

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

“Conflict Praying”

Colossians 2:1, 2

Take a BACKWARD look

1. So, what is in chapter 1 of Colossians? There is the introduction (1:1-8), and a prayer (1:9-14). Then comes an extraordinary section on the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:15-22).
2. Proofs of genuine salvation are offered (1:23) and then an exposition of suffering (1:24).
3. Paul is stated to be a minister of the church or the body of Christ. This is a brand new concept peculiar to the present Age of Grace (1:25-27).
4. Then the character, theme, methods, and object of Paul’s ministry are given (1:28, 29). Understood as an evaluation of the scope of his ministry, these verses affirm Paul came out on top. But, chapter divisions are often misleading. This is true here. The subject of 1:28, 29 continues with chapter 2. This is clearly indicated by the “for” of 2:1. So, moving on from his preaching, Paul records his praying. What are the features about Paul’s prayer life for his converts? Look at the following points:

1. Paul’s PRAYER described

a. Something to know

Normally Paul introduces something of this sort with the phrase “I don’t want you to be ignorant” (cf. Ro. 1:13; 11:25; 1 Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8; 1 Thess. 4:13). Here, however, a positive statement is made. He has told them about his preaching, now he gives information about his praying.

b. Something to understand

The present tense “have” is meaningful. There was no let up in Paul’s “conflict.” This word has the meaning of “wrestling in the arena.” Paul just could not dismiss the needs of the Colossian believers. For him, it was “how great a conflict.” Here is mental and spiritual anxiety like in a wrestling match. He wanted them to know this was his feeling for them.

c. Something to envision

The prepositional phrase “for you” is extended by two “ands.” These point on to Laodicia (cf. Rev. 3:14-22) and all other believers who had likewise (as Colossians) not seen (perfect tense) Paul’s face in the flesh. Oh, what a burden he

had -- not for conversions, but for teaching and enforcing the whole counsel of God!!!

2. Paul’s PURPOSE declared

Note: Not only did Paul have a conflict in prayer, but his object was a conflict. His importunate prayer and work -- even while in prison -- was to bring the believers into the clearness of doctrine.

a. To live above

Apparently the Colossians were being confused by false doctrine. Hence, one of the major “anxieties” of Paul’s prayer “conflict” was that they might be comforted, encouraged, braced, and counseled. This was not to be a cognitive (head only) matter, but in their “hearts.” The aorist passive verb clearly points out that the apostle hopes they will be accustomed to the comfort God provides.

b. To love together

The love is the kind God has for the world -- love by choice! The verb is an aorist passive participle meaning to be compacted. It is used of putting together in one’s mind so as to conclude by comparison. It is used of an assembly gathering (Acts 16:10). As believers understand God’s love for them in Christ, such love knits hearts and manifests the oneness of all in Christ. This knitting together in love comes from a sense of the truth, hence truth is kept and honored.

c. To learn fully

The preposition “unto” points to an ultimate purpose. “Riches” are the consequences of being knit together in love. The word provides the characteristic of the full assurance. A freedom of mind and confidence (full assurance) results from an “understanding”. Thus Paul expects the full use of the intellect in grasping the truth. All one’s mental processes come into play.

3. Paul’s PRIVILEGE defined

Here is another ultimate purpose as the same preposition “unto” is employed. “Acknowledgment” is the Greek for “full knowledge.” In a logical way, unity in love leads to the riches of confidence resulting from understanding and this brings about full knowledge of the mystery of God, even Christ. According to the previous verses (1:25-27) this mystery is the body, even the church which includes the glorious truth of Christ in both Jew and Gentile.

Take a PRESENT look. How is your understanding of the mystery? What kind of conflict-praying do you do? What is your score before the Lord?