

YOU ARE MADE COMPLETE IN THE WORD

Colossians 2:1-10

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, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Have you ever read in your Bible or maybe even in just another book of some kind (not that I'm saying they are comparable), but then you just stopped and thought, "wait a minute, what did I just read"? I must admit, that sometimes, as I'm somewhat just going through the motions in reading my Bible, just to satisfy my own goal for my daily reading, that I'm just reading it do get it done. If you're doing a reading through the Bible in a year plan, or something similar, or you have a goal of reading one or two chapters a day, you may just be looking forward to checking the box for that day so that you can say, "ah, that's done! I read my Bible today!" While I don't intend to discourage anyone who is reading the Word of God, yet it is with experience that we learn, that while it is good to develop a habit, and have a goal, we also have the Holy Spirit guiding us, as Paul tells us in **Romans 8**, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (**Romans 8:14**).

We should then be expecting to gain understanding towards knowing God, trusting Him, and honoring Him, as the Holy Spirit will minister to us about what we are presently going through, and there are then times where the Holy Spirit just causes you to stop your reading and to meditate on what you just read, which can lead to meditating on that throughout the day. That may be something you need for that day or for what you need to continue to overcome in this world and to not give up. Yet we can't just be expecting to have God do all the work, expecting Him to guide you without any effort on your part. He

doesn't work that way though, does He? Perhaps there have been other times where you're reading your Bible, which is the Word of God, and as you're reading you're just thinking "wow, this is good stuff!" You may have read over that passage of Scripture numerous times but then, all of a sudden, it can be said, at God's appointed time, He has you stop and recognize the significance of what you just read. Do you realize how special that is, that the Holy Spirit is ministering to us as we read God's Word, knowing that "the word of God [truly] is living and powerful [and active], and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (**Hebrews 4:12**)

I had one of those wow moments in reading over what is our passage of Scripture for today. Not necessarily an epiphany, that is, an awakening in my understanding, but it is what the Holy Spirit keeps saying to me, to us, about the vast difference between the wisdom that comes from God through Christ Jesus, compared to the wisdom of this world, and also of the great value, the pricelessness, of the Word of God, compared to any other form of literature written by the hand of man (or woman). We have rehearsed week after week that God through Christ Jesus, as the Apostle Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 1:30**, is our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Then in the next verse we are told that if anyone glories then let them glory in the Lord! Couple that with what Paul told his spiritual son Timothy with regards to the Word of God, he said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, **for correction**, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**" (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) Can one be more complete than complete? Can one be more thoroughly equipped than being thoroughly equipped?

It is really easy though to just speed-read through parts of the Bible such as in the book of 1 Chronicles where the first nine chapters are listings of genealogies, with many "begots" and "the son ofs". Yet one little nugget in the midst of all that is the two-verse mention in **1 Chronicles 4:9-10**, of Jabez and his prayer to God. He prayed a five-point prayer. **1.** That God would bless him indeed. **2.** That God would enlarge his territory. **3.** That God's hand would be with Him. **4.** That God would keep him from evil. **5.** And that God would keep him from causing pain. That is what we call "The Prayer of Jabez". It then says that God granted him his request. Jabez did not just take it for granted that God would do all of those things he prayed. Susie and I have adopted that prayer and prayed it many times with slight alterations. **1.** That God would bless us that we may be a blessing to others. **2.** Instead of praying that God would enlarge our territory we are praying that God would use us to bear much fruit for His glory, which is the same as being His light, being that one spark

that lights a fire that spreads throughout our community. **3.** That God's hand would be upon us, protecting us, shielding us from the darts of the enemy. Just as we also recognize that we are in the palm of His hand, fully keeping us in His Way, Truth, and Life in Christ Jesus. **4.** That God would keep us from evil, guarding our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. **5.** And that we would not cause harm to the body of Christ, that we would solely be about our Father's business, sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus. This message isn't to be focused on the prayer of Jabez, but it does speak to the fact that God desires for us to spend time in His Word, meditating on His Word, and to be always acknowledging Him as our God, Lord, and Savior as Jabez understood Him to be. God has given us a most precious of gifts, first in the salvation that we have in Christ Jesus, and also He has given us His Word, the Holy Scriptures, so that He may teach us to know Him, trust Him, and honor Him as our Lord, God, and Savior while He is changing our hearts and renewing our minds, as He is working in us to be like Christ.

Getting to our passage of Scripture in **Colossians 2**. Paul begins by saying, "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, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Paul was telling them that he was going through "great conflict[s]" but that it was all worth it as they are being knit together in the love of Christ. Right away that reminded me of what Jesus said was the Great Commandment of God, "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (**Mark 12:30-31**)

Putting that in a present-day perspective, God's kingdom is upon us, right now, as He is presently building His eternal kingdom, from faith to faith, as Paul said, "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (**Romans 1:17**) God's desire is for us is to be knit together in the love that is in Christ Jesus. Paul said it similarly in the book of Ephesians, referring to us as the body of Christ, by saying that "the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." (**Ephesians 4:16**) We looked at previously of how **Psalms 16:11** says, "In [God's] presence is fullness of joy". That is so true but Paul told the Philippians, "fulfill my joy [**make my joy complete**] by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one

mind [being one in spirit and purpose]. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (**Philippians 2:2-4**)

The gospel of Christ Jesus is believing on Christ, dying on a cross for our sins, to which He raised from the dead on the third day, so that by His Righteousness, He satisfied the requirement of God's perfect law. He took our place in death and in the punishment we deserved for our sins against God, so that we can be reconciled to God and to have a right standing in God's eternal kingdom. The gospel of Christ then does not end there. "**But as many as received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**) We must be born-again as Jesus put it, that is, born of the Holy Spirit—that is, receive the Spirit of Christ into our hearts to become a child of God. The gospel of Christ does not end there. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:8-10**) We are not doing good works to be saved but are doing the works of Christ because we are saved. We are His workmanship which includes the Holy Spirit working in us the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) That is where we can begin to love God with all that is in us and to then love other people as God loves them—even those who act as if they are our enemies. Praise God that He is "longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (**2 Peter 3:9**)

How does that tie in with our need for reading and knowing the Word of God? One may say, "You believe on Christ and receive Him and then He begins working in us. What need then is there for us to read the Word of God?" Unfortunately, a large percentage of people who claim to be saved, that they are children of God, that they are Christians, fall into that category, not realizing the significance of spending time in God's Word. Jesus tells us, "**Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.**" (**Matthew 7:24-25**) That of course was before His Words had been recorded as the Holy Scriptures. Today it can then be said, "whoever hears His Words and/or reads them and then does them is like a wise man who built his house on a rock". As I mentioned earlier, as we read God's Word, the Holy Spirit will minister to us and speak to us in ways that we would miss by not reading His Word.

Not that God cannot speak to us outside of our times of reading His Word, but He has given us His Word as a most precious of gifts. Once again, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

In **Colossians 2**, Paul goes on to say, "Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit [meaning perhaps that he is praying for them], rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. [Here is my wow moment] Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and **you are complete in Him**, who is the head of all principality and power." That's very similar to what Paul warned Timothy about saying, "Preach **the word!** Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from **the truth**, and be turned aside to fables."

You ARE complete in Christ Jesus and He IS the Word of God. The two are inseparable, Christ Jesus-the Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (**John 1:1-5, 14**) I hope and pray we all recognize the Word of God as the two-fold gift, the most precious of gifts from God, as the written Word of God and God's Spirit, also called the Spirit of Christ, or the Holy Spirit that dwells in us as children of God and that we are most complete and thoroughly equipped in The Word of God. In closing, may we be encouraged in the completeness and the promise we have in Christ Jesus. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (**Romans 8:16-18**) WOW! PRAISE THE LORD!