Hearts United in Love

Col 2:1-15
SS Lesson for 06/23/2019

Devotional Scripture: 1 Cor 3:10-17

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Key Verse: Col 2:6-7
Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

UNITED IN LOVE THROUGH BEING ENCOURAGED (2:1-5)

Encouraged through the assurance of God's purposes (1-3)
- Assurance in God's purposes because God does according to His Will (Dan 4:35)
- Assurance in God's purposes because they control what happens in heaven and on earth (Ps 135:6)
- Assurance in God's purposes because they accomplish what God intended and what He has planned (Isa 14:24)
- Assurance in God's purposes because God's plans stand firm forever (Ps 33:10-11)
- Assurance in God's purposes because God determines the outcome (Prov 16:9)
- Assurance in God's purposes because God's purposes always prevail (Prov 19:21)
- Assurance in God's purposes because God knows the beginning and the end of all things (Isa 46:10)

United in the wisdom and knowledge of God (4)
- United in the wisdom and knowledge of God because it is beyond description in its depth and richness (Rom 11:33)
- United in the wisdom and knowledge of God because it was predestined before the ages for our glory (1 Cor 2:7-8)
- United in the wisdom and knowledge of God because the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God (1 Cor 3:18-19)
- United in the wisdom and knowledge of God because Jesus brought God's wisdom to man (1 Cor 1:30-31)
- United in the wisdom and knowledge of God through the light of God (2 Cor 4:6)
- United in the wisdom and knowledge of God concerning the secrets of heaven (Matt 13:11-12)
- United in the wisdom and knowledge of God that comes from the mind of the Christ (1 Cor 2:13-16)

United in the steadfastness of faith (5)
- United in the steadfastness of faith by relying on God regardless of the circumstances (2 Cor 1:8-9)
- United in the steadfastness of faith by throwing off everything that hinders (Heb 12:1)
- United in the steadfastness of faith by confirming and proving God's trust (1 Cor 4:2)
- United in the steadfastness of faith by contending for the faith (Jude 1:3)
- United in the steadfastness of faith through being refined into genuine faith (1 Peter 1:7)

UNITED IN LOVE THROUGH BEING COMMITTED (2:6-7)

Committed to walking in Christ (6)
- By having Jesus live in and through us (Gal 2:20)
- By living a steadfast godly lifestyle (1 Thess 4:1)
- By living as Jesus would live (1 John 2:6)
- By following the "way" of Jesus (John 14:6)

Committed to being rooted in Christ (7)
- By meditating and delighting in God's word (Ps 1:1-3)
- By being nourished and fed by the holiness of God (Rom 11:16-17)
- By putting God's word into practice (Luke 6:47-48)
- By remaining in Jesus (John 15:4-5)
- By being a participant in God's spiritual house (1 Pet 2:5)

UNITED IN LOVE THROUGH BEING DISCERNING (2:8-10)

Discerning by being cautious of error (8)
- By not submitting to the world's evil rules and desires because we must be dead to sin (Col 2:20)
- By not forgetting God (Deut 6:12)
- By watching out for false prophets (Matt 7:15)
- By being careful not to initiate or follow those who cause divisions (Rom 16:17)
- By not being fooled by empty and vain words (Eph 5:6)
- By not following strange teachings (Heb 13:9)

Discerning by recognizing Christ's Deity and authority (9-10)
- Recognize that only God through Jesus could do the miracles Jesus performed (John 10:38)
- Recognize that Jesus is the representation of God (John 14:9-10)
- Recognize that Jesus is the true God and has eternal life (1 John 5:20)
- Recognize that Jesus rules with all authority and power (Eph 1:20-21)
Recognize that God exalted Jesus above all things (Phil 2:9-10)
Recognize that all things are in submission to Jesus (1 Pet 3:21-22)

**UNITED IN LOVE THROUGH FIRM FAITH (COL 2:11-15)**

**Firm because Jesus transforms (11-12)**
- Jesus transforms us into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)
- Jesus transforms us through reconciliation (Col 1:21-22)
- Jesus transforms us through being born again (John 3:3-8)
- Jesus will transform us at the Rapture (1 Thess 4:14-17)
- Jesus will transform our bodies into a glorious one (Phil 3:20-21)
- Jesus is transforming us into His likeness (2 Cor 3:18)

**Firm because Jesus forgives sin (13-15)**
- Jesus forgives because He is faithful (1 John 1:9)
- Jesus forgives because He redeemed us (Titus 2:14)
- Jesus forgives and does not remember our sins again (Heb 8:12)
- Jesus forgives because of His blood covenant (Matt 26:28)
- Jesus forgives because His blood cleanses (Heb 9:14)

**CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS**

**COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE**
**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR**
**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY**

**Lesson Background and Key Verse**

**Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

For many today, the promise of everlasting romantic love is the height of personal wellness. Tom Cruise’s oft-parodied line “You complete me” from the film Jerry Maguire points to humanity’s constant pursuit of completeness and our sense that we do not possess it on our own. Others do not seek wholeness through romance but instead through other relationships, through work, or even through hobbies. Where can we look to find true completeness?

Members of the Colossian church came from backgrounds featuring a myriad of religious and philosophical options. On this buffet were Judaism and pagan religions from across the Roman Empire. There were mystery religions that promised spiritual enlightenment through secret knowledge. There were sophisticated systems of philosophical thought and groups that practiced black magic. Each group made its own claims about truth. Some believers at Colossae attempted to augment the gospel with a mixture of elements from this religious-philosophical buffet. The temptation to trust in humanity’s knowledge rather than in faith through Christ and knowledge of him was irresistible to some.

**Key Verse: Col 2:6-7**

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

**Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary**

2:1. Paul’s labor (ἀγονία, struggling; cf. 1:29; 4:12) of love was not limited to those he personally knew; it extended to all who had not met him personally. This is a clear indication that Paul had not started this or other churches in the Lycus Valley. The mention of Laodicea (cf. 4:16) indicates that the heresy had spread there too, though it was probably centered in Colosse.

2:2-3. Paul’s stated purpose was that they might be encouraged in heart and united in love. Confidence and strength of conviction as well as cohesive unity yield a full understanding of the truth. There is no full knowledge apart from moral commitment. Complete understanding (συνέσεως, “insight”) results from complete yielding. And this understanding is Christocentric. This insight into God’s ways enables believers to know (ἐπιγινώσκει) Christ fully. Christ, as the true mystery of God, reveals God to man (cf. John 1:18; Heb. 1:2-3). For in Him are hidden (cf. Col. 1:26) all the treasures of wisdom (σοφία, cf. 1:9) and knowledge. Knowledge is the apprehension of truth; wisdom is its application to life. Knowledge is prudent judgment and wisdom is prudent action. Both are found in Christ (cf. Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 12:8)
whose wisdom is foolishness to the world (1 Cor. 1:21-25), but who is the power of God by which a believer receives “righteousness, holiness, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

2:4-5. Only this full knowledge and wisdom of Christ can keep a believer from being deceived by fine-sounding arguments (pithanologia, occurring only here in the NT, is lit., “persuasive speech” that uses plausible but false arguments). Truth and persuasion do not always correlate. Error can persuade, and truth can be compelling at times. It all depends on whether one has the full truth and a complete commitment to it. Hence even though Paul was absent from the Colossians, he delighted in how orderly (cf. 1 Cor. 14:40) and how firm (steadfast, solid) their faith in Christ was.

2:6-7. These two verses conclude the argument begun in 1:15. Paul’s point may be summarized thus: Divine exaltation belongs to Christ (1:15-20); in Him are found (a) reconciliation to God (1:21-23), (b) the revelation of the mystery of Christ (1:24-27), (c) believers’ perfection (1:28-29), and (d) education (wisdom) (2:1-5). Therefore believers should continue to live in Him (vv. 6-7). The Christian life continues as it commenced: just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him. Paul gave the same kind of exhortation to others (cf. 2 Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:6). Since their faith initially laid hold decisively on the apostolic gospel, Paul exhorted them not to forsake its divine authority for any human sophistry. For with these divine roots (rooted... in Him) that began in the past they can be continually built up (edified) and strengthened in the faith. If they did so they would not be blown to and fro with every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14). As believers are “built up” in Christ, they become more grateful and are overflowing with thankfulness (cf. Col. 1:12). After exhorting believers to continue in Christ (2:6-7)—in whom is the fullness of God and who brought complete redemption—Paul then condemned the Colossian heresy that was diverting them from Christ.

2:8. Paul was concerned that no false teacher take the Colossian believers captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy (cf. v. 4). He wrote here not against all philosophy but against false philosophy, as the Bible also speaks against false religion (James 1:26). The particular false philosophy at Colosse was “hollow” (kenēs, “empty”), “deceptive,” and based on human tradition... rather than on Christ. True Christian philosophy “take[s] captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). Philosophy is the love of wisdom, but if one loves wisdom that is not Christ (the Sum of all wisdom, Col. 2:3), he loves an empty idol. Such a one will be “always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth” (2 Tim. 3:7). This kind of philosophy is based on the world’s basic principles (stoicheia, “elementary principles” or “elemental spirits” [RSV]; cf. Col. 2:20; Gal. 4:3, 9). This may refer to the evil spirits who inspire such heresy and over whom Christ triumphed (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 6:11-12). Such a philosophy is demonic and worldly, not godly or Christlike. Unless believers are careful, such philosophy may ensnare them, taking them “captive.”

2:9. There is no “fullness” (plērōma) in philosophy based on vain human reasoning. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives. Hence only in Christ can one have fullness. Apart from Him is emptiness. As philosopher Jean Paul Sartre put it, “Life is an empty bubble on the sea of nothingness” (cf. Ecc. 1:14-18). The word for “Deity” is theotētos, a strong word (used only here in the NT) for Christ’s essence as God. The full deity of Christ is nonetheless in bodily form—a full humanity (cf. Col. 1:22). Both Christ’s deity and humanity were challenged by this early Gnostic-like heresy. Those heretics diminished Christ to an angel whose “body” was only apparent, not real. Paul affirmed here that Christ is both fully God and truly man (cf. 1 John 4:1-6).

2:10. Not only is all the “fullness” (plērōma) of God in Christ (v. 9), but also believers have been given fullness in Christ. Their fullness of life comes from Christ’s fullness. They partake of the divine nature through Christ (2 Peter 1:4), for “from the fullness of his grace we have all received” (John 1:16). This, of course, does not mean believers become God but simply share in Him. They have or share in the goodness of the nature which He is. They share in the body of Him who is the Head (cf. Col. 1:18) over every power (archēs, “ruler”) and authority (exousias, “ruling power”) (cf. 1:16; 2:15), including those who would talk the Colossians into living according to the world instead of according to Christ.
Major Theme Analysis
(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

United in Love through Being Encouraged (2:1-5)

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.
4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.
5 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.

Encouraged through the assurance of God's purposes (1-3)

Assurance in God's purposes because God does according to His Will (Dan 4:35)
35 All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"

Assurance in God's purposes because they control what happens in heaven and on earth (Ps 135:6)
6 The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

Assurance in God's purposes because they accomplish what God intended and what He has planned (Isa 14:24)
24 The Lord Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.

Assurance in God's purposes because God's plans stand firm forever (Ps 33:10-11)
10 The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. 11 But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Assurance in God's purposes because God determines the outcome (Prov 16:9)
9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.

Assurance in God's purposes because God's purposes always prevail (Prov 19:21)
21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

Assurance in God's purposes because God knows the beginning and the end of all things (Isa 46:10)
10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

United in the wisdom and knowledge of God (4)

United in the wisdom and knowledge of God because it is beyond description in its depth and richness (Rom 11:33)
33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

United in the wisdom and knowledge of God because it was predestined before the ages for our glory (1 Cor 2:7-8)
7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
United in the wisdom and knowledge of God because the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God (1 Cor 3:18-19)

18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness";

United in the wisdom and knowledge of God because Jesus brought God's wisdom to man (1 Cor 1:30-31)

30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

United in the wisdom and knowledge of God through the light of God (2 Cor 4:6)

6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

United in the wisdom and knowledge of God concerning the secrets of heaven (Matt 13:11-12)

11 He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 12 Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

United in the wisdom and knowledge of God that comes from the mind of the Christ (1 Cor 2:13-16)

13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.

United in the steadfastness of faith (5)

United in the steadfastness of faith by relying on God regardless of the circumstances (2 Cor 1:8-9)

8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

United in the steadfastness of faith by throwing off everything that hinders (Heb 12:1)

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

United in the steadfastness of faith by confirming and proving God's trust (1 Cor 4:2)

2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

United in the steadfastness of faith by contending for the faith (Jude 1:3)

3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

United in the steadfastness of faith through being refined into genuine faith (1 Peter 1:7)

7 These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.
United in Love through Being Committed (2:6-7)

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,  
7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Committed to walking in Christ (6)

By having Jesus live in and through us (Gal 2:20)  
I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

By living a steadfast godly lifestyle (1Thess 4:1)  
Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

By living as Jesus would live (1 John 2:6)  
Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

By following the "way" of Jesus (John 14:6)  
Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Committed to being rooted in Christ (7)

By meditating and delighting in God's word (Ps 1:1-3)  
1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

By being nourished and fed by the holiness of God (Rom 11:16-17)  
16 If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root,

By putting God's word into practice (Luke 6:47-48)  
47 I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.

By remaining in Jesus (John 15:4-5)  
4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

By being a participant in God's spiritual house (1 Pet 2:5)  
you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
United in Love through Being Discerning (2:8-10)

8 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.  
9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;  
10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Discerning by being cautious of error (8)

By not submitting to the world’s evil rules and desires because we must be dead to sin (Col 2:20)  
Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules:

By not forgetting God (Deut 6:12)  
be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

By watching out for false prophets (Matt 7:15)  
"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

By being careful not to initiate or follow those who cause divisions (Rom 16:17)  
I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

By not being fooled by empty and vain words (Eph 5:6)  
Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

By not following strange teachings (Heb 13:9)  
Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them.

Discerning by recognizing Christ’s Deity and authority (9-10)

Recognize that only God through Jesus could do the miracles Jesus performed (John 10:38)  
But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

Recognize that Jesus is the representation of God (John 14:9-10)  
9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

Recognize that Jesus is the true God and has eternal life (1 John 5:20)  
We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true-- even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Recognize that Jesus rules with all authority and power (Eph 1:20-21)  
20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms. 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.
Recognize that God exalted Jesus above all things (Phil 2:9-10)

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Recognize that all things are in submission to Jesus (1 Pet 3:21-22)

21 It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

United in Love through Firm Faith (Col 2:11-15)

11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Firm because Jesus transforms (11-12)

Jesus transforms us into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Jesus transforms us through reconciliation (Col 1:21-22)

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

Jesus transforms us through being born again (John 3:3-8)

3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." 4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

Jesus will transform us at the Rapture (1 Thess 4:14-17)

14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Jesus will transform our bodies into a glorious one (Phil 3:20-21)

20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.
Jesus is transforming us into His likeness (2 Cor 3:18)

18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Firm because Jesus forgives sin (13-15)

Jesus forgives because He is faithful (1 John 1:9)

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus forgives because He redeemed us (Titus 2:14)

14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Jesus forgives and does not remember our sins again (Heb 8:12)

12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Jesus forgives because of His blood covenant (Matt 26:28)

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus forgives because His blood cleanses (Heb 9:14)

14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable

Verse 1

Paul used an athletic metaphor to describe his anxieties and deep concerns for his readers and their neighbor Christians. His strivings (Colossians 1:29) included specific struggles and conflicts for them. Laodicea was about 11 miles west of Colosse, also in the Lycus Valley. Another town nearby was Hierapolis. Evidently the false teachers were promoting their views in that entire region. Paul felt concern for all the Christians under this influence including the Colossian and Laodicean believers. He may have meant that he was struggling in prayer for them. [Note: Vaughan, p194.]

"The Lycus Valley was not evangelized by Paul himself; it is plain from Colossians 2:1 that he was not personally acquainted with the churches there." [Note: Bruce, 561:8.]

Paul exhorted his readers to continue to believe and practice the truth of God’s revelation. He did this to prevent them from accepting the erroneous instruction of the false teachers who were seeking to turn them away from God’s will.

Verse 2-3

The "heart" includes everything in the inner man including the mind (cf. Proverbs 23:7). The Christian’s wealth is his or her thorough understanding of God’s truth. The essence of God’s revelation is Christ (cf. Colossians 1:27). The better a Christian understands God’s true revelation concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ the better he or she will be able to recognize and refute false doctrine.

"Only a love which penetrates to the heart and wells up from the heart can sustain the sort of unity that Paul sought (see also ... Colossians 1:4)." [Note: Dunn, p130.]

God has revealed in Christ all that a person needs to know to establish a relationship with God. Thinking that the source of true spiritual wisdom is somewhere other than in Christ can produce terrible disorder in the Christian life. "Knowledge" is genuine understanding and "wisdom" genuine truth (cf. Colossians 1:9).
"Knowledge is the apprehension of truth; wisdom is its application to life. Knowledge is prudent judgment and wisdom is prudent action. Both are found in Christ (cf. Romans 11:33; 1 Corinthians 12:8)." [Note: Geisler, p676.]

"The word apokruphoi (AV [and NASB], "hidden") is emphatic by position, and in the light of this it is just possible that Paul may have in mind something similar to the mystery religions. In them the initiate, after a long period of training and instruction, was allowed to be present at a performance similar to a passion play. By means of the performance the initiate was to have an experience of identification with his god. The instruction given previously enabled the initiate to understand the play. To outsiders the ritual would have been a mystery." [Note: Johnson, 475:236.]

Verse 4-5

Paul’s description of the Colossian church pictures a company of well-disciplined soldiers standing at attention in straight lines. The Greek word stereoma occurs only here in the New Testament and means "stability."

It ". . . points out that feature in the faith of the Colossians which specially commended it to the notice and eulogy of the apostle, to wit, its unyielding nature, or the stiffness of its adherence to its one object-Christ." [Note: Eadie, p123.]

So far the believers were holding their position against the false teachers, but Paul feared that this condition might change. He did not want the false teachers to talk them into believing something false by deceptive arguments.

"The implication that Paul can actually see the state of affairs at Colossae ("rejoicing and seeing your good order...") Isaiah, of course, intended more as an expression of what he would hope to see were it possible." [Note: Dunn, p134.]

"This final recall to faith forms an inclusio with Colossians 1:4 and thus brackets the whole of the intervening thanksgiving and personal statement as an exposition of that faith ..." [Note: Ibid, p135.]

Verse 6

In particular, Paul encouraged his readers to continue following Christ in harmony with the sound teaching that had resulted in their conversion. [Note: See H. Wayne House, "The Christian Life according to Colossians,"

Bibliotheca Sacra151:604 (October-December1994):440-54.] His point was not that as the Colossians had become Christians by faith in Christ they should continue to walk by faith. This is clear from Paul’s word translated "received." It usually refers to the reception of truth through transmission (cf. Colossians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 11:23; 1 Corinthians 15:1; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:9; Galatians 1:12). It is also clear from the expression "as you were instructed" (Colossians 2:7) and the context (Colossians 2:4-5; Colossians 2:8).

"Christ Jesus the Lord," a phrase that Paul used nowhere else, counteracts three false conceptions of the Savior. These are His deity ("Christ") that Judaism denied, His humanity ("Jesus") that Docetists denied, and His sovereignty ("Lord") that many varieties of false teaching denied.

". . . Paul here meets the two forms of Gnostic heresy about the Person of Christ (the recognition of the historical Jesus in his actual humanity against the Docetic Gnostics, the identity of the Christ or Messiah with this historical Jesus against the Cerinthian Gnostics, and the acknowledgment of him as Lord)." [Note: A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 4:489.]

"Since the basic sense of kurios ["lord"] is that of superior to inferior (master to slave; king to subject; god to worshiper), with formally acknowledged rights of the former to command or dispose of the latter (see also Colossians 3:22 and Colossians 4:1), all would have recognized that acceptance of Christ Jesus as Lord included within it submission of the believer to this Christ and unconditional readiness to act in obedience to him." [Note: Dunn, p140.]

Advocates of "lordship salvation" get into trouble when they go beyond this statement. Their position is that unless a person consistently obeys—their never specify how consistent one must be-he or she never truly accepted Christ.

Verse 7

Four characteristics describe the healthy Christian in this verse. First, he or she stands firmly rooted as a tree, "born again." Second, he or she is being built up as a building (cf. 1 Peter 2:2). Third, he or she is becoming increasingly stable in the faith. Fourth, he or she demonstrates the fruit of thankfulness constantly. Four
participles in the Greek text describe these characteristics. The first is in the perfect tense indicating the initial reception of new life. The last three are in the present tense revealing the ways in which new life should continually express itself.

"The present passage may imply that those who lack a deep sense of thankfulness to God are especially vulnerable to doubt and spiritual delusion." [Note: Vaughan, p196.]

"A thankful spirit is a mark of Christian maturity. When a believer is abounding in thanksgiving, he is really making progress!" [Note: Wiersbe, 2:125.]

"As in Romans 1:16-17 and Galatians 1:11-12, these two verses provide a brief summary sentence of the main point to be made in the body of the letter, to serve as a heading to what follows ..." [Note: Dunn, p138.]

Verse 8

"Philosophy"—this is the only occurrence of the word in the New Testament—here does not refer to the study of basic questions concerning God, Prayer of Manasseh, and the meaning of life. It refers to the speculations and ideas of false teachers not rooted in divine revelation. These ideas had come down by merely human tradition.

"Much depends on our semantics at this point. If by philosophy we mean the search for clarity and understanding regarding the whole of reality, then the Christian must in a sense philosophize. He must think clearly, and he must strive for a self-consistent view of life. In his quest, however, he must always submit to the guidance, limitation, and criticism of the light of divine revelation. On the other hand, if by philosophy we mean human speculation regarding man’s basic questions without due respect for the revelation of God, then the Christian, no doubt, will accord this philosophy a greatly diminished relevance to his life and calling."

"I seriously question the view that Paul, as Tertullian after him, is to be understood as condemning all study of philosophy [cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-58; Acts 17:22-30]...."

"I take the word, then, to be limited by the context; the Colossian philosophy is in mind, as well as any other, of course, which is not in harmony with divine revelation." [Note: Johnson, 476:302-03, 307. See David L. Mosher, "St. Paul and Philosophy," Crux8:1 (November1970):3-9.]

"Empty deception" describes "philosophy." This is clear from the fact that the two nouns are the objects of one preposition, "through" (Gr. dia), and there is no article before "empty deception." The idea is that the particular philosophy Paul had been warning his readers about was empty deception ("vain deceit," AV). These are not two separate dangers. This had come down to his readers as pagan tradition.

"Although the context of Colossians 2:8 probably has reference to a proto-gnostic type of philosophy at Colosse that had a disastrous mix of legalism, asceticism, and mysticism with Christianity, the implications of Paul’s exhortation to "beware of philosophy" are appropriately applied to other alien systems of thought that have invaded Christianity down through the centuries since then." [Note: Norman L. Geisler, "Beware of Philosophy: A Warning to Biblical Scholars," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society42:1 (March1999):3.]

"... We cannot properly beware of philosophy unless we be aware of philosophy." [Note: Ibid, p18.]

The "elementary principles (Gr. stoicheia) of the world" probably refer to the religious practices the false teachers were promoting that were simply external and physical (Colossians 2:20; cf. Galatians 4:3; Galatians 4:9). The view of many commentators is that this false religious system of worship had the elemental spirits as its subject matter (cf. Colossians 2:18). [Note: See O’Brien, Colossians . . ., pp129-32, for further discussion.] These practices probably involved observance of the Law of Moses. Christ was neither the source nor the content of these teachings.

"The context makes it clear that these prohibitions refer to things that are ethically neutral, not to things that are inherently sinful.... Voluntary self-denial in matters of food can be a helpful spiritual exercise, and may on occasion be recommended by considerations of Christian charity; but what is deprecated here is a form of asceticism for asceticism’s sake, cultivated as a religious obligation...."

"As has been said, the Colossian heresy was basically Jewish. Yet the straightforward Judaizing legalism of Galatians was not envisaged in Colossians. Instead it was a form of mysticism which tempted its adepts to look on themselves as a spiritual elite...."

"To look to movements within Judaism for the source of the Colossian heresy is a wiser procedure than to postulate direct influences from Iranian [Mesopotamian] or Greek culture." [Note: Bruce, 563:196-97, 200-1.]
"It is best to recognize that both Jewish and Gentile elements were present in the Colossian heresy, many of which were generally shared by the populace in the highly charged world of the first century, especially in the syncretistic and Hellenistic mood of Achaia and western Asia Minor. Many of the elements developed into the Gnosticism of the second century but with far more elaborate philosophical-religious views than are found in Colossians. The most one can say of the error in Colossians is that it was a syncretism of Jewish, Gentile, and Christian features that diminished the all-sufficiency of Christ’s salvation and His personal preeminence." [Note: House, "Heresies in . . .," p59.]

Paul revealed what his readers enjoyed in Christ in this pericope to encourage them to remain faithful to the true revelation they had received and believed.

"The apostle now makes his most direct attack against 'the Colossian heresy.' The entire passage bristles with exegetical difficulties, and calls for closer attention to its wording and argument than any other part of the Epistle." [Note: Vaughan, p197.]

“Colossians 2:8 functions as a heading and initial statement of the section’s theme, in chiasctic form:

Colossians 2:8 a polemical denunciation 16-23
Colossians 2:8 b in accordance with Christ9-15" [Note: Dunn, p144.]

"The one thing that is clear is that the false teachers wished the Colossians to accept what can only be called additions to Christ." [Note: Barclay, p161.]

**Verse 9-10**

"For" introduces another reason for abandoning the false teaching. What his readers had in Christ was completely adequate. He is the very essence of deity in whom this “fullness” permanently resides (cf. Colossians 1:19). The Greek word translated deity (theotetos) refers to the unique essence of God (cf. John 1:1). Divinity (theiotes, Romans 1:20; Acts 17:25), on the other hand, refers to the divine quality of God, which other beings may share (cf. John 1:14).

"Paul here disposes of the Docetic theory that Jesus had no human body as well as the Cerinthian separation between the man Jesus and the aeon Christ. He asserts plainly the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ in corporeal form." [Note: Robertson, 4:491.]

This fullness was present in Christ’s bodily form during His earthly ministry. He did not give up His deity when He became a man. It continues in His resurrected bodily form. [Note: See Johnson, 476:309-10.] As those in Christ we, too, partake of His fullness. We have no essential need that He does not supply.

"This statement crowns Paul’s argument. Because Christ is fully God and really Prayer of Manasseh , believers, in union with him, "are made full" (ASV), that Isaiah , share in his fullness." [Note: Vaughan, p199.]

"In the mystery cults which flourished in the apostolic age the great promise which was held out was salvation through enlightenment." [Note: Carson, p17.]

**Verses 10-12**

Christ is the head over all spirit beings ("rule and authority"). Christ’s sufficiency is evident in three things that God has done for us in Him: spiritually circumcised us (Colossians 2:11-12), forgiven our sins (Colossians 2:13-14), and given us victory over the forces of evil (Colossians 2:15).

Our spiritual circumcision (Colossians 2:11) took place when God regenerated us (cf. Galatians 5:24). It involved Christ cutting off the domination of our sinful nature (flesh), which slavery characterizes the unregenerate person (cf. Romans 7:24-25). "Baptism" (Colossians 2:12) is Spirit baptism.


**Verse 13-14**

Unbelievers are sinners by nature ("uncircumcision of your flesh," i.e, sinful nature), and practice ("transgressions," i.e, violations of God’s standards). Nevertheless, God has forgiven believers. He has cancelled our bill of debt. This is true if as Jews we violated the Law of Moses (special revelation). [Note: See Hal Harless, "The Cessation of the Mosaic Covenant," Bibliotheca Sacra160:639 (July-September2003):349-
And it is also true if as Gentiles we violated the law of God written on our hearts (general Revelation, Romans 2:14-15).

The Greek term translated "cancelled out" (Colossians 2:14, exaleipsas) suggests the smearing of letters written on wax. [Note: C. F. D. Moule, The Epistles ..., p98. Cf. Barclay, pp170-71.] Our certificate of debt was hostile to us in that it hounded us through a guilty conscience and scriptural warnings. Christ erased the debt and removed the certificate. God crucified this certificate with Christ on the cross. The final phrase in Colossians 2:14 may be an allusion to the superscription above Jesus' cross.

"What the metaphor says is that Jesus took the damning indictment and nailed it to His cross-presumably as an act of triumphant defiance in the face of those blackmailing powers that were holding it over men and women as a means of commanding their allegiance. If there is an analogy here, it may lie in the fact that Jesus' own accusation was fixed to His cross. Just as His own indictment was fastened there, says Paul, so he takes the indictment drawn up against his people and nails it to His cross. His victorious passion sets them free from their bankruptcy and bondage." [Note: Bruce, 564:296. Cf. O’Brien, Colossians ... , p124.]

Christ really died as our substitute under the charge of the broken Mosaic Law, not under the supposed charge that He falsely claimed to be the King of the Jews. [Note: F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians in Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians by E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, pp238-39.]

**Verse 15**

The disarming of the angelic rulers probably refers to Christ’s defeat of the evil angelic powers by His death and resurrection. [Note: Lightfoot, pp187-89.] This seems better than His retiring a mediatorial function of the good angels such as their giving the Law. [Note: Homer Kent Jeremiah , Treasures of Wisdom of Solomon , pp88-89.]

"Christ divested Himself at the cross of the evil powers which had struggled with Him so strongly throughout His ministry in attempts to force Him to abandon the pathway of the cross (cf. Luke 4:1-13; Matthew 16:22-23; Luke 22:53, etc.)." [Note: Johnson, 477:20.]

The public display probably refers to Jesus" disgracing the powers of evil when He died on the cross by bearing the sin that was their claim and hold on human beings. Christ triumphed over Satan’s hosts at the cross (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:14). "It" seems better than "Him."

"It is more natural to view the principalities and powers here as the defeated foes, driven in front of the triumphal chariot as involuntary and impotent witnesses to their conqueror’s superior might." [Note: Bruce, "Colossians Problems," 563:298-99. For a brief explanation and evaluation of the three major theories of the atonement of Christ, see Johnson, 477:21-22.]

"The picture, quite familiar in the Roman world, is that of a triumphant general leading a parade of victory.... To the casual observer the cross appears to be only an instrument of death, the symbol of Christ’s defeat; Paul represents it as Christ’s chariot of victory." [Note: Vaughan, p202.]

This passage is another (cf. Colossians 1:15-20) that emphasizes the supremacy of Jesus Christ and accounts for the strong Christological flavor of this epistle.

(Adapted from URL: https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/colossians-2.html)
Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator  

Sometimes Christians forget they became children of God when by faith they accepted Christ as their Savior. Salvation is the gift of God to all who acknowledge their lost state and receive Christ alone as their Substitute. Even before Jesus came to earth and died in our place, God the Father saved all who believed in Him on the basis of what He would do on the cross. Many who have received Christ as Savior fail to realize that God wants His children to walk by faith. That means to live by faith in Him. This does not mean Christians get more saved when they live by faith in Christ. Nor does it mean that if they do not walk in Him all the time, they will lose their salvation. What it does mean is that we cannot be in fellowship with God through Christ if we do not walk in Him. Walking in Christ does not save us, and it does not keep us saved. However, walking in Him does help us to grow up in Him, to be in a maturing fellowship with Him. The Scripture for this week's lesson is a wonderful reminder of what it means to be clothed in Christ. I once heard an educator define secular philosophy as "the muddled meanders of mixed-up men." That sounds about right to me. Now the word "philosophy" simply means "love of wisdom," and we all know that in itself philosophy is at all wrong. But a philosophy that does not allow for supernaturalism or the God of the Bible must be rejected by the believer. In the days of the Colossian Christians, there was a philosophy that, among other important things, denied the deity of Christ. Paul warned the believers about it and its dangers. Today there are still views and movements that, when examined carefully, reveal how far short they are of what the Bible teaches, especially about Christ. A quick and sure way to find out whether these movements are true or false is to find out what they say about two indispensable doctrines: what is believed about the Bible and what is believed about Christ. Nothing is as important for God's people as remembering their relationship with Christ. Many of us forget that. Our relationship with the Savior is an intimate one. When we accept Him, His victory over Satan and death at Calvary is our victory. Our debt is canceled, and we are free of Satan's shackles.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary  

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True Wealth - Discouraged Christians, uncertain about what they now possess as God's children, are easy prey for the enemy to break down. Paul desired for the believers in Colossae to constantly be growing, uplifted, confidently and courageously able to face difficult situations, deeply loving each other, and increasing in their understanding of the truth. Some open their wallets or check the balance in their bank accounts to be confident of their riches. Paul said real wealth resides in knowing and being assured of God's character, being convinced of His goodness and compassion. The Father is no longer a mystery who resides somewhere in the heavens, but the Lord has openly revealed Himself in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. In Paul's day, plenty of teachers and philosophers spoke about the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge. Paul made it crystal clear—to find wisdom and knowledge, seek Jesus and His truth. Don't hunt for secret books or information. Information about Jesus is open to all.

Warnings - Throughout his letters to the New Testament churches, Paul often warned against false teachers and deceivers. The mystics and philosophers mixed things up. Some referred to God as a spirit with no contact with the material world; some pushed dietary restrictions; others enforced angel or spirit worship—all in direct opposition to Christian beliefs.

Everything Is in Christ - Paul wanted the Colossians to know that everything you are looking for exists in Christ. All believers are united with Christ by faith and are complete in Him. Paul also reminded the church that Christ is above any other powers and authorities in the universe. He still is. There is no one above Him or more powerful than Him.