

Colossians

Colossians 1:6 – 2:5

The letter was written to correct some errors in the church at Colosse. We are not told what the questions were, but we can understand what they were by the answers he gave to correct.

If heresy were left un-refuted, a false or faulty foundation could be laid not only for this church at Colosse but for the church down through the ages.

The problems they faced then, helps us today.

This false teaching seemed to be the beginning of what later (in the second century) developed into Gnosticism. It contained several characteristics.

- (1) **It was Jewish**, stressing the need for observing Old Testament laws and ceremonies.
- (2) **It was philosophical**, laying emphasis on some special or deeper knowledge (gnosis).
- (3) **It involved the worship of angels** as mediators to God (2:18).
- (4) **It was exclusivist**, stressing the special privilege and "perfection" of those select few who belonged to this philosophical elite.
- (5) **It was also Christological**. The study of the work, and nature of Christ, (for them Christ was just one of several intermediaries angelic-like beings in the chain of creating the universe and leading to God)

- Geoff dealt with the supremacy of Christ last week.

The church in Colosse most probably met in Philemon's house. A wealthy businessman.

Onesimus – runaway slave was from there.

V24 **Paul is in jail**, suffering for preaching the gospel of Jesus, his life, death and resurrection.

He is rejoicing that he's in jail, and they, and countless others are in the Kingdom of God because of him.

V24 says, I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in regards to Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body which is the church. NIV

Is Paul saying that the sufferings of Christ on the cross were not enough, lacking?

No – the cross was a finished and complete work, nothing can be added or taken from it. It was a once for all sacrifice.

Heb. 10:14

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Did the afflictions of Christ end when he ascended to heaven?

Does he no longer feel the pain of his people? Because his work is over.

- Did he not stand when Stephen was stoned to death.
- Saul on Damascus Rd. Why are you persecuting Me!

Saul's rampage of persecution – men imprisoned – women left to fend for themselves. Children without dad around.

In persecuting Christians, he was persecuting Christ. Suffering Christians around the world today. Jesus feels it.

Heb. 4:15

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Sometimes Christians can be un-Christlike – the language we use, unkind attitudes, more ready to believe the worst etc.

Remember other believers are loved by Christ.

Rom 14:15-16

And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating ruin someone **for whom Christ died.**

Paul is sharing in the sufferings of Christ.

Col 1:24-25

for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church. NLT

Paul rejoicing –

Our sufferings may be minimal but everyone's sacrifice of time, money, expertise, it's worth it for the kingdom of God. Rejoice.

- Alpha teams – food makers, table layers, chair putter outers, and putting away-ers. washer uppers.
- Kidz Zone teachers and helpers planting good seed in young lives.
- Inviting people to come to church – risking rejection and isolation.
- Anything anyone does in promoting the gospel – helping at church
- Rejoice

He sees Churches established individual lives changed – its worth being in jail for that. I rejoice.

Pauls message

1. The **gentiles** are included in God's salvation – not a big deal now but then – staggering.

The Jews were God's chosen people – all the prophets who brought Gods message to the world were Jews. Gentiles were hated.

Paul making his defence

Acts 22:21-23

"But the Lord said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles!'"

22 The crowd listened until Paul said that word. Then they all began to shout, "Away with such a fellow! He isn't fit to live!" 23 They yelled, threw off their coats, and tossed handfuls of dust into the air.

The mystery – it was hidden (Not many passages in the O/T speak of gentiles being saved) **something now revealed.**

Christ in you – Christ is all you need – comparative religions all make demands of us to obtain salvation.

Programme on TV Aristotle Confucius Buddha.

Hotel programme – good earth- swishing away negative energy etc!!

Their teachings are not in the same room as the sermon on the Mt.

Buddhism – many incarnations to reach enlightenment – depending on how you did in one life to progress to a higher level. Millions of lifetimes!

Christ's death at Calvary was enough for our salvation - Jesus cried It is finished (paid in full) Nothing to be added, nothing to be taken away.

C.S. Lewis (at Oxford) and discussion on the uniqueness of Christianity = Grace.

Christ comes in us - as a seed – mentioned at Buckfast - packet of seeds?

John 1:12-13

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

He was commissioned by God to proclaim the gospel. V 25

1. **The Mystery – Christ in you** - something hidden (the cults talked about secret wisdom etc.)

The Gospel – good news is – Christ in You – not keeping rules and regulations, visiting certain places.

We need to be reminded

1 Cor 6:19

Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you,

1 Cor 6:3

Do you not know that we shall judge angels – a lot in the bible

The bible talks about the same spirit living in us.

Rom 8:11

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, **who lives in you.**

What is in the seed -- Christ was ---- packet of seed = ugly

Jesus,

Isa 53:2-5

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Sow in your life

Gal 5:22-23

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

How do we let the seed grow?

How do we get the new life of Christ to grow and the old to die?

- **Starve the old.**

- Avoid tempting situations. Drop old companions who may entice you back into old habits. If necessary, move environment.
- Remind yourself of what you were like before Christ came in.
- **Feed the new.**
 - Feed on God's word
 - Believe what it says about you
 - Make friends of positive people
 - Meet regularly in church.
 - Keep short accounts – be quick to repent (apologise).

Phil 2:13

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

Christ in you – the hope of Glory = future = glory how is that achieved?

It's all in seed form

Paul states the end journey = glory I want to present you perfect (complete)

How = Admonishing = cautioning scolding reprimanding.

Also **teaching**- explaining, **encouraging** etc.

The finishing school – everyone complete in Christ

Jude 24

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--

Not just saved – mature, strong, godly. Showing the fruit of the Spirit.

Chapter 2

Feels sorry for those who have never met him.

He wants to encourage them – don't let anyone deceive you by fine sounding arguments. **All you need is Christ.** The Beatles song

He commends them for their orderly conduct and firm faith.

- Have you received Christ yet – have you begun the journey of walking with Jesus.
- Are you growing in Christlikeness? Have you come to a stop. Get going again.

Suggested Questions
Use only what is useful for your group.

1. Discuss what Paul meant when he said, he filled up what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the church v24 – read it in a couple of other versions. How does this apply to us today.

2. The heresy that was being taught in Colosse was.

(1) **It was Jewish**, stressing the need for observing Old Testament laws and ceremonies.

(2) **It was philosophical**, laying emphasis on some special or deeper knowledge (gnosis).

(3) **It involved the worship of angels** as mediators to God (2:18).

(4) **It was exclusivist**, stressing the special privilege and "perfection" of those select few who belonged to this philosophical elite.

(5) **It was also Christological**. The study of the work, and nature of Christ, (for them Christ was just one of several intermediaries angelic-like beings in the chain of creating the universe and leading to God)

How was this at odds with the gospel as taught in the New Testament.

The Mystery = Christ in you.

3. We said that Christ comes into our lives like a seed. All the attributes of Christ are there but need to grow. See Galatians 5:19-23.

a. What areas of your life need to develop more and why?

b. What are the things that

i. Prevent growth

ii. Encourage growth

4. 2v4 Paul warned against being deceived by fine sounding arguments

a. What are some arguments that try to deceive today.

5. 2v5 He commends them for their orderliness and faith – what would that look like.

