

2154 - HAVING RECEIVED CHRIST - Col 2:6-8

PRELIMS. We normally have a **greater interest** in people we have met **personally**, *face to face*! We might **feel** for a passing moment for those people we read of in the **newspapers/TV** who are going through hard times, but because they are '**distant**' from us we soon lose interest. Well, **not** so Paul! He begins this chapter by stating his desire that the Cols **know how great a struggle I have for you...and for all who have not seen me face to face** [1]! **Amazing** - but then Paul is a man after God's own heart - he is deeply **concerned** about **people** - especially God's people! He has only heard and read about these Cols, yet he has a real deep concern for them.

And **what** did he learn about them? (1) They had **received Christ** - not just heard/read of Him [6]. (2) They were **circumcised with the circumcision made without hands** - *the circumcision of Christ* [11]. (3) God **made** them **alive**! [13] They were now 'alive' **spiritually**.

So **why** was Paul **concerned** for them? Because they were now **more vulnerable** to the **subtle attacks** of Satan to which they were **not subjected** before! Because **grace** is just that, **unmerited favour 100%** - Xns are tempted to take salvation **for granted**! Because we are fallen human beings we can become **far too easily complacent**! Paul was concerned that they, and the Laodiceans and all his readers everywhere would become '**satisfied with themselves**'! 'We are OK, we have Christ, we have nothing to fear, we are safe'! We can 'trifle' with sin, we can live near the edge, we cannot be lost'!

A Xn does **not** need to have had a **dramatic conversion** experience, but he **does** need to have a **changed life**! But **not perfectly**! Every Xn experiences the **power of God** in his life - and that power manifests itself in certain ways. God's power **does** have an effect on the Xn's way of life. Not only do beliefs change but also behaviour! There is no such thing as a 'Head Only Xn'! Churches are not filled with 'heads' rolling about! Xns have bodies that 'do' things. Paul has just said *I toil, struggling with all His energy that He **powerfully works within me***![2:29]+Paul prayed the Ephs would know about the **immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe**[E1:19]

Jesus said to the Sadducees who pretended religion but had serious error, *Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you **know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God**?* [Mat 12:24] Paul said the gospel was *the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes* [Rom 1:16] and *to us who are being saved it is the power of God* [1Cor 1:18]. Paul told the Cors that when he first came to them he was in fear/weakness/trembling and that his speech and message *were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in **demonstration** of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God* [1Cor 1:1-5] Paul reminds them what he was like when he first came – **weak and unimpressive** – yet God’s power **enabled** him to speak with **authority and power!**

When a Prime Minister first walks into 10 Downing Street, he has an authority/power he did not have before in that place! **APP** It is the same with the Xn, when X comes into the heart, X has an **authority and power** He did not have before. Christ is given a new **respect!**

At ‘conversion’ Jesus comes into the heart and casts out the evil demons! But they eventually want to return with more demons, and when they do return, they find a **big change** - the house is swept and **put in order** [Mat 12:43,44]. Jesus comes to put us ‘in order’! *That story has a solemn application. Jesus was **warning** the **Jews** about their treatment of Him. He had come to His Temple and they were about to put **Him out!** If that happened, then the *last state of that person is worse than the first!* [Mat 12:45]. **APP** That is why it is so vital that those who **profess faith** in Christ do **not turn away** from Him! Because the last state will be **worse** than if they **never heard** the gospel! **That** is why Paul here is so **concerned** that the Cols are **rooted and built up in Him** and **established in the faith!** [7].

As soon as something is planted, the gardener takes great care to **nourish** and **guard** and **cherish** the plant. So it is **vital** that there is some **means provided** for Xns to be **protected** and **grow** in the Lord. Sometimes the 1st thing new Xns are very often asked to do is get involved in **evangelistic** work! Well, the **first** thing should be **rooting** and **establishing** the young Xn in the faith. If Xns are not **established** in the faith, they will soon drift away from the faith!

Now we all know that as time goes on, that **eagerness to serve Christ wanes!** That is why in all epistles to the churches there are **warnings** to take care! Here we have Paul saying *so walk in Him...See to it...* [6,8]. Paul knows that Satan, the invisible enemy of the human soul, man's arch-enemy, is **subtle**, and spends his **whole life** seeking who he may **deceive** and devour with his fraudulent lies! You see, people are **not** misled and mistaken about the afterlife **by default**. No, no, people are deceived through the **deliberate/purposeful** work of Satan. Peter says to believers *Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour* [1 Pet 5:8]

So, Paul, as a true pastor, sets about explaining to them the **essentials** of the faith! Now the Scriptures speak of a body of teaching which is called **the faith** [7]. Paul refers to it here. It was the gospel which the Colossians were taught by Paul. He says they were **established in the faith** just as you were **taught** [6] Jude wrote *I found it necessary to write to you...to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints* [Jude 3] To the Galatians Paul preached **the faith** which once he destroyed [Gal 1:23] To Tim in latter times some will depart from **the faith** giving heed to deceiving spirits [1Tim 4:1]

It is important to realise this, because **there are today** a growing number of 'faiths' that **sound** like the real faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, but is **not**. Many **celebrities** profess good things and emphasise love, etc but on examination it is **not Christianity!**

Sex, money and materialism have not satisfied the human 'longing' in the soul. So, many **are** turning to **religion!** Film stars, Tom Cruise, Will Smith, etc have turned to **Scientology!** Cruise 'insists that Scientology can save drug addicts, rehabilitate criminals, and even bring about world peace. He issued a rallying call to other Scientologists to change the world, saying 'Now is the time', and confessed he was 'dedicated' to taking Scientology to the masses' [Daily Mail 17/1/09]. Cruise realises, that in himself, he doesn't have the answer to life's problem. Because he has problems of his own! His fame and fortune have not brought contentment and has only revealed to him that **there is still a lack** of some **vital** ingredient in mankind! This 'missing part' cannot be filled with wealth/sex/power/

fame or success! Mankind needs the living God in Christ!

Friends, do not be deceived, many false religions have a **vocabulary** and **terminology** which **sounds Xn**, but is **not**! They can talk of God faith, prayer, the Christ, but they mean something completely different from Biblical Xnity! There is a spirituality which is **not valid** in the sight of God. Many religions can refer to God – but unless the God referred to, is the **Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, He is not the true God. Prayer must be to the Father of our LJC or it is not Xn prayer. Unless the **Christ** they speak of is **the Son of God who gave Himself for our sins** [Gal 1:4] and **who gave Himself a ransom** [1Tim 2:6] and **who gave Himself for us to redeem us...and to purify for Himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works**”[Tit 2:14] that X is not the X of the Bible!

Unless the **Cross** of Jesus Christ is **central** to the faith, unless the atoning death of the LJC is the **foundation** and **centre** of your faith, it is not the real thing at all, it is not Xn! Thus... Paul insists here that we must be **established in the faith** and are **rooted and built up in Him**, ie Jesus Christ! Now if we have real faith in the real Jesus...

...we will be **abounding in thanksgiving** for salvation [7]! If we are not thankful for Christ, we have **not received Christ**! It is **impossible** to have Christ and **not** be **thankful** about Him! The Christ that you/I need, and must have, is a Christ that has **paid the price of our personal sins** and can usher us straight into the presence of God His Father - without spot or blemish of any kind. That is why Paul says **See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ** [8]

...**so walk in Him** [6] Paul is saying ‘Do not be content in **knowing about Xn theology** - you must **walk** each day with Christ and **enjoy** His fellowship and **draw out** of His fullness! *and of His fullness have all we received and grace for grace* [J1:16] There is a **bottomless pit of treasures** in Christ! *Paul wants us to **see to it** that we **walk** in Christ **to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery which is Christ** [2]