

Jesus, Our All in All – Spiritual Maturity: Part I, 2:1-7

We have made it to the second chapter of Paul's letter to the Colossians. Chapter one was all about Paul's teaching on the deity of Jesus Christ. To do this, he focused on Jesus as the image bearer of God the Father, as Creator of all things, and as the head of the church. At the end of chapter one we also discovered Paul's number one goal for his ministry. Which, according to verses 28 and 29 is to allow the powerful Spirit of God to work through him to warn and teach everyone about the dangers of living without Christ. He states that he wants every person to be presented as "*mature in Christ.*" The second chapter of this letter finds Paul encouraging the Christians of Colossae by offering them insight into what it's like to grow spiritually as a follower of Jesus and then to warn them about the dangers associated with following the misguided teachings of the day. When we finish our look at chapters one and two, we'll discover that Paul's desire for the Colossians was that they know who Jesus truly is and that they understand the powerful and eternal nature of His work in their lives. Chapter one and two inform us about everything Christ has done on our behalf and chapters three and four tells us what we should do to live spiritually mature lives, individually and corporately. Let's read chapter two together. **Read Colossians 2:1-23.**

Today, our focus is on Spiritual Maturity. The first five verses give us a few examples of what a spiritually mature Christian may look like. Remember, Paul is the best example we have from Scripture on imitating Jesus. He even encourages us to look at his methods and how he succeeds in this when he says to the church at Corinth – "*Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*" **(1 Corinthians 11:1)** Paul was not being conceited when he wrote this. He was simply stating that since Jesus was no longer physically present, he was one of a few that could be trusted to teach and show them what spiritual maturity was like. They didn't have the benefit of the New Testament like we do. This is his approach to the Colossians and the Laodiceans as well. Verse, one provides our first example of what spiritual maturity in Christ looks like. Like Paul, we too should be concerned with our Christian siblings. Paul was even concerned with the ones he had never met. When we hear of a struggling church, what reaction do we have? Hopefully, it's one of heartbreak or of concern. Anytime our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ struggle, regardless of the reason, it should concern us. It should encourage us to lift a little knee mail on their behalf. At a minimum this should be our response. If we can do more in the name of Christ, then we should also seek out those opportunities too. The spiritually mature Christian will recognize the difference between a church mindset that focuses only on one singular church, or even one singular denomination and that of a kingdom mindset that views the church as Paul explained it previously for us. We must know and understand that the true Church of Christ is only made up of everyone who faithfully places their trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Of course, this also means that the true Church includes believers who genuinely accept God's gracious gift of salvation through His Son Jesus. **Read Ephesians 2:8**

The second verse gives four other examples concerning spiritual maturity. **Proverbs 15:13** says, "*A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.*" God does not want us to have hearts of sorrow. Nor does he want our spirits crushed. He wants us to serve Him and others with hearts of peace and joy. Consider the words of Jesus who said, "*Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.*" **(John 14:1)** And also, "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*" **(John 14:27)** Continuing with the condition

of the heart, Paul also says that the spiritually mature Christian will have a heart that has been knit together “in love” with other believers. From here, Paul writes next about knowledge and understanding. Colossians 2:2 is one of the verses I use as a basis to continually encourage you to embrace your salvation. As you grow spiritually, all doubts and concerns over your salvation begin to dissipate. The more we understand our faith and the more we understand God’s Word, the stronger our assurance becomes. Of course, knowledge of Jesus and all His ways is the foundation for who we are in Christ. Be encouraged by the fact that we have God’s Word as the main source for that knowledge and assurance. **Romans 15:4-6** says this, *“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* The spiritually mature Christian trusts the Bible and trusts completely in its truths. Afterall, its words are directly from God.

Order and steadfastness are next on Paul’s mind. In verse five he lets us know that the spiritually mature follower does things under control. Let me ask this question - Is your walk as a disciple ordered and controlled by what expectations are found in the Bible? The more obedient we are to God’s commands, the more steadfast we become. Remember, Jesus is not wishy washy, and we shouldn’t be either. A spiritually mature Christian adheres to the words of **Hebrews 10:23-25**. *“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”*

The things Paul lays out for us in the first five verses of chapter two are just a few examples of evidence that can be found in the spiritually mature Christian. When these things are present, it’s a good indication that Jesus is more than Savior but is Lord also. Verses 6-8 teach us the basic steps needed for growing spiritually as a follower of Christ. Many people believe in Jesus and just as many also receive Him as Savior, but that’s unfortunately where it often stops. Few allow Him to become Lord in their life. If you desire for Jesus to become Lord in your life, Paul suggests you first learn to “walk in him.” What does this look like? Be an imitator. Or, as I have often heard it, walk in His footsteps. Obey His commands. Find delight in His Word. Walk in the light instead of the dark places. Chase after Him always. Cultivate a desire to be taught the truth about Jesus. Share Him with others. Humble yourself and allow Him to be your source for all things. Paul teaches that Jesus should be the place where we are rooted. He should be our foundation. The place where our faith begins and grows stronger. Filling our hearts with praise and thanksgiving. If you think of a plant that is rooted in the ground, you’ll have a great image of what Paul is teaching here. Just as a plant draws everything it needs for survival from the soil it is planted in, we can draw our life-sustaining power from Him. The more often we do this, the less likely it is that we will be fooled by false teachings and heresy.

I hope you have taken something significant from today’s message. It’s important for every believer to pursue spiritual growth and maturity. It is this pursuit that helps us grow in knowledge and wisdom. The pursuit of spiritual maturity helps us learn how to communicate with the Father and to do the things we do each day in accordance with His will. It helps us avoid

the negative results associated with Jesus' warning about producing fruit. Remember these words from Jesus in **John 15:1-2** ... *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.* Every believer and every local Christian church have been given their mission for the Kingdom. If we do our part to stay connected with Jesus and walk with Him, then we can be assured that God will continue to use us and bless us every step of the way. It is when we do not heed warnings such as found here in Colossians and forget about Jesus as Lord, that we enter a dangerous zone.