

INTRODUCTION.

WE HAVE BEEN STUDYING ~ PAUL'S ACCOUNT ~ ¶¶

▶▶ of his apostolic ministry ~ to the church, ~ which takes up Col. 1:24 - 2:5.

▶▶ Today ~ we continue to do that.

AS WE ARE WELL AWARE OF, ~ HIS ACCOUNT ~ CAN BE SPLIT INTO THREE PARTS.

▶▶ The first part ~ was Paul's ministry of suffering on believers' behalf, ~ 1:24.

▶▶ The second part ~ was the character of his ministry, ~ 1:25-29.

▶▶ Now, ~ on the third part, ~ which is found in 2:1-5, ~ and which ~ we'll begin to look at today, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ I've modified my thinking on this.

▷▷ I had said ~ that in this part, ~ Paul talked about ~ his ministry of encouragement.

▷▷ But ~ after I began to study this more in depth, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ I felt ~ the more appropriate heading ~ would be ~ Paul's pastoral concern ~ for believers.

OK, ~ LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION ~ TO PAUL'S PASTORAL CONCERN. ¶¶ 1/14

PAUL ~ HAD A STRONG PASTORAL CONCERN ~ FOR THE SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING OF believers.

▶▶ Even ~ when believers were largely strangers to him, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and when others ~ were more immediately responsible ~ for their care.

▶▶ Even though ~ he had not known most of them personally.

▶▶ He had a concern ~ for the whole church, ~ not just ~ ¶¶

▷▷ for those believers ~ who happened to be near him at the time.

▶▶ He knew the reality ~ of the oneness in Christ ~ that all believers share.

▶▶ And he felt obliged ~ to help believers everywhere ~ ¶¶

▷▷ grow ~ in their spiritual lives ~ and to stand firm ~ against the evils of false teaching.

PAUL ~ STANDS ~ AS A MODEL FOR US.

▶▶ It is very easy for us ~ to begin to focus our concern ~ ¶¶

▷▷ on just our little group, ~ our little corner of the universal church.

▶▶ We must ~ take ~ a much broader perspective.

▶▶ We are part ~ of a very large family.

▶▶ And we need to be concerned for our brothers and sisters ~ outside of our local fellowship.

▷▷ Praying . . . . ⇔⇔ Helping . . . . ¶¶ 2/14

OK, ~ LET'S BEGIN TO LOOK CLOSELY ~ AT PAUL'S PASTORAL CONCERN ~ FOR believers, ~ 2:1-5.

SPECIFICALLY IN THIS CASE, ~ HIS CONCERN FOR THE BELIEVERS IN COLOSSAE, ~ ¶¶

▶▶and, ~ as we'll see, ~ the believers in the surrounding areas.

▶▶The specific area ~ of his concern in this case ~ was the danger of false teaching.

THIS PASSAGE, ~ COL. 2:1-5, ~ CAN BE BROKEN DOWN INTO FOUR PARTS.

▶▶In **verse 1a**, ~ Paul lets us know ~ how his concern was expressed.

▷▷Intercessory.

▶▶In **verse 1b**, ~ he notes the believers ~ ¶¶

▷▷on whose behalf ~ he was interceding.

▶▶In **verses 2-3**, ~ we find the content ~ of Paul's intercessory prayer.

▶▶And then in **verses 4-5**, ~ Paul gives ~ the reasons for his pastoral concern.

NOW, ~ WE'RE NOT GOING TO GO THROUGH ALL OF THIS TODAY.

▶▶We'll just cover **verses 1-2a**, ~ ¶¶

▷▷and end with ~ Paul's first prayer request for believers.

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ LET'S LOOK AT ~ HOW PAUL'S PASTORAL CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED.

Col. 2:1a. ¶¶ 3/14

## IN THE CONTEXT OF WRITING TO THE COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ the form ~ his pastoral concern was expressed by a great struggle.

▷▷ For I want you to know ~ how great a struggle I have.

## THE WORD FOR ~ "STRUGGLE" ~ POINTS ~ TO ~ AN INTENSE STRAIN.

▶▶ The word is related ~ to the term "struggling" ~ in 1:29.

▶▶ Which, ~ as we said ~ is ~ an athletic image, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ depicting runners ~ straining ~ with every muscle ~ toward the finish line.

▶▶ IOW, ~ giving maximum effort ~ in order to win the victory ~ against formidable opponents.

▶▶ Doubtless, ~ Paul, ~ here in 2:1, ~ is continuing ~ this athletic picture.

## HOWEVER, ~ SINCE PAUL WAS UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN ROME ~ WHEN HE WROTE this letter, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ he could not ~ have been talking about ~ ¶¶

▷▷ maximum ~ physical effort ~ or ~ formidable ~ physical opponents.

▶▶ He must be talking about ~ maximum ~ spiritual effort ~ and ~ formidable ~ spiritual opponents.

▶▶ Paul uses a related word in Col. 4:12 ~ to refer to ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Epaphras' wrestling in prayer ~ for these believers. ¶¶ 4/14

▶▶ So no doubt ~ Paul is referring ~ here in Col. 2:1a, ~ to ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the spiritual warfare ~ of wrestling in prayer, ~ to which ~ Paul gave maximum effort.

AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS DISCUSSION ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE, ~ Paul writes, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ Eph. 6:12. ~ For we do not wrestle ~ against flesh and blood, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but against ~ the rulers, ~ against ~ the authorities, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ against ~ the cosmic powers ~ over this present darkness, ~ ¶¶

→→ against ~ the spiritual forces of evil ~ in the heavenly places.

▶▶ This applies ~ to prayer as well, ~ perhaps ~ especially ~ to prayer.

WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND ~ THAT ~ ALL PRAYER ~ IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

▶▶ There is no such thing ~ as ~ regular prayer ~ and ~ spiritual warfare prayer.

▶▶ All prayer ~ is spiritual warfare.

▶▶ The minute ~ we engage in serious prayer, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the spiritual forces of evil ~ mount a full-scale attack on us.

▶▶ Why?

▷▷ Because ~ they know ~ the power of prayer.

▶▶ And will do all they can ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to ~ discourage us, ~ to ~ stop us ~ or ~ to ~ prevent us ~ from praying. ¶¶ 5/14

▶▶ To be engaged ~ in serious prayer ~ 77

▷▷ is to be engaged ~ in fierce spiritual warfare, ~ against ~ formidable ~ spiritual opponents.

FURTHERMORE, ~ AT ~ THE END ~ OF HIS DISCUSSION ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE, ~ 77

▶▶ Paul indicates ~ that prayer ~ is central ~ 77

▷▷ in our fight against ~ "the spiritual forces of evil ~ in the heavenly places."

BACK TO COL. 2:1a.

▶▶ And ~ to how ~ Paul's pastoral concern for these believers ~ was expressed.

▶▶ To put it briefly, ~ Paul ~ was engaged ~ in serious ~ intercessory prayer.

▶▶ He was expending ~ great energy ~ in prayer ~ on these believers' behalf.

NOW, ~ THE FORM OF THE VERB FOR "I HAVE" ~ 77

▶▶ when he says, ~ For I want you to know ~ how great a struggle I have, ~ 77

▷▷ indicates ~ that ~ this intercessory prayer ~ was ongoing.

▶▶ Verse 1a ~ could be translated, ~ For I want you to know ~ how greatly ~ I am struggling.

FURTHERMORE, ~ WHEN WE LOOK ~ AT THE CONTENT ~ OF HIS CONTINUAL intercession, ~ 77

▶▶ we'll see ~ that his praying ~ was specific. 77 6/14

## ALL OF THIS ~ SHOWS US ~ THAT PAUL'S PRAYING ~ WAS ~ 77

▶▶ heartfelt, ~ in-depth, ~ continual, ~ and ~ specific.

▶▶ This ~ was not ~ some vague, ~ surface, ~ or sporadic praying.

▶▶ Such as, ~ once in awhile praying, ~ 77

▷▷ "O, ~ Lord, ~ bless so and so." ~ 77

↳↳ Or, ~ "O, Lord, ~ be with so and so."

## PAUL ~ SERVES AS A MODEL ~ FOR ALL BELIEVERS.

▶▶ All believers ~ can learn ~ three valuable lessons here ~ from Paul.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ we should be engaged in serious prayer for our fellow believers.

↳↳ And if we don't know what to pray for, ~ just open our Bibles.

↳↳ Scripture ~ will always ~ show us what to pray for ~ for our fellow believers.

▷▷ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ we need ~ to make sure ~ that our prayers for them ~ are ~ 77

↳↳ heartfelt, ~ in-depth, ~ continual, ~ and specific.

▷▷ And 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ don't let the spiritual forces of evil ~ keep us from praying. ⇔⇔ Is. 41:10

↳↳ fear not, ~ for I ~ am with you; ~ be not dismayed, ~ for I ~ am your God; ~ I ~ will strengthen you, ~ I ~ will help you, ~ I ~ will uphold you ~ with my righteous right hand. 77 7/14

## A FINAL POINT ~ ABOUT ~ PAUL'S SERIOUS ~ INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

▶▶ By letting his readers know ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that ~ he was continually wrestling in prayer for them, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Paul conveyed to them ~ the seriousness and danger ~ of their situation.

▶▶ The seriousness and danger ~ of false teaching.

▶▶ We talked about this last week.

▶▶ And ~ since Paul points this out again, ~ it no doubt ~ bears briefly reviewing.

▶▶ As said, ~ warning believers against false teaching ~ and its dangerous consequences ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is part and parcel ~ ¶¶

↳↳ of ~ a Bible teacher's or preacher's ministry, ~ ¶¶

→→ of the ministry ~ of the local church, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and ~ of an elder's ministry ~ to the church he serves.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ we noted that ~ warning against false teaching ~ is a recurrent theme ~ in the NT.

▶▶ And we noted that ~ both ~ implicitly ~ and explicitly ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the NT ~ points out ~ the dangerous consequences ~ of false teaching.

▶▶ Again, ~ false teaching ~ is ~ destructive. ¶¶ 8/14



NOW LET'S LOOK ~ AT THE BELIEVERS ~ ON WHOSE BEHALF ~ Paul was interceding, ~ 2:1b

FOR YOU [I.E., ~ THE COLOSSIANS] ~ AND ~ ¶¶

▶▶ for those at Laodicea ~ and ~ for all who have not seen me face to face.

▶▶ Laodicea ~ was a neighboring city ~ ten miles to the west ~ of Colossae.

▷▷ Apparently ~ the same doctrinal errors ~ were being promoted there.

▶▶ But Paul's concern ~ did not stop ~ with the churches at Laodicea and Colossae.

▶▶ The phrase ~ for all who have not seen me face to face ~ no doubt included ~ ¶¶

▷▷ all the other believers and churches ~ in that vicinity.

▶▶ Apparently ~ the same doctrinal errors ~ were being promoted ~ throughout that region.

▶▶ So, ~ the heresy ~ and the danger included with it ~ was quite wide spread.

JUST THINK HOW MUCH MORE ~ WIDESPREAD ~ HERESY IS TODAY.

▶▶ Just think ~ of all the books, ~ the radio and TV programs, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and what goes out over the internet, ~ all claiming to speak in the name of Christ.

▶▶ And yet ~ Christ has not sent them ~ to speak for Him.

▶▶ Heresy ~ is a real ~ and widespread ~ danger ~ in our day. ¶¶ 9/14

▶▶ Therefore, ~ we need to be discerning.

▶▶ We need to ~ "test the spirits," ~ as John says.

▶▶ Like the Bereans, ~ we need ~ to examine the Scriptures ~ daily ~ to see if these things are so.

▶▶ And we need ~ to expend great energy in prayer ~ for ourselves, ~ and on other believers' behalf.

▷▷ So that ~ none of us ~ will get sucked in ~ by charlatans.

### VERSE 2-3 ~ CONTAIN THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

IT LOOKS LIKE ~ THERE ARE FOUR REQUESTS HERE ~ ON BELIEVERS' BEHALF.

▶▶ We're just going to look at the first request, ~ and then we'll be done for today.

▶▶ And then next week, ~ we'll finish them ~ and also look ~ at [verses 4-5](#).

### THE FIRST REQUEST, ~ VERSE 2a

THAT THEIR HEARTS MAY BE ENCOURAGED.

▶▶ Now, ~ I need to spend some time talking about this word.

▷▷ Because ~ not everyone uses the same translation.

▷▷ And I don't want ~ anyone ~ confused by this. **⇓⇓ 10/14**

▷▷ I want you ~ to get a good understanding of this.

▷▷ So please, ~ bear with me.

▶▶ The Greek word for ~ "encouraged," ~ literally means ~ "to call to one's side."

▷▷ And ~ because ~ a person can be called alongside ~ for many purposes, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ the word ~ has ~ a wide range of meanings.

▷▷ It signifies ~ such ideas as ~ comfort, ~ encouragement, ~ exhortation, ~ admonish, ~ and strengthen.

↳↳ All depending ~ on the context ~ in which it is found.

▷▷ And, ~ if I understand it correctly, ~ it's hard to express it ~ in English.

↳↳ Probably ~ because ~ of the wide range in meanings.

▷▷ So, ~ when it comes down to it, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ it looks like it's an interpretive decision ~ on the part of translators ~ ¶¶

→→ as to how to translate the word here ~ in Col. 2:2a.

▷▷ And that's why ~ you see different English words ~ used in different translations ~ of this verse.

WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COLOSSIANS, ~ THE IDEA OF STRENGTHEN ~ SEEMS ~ TO fit best.

▶▶ Always keep in mind the overarching reason Paul wrote Colossians. ¶¶ 11/14

▶▶ These believers ~ were beset ~ by false teachers ~ and most likely ~ 77

▷▷ needed strengthening ~ the most.

▶▶ Rather ~ than ~ comfort, ~ encouragement, ~ exhortation, ~ or ~ admonishment.

▶▶ What made Paul concerned ~ for these believers ~ was the danger ~ 77

▷▷ of their being carried away by the heretical teaching ~ that was threatening them.

▶▶ And he wanted ~ these believers ~ enabled ~ 77

▷▷ to meet ~ this difficult situation ~ bravely ~ and ~ with confidence.

▶▶ Briefly put, ~ they needed strength ~ in order ~ 77

▷▷ to equip them to stand strong ~ against ~ the error they faced.

OK, ~ HERE'S THE POINT OF APPLICATION FOR US.

▶▶ We too ~ need strength ~ to equip us ~ to stand strong ~ against error.

▶▶ And, ~ although ~ it almost goes without saying, ~ 77

▷▷ the strength we need ~ comes from the Holy Spirit.

▶▶ False teachers ~ are quite proficient ~ at what they do.

▶▶ We'll see that at [verse 4](#), ~ where Paul shows us ~ 77

▷▷ that the false teachers ~ use arguments ~ that sound ~ reasonable. 77 12/14

▶▶ Paul, ~ I would suggest, ~ is sending us a clear message ~ ~ 77

▷▷ we need God's resources ~ to prevent us ~ from buying into ~ what false teachers are selling.

WE JUST TALKED LAST WEEK ~ ABOUT ~ NOT BEING ABLE TO DO ANYTHING ~ without Jesus.

▶▶ And here it is again.

▷▷ And ~ since Paul has brought it up again, ~ no doubt we should briefly look at it again.

▷▷ Last time ~ it was in the context of ministry and the Christian life.

▷▷ Here ~ it's in the context of not falling for false teaching.

▶▶ We need God the Holy Spirit ~ to give us the strength we need ~ in order for us ~ 77

▷▷ to stand strong against false teaching ~ and to see through the lies ~ of those spreading it.

WE NEED TO WRAP OUR HEADS AROUND THIS.

▶▶ The quicker ~ we understand and acknowledge this, ~ the better off we will be in life.

▶▶ The enemy . . . .

▶▶ Then sinful pride kicks in.

▶▶ Remember what Paul said about his thorn in the flesh? ⇔⇔ 2 Cor. 12:8-10. 77 13/14

▷▷<sup>8</sup> Three times ~ I pleaded with the Lord about this, ~ that it should leave me. ~<sup>9</sup>  
But he said to me, ~ "My grace ~ is sufficient for you, ~ for my power ~ is made perfect  
in weakness." ~ Therefore ~ I will boast all the more gladly ~ of my weaknesses, ~ 77

↳↳so that ~ the power of Christ ~ may rest upon me ~ [i.e., ~ so that Christ's power  
may reside in me]. ~ [Paul continues,] ~ 77

→→<sup>10</sup> For the sake of Christ, ~ then, ~ I am content ~ with ~ weaknesses, ~  
insults, ~ hardships, ~ persecutions, ~ and calamities. ~ For when I am weak, ~  
then ~ I am strong.

▶▶My . . . , ~ we need ~ to get to the same place ~ that Paul was at.

▷▷To gladly boast ~ in our weaknesses, ~ so that ~ 77

↳↳God's power ~ can work ~ in us ~ and through us ~ and for us.

▷▷And ~ we should not delay ~ in getting to that place.

## CONCLUSION.

AS MARTIN LUTHOR WROTE, ~ 77

▶▶Did we ~ in our own strength confide, ~ our striving ~ would be losing. ~ 77

▷▷Were not the right Man on our side, ~ The Man ~ of God's own choosing; ~ 77

↳↳Dost ask ~ who that may be? ~ Christ Jesus, ~ it is He; ~ 77

→→Lord Sabaoth, ~ His name, ~ From age to age ~ the same, ~ And He ~ must win  
the battle.