



COLOSSIANS

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Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

“Him” is speaking of “Christ” as referred to throughout the passage, and also in the preceding verse. In the words “Him we preach,” the “we” is in the emphatic position. Thus, he is including Epaphras of verse 7, and Timothy who was included in verse 1. He is probably also referring to true apostles who would come and preach Jesus Christ in the manner of himself and these others. In other words, anyone who does not preach Him in the same manner is to be rejected.

Next he says “warning every man.” The word is *nouthetéo*, and it means “admonish through instruction.” This is particularly in appeals to the mind in order to supply substance in doctrine and spiritual matters. It gives the sense of exerting positive pressure on another person’s logic or reason. Therefore, the word “warning” which is repeated from the archaic KJV is better translated as “admonish.” What “warning” once meant has taken on a different force in modern English which is not found in Paul’s thoughts.

In addition to admonishment, he says, “and teaching.” Whereas the admonishment is directed to those who have already been taught, and which looks to correctly walking in accord with doctrine, or repenting and turning back to correct doctrine, the teaching looks to those who are uneducated in matters, and who need to learn instruction. This then is directed to their intellect in order for them to obtain the necessary information that they lack.

Paul uses the word “every” in both admonishing and in teaching, and then again in the next clause as well, in order to “emphasize the universality of the Gospel against the intellectual exclusiveness encouraged by the false teachers” (Vincent’s Word Studies). Whereas false teachers claim exclusive knowledge that they alone possess, the Gospel is open to all and can be understood by all. The only thing exclusive about the words of Scripture are that they are revealed as God determines, and also by study and contemplation by those who would desire deeper knowledge. However, what is revealed is open to all.

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His next words, “in all wisdom,” are given to oppose “the esoteric and exoteric wisdom represented by the false teacher; higher knowledge for the few philosophic minds, and blind faith for the masses. In Christian teaching the highest wisdom is freely open to all” (Vincent’s Word Studies). As you can see, Paul’s letter is not only one of instruction on what is correct concerning Christ, it is also a letter warning against what is incorrect. It is a cult-buster if one properly uses it in that manner. Hence education in the book of Colossians, as well as in all Scripture, is vital for sound doctrine.

Finally Paul says that this admonishment and teaching is done so “that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” This corresponds to his words of verse 22 which said that Christ’s work was intended “to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.” It is a perfection which finds its source in Christ, not in wisdom of the mind, or a perfection of the body through asceticism. Rather, it is through instruction in the work of Christ, and in the application of that instruction to our lives that we will be perfected until the day He comes to finally and fully perfect us.

Life application: The Bible is given for life’s doctrine and practice. We cannot grow in Christ without it and we err when we think that mere life-application sermons which tickle our ears will satisfactorily help us to grow spiritually. If you or a loved one isn’t actively reading the Bible and following through with Bible studies, you are not living in accord with the instructions found in the Bible itself. Turn off the TV and open the Bible. Get to it there, friend.

To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Colossians 1:29

Paul completes Chapter 1 by moving from the third person to the first person. After this, in Chapter 2, he will continue speaking in the first person, directly giving them words of council and admonition. The words, “To this” refer to the previous verse where it said, “...we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” The transition to the singular person then occurs. In essence, “It is for this reason we do this, and for this reason I follow through with it.”

He then notes that, it is for this goal that “I also labor.” The word means to labor with both physical and mental strength to the point of weariness. Paul would exhaust himself in order to bring every man to perfection in Christ Jesus. In further explanation of that, he says that he is “striving according to His working.” The word translated as “striving,” *agónizomai*, indicates a struggle as if one is engaged in a wrestling match or in a battle. One can see that this is a root of the modern word for “agony.”

The words, “His working” is referring to Christ Jesus. The word is *energeia*, and Paul’s use of it is that of God’s power being supplied to him and through him. It is as if he was a machine,

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plugged into a receptacle. In that state, he was receiving energy necessary to move from one task to another because of this external supply coming into him. One can see that this is where our modern term “energy” is derived from. He was able to meet the challenges set before him because of this power which, as he says, “works in me mightily.”

This mighty power is the word *dunamis*. It is God’s power, supplied to him, which then results in powerful deeds and successful accomplishments. This is the root of our modern term for “dynamite.” Paul was chosen by God to transmit the message of the gospel to the Gentiles. He both labored with all of his might, and he relied fully on the power of God to continue to meet every challenge which came before him.

Life application: God has fashioned each of us to accomplish certain things, if we are willing to expend ourselves in doing them. But He hasn’t left us to simply wear ourselves out in the process. He will supply us with everything we need in order to continue to work effectively for Him. Let us not trust in our own strength, but rely on the Lord who is the One who has set the plan into motion, and who will see it through to its completion.

For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, Colossians 2:1

To open Chapter 2 (remember though that chapter divisions didn’t exist at this time), Paul says, “For I want you to know...” The words are given to show that what his heart feels is what he is trying to convey, knowing that if they understood these emotions, they would be truly affected concerning his words. More commonly, Paul would say, “I would not have you to be ignorant,” such as in 1 Corinthians 12:1. Here he makes it a positive, rather than a negative, statement.

Understanding this, he continues with, “...what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea.” The word he uses here is the noun *agon*. It is cognate to the verb “striving” of verse 1:29. It is as if he were in a battle or a wrestling match against the spiritual foes of the church, fighting for the precious saints that he was called to minister to. It is certainly a spiritual battle which he is speaking of, as the words of the next clause will show. In verse 4:12, he will again use the verb form of the word when speaking of the prayers of Epaphras. This further shows us that Paul’s conflict is tied into the striving of Epaphras, and which is spiritual in nature. His desire was that they could know and understand the level of trial and striving he had put forth on the behalf of the churches of Colossae and Laodicea.

But he next shows that this conflict was not limited to them alone. Rather, it extended to “as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.” He was, at this point, unknown personally to many, and yet he labored for them in the great conflict of spiritual matters. He wrote epistles, he studied the Scriptures in order to find answers to questions which had been sent to him, he steadfastly prayed for those who were being led astray, and so on. It was his calling to minister,

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and minister he did. He put forth great effort in order to bring soundness of doctrine and peace within the fellowship to those he ministered to.

Life application: Are you willing to minister to those you have never actually met? What will you do if someone emails you with questions concerning doctrine? And what if you hear of a church that is struggling and facing great trials? We have open to us a vast amount of resources for helping in doctrine, and we have the throne of heaven open to us for prayer when such needs are made known to us. Let us use these tools as weapons in the great spiritual battle we are engaged in.

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