

**Paul's Pastoral Heart – Colossians 2:1-5**  
*James Muldoon - Carey Baptist Church – 17 August 2008*

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Paul has never met the Christians at Colossae. However, he is keen that they respond warmly to him. Like a wise pastor, he realises that they're going to be far more likely to listen to what he has to say if he's built up some kind of rapport with them. So in **Colossians 2:1-5** he shows that he has a loving, pastoral heart and that he genuinely cares for them.

i What he does

**v1** tells us what Paul does. He struggles for the Colossians. He's confined in prison. However, still he struggles for the Colossians (and for other Christians) by praying, writing letters, building up other believers, sharing the gospel, worshipping and reading.

Many members of the church feel confined due to age or ill health. They can feel quite useless and worthless. However often the most effective church members are often those who are confined. They pray. They write. They speak to Christians. They speak to non-Christians. They worship. They read. And by doing so, they are a great blessing to many!

ii What Paul wants

**v2-3** tell us what Paul wants. It's a complicated pair of verses! He basically wants four things for the Colossians (and for Christians in general).

Firstly, he wants **“their hearts to be strengthened”**. He wants the Colossians to be strengthened in their minds (stronger in their understanding of Christ), in their emotions (stronger in their love for Christ), and in their wills (stronger in their desire to serve Christ). That's a good thing to pray for your fellow-Christians here.

Secondly, he wants them to be **“united in love”**. Without unity, churches grind to halt. Without love, churches are nothing. So Paul wants the Colossians to be united and to be united in love for one another. He would want the same for us.

Thirdly, he wants them to **“have all the riches of the assurance of understanding”**. He wants them to grow in understanding. As they grow in understanding, they will also grow in assurance; they will have a deeper, more settled conviction that the Christian way is the right way. And when they have that, they have riches! It's so important that you grow in your understanding of the gospel, of the word of God, of Christ.

Fourthly, he wants them to **“know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”** He wants them to know Christ better. The Lord is like a mine full of treasure, full of wisdom and knowledge. Everything we need to navigate this life and the next successfully is stored up in him. So get to know him. As you do, you'll inevitably grow in wisdom and knowledge. The mission statement of the Christian's life should be: **“know ... Christ”**.

If you're not a Christian, it means that you don't know Christ at all. So you need faith in him. You need to believe his verdict on you: that you are a sinner who deserves to be condemned. You need to believe that Jesus is the only one who can save you from your sin and from its consequences. And you need to believe in him: trusting him to forgive you for your sin, trusting him alone, trusting him enough to devote the rest of your life to following him.

### iii What he does not want

**v4-5** tell us what Paul does not want. He does not want them to be led astray and deceived. Instead, he wants them to continue to be orderly and firm in their faith, like an impeccably disciplined army.

Paul tells us about the modus operandi of false teachers here. They use fine-sounding arguments. More often than not, they use subtle reasoning which sounds so plausible. They distort the truth or they twist the truth or they add to the truth. A little distortion here. A tiny addition there. And soon you no longer have Christianity. You have heresy. So beware! Test everything by Scripture.

Christians need to oppose false teaching. Tolerance, pluralism and relativism are the hallmarks of Western society today; dogmatism, certainty and absolutism are regarded as the ultimate evils of the day. But Christians cannot compromise with the gospel. Any other "gospel" is no gospel at all. Any other "gospel" compromises the honour and glory of Christ. So be socially unacceptable in a sensitive kind of way! Stand against false teaching. Stand for Christ.

And how do we do that? By taking heed to v2-3! By having strong hearts. By being united. By having understanding which gives the riches of assurance. And, above all, by knowing Jesus Christ. When that's true, you will not be easily shaken.