

Paul now comes to his theme, which he has mentioned before, but is ready to develop.

I. vs. 1. He has conflict: from same root as "striving" in 1:29. Internal, but manifested externally. There is agony in Paul's mind over the spiritual welfare of the Colossians. "Agony" This is the work of the Holy Spirit in Paul.

A. Two errors concerning the work of the Holy Spirit:

1. Identification with our spirits with the Holy Spirit. If it is energetic and full of pizzaz, then the Holy Spirit must be in it!!
2. That He does not work supernaturally, powerfully, personally. He is not to be equated with natural reason, emotion, power, etc. There is a supernatural power that works in the child of God which has no explanation in human things. It is realized creature hood; true identity as the image of God; but not after the course of the world.

B. Communion of the saints: Paul could love those whom he had not met.

II. Vs. 2. What a wonderful verse:

--comforted: consolation: false doctrine destroys the comforts of a Christian. "True quietness" (Calvin). This is possible: and a great and wonderful hope.

--Where is this comfort found: knit together in love. Here is strength: Col. 3:14. Not in rugged individualism, but in the community of the saints. love and faith a conjoined;; they can never be separated. Paul is contending for doctrine so that they might not lose their comfort.

--"Riches of the full assurance of understanding." The riches of a settled mind. Not tossed to and fro, unable to decide anything. The truth can be known, and must be known. But it must be found in Christ; not in "doctrines" that take us away from Christ.

--mystery: revealed to Christians who love one another: Rom. 11:33-36 Do you want to know mysteries; hidden things; dark things. There is plenty here; your soul will be destroyed in seeking mysteries, and dark things, and hidden things apart from Christ. Calvin: It is not lawful for a Christian man to know anything except Christ. People turn from the mysteries of the Gospel--Christ in you the hope of glory--to all sorts of hidden "apocryphal" things, to the damnation of their souls.

--Only in Christ: of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. God is hidden until He is found in Christ. Christ is the Way the Truth The Life; there is no knowledge of God apart from Christ: all knowledge of God apart from Christ is simply idolatry, and will lead nowhere. God must be sought for in Christ, or all is lost, including our souls.

III. vs. 3. Hidden: Here are the true secret treasures: secret as the treasures in a mine; not as the treasures in a pirate's cache. Christ is a mine to be mined; not to be concealed.

A. Essenes: Swear tremendous oaths not to reveal secret books, names of angels, etc. Christ: You are my friends for I have told you all things.. Christianity is not a secret organization, practicing secret rites, mysterious formulas, with esoteric, hidden books with hidden meanings. Ours is freely offered. If it is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost, whose minds have been blinded; not because the message has been concealed.

- B. Wisdom and knowledge: these are the same to Christ. Rom. 11:26ff. How could Jews and Gentiles be reconciled apart from the wisdom of God. How could justice and mercy kiss each other, except by the wisdom of God.
 - C. They are different with us: wisdom is the right use of knowledge; the ability to apply knowledge properly.
- IV. vs. 4, 5: men are deceptive:
- A. We do not use hidden arts, because we do not have a hidden agenda or message. No enticing words, but the simplicity of the Gospel.
 - B. order: structure, discipline: orderly arrangement: as taxonomy in biology
steadfastness: strength: the ankle bones: Acts. 3:7. Christ centered.