

**Message #8****Colossians 2:1-7**

No New Testament apostle struggled for the church like Paul. He put up with just about everything imaginable, when he was hurting himself. He not only served the church, he struggled on behalf of the church. The word “struggle” used in verse 1 is the Greek word from which we get our English word agony. The word literally has to do with an athletic struggle like a track contest (Heb. 12:1) or boxing match (I Tim. 4:7). Paul viewed Christian life and ministry as a contest and struggle. He put up with intense pain and distress for the church. Paul fought hard battles for these churches and he kept at it. The big question is “why”? Why would Paul struggle for people in a church like Colossae or Laodicea when he hadn’t even seen most people at these places? What was really on the line? Why should we keep ministering at times when we ourselves are hurting?

He believed it was necessary for him to keep praying, to keep writing, and to keep preaching because of the potential seduction of individual hearts and an entire church.

Paul NEVER wanted any believer seduced into moving away from the truth. He struggled so that God’s church might become strong and stable.

**THE REASON WHY A MINISTER MUST CONTINUE TO FAITHFULLY MINISTER, EVEN WHEN PERSONALLY STRUGGLING, IS BECAUSE HIS FAITHFULNESS CAN PRODUCE SPIRITUAL STRENGTH AND STABILITY IN OTHERS.**

It is possible to help others become stable in the faith; it is also possible to hurt others. We need to take our ministries seriously. We need to be willing to put up with struggles and hardships because we are in war. Satan is out to seduce people away from the truth and we need to keep fighting for their hearts and battling for their minds.

**REASON #1** – Paul put up with struggles for a reason that was positive. **2:2-3**

The word “that,” which begins **verse 2**, introduces one purpose for Paul’s struggle which was specifically in behalf of this church. The purpose was very positive, he wanted to encourage the hearts of the people.

The word “encourage” is one that carries with it the idea of cheering, comforting and challenging (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 340).

Notice carefully what needs to be cheered and comforted and challenged—the heart. Theological error messes up the heart. Paul specifically was preaching and teaching; he was specifically praying and writing so that he could impact the hearts of the people.

The past tense of the participle “having been knit together” indicates that Paul was struggling for believers who had been united or joined together with Jesus Christ. Now he qualifies whose hearts may be encouraged by using three different prepositional phrases.

**Prepositional Phrase #1** - Paul struggled to encourage the hearts of those who had been knit together in love. **2:2a**

Theological heresy hammers at believers in the church and it breeds suspicion and alienation.

When heresy strikes, it is imperative that God's people bind together in love. Biblical love is always based on truth. It is not some mindless emotionalism or enthusiasm; it is very specific and concrete as defined in I Cor. 13:4-7. Nicholson said: "Love never compromises truth. It is compassionate to the errorist, but gives no allowance to the error" (p. 177).

A group of people who love God, His Word and each other is an impregnable wall which cannot be cracked.

**Prepositional Phrase #2** - Paul struggled to encourage the hearts of those who had been knit together into wealth. **2:2b**

Notice carefully what wealth is in the mind of God—coming to a full assurance of understanding. People who are rich, by God's calculation, are those who have a deep knowledge of His Word and the assurance of their relationship with Him. Full assurance comes by understanding the deep things of God.

**Prepositional Phrase#3** - Paul struggled to encourage the hearts of those who had been knit together into knowledge. **2:2c**

The word for knowledge is "knowledge-upon-knowledge," or deep knowledge. Paul put up with struggles so that he might take people deep into their understanding of God's Word.

All heresies, all heretics feature an ignorance of Jesus Christ—His humanity and His deity. In other words, one cannot grow deep in knowledge without a proper relationship with and knowledge of Jesus Christ, because it is in Christ that all wisdom of God and knowledge of God are found.

If you are a believer and you are depressed, let me give you three keys to getting out of your depression: 1) Start loving your brothers and sisters in Christ; 2) Start studying and learning so you can grow deep in your knowledge; 3) Start cultivating a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

**REASON #2** – Paul put up with struggles for a reason that was protective . **2:4**

Paul kept at his ministry because he did not want any heretic to be able to delude these believers by their persuasive arguments. The word "delude" means there are those who are very skilled at using false reasoning and logic who can delude one's mind. They sound very intellectual, very scholarly and very legitimate.

Ladies and Gentlemen, look contextually what this verse is saying—the key to combating false argumentation and logic is a deep knowledge of God’s Word. Paul struggled to take people deep into the things of God so that they would not be deluded.

**REASON #3** – Paul put up with struggles for a reason that was personal. **2:5**

Even though Paul was not physically in Colossae, he rejoiced that he had seen, through the description of Epaphras, that this was a church that had the same spirit he had toward the church.

**Feature #1** - It was a church that was disciplined. **2:5a**

The word “discipline” is a rare Greek word which refers to a military type of order and arrangement. This type of discipline was lacking in the Corinthian church where Paul uses the same word (I Cor. 14:40), but it was existing in the Colossian church.

We see from this type of church that demonstrated a Pauline spirit was a church that was highly disciplined and organized. Paul found great joy in churches that featured disciplined people and military-type organization.

**Feature #2** - It was a church that was stable. **2:5b**

The word “stable” means this church was strong, firm, solid and steadfast concerning faith in Jesus Christ.

**REASON #4** – Paul put up with struggles for reasons that were practical. **2:6-7**

Paul had a very practical reason why he put up with the struggles, because he wanted these believers to, by faith, live a Christ-like life. You walk in Christ the same way you received Christ and that is by faith. Deep knowledge of God’s Word is very practical.

**Participle #1** - A walk in Christ is one firmly rooted in Christ. **2:7a**

The perfect / passive indicates this walk begins by being firmly rooted in Christ and continues by being firmly rooted in Christ.

**Participle #2** - A walk in Christ is one built-up in Christ. **2:7b**

The present tense indicates that a walk that is in Christ is one that is continually being built. We should be a continual spiritual construction project that is constantly building and expanding. Once the building process starts, it needs to continue. We should be continually growing, learning and applying.

**Participle #3** - A walk in Christ is one established in the faith. **2:7c**

Notice very carefully what establishes one in the faith—instruction. A walk in Christ will be a walk of continual instruction in the Word of God.

**Participle #4** - A walk in Christ is one abounding in Thanksgiving. **2:7d**

It is interesting that this is the only participle that is not passive voice. The other three indicate that God began the work and we are to continue it. But this one is active voice meaning we are to continually be thankful for all God has done for us.

We need to realize that others are looking to us and looking at us, whether it is in the home with children, in the school with classmates, or on the job with co-workers. We stay committed to growing deep in our knowledge of God's Word. Others need to see that even though we struggle, we still are faithful. That is what will help bring spirituality and stability to others.