

Christ Himself: Treasure Trove of Wisdom and Knowledge

What's the Big Idea?

God's people should be encouraged through knowing Christ himself, continuing in their relationship with him the same way they began it (trusting in his undeserved favor every day).

What's the Problem?

We seek encouragement, wisdom, and knowledge in places other than Christ, and we drift from a life of receiving the provision of Christ in our lives moment by moment by faith.

What's our Response?

Turn to Christ moment by moment, trusting him for the knowledge, wisdom, and everything we need in life.

Memorize

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.

Colossians 2:6

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

This passage expresses Paul's heart for the Colossians. Even though he hasn't met them personally, he's passionate about them being encouraged in their faith. He wants them to cling to Christ, not human philosophies or solutions to life. He wants them to continue in their relationship with Christ the same way they began it, by coming to him in simple faith. Help your group to see that God wants the same things for us and lead them to cherish Christ, in whom are all the riches of wisdom and knowledge (verse 3).

The Source of Encouragement-Colossians 2:1-4

We live in a world that's full of things that can make us feel discouraged. The same was true in Paul's day. Even though he had never met the Colossians or many others who had begun to follow Christ during the years of his ministry, he wanted them to be encouraged. The key to this encouragement is Christ himself. Help your group see that Christ is the key to an encouraged heart for them as well. He is the source of all wisdom and knowledge. Lead your group to consider other places we turn for encouragement and life. Call them to reject these "persuasive arguments" (verse 4) and turn to Christ himself.

It's also important to note that a key part of finding encouragement in Christ is having hearts that are knit together in love (verse 2). God uses our relationships with other followers of Christ to lead us together to the encouragement that comes from his Son. Help your group to consider the specific people God wants to knit their hearts with.

Impact from Afar-Colossians 2:5

Paul had never met the Colossians, but he was confident that God was using him in their lives to point them to Christ and away from the delusion of persuasive arguments (verses 3-4). He expressed that he was with them in spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source of this confidence. Because he is present everywhere, he is able to create a bond between his people in spite of the distance that separates them. New Testament commentator Doug Moo says this bond is much more significant than our typical expression, "You're in my thoughts and prayers."

As Paul entered into the Colossians' lives from a distance, he expressed his joy in their stable and growing faith in Christ. Help your group members to see that God wants to give them the privilege of entering into his work in others' lives through his Spirit as well, even if physical distance separates them.

Growing in Christ-Colossians 2:6-7

Paul closes this section with a call for the Colossians to continue in their faith in Christ. How does this happen? The same way they began their faith in Christ. And how did that happen? Simply by coming to Jesus and trusting in his undeserved favor toward them (see Ephesians 2:8-9).

Paul points to several key contributors to a growing faith in verse 7: being firmly rooted in Christ, being built up in him, being established in faith, and having a heart that overflows with gratitude. Lead your group to consider what it looks like for these things to be a growing reality in their lives as they seek to continue in their faith in Christ.

What Are the Questions?

Launch

What are some of the reasons people start something and don't finish it (e.g.: reading a book, working on a project, persevering in a relationship)?

Explore

Read Colossians 2:1-4

1. Who is the focus of Paul's struggle, and what does this say about him?
2. What is the heart of Paul's struggle?
3. What does Paul point to as our fundamental source of encouragement?
4. According to verse 3, what about Christ makes him worthy of being our fundamental source of encouragement?
5. What role do you think having hearts that are knit together in love (verse 2) plays in our encouragement?
6. Why does Paul want his readers to know that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ (verse 4)?

Read Colossians 2:5

7. What does Paul seem to believe about his ability to have an impact in the Colossians' lives?
8. What gives Paul confidence that he's having an impact in the Colossians' lives?
9. What about the Colossians encourages Paul?

Read Colossians 2:6-7

10. How do you think these two verses relate to Colossians 2:1-5?
11. What is the main command in these verses?
12. What does verse 7 say contributes to continuing in Christ?

Apply

13. Reflect on the last several days. What has been the fundamental source of encouragement in your life?
14. What steps do you sense God calling you to take in order to make sure your fundamental source of encouragement is in Christ himself?
15. In what ways are you tempted to live as if the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (and life in general) are found elsewhere than in Christ? What are the persuasive arguments that conspire to delude you?
16. Who are some of the people you sense God wants to "knit together in love" with your own in an effort to help you find encouragement in Christ? What can you do to facilitate this knitting together?
17. Just as God's impact through Paul wasn't limited by distance, the same is true for us. Who in your life do sense God calling you to influence for him, even though physical distance separates you?
18. What steps do you sense God calling you to take to ensure that you continue in Christ in the ways described in verse 7?

What Are the Answers?

1. Paul struggles in his heart for the Colossians, Laodiceans, and all whom he hasn't met personally. This shows that the heart of a Christ follower need not be limited to those one knows.
2. He wants their hearts to be encouraged.
3. Christ himself.
4. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him.
5. Just as several strands of thread knit together into a single fabric have more strength than an individual strand, so also we experience a stronger bond of encouragement when God knits our hearts with other followers of Christ.
6. He doesn't want anyone to delude them with persuasive arguments that suggest wisdom and knowledge ultimately come from any other source than Christ.

7. He seems to believe that a lack of physical presence doesn't limit him from having an impact in their lives.
8. He's with them in spirit.
9. Their good discipline and the stability of their faith in Christ.
10. Paul is saying that since the Colossians have experienced a stable faith founded on Christ up to this point, they should continue following him and looking to him as the source of life as they have in the past.
11. Walk in Christ; continue in him.
12. Being firmly rooted, built up, and established in Christ and overflowing with gratitude.
13. Allow the group to discuss.
14. Allow the group to discuss.
15. Allow the group to discuss.
16. Allow the group to discuss.
17. Allow the group to discuss.
18. Allow the group to discuss.