

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

“Treasures in Christ”

Colossians 2:3-6

Introduction

1. Paul declares he has been appointed by God to be a minister (1:23, 25). His ministry is related to the mystery “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (1:27).

2. What is included in “ministry,” particularly that of the apostle Paul, is clearly indicated (1:28, 29). It is self evident that, by extension, this is what is expected in the “ministry” today. Alas, there is paucity of this sort.

3. Even more reprehensible is the ministry’s failure today to include another facet of Paul’s. He was a man who had a conflict in prayer for his charge (2:1, 2). Not a conflict in a bad sense, but a good one. He was prepared to go to the mat for his people. He wanted them to be comforted, to be knit together in love, to have full understanding and full knowledge of the “mystery of God.”

4. Having explicated these aspects of his own ministry, he affirms the centrality of the Lord Jesus and warns against false teaching. This is the essence of the text. Consider, then, these further aspects of the ministry which Paul had:

1. Its PRIVILEGE v. 3

The privilege of the ministry is the fact that all one needs is to be found in the Person of Christ.

a. Personified

This relative pronoun “in whom” is best taken to refer to the PERSON of Christ. This conceives of His deity and humanity as one glorious person. The hypostatic union of the two natures accomplishes this.

b. Treasured

This is a plural noun pointing up the storehouse which is in Christ. It refers to the sum total.

e. Detailed

Wisdom and knowledge are the two items of which the treasures consist. The whole gamut of information and understanding are found in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23, 24). Thus, to know about man, God, sin, etc. -- look to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Its PRECAUTION v. 4

The introductory word “and this I say” links the statement of v. 3 with a practical reason. It is important, Paul writes, to affirm the fullness of Christ because of certain erroneous efforts.

a. Against false reasoning

The verb “beguile” means to reason falsely. It is found only here and in James 1:22.

It has the idea of miscalculate or mislead. The entire liberal theological, social, and political movements are sharp evidence that people are easily misdirected. Let it be stated with force: the only safeguard against error is the full knowledge of the Person of Jesus Christ.

b. Against persuasive speech

“Enticing words” is from a word only found here in the N.T. It refers to speech adapted to persuade. Plausible arguments are addressed leading others into error.

NOTE: the precaution concerns the peril of misinformation given in such a way that gullible people swallow it. The peril moves in three directions: 1. About Paul (2:1). 2. About the Colossians (2:2). 3. About Christ (2:3).

3. Its PRAISE v. 5

The first part of this verse has been painfully abused by many well meaning Christians. When they do not find it convenient to attend an assembly because it interferes with other activities, they quote it. Paul used it because he was in prison for the sake of the Gospel. He surely would have been in Colosse had it been humanly possible! Not so with many who carelessly quote the text. Of Paul it can be said -- he was absent in body but he was present in spirit (his whole heart). This meant:

a. An involvement

Two participial verbs express this matter: Paul was rejoicing. Although incarcerated in prison, he rejoiced in what he knew of the Colossians. Moreover, he was beholding with the eye of faith (and reports from Epaphras!) what God was doing among them. One can only wonder what bodily presence would have added to such deep interest! God -- give us men like this among the believers today.

b. A contentment

1) About Colossian order. There was ordered discipline in the assembly. The term used here suggest quiet, concord, and subjection to the spiritual overseers and to one another (cf. 1 Cor. 14:40).

2) About Colossian steadfastness. The word used is only found here in the N.T., but it is in the LXX in Gen. 1:6 of the firmament and Psa. 18:2 of a rock. Paul was delighted that the character of Colossian faith was solid. Like a close phalanx, they had a solid doctrinal front in the face of attacks of error.

Conclusion

What can be learned from this section (2:1-5)? 1. The need for spiritual compassion (v. 1). 2. The need for spiritual correction (v. 2). 3. The need for Christ-centered thought (v. 3). 4. The need for spiritual caution (v. 4). 5. The need for spiritual confession (v. 5). How do you and I measure up?