

Be Encouraged!

(or, How to Have a Heart of Hope)

Colossians 2: 1-3

(NKJ) Colossians 2:1 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, 2 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, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

(BYZ) θελω γαρ υμας ειδεναι ηλικον αγωνα εχω περι υμων και των εν λαοδικεια και οσοι ουχ εωρακασιν το προσωπον μου εν σαρκι
ινα παρακληθωσιν αι καρδια αυτων συμβιβασθεντων εν αγαπη και εις παντα πλουτον της πληροφοριας της συνεσεως εις επιγνωσιν του μυστηριου του θεου και πατρος και του χριστου
εν ω εισιν παντες οι θησαυροι της σοφιας και της γνωσεως αποκρυφοι

Paul's Pep Talk to the Colossians—

The center of these verses tells why Paul labors so diligently in the ministry, why he does what he does—

That the _____ of the Colossians may be _____.

The "that" at the beginning of verse 2 is commonly translated "in _____ that." Paul says that all the "labor" and "striving" and "working" and "energy" are spent "in order that" their hearts may encouraged, lifted up, emboldened to walk in Christ and be established in the faith—**Col 2:6,7**

ENCOURAGED = to _____ courage _____

The word for "encouraged" is παρακαλεω, *parakaleo*, that is, one "_____."

Though *parakaleo* can be translated in several ways, the context seems similar to that in:

Acts 11:23 "When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and **encouraged** them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord."

1Thes 3:2 "and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and **encourage** you concerning your faith,"

Paul wants the Colossians to know that his efforts are for them, for their spiritual growth, and he wants to spur them on. We, too, can be encouraged in our faith, to fight the good fight!

HOW TO BE ENCOURAGED!

I. By _____ That Your Leaders Labor _____

2:1 "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,"

Paul speaks of his "**great conflict**" for the Colossians, even though he had never met them face to face. Epaphras, 1:7, is the one who brought the Gospel to Colosse.

"**Great**" is only used here and in **James 3:5**, evoking a great, raging _____.

Jam 3:5 "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles."

"**Conflict**" is translated from αγωνα, *agona*, from which we get our word, _____, as in **1:29**.

The word originally seemed to have more of the idea of an arena, and meant the assembly of Greeks for their national games. It came to mean a struggle or contest, and is even translated "race" in **Hebrews 12:1**- "let us run with endurance the **race** that is set before us"

You can be encouraged by knowing of the hard work of your leaders, and by knowing that their _____ and _____ are _____.

Paul wanted them to know how hard he worked for them so they would be encouraged.

You can take courage from the fact that your leaders work and study hard.

The same word is used of Epaphras as he prays for the saints at Colosse. **Col 4:12**

Perhaps Paul has the same idea of agonizing prayer in mind in 2:1, as he writes from prison where he is certainly praying for them.

II. By _____ One Another _____, Which _____ Us Together

2:2 "that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love"

"Being knit together," συμβιβασθεντων, *sumbibasthenon*, literally is to have a " _____ together." TDNT translates this as "to _____ together," or "to _____."

The word is used in the NT to speak of the unity of the Body.

Eph 4:16 "from whom 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."

Col 2:19 speaks of "holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and **knit together** by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God."

The way that you can be encouraged, and that you can encourage others, is to be united in love by supplying your part to the Body. The word for "love" is *αγαπη*, *agape*, which means

_____ love and is best demonstrated by _____.

If each member of the Body puts the welfare of the other members, the good of the other members, before his or her own, the Body will build and grow. The same is true of any sports team, and the same is true of any family. If each member of a family is pulling in his or her own direction, each one just tugging to get his way, the family will fly apart. But if every member pulls together for the good of the "team," the family will flourish.

Paul sees love—unconditional, sacrificial love—as the basis for unity.

Col 3:14 "But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."

III. By _____ the _____ Which Are in _____ !

2:2,3 "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, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Paul's encouragement isn't just so the Colossians feel good about themselves. He's not just pumping up their feelings. The ultimate goal of Paul's encouragement is that they would attain:

A. "To all the riches of the full assurance of understanding"

"Full Assurance," *πληροφορέω*, *plarophoreo*, is a combination of "to completely _____" and "to wear, carry, or _____."

Paul is encouraging them to put aside any doubts, that they are able to have "full assurance." It is a great richness to know that they can completely stand on their understanding of what they have been taught, that it will fully carry them.

B. "To the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ"

"Knowledge," *ἐπίγνωσις*, *epignosis*, strengthens that meaning of assurance and means that we can know God (both the Father and the Son) _____.

The clearest verse to see this experiential knowledge is **2 Timothy 3:7**.

2Tim 3:7 "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

C. "of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

"Treasures," *θησαυρός*, *thasauros*, is our word, *thesaurus*. Christ is the

_____ of all wisdom and knowledge, and we may tap into that storehouse through our experiential knowledge of Him.

What a great reason to be encouraged! No matter what inadequacies the world claims we have, we can be fully assured of all the riches of the treasury of wisdom in Christ!