



Assurance in Christ

[2:1-10]

Gene Cloer

“For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument. For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority” (2:1-10).

Insurance is a fascinating subject. What an invention of modern man! You pay ahead of time for the mistakes that you might make in the future. It is much like the practice of the Roman Church in the Middle Ages of selling indulgences. If a person wanted to commit a sin, he

simply bought a license. The Roman Church assured him that they would forgive him, for a price. We do like to know that should something bad happen to us, we are covered.

What about spiritual insurance? How can I have the assurance that my soul is secure? How can I have the assurance that I am conducting my life in the right manner?

A spiritual assurance plan is outlined in Colossians 2:1-10. We will gain assurance if we follow carefully Paul’s directions.

Two phrases indicate this idea.

I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument (2:4).

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ (2:8).

Notice the assurance that is implied in the words: “in order that no one may delude you” and “no one takes you captive.” If we do as Paul has admonished, we can be assured that we will not be deceived or taken captive.

Paul’s plan for the Colossians involved four steps. If they implemented these four steps, a great assurance would be theirs.

THE CONSOLATION (2:1, 2)

Paul first admitted his struggle or conflict for them (2:1). This was a conflict that included all the Christians of this area, even those who had

not seen his face. Why the struggle? Why the conflict? Four reasons are given: First, Paul hoped that they might be comforted or “encouraged” (2:2a). Verse 2 indicates that Paul’s purpose was that they might be encouraged in heart. The number one enemy of Christianity is discouragement. A good way to assist others in overcoming discouragement is to encourage them. This helps us avoid discouragement ourselves. It allows us to get out of ourselves and into service for others. By doing so we tend to forget, or at least not think of, our own discouragement.

Second, they were to be “knit together in love” (2:2b). By mentioning this directive Paul was indicating that a need was present for this knitting. Jesus said, “That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me” (John 17:21). The need for unity is serious. It is “that the world may believe.” Why does the world not believe today? Several reasons could be given, but one is certainly evident: a lack of unity among believers. How can we maintain the unity of the church? Only by love. Love knits together. Love unites.

Third, Paul prayed that they might have “all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding” (2:2c). A danger existed that these Christians would be carried away with strange doctrines that claimed to have greater wisdom than the teachings of Christ. Paul was suggesting that we need nothing more than Christ. The redemption in Christ is complete. No other organization or relationships are needed. The secrets of the world will not add anything to those who have the full understanding of the riches we have in Christ.

Fourth, he prayed that they might know God’s mystery, Christ (2:2d). This phrase could be translated in several ways. The KJV has “to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.” The best translation seems to be this: “That they may know the mystery of God, Christ.” Christ was the great mystery of God, revealed in the last times. The mystery made salvation available to all men, even to the Gentiles.

Encouragement from these four facts will assist you in refusing to be deceived by enticing words.

THE COMPLIMENTS (2:5-8)

Can we assume that since Paul was an apostle, inspired of the Holy Spirit, that what brought him joy would also bring joy to the Lord? Surely that is the case. Paul compliments the Colossians for what they were doing well.

First, he complimented their orderliness (2:5). This military term describes troops in marching order. It describes their being in step, in perfect alignment. We are engaged in a battle. The church has always been at war.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:12-17).

Keep rank. Make sure you are in step with the teachings of Christ. All Christians can and must be united.

Second, he commended the firmness of their faith (2:5). Steadfastness is a characteristic of faithfulness. It, too, is a military term that describes how a good army presents a united front. The lines are impenetrable because each soldier is doing his job. No weakness occurs in the front lines. The church must present a united front. Each must support the other. Your strength must compliment my weakness and vice versa. In this way we can be firm or steadfast in the faith. The Lord delights in order and in steadfastness.

THE CONFIRMATION (2:6, 7)

They had received Christ Jesus as Lord (2:6). What now? Remember “receiving Christ” is not just an attitude of believing. It is full obedience to the commands of Christ. If I do not do what He says, I have not received Him. Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:48). Receiving Christ means receiving His words or being obedient to His commands.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12).

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (John 14:15).

A program for what should happen after “receiving Christ” is given.

First, they were to walk in Christ (2:6). The NIV says they were to “continue to live in Him.” Christ is the whole of the Christian’s life. Everything revolves around Him. When I hear of someone who became upset over a petty, insignificant happening and quit coming to worship service, I know Christ is not the center of his or her life. Implied in this command is a necessity on my part. The understood subject is “you.” *You walk in Him. You continue to live in Him.* This is not something that comes automatically but something that requires effort and application.

Second, they were to be rooted and built up in Him (2:7a). A tree is no better than the soil in which it is rooted. The kind of soil determines, to a great degree, the kind of plant grown. It is so with the Christian. We must sink our roots deeply into the soil of Christ. We must draw from Him the inspiration to live daily for Him, to walk in Him.

Third, they were to be established in the faith (2:7b). The idea of this phrase is that we must be firmly set. To be established is to have a firm foundation and a sense of continuing. Your faith is not something which always remains the same. It is either growing or diminishing. Even the apostles asked the Lord to increase their faith.

Fourth, they were to be overflowing with thankfulness (2:7c). In order to abound in thankfulness, we must constantly be looking for the good. We will see the blessings, not the problems. Those who become discouraged begin to look at the faults, weaknesses, or problems. The moment we give in to discouragement we begin to see problems. Let us focus on the good we can see, not on the difficulties.

Do not allow anyone to spoil you or take you captive. Surely, if we will continue to walk in Christ, to be rooted and built up in Him, to be established in the faith, and develop the attitude of thankfulness, we will not be taken captive. How can we prevent being carried away either

by discouragement or false teachers? Paul has given us the method.

THE COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST (2:9, 10)

Three glorious truths are stated rather plainly in 2:9, 10: (1) All the fullness is in Christ. (2) Deity lives in Him in bodily form. (3) You have been given that fullness.

Christ is the head over all things. Nothing can supercede Christ. If you are looking for something better, you will not see it. If you are looking for more fullness, it will not be found.

The world, in general, looks for something or someone better than Christ. The world is mistaken. The fullness is in Christ!

CONCLUSION

What is life all about? How can we plug into all the power needed for life’s big problems? Christ is the answer!

Quotations

Augustine said that in the writings of the philosophers of Greece he could parallel practically every statement in the New Testament except one: “The Word became flesh” (John 1:14).

The Jewish rabbis had a magnificent saying: “A man will give account for every good thing he might have enjoyed and did not enjoy.”

“A man cannot live unless he is in the air and the air is in him. Just so a man cannot be a Christian unless he is in Christ and Christ is in him.”

Harnack

“The real acid question is not, ‘What does Christianity make a man within the church?’ but, ‘What does Christianity make a man in the office, the shop, the factory, the shipyard, the school, the golf course, . . . the home?’ It is life that Jesus promises, and life cannot be confined to any part of life; life permeates all life.”

William Barclay,
The All-Sufficient Christ