as being a successful ministry.

When I look at our text it doesn't include any of these things! **What was Paul's template.**

Arguably, our focus is usually almost exclusively external, **Paul's is internal.**

He has committed his life to planting and growing churches. And to the Colossians he writes, *"I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never met me personally."*

Paul agonized for the maturity of those new believers. **What a template for any pastor!**

He agonized by suffering with them and for them. They're strangers to one another, they've never met. Paul is not physically there with the Colossians as he's over a thousand miles away in prison at Rome. And yet he's still spiritually connected with them, **immensely burdened for them.**

In some of Paul's other letters he writes about some of the incredibly difficult experiences he endured as a missionary. He was imprisoned. He was subject to mob violence.

He was shipwrecked and beaten to within an inch of his life; stoned and flogged. There were material struggles. There were physical struggles and extraordinary physical deprivations.

The other apostles received their support from the church, but when Paul travelled the known world at the time, he resolved never to be a burden upon the churches he was planting, so he worked as a tentmaker supporting himself.

And so while he had the cares of all the churches, he also had the responsibility resting upon himself to make ends meet.

He says, *“I want them to be encouraged.”* (v. 2) Encouraged in the sense to meet a difficult situation with confidence and strength.

Paul writes he’s struggling for them that *“their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in strong ties of love.”* Encouragement means more than an “Atta boy,” slap on the back, a few positive words.

As helpful as that sometimes is, in the Bible encouragement is much more than that.

It means to come alongside someone, both in words and deeds and strengthen them, and build them up.

Who among us has not struggled at times with assurance and doubts and wonder, **“Why can’t I get over this?”**

One of the indications of a mature faith is exhibiting strength even when the going gets rough.

Listen to these words of the prophet Habakkuk,

“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour.

The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.” (Hab. 3:17-19)

Habakkuk determined to hang on because of his confidence in God! He knew God’s character. He knew He was sufficient for every need. He knew that God loved him. He knew God was faithful.

No matter what the outward circumstances . . . Habakkuk had an unshakeable assurance in God. That’s the kind of assurance Paul wants from the church, believers who see by faith and not by sight.

There may be some here today that are going through physical, relational, financial, and spiritual struggles to the point of exhaustion.

If this is your experience, embrace the Lord’s great promise that your strength for difficult times doesn’t reside in your ability . . . but His. **Trust Him with all your heart!**

If you’re a mature member in this church, and you’re here and you’re serving, I praise God for you.

But remember there’s a call here to you and to me to take the initiative in encouraging those who are on the edge of things.

We need to get past the brief, “**How are you doing?**” “**I’m fine,**” as we head out the door. We’ve got to start making a connection.

This is exhibited when we show a love that is uncommon in the world. Paul nails it when he prays we might not only be encouragers, but “*knit together by strong ties of love*”.

He knows genuine love shown within a church has a magnetic power.

Make no mistake – if we want to leave a lasting impression on folks who come through our church doors and to one another, we need to show genuine love.

This is what the church is to be.

In order to “get the picture in my head,” here’s a list of what I think true love in the body of Christ means;

We treasure each other

We spotlight gifts and abilities rather than faults and failures

We truly celebrate the gifts and blessings of others without feeling resentment

We rally around each other in times of sadness and loss

We allow people to have “bad days”

We’re quick to forgive

We act in kindness toward each other

We defend each other

We’re willing to do things differently than we would necessarily choose . . . **for the honour of Christ.**

This is a great pastoral priority which I think is profoundly challenging for those of us who are leaders in the local church, whether as a pastor, or deacons, or leading in some other capacity.

Paul says our faithfulness and our love for each other will lead to “*an assurance that they understand God’s mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*”

The two words “**wisdom and knowledge**” are much more than having your head stuffed with facts. We need to learn why those facts are important, and how they relate to our lives.

And folks it’s not just any facts that we should be seeking. . . **we should be seeking a deeper knowledge of Christ!**

Our opponent has not lost his fire . . . he’s as enthusiastic and diligent as ever.

To withstand his attacks we must continue to grow in wisdom and knowledge.

Knowledge enables us to handle the Bible accurately. The more we know the Bible, the better and more accurately we're able to interpret it. We get better and better at letting the Bible form our values, rather than using the Bible to validate our opinions.

Paul wants full assurance for each of the people of God in the churches for which he's concerned. He wants to get to the heart of the real spiritual needs of the people of God.

Be always on the lookout for false teachers he says.

He says assurance is a preventative measure. *"I'm telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments. I rejoice that you're living as you should, and that your faith in Christ is strong."*

He says watch out for false teachers in other passages.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 NLT) *"Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. 2 These people are hypocrites and liars, and their consciences are dead."*

2 Timothy 4:3-4. *"For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will reject the truth and chase after myths."*

"They're false teachers. They're trying to delude you. Some of their arguments are actually quite plausible."

Paul warns, *"I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments."* Counterfeit assurance comes from deceptive philosophies, false gospels, and worldly wisdom that claim to offer security but leave lives empty and disillusioned.

What are some common counterfeits today?

- **Legalism**—Trusting in religious rules rather than Christ's grace.
- **Emotionalism**—Basing assurance on feelings rather than truth.
- **Prosperity Gospel**—Believing financial or personal success is proof of God's favour.
- **Universalism**—Teaching that all paths lead to God, denying the exclusivity of Christ.

False teachings may sound convincing, but they divert us away from Christ.

Some time ago I learned how customs officials check for counterfeit money. You may have heard that when they're training people to check for counterfeit currency, guess what, they don't start them off by looking at the counterfeit; **they spend all their time looking at the real thing.**

They study the real thing in minute detail.

When they find the counterfeit, they can immediately tell the difference. They know the real thing and so they're not deceived.

Paul is saying, "Look, Jesus Christ is the real thing. Fix your eyes on Him, and when the counterfeit comes, you won't be deceived.

When the false teachers begin to assail you and tempt you and try to draw you away or question the reality of your faith, your eyes will be fixed on Him.

Most deception comes in brightly coloured packages. Look beyond the polished words and slick presentations.

Most deception minimizes or seeks to eliminate any talk of sin and responsibility.

Deceivers will diminish the character and person of Christ.

They may talk about how much they love Jesus, but if you ask them to describe Him, you'll get a different picture.

In my lifetime I've found deceivers usually draw some meaning from obscure passages of the Bible. **Folks, if it's not taught clearly throughout Scripture . . . beware!**

Deceivers seldom have a lifestyle that matches their profession.

The whole message of the gospel is that Jesus came into the world to save those who could not and would not save themselves. He gave His life as payment for our sin.

In summary, the four characteristics of the message on assurance today are: faithful in the struggle, loving, growing in wisdom and knowledge and discerning.

Assurance is a Christ-centred blessing. It comes by looking to Him, resting on Him, never straying from Him.

Paul says, **"Remember where assurance is found."**

- Grow in the Word—The more we know Scripture, the less likely we are to be deceived.
- Stay connected to the body of Christ—Community strengthens assurance.
- Pray for discernment—Ask God for wisdom to recognize truth and reject counterfeits.
- Keep your eyes on Jesus—True confidence comes not from self, but from continually looking to Christ.

These are the things that bring a solid assurance to any believer.

To be able to say with Paul, *"I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he's able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return."* 2 Timothy 1:12. **Don't get distracted. Keep Christ at the centre. Don't get discouraged. Don't give up.**