

**Colossians 1:28-2:10, 3:16**

Nehemiah 8:1-3

And all the people gathered as *one man* into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel. 2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

Commentators tell us there were up to 42,000 people gathered there as *one man*. One man means they were intent on one purpose. They are here to cry out to their leaders, BRING US THE BOOK. BRING US THE WORD OF GOD. These people have been in captivity for the past 70 years. They are under the heightened awareness of this and they are crying out – BRING THE BOOK.

The people who love God are saying, Give us the Scripture.

This is the challenge to everyone at Clearcreek Chapel – a desire, a hunger, a passion to know the Word of God. This is the desire of many here at the Chapel, if not most.

And this presents a true challenge to those who teach, counsel and preach.

- Will we really be able to put excellent teachers with our adults and our children?
- Will those in our Bible studies get some cheesy lesson, or will they receive a full and complete treatment of the Word of God?
- Are you understanding what Paul commanded Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-17

*You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

**Why is it important that we teach the word, how to study the word, and how to apply the word?**

Let's look together at the letter to the Colossians this evening to answer that question. And as we read this together I want to read it in the first person. I have an intense desire that men and women would be consistently transformed by the Word of God. I am not the Apostle Paul, but

his words here resonate with me. So as I share his passion let me share my heart and the desire of our ABE team with these words:

**Colossians 1:28-2:10, 3:16**

1:28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, 2 that your hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. 5 For though I am sometimes absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

Col 3:16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

To be completely fair to this text, we should begin midway through chapter 1. Chapter 1:16 through 2:15 has a definite structure. I've outlined it for you on the screens, even though we will not take the time to develop it. Notice that the focus of the structure is on the beginning of our text this evening. That is chapter 1:28 through 2:2.

Let's work through this text and look at what it looks like for a Word Filled church to mature in Christ.

**A Word filled church will be a joyful church (Col 2:2)**

When received by faith, God's Word always produces joy, filling hearts with encouragement.

**A Word filled church will be a loving and unified church (Col 2:2)**

As we grow in the truth, we grow in the Lord, and in turn we grow closer to one another. The understanding and knowledge of God's mysteries shapes and molds us through our commonly held commitment to them. We are knit together. We understand that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. The more we learn about our relationship with Christ, the closer, deeper, and richer our fellowship is with one another.

The potential exists for a union among believers that is incredible and proprietary to them. Jesus prayed for this, for us when he said, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will

believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” John 17:20-21

### **A Word filled church will have people with a Full Assurance of Understanding (Col 2:2-4)**

Paul desires that the Colossians also experience all the treasure that comes from full assurance. Without that assurance, believers cannot enjoy all the blessings that are theirs in Christ. For example, no one can look forward with hope to the blessings of heaven if he is not sure he is going there.

Understanding refers to more than just having desire and knowledge. Paul ties it here to wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge rightly applied.

When it comes to applying biblical principles to our lives, it is the exclusive property of Christians because “a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:14).

Knowing the truth, and acting upon it, leads to all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

At the heart of this understanding, we need to have what one author calls “a settled conviction” about Christ’s deity and sufficiency. It is a matter of worldly wisdom versus Godly wisdom. Because Christ is sufficient, there is no need for the writings of any cult, philosophy, or psychology to supplement the Bible. He is the source of all true spiritual knowledge.

Why was this of concern to Paul? Why is this so important to us?

So that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. If Christ really is all that Paul says he is; if Jesus truly is sufficient and preeminent, then it becomes extremely serious if we are deluded by something else. And don’t we take the truth very seriously here? Of course we do.

So what would it take to delude us here at the Chapel? Will plausible arguments and persuasive speech? We will not be persuaded by unpersuasive arguments. I am not worried about those. On the other hand, persuasive arguments sound plausible. They sound right. In fact this letter itself is a plausible argument, so they in and of themselves are not negative.

### **A Word filled church will have people who walk with Christ (Col 2:6-7)**

The importance of Christ in religion is widely acknowledged. Even groups that don’t call themselves Christians generally regard Jesus as one of the world’s foremost spiritual leaders. The problem comes when one confronts the precise claims which the Bible makes concerning Christ.

- He is not set forth as merely a religious figure.
- He is not presented as simply a visionary man often misunderstood, and from whom moral lessons can be learned.
- Christ is central to our true Christian faith and that point is clearly explained here.

The connecting word - **Therefore** - brings into focus what Paul has just commended them for. Encouraged hearts, knit together in love, and reaching the full assurance of understanding make them able to now walk in him.

Walk refers to daily conduct. In this context it means primarily to continue believing the truth about Christ, not allowing their conviction to waver.

In broader terms walking in Christ means abiding in him. It means to maintain a lifestyle patterned after his. Like a tree with deep roots in rich soil, believers have been rooted (or potted) in him at the time of salvation and are now being built up in him. This building up connotes the process of becoming more and more conformed and transformed into the image of Christ. It is an ongoing and continuous action.

### **A Word filled church is a “Bulwark never failing” (Col 2:8-10)**

The definition of bulwark is "any person or thing giving strong support or encouragement in time of need, danger, or doubt."

I have often commented in my teaching that I pity those who don't know Christ. You see,

- the only thing they have on which to base decisions
- the only thing they have to fall back on when times are tough

are human “philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world”

Let me give you an example from my recent experience.

Late August as my mother was in her final days at Hospice, I was approached by a nurse. This nurse was extremely professional and over time I had observed her to be very, very caring and compassionate. This was my experience with all Hospice staff and volunteers.

She took my hand as she asked me how I was doing. As I began to tear up a bit, she told me about the different things they had on the grounds that might bring me comfort.

- She told me about the bubbling fountain outside that would provide a peaceful atmosphere for my respite.
- She showed me the pond behind the facility where many go just to sit and watch the water and the birds as they contemplate their situation.
- She spoke with me about the memory labyrinth where I could walk. Where at each turn one remembers a happy memory from their life.

Hospice had done their best to create an atmosphere that would be “helpful” to those grieving. Yet it was vanity, empty human philosophy and completely void of the true power and comfort of Jesus Christ.

### **A Word filled church will be a worshipping and thankful church. (Col 3:16)**

Never occurring in an intellectual vacuum, authentic praise and worship is always a heartfelt response to biblical truth. When Jesus said, God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24), he meant that genuine worship occurs when a believer responds inwardly to God's truth.

In other words, theology leads to doxology. Biblical truth ignites hearts and lives with a fervent, passionate love for God.

## Conclusion

We want you to develop a passion for Bible education because:

- it is the only thing that shows us the Father, the Savior, and the Holy Spirit
- it produces genuineness of faith—more precious than gold
- It is the only truth that shapes our lives and transforms us
- It displays to us the divine power of God that has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

A mighty fortress is our God,  
a bulwark never failing;  
our helper he amid the flood  
of mortal ills prevailing.  
For still our ancient foe  
doth seek to work us woe;  
his craft and power are great,  
and armed with cruel hate,  
on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,  
our striving would be losing,  
were not the right man on our side,  
the man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be?  
**Christ Jesus**, it is he;  
Lord Sabaoth, his name,  
from age to age the same,  
and he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,  
should threaten to undo us,  
we will not fear, for God hath willed  
his truth to triumph through us.  
The Prince of Darkness grim,  
we tremble not for him;  
his rage we can endure,  
for lo, his doom is sure;  
one little word shall fell him.

That **word** above all earthly powers,  
no thanks to them, abideth;  
the Spirit and the gifts are ours,  
thru him who with us sideth.  
Let goods and kindred go,  
this mortal life also;  
the body they may kill;  
**God's truth abideth still;**  
**his kingdom is forever.**