

**Paul's Ministry:
It is a Ministry of Internal Struggle
for You Colossians and Laodiceans
Col 2:1-5 (Part 1)**

I. Introduction

A. Past many weeks studying the Ministry of Paul! (1:24-29)

1. Paul BEGAN by teaching us the his ministry WAS A MINISTRY of SUFFERING
Col 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.
 - a) Those who HATED CHRIST could not get to Him (in heaven) SO THEY TOOK OUT THEIR HATE on HIM
 - b) BUT this SUFFERING was on BEHALF of the Colossians and other Gentiles
 - c) Paul SUFFERED ONLY because he was FULFILLING the ministry Christ had PUT him in!

2. Paul CONTINUED tell us that his ministry was a Ministry of Proclaiming Jesus Christ in You, the Hope of Glory!
Col 1:25 Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching* of the word of God, 26 *that is*, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.
 - a) Most of those verses DESCRIBE WHAT the mystery was the became the CONTENT of Paul's ministry
 - b) BUT V.29 gives us a picture of Paul's INVESTMENT in his ministry – the PRICE he PAID!
 - c) Let's review these as they will Launch us into the next section!

B. Col 1:29 Paul's INVESTMENT in HIS MINISTRY

For this purpose also I labor, striving

1. "For this Purpose" = Presenting every man complete in Christ
2. "I Labor" = Toil to exhaustion
 - a) Paul's testimony to Labor

1 Th 2:9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, *how* working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

- b) When Paul lists his ministry travails in 2 Cor 11, he says he was in "FAR MORE ABUNDANT LABORS" then them...
- c) When you study Paul's life you see this labor!
- d) At Ephesus – 3 years of ministry
 - (1) Taught all afternoon
 - (2) Came back in the evening
 - (3) Then went house-to-house until late into the night
 - (4) up even later praying, crying, concerned over his people

3. “striving”
 - a) Athletic term most common to wrestling!
 - b) Root = agonidzo = AGONY!
 - c) Wrestling is great illustration
 - (1) 100% effort against the 100% effort of your opponent
 - (2) Completely exhausting every muscle of your body
 - d) Paul – ministry is 100% effort for all years of life!

2 Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;
1 Ti 4:9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. 10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God...

e) Even Epaphras could testify to this “Striving”

Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring [striving] earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

4. What do you have here? TWO words
 - a) Nearly synonyms! THEREFORE = EMPHASIS!
 - b) And VERY STRONG INTENSE WORDS
 - c) BOTH present tense = CONTINUALLY laboring and striving!
5. BUT – hang on to these words – ESPECIALLY the word “striving”
6. See – Paul has just got done DESCRIBING his ministry in GENERAL
7. NOW – He’s going to apply it DIRECTLY to the Colossians and the Laodiceans – all Christians in the Lycus Valley.

C. Yes, *IN GENERAL, I Labor and Strive...Now ADD...*

Col 2: 1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, *that is*, Christ *Himself*, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. 5 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.

D. Proposition: Paul: It is a Ministry of Internal Struggle For YOU Colossians and Laodiceans

1. Paul MODELS for us the Internal Struggle and Concern that he had for those he ministered to in Colossae and Laodicea SO THAT we can be assured and supported in our own struggles in ministry
 - a) Intensity of Paul’s Struggle (2:1)
 - b) Purpose (Heart) of Paul’s Struggle (2:2-3)
 - c) Motivation for Paul’s Struggle

II. Intensity of Paul’s Struggle

Col 2: 1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face,

A. For I want you to know

1. “know” – interesting word!

- a) Talk about for a minute because we have multiple words in this passage relating to knowing, knowledge, understanding, etc.
 - b) Lots of words for know / knowledge – TWO primarily used in these contexts – “I want you to know something”
 - c) First – GINOSKO = (“Gin” with hard “G” + “o” + “sko” with long “o”) “to take in knowledge, to come to know, recognize, understand”
 - d) Second (USED HERE) – OIDA (“oiy” as in “ahoy” + “da”) = From root “to see” = to have seen, perceived, know from observation
 - (1) Has a FULLNESS of Knowledge that Ginosko doesn’t
 - (2) Completeness whereas Ginosko is more for progression / progress to
 - e) Paul – I want you to come to know by SEEING, OBSERVING, EXPERIENCING AND get to the point of just knowing it once-and-for-all...
2. Who’s this “you”? The verse tells us!

B. your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face.

1. = Colossian Church + Laodicean Church up the road + everyone else there who has never met me!
2. Going see down in V.4 the Motivation for Paul’s struggle:
4 I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.
3. IOW – I’m addressing this to ALL of YOU in THE AREA who are FACING the SAME THREAT of FALSE TEACHERS!
4. I know this WHOLE AREA is UNDER ATTACK!

C. What does he want ALL of the people of the AREA to know?

D. how great a struggle I have on your behalf

1. I don’t know most of you, YET I have a GREAT STRUGGLE going on – on your behalf!
2. Remember the “labor” and “striving” of V.29?
3. “Struggle” is the SAME word as “striving”
 - a) = Root for AGONY
 - b) Here = INTERNAL struggle, conflict, Prayer, thinking (like what more can I do)
 - c) SUMS UP ALL of the TIME and EFFORT that he is OCCUPIED with these people and their situation
 - (1) ALL of His Prayers
 - (2) ALL of his thinking –
 - (a) what more can I do –
 - (b) what else would help
 - (3) ALL of his wondering!
 - (a) Did my letter do its work?
 - (b) Did I write the right arguments / give the right information?
4. To WHAT EXTENT were his INTERNAL STRUGGLES?
5. “how great a struggle”
 - a) Called a “adjectival relative” –
 - b) Not a precise word – just means A HUGE Amount

- c) Get a clear picture of its size in James 3:5
Jas 3:5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!
- d) Paul – though you are far away and small in number, I have A GREAT STRUGGLE on your behalf!

E. What does this tell you about this man?

1. HE CARED and showed his CARE by the INTENSITY of his CONCERN, EFFORT, LABOR, STRIVING, STRUGGLING
 - a) For churches he DIDN'T START
 - b) Had never VISITED
 - c) Didn't know MOST, if not all, the people
2. But, Epaphras comes to him and brings the news of their situation
 - a) What does Paul do? TAKES on their situation PERSONALLY
 - b) INVESTS HIMSELF in them
 - (1) Not worry, anxiety in a sinful manner
 - (2) BUT RATHER POSITIVE, PRODUCTIVE internal struggle
 - (a) Praying
 - (b) Thinking, coming up with ideas to help, etc.
3. CONCERN that leads to GODLY CONDUCT!

F. Transition:

1. Paul starts with the INTENSITY of his Struggle
2. Goes on to tell them the PURPOSE (heart – pun) of the struggle
3. What is all this praying and concern / thinking for?
4. What does he want to happen?

III. Purpose (Heart) of Paul's Struggle

2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

A. **“that”** = SO THAT = Purpose clause about to begin!

B. **“their”** = Colossians and Laodiceans just mentioned

C. Then Paul states his purpose followed by three phrases that DESCRIBE / DETAIL OUT his purpose

D. **The Purpose of Paul's Struggle** = **“their hearts may be encouraged”**

E. What does mean? How does this detail out?

1. UNITED in LOVE: having been knit together in love,
2. RICH in ASSURANCE: and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding,
3. RESULTING in KNOWLEDGE: resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

F. PURPOSE: **their hearts may be encouraged**

G. **“hearts”**

1. Once again – a word the world uses OPPOSITE to its biblical meaning!

2. "heart" today = emotion!
 - a) I love you with all my heart!
 - b) My heart longs for you!
3. Need to do a quick biblical theological study of "heart" as the BIBLE INTENDS IT TO BE MEANT

IV. Biblical Meaning of Heart (and Bowels)

A. In Bible, the Hebrew authors basically referred to two organs of the body:

1. the bowels
2. the heart.

B. The Bowels

1. There are many references in the Bible to the bowels.
2. They have been fairly well erased in the later translations, but the pure translation of the Hebrew indicates that that is the word.
3. = the womb, the stomach, the intestines, and of several other abdominal organs = general term for the gut.
 - a) "I feel it in my bowels," = "I feel it in my gut."
 - b) Hebrews did not know anything about speculative thinking or of interpreting things in abstractions.
4. Examples in Scripture:
 - a) Ps 22:14 – Prophetic Description of Christ on the Cross...

Ps 22:14 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.

 - (1) "it is melted within me" = Literally: "it is melted in the midst of my bowels"
 - (2) = My stomach is in knots / I feel it in my gut
 - (3) VERY EXPERIENTIAL CONCEPT!
 - (4) Jew wouldn't say – "I am very anxious / I have a lot of anxiety"
 - (a) TOO abstract
 - (b) They say what they felt!
 - b) Song of Solomon 5:4

So 5:4 "My beloved extended his hand through the opening, And my feelings were aroused for him.

 - (1) That's NOT QUITE what the Bride said!
 - (2) Literally: "My beloved extended his hand through the opening (i.e. opened the door) AND my bowels were moved for him!"
 - (3) In other words, I got excited and felt it in my abdomen = physical arousal for him!
 - (4) NOT "I got a great sense of passion for him! TOO ABSTRACT!
 - c) Lamentations 2:11

La 2:11 My eyes fail because of tears, My spirit is greatly troubled; My heart is poured out on the earth ...

 - (1) That's NOT what he said! ESV is closest:

La 2:11 My eyes are spent with weeping; my stomach churns; my bile is poured out to the ground ...
 - (2) Literally: My bowels are poured out, to the ground my liver!

- (3) Different translations try to say
- (a) Heart is troubled / Spirit is troubled
 - (b) Jeremiah – I was SICK to MY STOMACH over what I SAW!
- (4) What did he see?
- [La 2:11](#) My eyes fail because of tears, My spirit is greatly troubled; My heart is poured out on the earth Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, When little ones and infants faint In the streets of the city.
- (5) Jeremiah saw starving children dying in their mother's arms because of the Babylonian invasion
- (6) IT MADE HIM SICK TO HIS STOMACH!
- d) One more – NT: 1 Jn 3:17
- [1 Jn 3:17](#) But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?
- (1) Literally: If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes HIS BOWELS FROM HIM, how does God's love abide in him?
 - (2) John: When you see a person in need, it should give you a GUT-LEVEL FEELING for them!
5. So, why talk about BOWELS, when the passage says Heart in Col 2:2
- a) To Show you that the most common Jewish expression for EMOTIONS was a reference to the BOWELS – NOT to the HEART as People DO TODAY
 - b) And – to establish the way that Jewish thinking worked
 - (1) Just like us – they had their phrases / idioms to express themselves!
 - (2) Have to study language IN CONTEXT and CULTURE to understand!
6. BUT – listen carefully now – what were the BOWELS responding to?
- a) According to the events of those passages, the bowels responded to, I.E. the EMOTIONS RESPONDED TO:
 - (1) Painful situations – about to die
 - (2) Sensual situations – about to have sex
 - (3) Needful situations – the plight of another brother
 - b) BUT – Think carefully – do your emotions REALLY respond DIRECTLY to the situation?
 - (1) Not really
 - (2) You have to evaluate a situation before you emotionally respond to it
 - (3) YOUR EMOTIONS RESPOND to YOUR MIND!
 - (4) Or in the Jewish Mind, your bowels responded to your heart
 - (5) IOW – the Heart is symbolic of the mind

C. The HEART

1. First, let's see the heart as the PLACE of RESPONSIBILITY
 - a) Jeremiah 3:17

[Je 17:9](#) "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

 - (1) God's going to HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE for your CHOICES, DECISIONS, etc.
 - b) But then you see many verses like these:

Ps 14: 1 For the choir director. *A Psalm* of David. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.

Dt 29:4 "Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.

Re 18:7 "To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 'I SIT AS A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.'

Mt 12:34 "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

- c) Here see HEART = MIND = where you think?
- d) So, obvious to see how bowels tied to stomach!
- e) How does Heart tie to mind?
 - (1) Early civilizations didn't understand the function of the brain
 - (2) When Egyptians mummified people
 - (a) Removed ALL of the critical organs and put them in special vases to go along with mummy
 - (b) What did they do with the brain?
 - (i) Drilled a hole in the head
 - (ii) Sucked out the brains
 - (iii) Threw them away
 - (3) The heart was thought to be the CENTER of thinking
 - (4) They felt the BEATING of the heart
 - (5) They opened corpses and saw ALL the blood vessels FLOWING to ALL PARTS of the BODY
 - (6) For a myriad of OBSERVATIONAL REASONS, this is where the CENTRAL CONTROL was, HENCE, the CENTER of THINKING and RESPONSIBILITY
- f) Obviously, words can have more than one meaning – what we call semantic range (range of meaning)
- g) BUT – when used in its most TECHNICAL SENSE "heart" = MIND and WILL
- h) In the most general sense, heart = whole inner person
- i) Here in Col 2:1 Heart = MIND and WILL

D. Relationship between MIND and EMOTIONS BIBLICALLY?

1. While on the subject of these two, there is a biblical relationship!
2. The MIND FEEDS the EMOTIONS!
3. SO – if you want to CONTROL your EMOTIONS, GET CONTROL of YOUR MIND!
4. IOW – Biblical RESPONSES come from a BIBLICAL mind!
5. Listen to Paul:
 - a) First – we have spoken STRAIGHTFORWARD to you with MINDS OPEN WITH TRUTH

2 Co 6:11 Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. **12** You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. **13** Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also.

- (1) [“our heart is opened wide”](#) = our mind is open toward you = we have been completely open-minded toward you
- b) But your constraint is your emotions! You don't receive our truth because of your emotions!
- [12 You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.](#)
- (1) Guess what “affections” really is? BOWELS!
- (2) You are restricted in your bowels!
- c) So, put this together
- (1) We came and spoke to you
- (2) Completely open, honest (and, of course TRUTHFULLY)
- (3) With an OPEN MIND toward you!
- (4) BUT YOU
- (a) Didn't accept our words
- (b) We saw your emotional response AGAINST US!
- d) So, how does Paul tell them to correct the situation?
- [13 Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also..](#)
- (1) Open wide what? Your hearts referring back up to v.11= Your minds!
- (2) FIX your THINKING and that will FIX YOUR EMOTIONS!
- e) What was going on here?
- (1) Some of the Corinthians were believing the LIES ABOUT PAUL
- (2) They had turned against Paul!
- (3) They were EMOTIONALLY NEGATIVE towards him!
- (4) Ever had that happen to you?
- (5) People are cold or even negative toward you because they believe something negative and not true about you?
6. Biblical Principles:
- a) EMOTIONS ONLY and ALWAYS respond to the MIND
- b) KEY to BEHAVIOR and EMOTION is the MIND (Heart in Scripture)
- c) Solomon:
- [Pr 4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.](#)
- (1) Guard the MIND and you CONTROL LIFE (responses, etc.)
- d) Again
- [Pr 23:19 Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way.](#)
7. Given ALL the ground work I laid to explain how Scripture SPEAKS of THINKING – MIND and WILL vs. EMOTIONS
- a) It's important to see their relationship!
- b) Understand their interaction
8. As I've taught many times before You don't make me mad!
- (1) That implies EVENTS lead DIRECTLY to EMOTIONAL RESPONSES!
- (2) NO – I make me Mad –I make me mad WHEN I'M AROUND YOU!
9. Biblical Model:
- a) EVENT: Something happens!

- b) EVALUATION: You evaluate with two questions!
 - (1) What does this mean to me?
 - (2) What am I going to do about it?
 - (3) Based on your answers...
 - c) EMOTIONAL and PHYSICAL RESPONSE!
10. illustration – 3 ladies are having lunch in a room when a Boa Constrictor slithers in -
- (1) One – Daughter of famous snake studier in Africa
 - (2) One – Grew up in New York where only snakes were in movies eating people
 - (3) One – Grew up on Midwest farm where snakes were something you stepped over so that you didn't squish them!
- b) 3 responses
 - (1) One is picking up the snake saying it was her father's favorite type...
 - (2) One has jumped out the window
 - (3) One is saying that they should leave the snake alone, finish lunch, and continue the conversation they were having!
 - c) ONE EVENT – THREE DIFFERENT RESPONSES! Which one was right?
 - d) It ALL DEPENDED on what you THOUGHT ABOUT SNAKES!

E. OK – I've been meaning for a LONG TIME to EXPLAIN "the heart" and emotions biblically and this passage allowed me to do it!

F. So, back to Colossians 2:2!

[Col 2:2](#) that their hearts may be encouraged,

1. Now you know that Paul is saying "that their minds may be encouraged"
2. We're not going to dive into "encouraged" today – that's another discussion!
3. BUT – as a preview: [Encouraged](#) = Strengthened
4. Paul wants their minds to be strengthened!
5. With strong minds, you can BIBLICALLY Respond to error
6. Remember Paul's Motivation down in V.4

[4](#) I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.

V. CONCLUSION

A. Come back up out of the trenches and remember what we've seen today!

B. Paul AGONIZED over a group of people He did not know!

C. Paul LOVED His Lord, Jesus Christ! We all know that! He had a Great love for God!

D. John teaches us

[1 Jn 5: 1](#) Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

E. When you Love God, you love the Children of God!

F. Think about that relative to yourselves this week and we'll pick up here next week!