

Colossians: Paul

Col 1:24-2:5

Intro: continuation of the letter

Short letter, but

Even in Ch 2 Paul is still in the introduction

In Ch1 Paul wrote about the Cols

How pleased he was with him

But also the theme that they need to held steadfast to the Gospel of Christ

And Paul wrote about who Christ is

The image of the invisible God

Now: he introduces himself

No one in Collosae has met him

Who is this person that writes to them

Is this 'junk mail'

Can we take this fellow seriously?

Yes, they knew Epaphras as the messenger

But Paul

Who is Paul?

1. He suffers for the sake of Cols

^{v24} He is in prison

But we only hear of this 4:10, as he refers to a fellow prisoner

He is struggling

^{2:1, 1:29}

But remarkable, he does not focus on the what he is struggling/suffering with

Life in prison?

Writing lots of letters?

Or is he struggling in prayer for all the churches that he knows?

But: in his flesh he is completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of the Church

Theologically complex

Is Christ's suffering not enough for our salvation?

Surely no human being can complete it

Jesus died on the cross for us all - and the price of our wrong doings / lackings has been paid in full

But: without Paul and other struggling the Church would not grown

Paul knows that the fight of the church is against thrones, dominions, rulers and powers - visible ones or invisible ones

^{1:16}

He is in prison because of his faith

Countless others have been imprisoned because of their faith

Countless others have worked very hard to proclaim the gospel and establish the Church

And countless others have been killed for their faith

All of them are struggling and suffering

And without these struggles and sufferings the church would not be what it is then and what it is now

So Paul sees that his suffering is to establish the church: the body of Christ

And in that way he completes the sufferings of Christ: so that the body can grow and live

2. Paul is commissioned by God as a servant of the Body of Christ

To establish the Church

To make the word of God fully know

^{1:25}

To proclaim Christ

^{1:28}

To warn and teach everyone

To present everyone mature in Christ

Paul does not stop with bringing people to Jesus - he wants them to be full disciples

Paul suffering and commissioning establishes him as the Apostle (a leader in authority) to which the Cols need to listen

Christ

But in presenting his credentials, Paul cannot help but present Christ

Paul's & Christ's are interwoven

God's word:

The mystery that was hidden, but now has been revealed

The mystery is 'Christ in them'

The hope of Glory

This mystery has been revealed by Christ himself

The incarnation: God became human in Christ

The sacrifice once and for all: God was crucified in Christ

The defeat of death and hell: Christ was resurrected and restored to heaven in the Ascension

The inhabitation; The Spirit of Christ came to live in those who received Christ as saviour: Christ in us

It is this Christ that drives and forms who Paul is

Paul's message to the Saints

to them, to Laodicea and all who has not even met - ie we who read this letter!

^{v2:1}

Knowledge of God's mystery: Christ!

1. their hearts encouraged and united in love

^{v2.2a}

Precursor: together they receive the knowledge of Christ

Challenging faiths: personal knowledge

Budhims: personal enlightenment

For Paul the knowledge of Christ can only be held together in love and unity

The body of Christ cannot know Christ unless it is in harmony and love with each other

One person alone cannot know Christ fully

Together we can!

2. Knowledge and wisdom come from knowing Christ

riches of assured understanding

^{2:2}

knowledge of God's mystery

^{2:2}

treasures of wisdom and knowledge

^{2:3}

There is no other source of knowledge and wisdom then Jesus Christ

Be aware of plausible arguments

^{v2:4}

The crux of this passage and maybe the letter

As we said before the Cols were tempted by non-Christian knowledge

Syncretism

Touching wood

Friday 13

Gnosticism

There are more mysteries then Christ

Paul: focus on Christ

He has all the knowledge / wisdom you need

So much that you need each other to understand it!

So do not let yourselves be tempted by other sources of knowledge

As these will lead you astray

What can we learn

The Cols were tempted to adopt teachings from other faiths around them

But we have the same issue

There are two main philosophies that can lead is astray

1. Modernism

This is the believe that humanity can create paradise under its own strength

Science based

Political unity and agreement

Things like: this should not happen in the 21st C.

As if human beings can create a world where there is not harm, pain, accidents

All those who are not good enough are set aside

Politicians making mistakes are fired

Human beings that are not according to a norm need to be isolated

People with learning difficulties

Abortus of featusses that have downs syndrom

It is what the Nazi's wanted

And slowly it comes into our world again

Result humanity is God, and God does not exist

Atheism is faith in humanity not God

2. Post modernism

This is a reaction to the modernistic ideology

It is hankering to a form of spirituality

As the in their eyes the modernistic experiment has failed

But it is human centric spiritualism

Finding ways to meditate without God

Borrowing from eastern religions like Buddhism and Hindusims

Yoga, Mindfulness

Borrowing from pre-Christianity pagananism

Witch craft

Widgy boards

Tarot cards

Crystals

But dangerous as it opens the door to spirits that are not of God

The powers, dominions, rules and thrones that are invisible

Whilst thinking they worship themselves

They start to worship other gods and come into bondage to them

At the heart is self worship and self idolatory

I do not need anyone else

My truth can be different from your truth

You can do anything as long as you do not harm others

and in the mean time they do harm themselves

and others

breakup of families

Not forming of families

Heaven either does not exist, or all end up in heaven regardless of what they have done or believe

Easy to be led astray

It is easy to be led astray

Both philosphies are present in all the media

from the BBC News (modernism) to Harry Potter (post modernism)

Look for it in the media

Look for it in what people say to each other

How are we affected?

Do we follow Christ only at certain times?

And not at other times

Paul's example

Take an example to Paul

Paul could not speak about himself, without speaking about Christ

As Christ is in him

But Paul is not Christian in isolation

He can only be Christian in community

It is the Church that is the body of Christ

And as Chirst is in him he is part of the body

How do we think about ourselves?

Is Christ part of our identity

Or does he live on the side

What modernistic ideas influences us: that humanity can fix everything

Or what post-modernistic ideas influence us: are we at heart God to ourselves?

Jesus: Love God above all, love neighbour as self

Self identity: if you are in Christ you love Christ not self

Community identity, if you are in Christ you love and take part in his community

Let us pray