

Lesson 4

**Rooted in Christ;
He is our Treasure...
so live in him, growing in
wisdom and knowledge in him**

GETTING STARTED

1. Our Study: Colossians 1:24-2:7

Overview

Take a few moments and reflect on the passages you have already studied in the Letter to the Colossians. Think about the aspects of Christ which Paul has emphasized. If Christ is our Redeemer, what should be our response? If Christ is our Reconciler, what should be our response?

In the passage for our study in this lesson, Paul's emphasis is on Jesus Christ, our priceless Treasure. Again reread the entire letter, and look for those things which Paul seems to think should characterize the person who has found Jesus Christ as a priceless Treasure. As you read, you might place a question mark (?) by those statements about which you have a question and place an exclamation mark (!) by those which have special meaning for you.

Pray that as you study this lesson you will discover at least one new insight which so enriches your life that you will want to share it with others.

Concerns About the Life in Christ

Your daughter is in college. You have just received a text from her telling about some of the disturbing things which she has been hearing in some of her classes – teachings which are contrary to what she was taught in her home and church. The persons presenting the ideas are charming and gracious and their teachings are very convincing. She feels very confused and upset.

- Would you feel capable of advising her? _____
- Do you wish that you knew more about your Christian faith so that you could advise her? _____
- How might this experience be a hinderance to her faith or be a way of maturing her Christian faith? What will make the difference? As you study this lesson, see if Paul has an answer for this situation. _____

Problems Facing the Colossians

Paul must have felt about the Colossian Christians as you would feel about your daughter, upset and concerned about false teachers and teachings. It seems that these persons were not trying to take members away from the church, nor were they condemning Christ, but they were teaching ideas which depreciated Christ, his person and his position. They evidently were smooth talkers and seemed to be claiming:

- that not every person was eligible for salvation.
- that there were secret treasures of knowledge and mysteries which a person had to know and only they, themselves, had the key to the mysteries.
- that the Gentiles did not have the same standing with God as the Jews did.

DIGGING IN... for the facts

2. Paul's Hope – to Present Everyone Mature in Christ (Colossians 1:24-29)

As Paul thought of the effect the Gospel had had in the lives of the Colossians, he began to think about the great privilege which had been his to proclaim this Gospel to many people. What does Paul have to say:

- A. About his suffering? (1:24) _____

- B. About his office? (1:25a) _____

- C. About the purpose of his appointment? (1:25b) _____

- D. About the keynote of his message? (1:26, 27) _____

- E. About the purpose of his ministry? (1:28) _____

- F. About the source of his power? (1:29) _____

3. Paul's Desire – to Build Up the Inner Life of the Church (Colossians 2:1-7)

Paul was extremely concerned that the Colossians would fall for the smooth talk of the false teachers and be led astray in their faith. How does Paul express ...

- A. His prayerful concern? (2:1) _____

- B. His hopes and desires for the Colossians? (2:2) _____

- C. His confidence in Christ? (2:3) _____

- D. His reason for writing? (2:4) _____

- E. His confidence in the Colossians? (2:5) _____

- F. His concern for what they had been taught? (2:6, 7) _____

DIGGING DEEPER... for understanding

4. What Does Paul Mean?

No doubt you are puzzled about many of the things Paul describes in this passage. Consider some of the following study suggestions and questions.

Seek to Know Meanings of Words and Phrases

- A. What do you think Paul meant by his statement: *I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions*? _____

What insights do these references give you? John 15:18-20; 16:33; Luke 9:23, 24; Philippians 1:12; 2 Timothy 1:8, 2:10. _____

- B. What did Paul mean by the statement: *the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations*? The word which Paul uses means an open secret, a revealed secret. Compare Ephesians 3:1-6. In what way is the Gospel a mystery to some people? Note 1 Corinthians 1:18. In what way is it a mystery at times to all of us? _____

Look for the Author's Purpose

- C. Did you note that again Paul emphasizes *knowledge, wisdom, and understanding* (2:2, 3)? Compare Colossians 1:9, 10 and 2:2, 3. What is the emphasis in each reference? What is it that Paul wants persons to know about Christ? Note Ephesians 1:17-20 and 2:4-9. Is it possible to know many facts about Christ and yet not know him?

Be On the Alert for Details

- D. What is the meaning and significance of such words as *great, fully, riches, glory, powerfully, treasures, overflowing, complete*? Reread the passage (Colossians 1:24-2:7) leaving out these words. What happens to the message? What did these words add? _____

- E. Did you note Paul's emphasis on the words: *everyone* and *all*? Why this emphasis? Review the false teachings listed under the "Problems." What is Paul trying to combat? Also note the preposition *for*. Underline the *for's*. What insight do you gain about Paul's reason for doing things? _____

Choose one or more of the suggestions for special study. Look up words in the dictionary. Study cross references. Compare translations. List one new insight which you have received. _____

GROWING... in Christ

5. What is Paul Saying to Us?

A. Growing in faith? ... By now, no doubt, you have memorized the theme verses, Colossians 2:6, 7, but have you *internalized* them? Reflect on their meaning for you personally and then rewrite them in your own words, using first person (I, me). _____

B. Growing in knowledge and understanding? ... Someone has said that less than 15 percent of the people in most congregations are really concerned whether they are growing in their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith (e.g. less than 10% of WELS members attend Bible Class!). How would you evaluate your congregation and yourself as a member? What percentage of your congregation seems interested in attending classes in Bible or doctrinal study? _____

Reread the incident described in the beginning of this lesson. If she were your daughter, what would you need to know in order to advise her? What would you write to her? _____

C. Growing in love? ... Reflect on what it means to become knit together in the love of Christ with other members of your congregation. Think about the meaning of the little word KNIT. Picture yourself and your members becoming so woven together in the love and compassion of Christ that you all have HIS concern for others... for those in the church and out of the church. How would you evaluate the concern of persons who say...

- “I don't want our circles to be changed. I want to stay with my friends.” “We certainly aren't going to have THAT family in our church!” _____

- “How can they expect us to give much to other mission causes. We have to pay for our own church first.” _____

- “I don't get anything out of our worship or Bible study, so I am going to scale back on my attendance.” _____

D. Growing in thanksgiving? ... Thank God for your treasures in Christ Jesus – for the forgiveness of sins, for your reconciliation with God through Him, for Christ's peace and joy.

If you are uncertain of these treasures, take God at his Word when he tells you they are his gifts to you... trust the power of the Spirit to work such confidence in your heart! Read and contemplate the words of Jesus to you in Matthew 11:28-30; John 14:1; 15:4, 7-9; Revelation 3:20. Thank Him for His promises.

Memorize one of these verses! _____
