

INTRODUCTION.

LAST SUNDAY ~ WE BEGAN TO LOOK AT ~ Paul's pastoral concern for believers, ~ 2:1-5.

▶▶ Specifically in this case, ~ his concern for the believers ~ in Colossae ~ and the surrounding regions.

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

AS WE NOTED, ~ THIS PASSAGE, ~ COL. 2:1-5, ~ CAN BE BROKEN DOWN ~ into 4 parts.

▶▶ In [verse 1a](#), ~ Paul indicates ~ that ~ he was wrestling in intercessory prayer.

▶▶ 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.

▶▶ & then in [vv. 4-5](#), ~ Paul gives ~ the causes for his pastoral concern & subs. inter. prayer.

LAST TIME, ~ WE WENT AS FAR AS THE FIRST PART OF THE CONTENT ~ OF PAUL'S intercessory prayer.

▶▶ His first prayer request ~ was for the Lord ~ to give these believers ~ strength.

▶▶ They needed strength ~ in order ~ to equip them to stand strong ~ against ~ the error they faced.

▶▶ We too ~ need strength ~ to equip us ~ to stand strong ~ against error. 📖 1/15

TODAY, ~ WE'LL FINISH THIS PARAGRAPH ~ ON PAUL'S PASTORAL CONCERN FOR ~ believers.

▶▶ We'll look at ~ the rest of the content of Paul's intercessory prayer ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and ~ the reasons ~ for ~ his pastoral concern.

NEXT ~ IN HIS INTERCESSORY PRAYER, ~ PAUL PRAYS ~ FOR UNITY, ~ VERSE 2b.

THAT BELIEVERS ~ BE KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE. ⇔⇔ TALKING ABOUT UNITY.

▶▶ Unity ~ is vital ~ for ~ the life ~ and spiritual protection ~ of a local fellowship.

▶▶ Keeping the overarching theme in mind, ~ the presence ~ of false teaching in a church, ~ is always ~ divisive.

▶▶ Jude points this out ~ in **verse 19 ~ NIV** ~ of his brief epistle.

▷▷ These ~ are the people ~ who divide you, ~ who follow ~ mere natural instincts ~ and do not have ~ the Spirit.

▶▶ Paul ~ wanted these believers ~ to stand united ~ in the face of false teaching.

▶▶ We too ~ are to stand united ~ in the face of false teaching.

UNITY ~ IS SO IMPORTANT ~ FOR A LOCAL CHURCH, ~ THAT ~ ¶¶

IT WOULD DEFINITELY BE TO OUR BENEFIT ~ ¶¶

▶▶ to spend some time developing this. ¶¶ 2/15

IN EPH. 4:3a, ~ PAUL CALLS BELIEVERS ~ TO BE "EAGER ~ TO MAINTAIN THE UNITY ~ of the Spirit."

▶▶ "eager" means "make every effort."

▷▷ So, ~ here in Eph. 4:3a, ~ Paul is saying, ~ "make every effort ~ to maintain the unity of the Spirit."

▶▶ Although ~ we might expect Paul ~ to encourage believers ~ to strive to achieve unity in the church, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he actually ~ calls us ~ to maintain ~ a unity that already exists.

▶▶ "maintain" ~ essentially means ~ to preserve and protect ~ what is already in existence.

▶▶ Basically, ~ to build on verse 3a, ~ Paul is saying, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Make every effort ~ to preserve and protect ~ the unity of the Spirit ~ that you already have ~ in your possession."

SO, ~ BASED ON THIS, ~ BACK IN COLOSSIANS 2:2b, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ we can most likely conclude ~ that Paul ~ was praying ~ that the Lord ~ ¶¶

▷▷ would help these believers ~ maintain their unity ~ in the face of false teaching.

▶▶ So ~ most likely, ~ he was not praying for unity as such, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but ~ to uphold the unity ~ they had as believers.

▶▶ Paul's concern ~ was ~ that believers, ~ which would include us, ~ Paul's concern ~

▷▷ was that ~ all believers ~ maintain the unity ~ we have as believers. ¶¶ 3/15

OK, ~ LET'S GO BACK TO Eph. 4:3a, ~ IN OUR EXPANDED DISCUSSION ON UNITY.

▶▶ So far, ~ we have built on [verse 3a](#) ~ and noted that Paul there ~ is saying, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Make every effort ~ to preserve and protect ~ the unity of the Spirit ~ that you already have ~ in your possession."

THE GREEK GRAMMAR PAUL USES ~ SHOWS ~ THAT ~ ¶¶

▶▶ this ~ is a continuous thing ~ he is insisting that believers do.

▶▶ To once again build on [verse 3a](#), ~ Paul says, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Continually ~ make every effort ~ to preserve and protect ~ the unity of the Spirit ~ that you already have ~ in your possession."

AND THE PHRASE ~ "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT" ~ HERE MEANS ~ THE UNITY ~ FROM ~ the Holy Spirit."

▶▶ So, ~ Paul is talking about a unity that the Holy Spirit has given believers.

▶▶ God the Holy Spirit has joined believers together to form one unit, ~ the one church.

▶▶ When we are saved, ~ he does not divide us into individual separate entities, ~ each doing our own thing.

▶▶ As Paul notes ~ in his use of the human body ~ as a metaphor to describe the church, ~ ¶

▷▷ believers ~ have all been baptized ~ into one body by one Spirit, ~ and we all share the same Spirit.

▶▶ We are all different parts of one unit, ~ one whole. ¶¶ 4/15

TO ONE LAST TIME ~ BUILD ~ ON VERSE 3a, ~ PAUL SAYS ~ TO BELIEVERS ~ ¶¶

▷▷"Continually ~ make every effort ~ to preserve and protect ~ the unity ~ that the Holy Spirit ~ has given you."

MY ..., ~ WE ~ HAVE A GREAT ~ RESPONSIBILITY.

▶▶The unity we enjoy is a precious gift from the Holy Spirit that can be easily wrecked.

▶▶E.g., ~ bickering, ~ factions, ~ dissensions, ~ and, ~ ¶¶

▷▷more to the point of our current study, ~ false teaching ~ could wreck ~ our unity.

▶▶Each one of us ~ here at NHCC ~ must ~ make every effort ~ ¶¶

▷▷to preserve and protect ~ this unity ~ that ~ God the Holy Spirit has given us.

Now, ~ having said all that, ~ at this point, ~ must sound cautionary note.

It is extremely important ~ for us to understand ~ that Paul is not calling us ~ to unity at all costs.

E.g., ~ we are not ~ to sacrifice doctrinal purity and biblical truth ~ in order to preserve and protect unity in our church.

Furthermore, ~ we are not ~ to tolerate sin ~ in order to preserve and protect unity ~ in our church.

OK, ~ BACK TO COL. 2:2b.

NOTICE ~ IN VERSE 2b, ~ Paul says that he wants them to be "knit together ~ in love."

▶▶"in love" here ~ could be read as "by love."

▷▷Showing a means ~ by which ~ unity can be maintained. ¶¶ 5/15

▶▶ Paul ~ wanted these believers ~ to maintain their unity ~ in the face of false teaching.

▶▶ And one of the keys in doing so ~ is love for one another.

▶▶ But ~ not just any kind of love ~ is a key.

▶▶ Jesus defines the kind of love Paul is talking about.

▷▷ Jn. 13:34. ~ A new commandment I give to you, ~ that ~ you love one another: ~ ~ 77

↳↳ just as I have loved you, ~ you also ~ are to love one another.

▶▶ So, ~ the kind of love that Paul is talking about ~ is ~ Christ-like love.

▶▶ Now, ~ it doesn't take a rocket scientist ~ to figure out how Jesus loves us.

▷▷ It is written clearly ~ on the pages of the gospels, ~ and ~ on full display ~ at Calvary.

▶▶ When we have Christ-like love for one another, ~ 77

▷▷ it will be very less likely ~ that ~ false teaching, ~ or any other detrimental thing, ~ will divide us.

OK, ~ WE ARE LOOKING AT ~ THE CONTENT ~ OF PAUL'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER ~ FOR these believers.

NEXT, ~ IN VERSE 2c, ~ PAUL PRAYS THAT BELIEVERS ~ WOULD REACH ~ ALL THE riches of full assurance of understanding.

THIS WORDING SEEMS ~ A BIT CUMBERSOME. ⇔⇔ LET'S BREAK IT DOWN. 77 6/15

▶▶ "the riches of full assurance of understanding" ~ can be looked at ~ ¶¶

▷▷ as saying ~ "the riches that come from the full assurance of understanding."

▶▶ So Paul ~ was praying that ~ these believers ~ would reach ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the riches ~ that come from ~ the full assurance of understanding.

▶▶ "to reach" ~ can be translated as "may have."

▶▶ "riches" here ~ can be looked at as ~ "all the benefits."

▶▶ "full assurance of understanding" ~ can be looked at as saying, ~ "definite understanding."

OK, ~ NOW ~ LET'S PUT VERSE 2c BACK TOGETHER.

▶▶ Paul was praying ~ that ~ believers ~ would have all the benefits ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that come from ~ a definite understanding.

▶▶ The idea here ~ I would suggest, ~ is that ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul wanted believers to have all the benefits ~ that come from ~ a clear and correct understanding.

BUT ~ TO HAVE ~ A CLEAR AND CORRECT UNDERSTANDING ~ OF WHAT?

▶▶ Well, ~ since this was a prayer for believers to ~ not fall prey to false teaching, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the answer to the question ~ is ~ a clear and correct understanding ~ of sound doctrine. ¶¶ 7/15

▶▶ Sound doctrine being, ~ as Jude puts it, ~ the faith ~ that was once for all ~ delivered to the saints.

▶▶ The "faith" here ~ refers to ~ the whole counsel of God.

▷▷ The full revelation of which ~ was written down in Scripture.

SO, ~ PAUL WANTS BELIEVERS TO HAVE ~ ALL THE BENEFITS ~ ¶¶

▶▶ that come from ~ a clear and correct ~ understanding ~ of God's word.

▶▶ TPID, ~ the apostle wants believers ~ to have ~ all the benefits ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that come from ~ being well-grounded ~ or established ~ in sound doctrine.

▶▶ In the immediate context, ~ which is focus of our study ~ the benefit ~ would be ~ ¶¶

▷▷ not getting suckered ~ by false teachers.

▶▶ But ~ just to mention in passing, ~ the benefits within ~ every context of our lives ~ ¶¶

▷▷ are ~ too numerous ~ to count.

▷▷ And since ~ they're not our focus, ~ I'll let you trace them out on your own.

WHAT ALL THIS MEANS FOR US ~ IS THAT ~ WE, ~ BELIEVERS, ~ NEED ~ ¶¶

▶▶ a clear and correct understanding of sound doctrine, ~ in order ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to protect us ~ from false teachers.

▶▶ Otherwise, ~ how will we know ~ when someone ~ is trying to fool us? ¶¶ 8/15

▶▶ In Ps. 119:98 (CSB), ~ the psalmist says to the Lord, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Your commands ~ make me wiser ~ than my enemies, ~ for they are always ~ with me.

▶▶ As long as believers ~ are uncertain ~ about the basic truths of the faith, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ they will, ~ as Paul puts it in Eph., ~ be ~ ¶¶

↳↳ tossed by the waves ~ and blown around ~ by ~ every wind of teaching, ~ by ~ human cunning ~ with cleverness ~ in the techniques of deceit.

▶▶ Believers, ~ who are not solidly grounded in sound doctrine, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ become easy prey ~ for every cult and religious charlatan ~ that comes along.

NEXT, ~ IN VERSE 2d, ~ PAUL PRAYS THAT BELIEVERS ~ WOULD HAVE ~ ¶¶

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S MYSTERY, ~ WHICH IS CHRIST.

▶▶ "mystery."

▶▶ This, ~ I think, ~ is very similar ~ to the previous prayer request.

▷▷ The difference being ~ that Paul ~ is zeroing in ~ ¶¶

↳↳ on one specific aspect ~ of the whole counsel of God.

▶▶ So ~ there's really no need to spend a lot of time here ~ except to say this.

▶▶ Paul wanted believers ~ to have ~ a clear and correct understanding ~ ¶¶

▷▷ of the Person and work of Jesus. ¶¶ 9/15

▶▶ When believers possess this, ~ it's fairly easy for them ~ to ~ recognize ~ and refute ~ false teaching, ~ 77

▷▷ which is often ~ superficially attractive.

▶▶ We need to heed Peter's words ~ in 2 Pet. 3:18a. ~ 77

▷▷ But grow ~ in the grace and knowledge ~ of our Lord and Savior ~ Jesus Christ.

IN VERSE 3, ~ PAUL GIVES US THE REASON ~ IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE ~ 77

A CLEAR AND CORRECT UNDERSTANDING ~ OF THE PERSON AND work of Jesus.

▶▶ in Jesus ~ are hidden ~ all the treasures ~ of wisdom and knowledge.

▶▶ All that a person needs to know ~ 77

▷▷ in order to establish an eternal relationship with God ~ can be found ~ 77

↳↳ in Jesus ~ and His accomplishment for mankind.

REMEMBER, ~ IT LOOKED LIKE ~ THE HERETICS TOLD BELIEVERS ~

▶▶ they needed something more ~ than their relationship with Jesus ~ 77

▷▷ to bring them to genuine spiritual experience.

PAUL HERE ~ LET'S BELIEVERS KNOW ~ THAT IN JESUS ~ ARE ~ ALL ~ the treasures ~ 77

▶▶ that will make a person ~ knowledgeable and wise ~ regarding life with God. 77 10/15

▶▶ 1 Tim. 2:5-6 (CSB). ~ ~ ⁵ For there is one God ~ and one mediator ~ between God and humanity, ~ the man Christ Jesus, ~ ~ ⁶ who gave himself ~ as a ransom for all, ~ a testimony at the proper time.

▶▶ Heb. 10:12. ~ ~ But ~ when Christ ~ had offered for all time ~ a single sacrifice for sins, ~ ~ he sat down ~ at the right hand of God.

IN VERSES 4 AND 5, ~ WE SEE ~ THE CAUSES ~ ¶¶

OF PAUL'S PASTORAL CONCERN ~ AND SUBSEQUENT INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

THE FIRST REASON ~ IS IN VERSE 4 (CSB).

I AM SAYING THIS ~ I.E., ~ I AM LETTING YOU KNOW ~ THAT I'M PRAYING THESE things for you, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ so that ~ no one will deceive you ~ with arguments ~ that sound reasonable.

▶▶ Paul was concerned and praying for these believers, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ because the heretics ~ were wrapping their heresy ~ in plausible claims.

▶▶ And Paul ~ did not want them ~ to be deceived by them.

PAUL ~ ALSO SPEAKS ABOUT THIS ~ IN ROM. 16:17-18.

▶▶ ¹⁷ I appeal to you, ~ brothers, ~ to watch out ~ for those who ~ cause divisions ~ and create obstacles contrary ~ to the doctrine ~ that you have been taught; ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ avoid them. ~ ~ ¹⁸ For such persons ~ do not serve our Lord Christ, ~ but their own appetites, ~ and ~ ¶¶

↳↳ by smooth talk and flattery ~ they deceive ~ the hearts of the naive. ¶¶ 11/15

▶▶ False teachers ~ charm ~ with their eloquence, ~ 77

▷▷ confuse ~ with their subtle reasoning, ~ 77

↳↳ and mislead ~ with their bold, ~ assured statements ~ of half-truths.

PAUL ALSO SPEAKS ABOUT THIS IN OVER EPH.

▶▶ He indicates that ~ false teachers ~ try to lead us astray ~ 77

▷▷ by ~ human cunning, ~ by ~ craftiness in deceitful schemes."

▶▶ The idea here ~ seems to be ~ that the false teachers ~ try to deceive us ~ 77

▷▷ with lies so clever ~ they sound like the truth.

▶▶ They use ~ cleverness & tricks ~ to camouflage the true nature ~ of their teaching, ~ 77

▷▷ in order ~ to lead people astray.

SINCE FALSE TEACHERS ~ WRAP THEIR HERESY ~ IN ARGUMENTS THAT SOUND ~ reasonable, ~ 77

▶▶ and ~ use smooth talk, ~ flattery, ~ cleverness, ~ and tricks, ~ 77

▷▷ we dare not ~ be naïve ~ in sound doctrine.

▶▶ When we are immature ~ in sound doctrine, ~ we will be fooled ~ every time.

▷▷ We will fall ~ for their 11 12/15

▶▶ Stable and mature believers, ~ i.e., ~ believers ~ who have ~ ¶¶

▷▷ a clear and correct understanding ~ of sound doctrine, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ will see right through ~ false teachers' ~ deceptive strategies.

▷▷ And ~ they will not ~ be led astray by them.

VERSE 5 (NASB) ~ GIVES US THE 2nd REASON ~ FOR PAUL'S ~ PASTORAL CONCERN ~ and subsequent intercessory prayer.

FOR EVEN THOUGH ~ I AM ABSENT ~ IN BODY, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ nevertheless ~ I am with you ~ in spirit, ~ ~ rejoicing ~ to see ~ your good discipline ~ and ~ the stability ~ of your faith ~ in Christ.

▶▶ The second factor ~ that caused Paul's concern and subsequent prayer ~ was ~ ¶¶

▷▷ his inability ~ to be present at Colossae ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and to take a personal hand ~ in refuting the error ~ that was threatening the church.

WHILE CONCEDING ~ THAT HE MUST BE ~ PHYSICALLY ABSENT, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ Paul quickly added ~ that ~ he was not ~ cut off ~ from his interest in these believers.

▶▶ In the context of his intercessory prayer, ~ the phrase ~ "I am with you in spirit" ~ ¶¶

▷▷ probably means ~ that ~ though absent ~ and not physically able ~ to help them, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ they were continually ~ in his thoughts and prayers. ¶¶ 13/15

▶▶ TPID, ~ although far away, ~ he wanted them to know ~ that ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he stood with them ~ in this fight against false teaching.

▷▷ And that ~ he was constantly ~ wrestling in prayer ~ on their behalf.

▶▶ This tells us ~ that we don't have to be ~ physically present ~ to help our fellow believers.

▷▷ Through prayer, ~ we can, ~ spiritually speaking, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ stand shoulder to shoulder with them ~ in whatever they're going through.

BACK TO VERSE 5.

▶▶ The good news in this situation ~ was ~ that ~ the Colossians were remaining faithful.

▷▷ At the end of the verse Paul said ~ that ~ he rejoiced ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to see their ~ good discipline ~ and the stability ~ of their faith in Christ.

▶▶ "good discipline" ~ and ~ "stability" ~ are military metaphors ~ ¶¶

▷▷ which paint the picture ~ of the Colossians ~ not breaking rank or defecting.

▷▷ When the enemy attacked, ~ the Colossians maintained a solid front.

▶▶ So, ~ we have come back ~ to unity.

▶▶ We ~ must never underestimate ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the importance of unity ~ within our local fellowship. ¶¶ 14/15

▶▶Of course, ~ the Colossians' unity was ~ and ours ~ must also be ~ centered ~ ¶¶

▷▷on sound doctrine, ~ the faith ~ that was once for all ~ delivered to the saints.

▷▷On this ~ together ~ we must make our stand ~ and hold fast.

LET'S PRAY..... 15/15