



## Colossians 2:1-5 – Learn More About Jesus!

Lakeshore Community Church of Christ, 9:00am, 22 August 2010

What's some of the worst advice you've ever heard? How did you know it was dodgy?

I think you'll often hear bad advice when it comes to financial decisions! If you have some money to save or invest, lots of people are willing to offer advice on what you should do with your hard earned cash. And how can you judge if it's good advice or not? **Well, you've just got to learn a bit about money.**

Learn to be suspicious if your dodgy mate really needs your money to finance his can't-fail-get-rich-quick scheme – “You're gonna make millions!” Learn to avoid financial institutions you've never heard of with offices in the Cayman Islands. And you've got to learn that, yes -- boring old superannuation is a good long term financial investment.

There's no short cut – **you've just got to learn** about how to use your money wisely.

Living our lives for Jesus is like using your money wisely. We need to **learn about Jesus**. We need to **learn about Jesus** if we want to follow him faithfully and if we really want our lives to bring him glory. The gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ is an inexhaustible, never ending source of joy and encouragement and wisdom for us – if we are willing to **learn about it**.

But so often **we think we know enough**, and as a result, we can be unstable in our faith, vulnerable to going astray, and we can miss some of the joy and encouragement and wisdom that comes from **learning about Jesus**.

Would you say **“there's nothing more for me to learn about Jesus that I don't already know”**? If so, please listen carefully to the challenge of today's passage. But I don't think many of us would say that, because

we know it's not true. But I do think many of us act, day by day, as if that's true, because it's easy to be comfortable and complacent with what we have learned in the past.

The first 5 verses of Colossians chapter 2 have a clear message for everyone here today: **Learn more about Jesus! Learn more about Jesus.**

The book of Colossians is a letter from the Apostle Paul to a young church in Colosse. He's never been there, he's never met most of them.

So far (in Chapter 1):

- He's written how thankful he is to God for them
- He's recorded his prayer for them
- He's spoken of the awesome majesty of who Jesus Christ is
- And he's explained to them again what exactly happened when they first heard the gospel.

So now he's getting right into the heart of the letter, and in verse 1 it's as if **he pauses to grab their attention**, and says, "now listen – I'm about to tell you something important!"

## 1. This is important

Keeping in mind that he's just mentioned (in v29) that his ministry involves a struggle, in verse 1 Paul says:

**"I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally."**

He's being very emphatic:

- Repeating himself ("struggling")
- Being very direct ("I want you to know")
- Taking things up a notch ("how **much** I am struggling")

It's like that moment in a movie when the music picks up and you know something major is about to happen...

I think the Colossians would have leaned forward as they listened: "Why is he struggling for us?", "Why is this so important?", "What's he about to say?"

## 2. Learn more about Jesus!

**Verse 2 and 3: "My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God,**

**namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

Whatever Paul's talking about, it sounds great! However, it may not be immediately clear what exactly he is saying. There are 4 related phrases here, which Paul strings together. Let's sort through them and distil his main point:

- **What's the heart of the passage? Christ**
  - o "That they may be encouraged..." is so that:
  - o "They may have full riches..." which is in order that:
  - o "They may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ"
  - o **What's at the heart of Paul's purpose? Knowing Christ.**
  
- **What then are we to do with Christ? Learn.**
- He uses 3 phrases that speak of learning, of knowing about Jesus:
  - o "Have the full riches of complete understanding" – involves learning about Jesus
  - o "Know the mystery" – involves learning about Jesus
  - o Know "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" – things that are learned.
- Paul wants every person to know Christ – which is the message of the gospel – and to know about Christ. Learn about Jesus.
  
- **Can we ever learn enough? No.**
- This is really Paul's main concern, the reason he is making the point. He's worried
  - o That the Colossians will not have the "**full**" riches
  - o That they won't have "**complete**" understanding
  - o That they won't find "**all the treasures**".
- Paul is saying that for a Christian:
  - o There is no other focus for our learning
  - o There is no other source of understanding
  - o There is no other treasure than Christ
- Paul's big concern for his hearers: **Don't meet Jesus, and then turn aside to learn about other things.** It's not enough to know Jesus, simply learn a little about Jesus, and then stop.

That's Paul's message for every Christian: **You know Jesus – now learn more about him.**

The Christian life is like **riding a bike up a hill**, and learning about Jesus is like **pedalling**. If you want to keep going, you need to keep pedalling. If you stop pedalling, you're not going to keep rolling along, and you're not even going to stay still. If you're not pedalling, you'll be going backwards, or more likely, you'll fall over.

That, unfortunately, is how our Christian life will look if we stop learning more about Jesus.

**A Danger:** Some will think, “it’s what you do that matters, not what you know -- actions count, not head knowledge.”

My response: read these verses! What you believe, what you know matters!

**Right thinking leads to right living!** They can’t be separated!

If you don’t think rightly about Jesus, you can’t live rightly for Jesus.

**Learning about Jesus leads to living for Jesus.**

Think of a veggie garden: You can’t say, “What really matters is the produce, the food, the fruit. The compost, the fertiliser, the mulch, the water is all irrelevant – I just focus on the fruit!

That’s silly. You can’t have one without the other – if you don’t feed and water the veggie garden, you won’t get any fruit!

**Learning about Jesus leads to living for Jesus.**

### **Practical Question Number 1: What do I need to learn?**

“I know the stories about Jesus,” you say, “I know about his death and resurrection”. Where to from here?

- A. The whole Bible is about Jesus**, not just those sections which mention him explicitly
- B. Your whole life needs to know it!** You can be continually returning and re-learning even one simple truth about Jesus as you go through life.

### **Practical Question Number 2: How can you do it?**

**God’s word** contains everything you need to continue to learn about Jesus during your whole life.

**Prayer** (asking the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to you through the Bible). Learning about Jesus can happen because **you do know Him already**, and he will reveal himself to you as you ask him to.

Having said that, there are a whole variety of different ways that we can learn about Jesus from God’s word:

- A. Firstly, just **read it**. ... As you read it, pray and ask Jesus to teach you more about him.
- B. **Read it and talk about Jesus together with another Christian** and encourage one another with things you’ve learned about Jesus. (Even if personally you cannot read the bible for some reason!)
- C. This is yet another reason to **gather with other Christians** – to learn more about Jesus together:
  - a. Sermons in church

- b. Growth groups / Bible studies during the week.
- D. Read books about Jesus

Paul tells the Colossians, "I want you to know how much I am struggling, so that you will be encouraged to **learn more about Christ**."

### 3. What will happen as we learn more about Christ?

**Verse 4: "I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments."**

- **"Fine Sounding Arguments"**: If we continue to learn more about Jesus, we will be able to judge any idea, advice or argument that comes across our path.
- Paul has explained that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. So as we learn more about Jesus, we won't be deceived by fine sounding ideas that in fact lead us away from Jesus.
- The dumb ideas aren't usually a problem! Only the ones that sound convincing!
- When we are faced with a convincing suggestion, idea or piece of advice, if we are always learning more about Jesus, we can ask:
  - a. Is this in line with Jesus as I have come to know him?
  - b. Is this in the line with Jesus as I have learned about in the Bible?
- **If not**, we can reject it with confidence
- **If so**, we can embrace it.

Flip back a few pages to Eph 4:14

**"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming."**

If we are not learning more about Jesus, we are like a ship without an anchor. Every fine sounding idea is like a wave that carries us away, tosses us around, because we don't have security in Christ. Every new teaching is like a wind that blows us here and there, because we aren't firmly anchored in Jesus.

If we are always learning more about Jesus we won't be deceived.

Does this sound **obscure and rare**? You may be thinking, "I don't meet many heretics trying to lead me away from Jesus!?"

Actually, I believe that this is what following Jesus is all about. **Every single day we are confronted by lots of fine sounding options**, and we have to choose whether Jesus wants us to accept or reject them!

Turn on the TV, read the junk mail, talk to your neighbours, turn up to work, and you are faced with:

- A lifestyle suggestion
- A financial decision
- A relationship choice
- An ethical decision at work

And how many times does it turn out that the easy, attractive option is actually the wrong one?

However, as you seek to learn more about Jesus, **you will come across new ideas and arguments specifically about Jesus, and you will need to make decisions:**

- A. It might be over a cup of tea after church: “Hmm, that’s interesting, but I’ve never heard that before.” But just because you heard it from someone at church...
- B. It might be a Christian TV program: Wow, that sounds pretty attractive – is it from the Bible? But just because it’s on Christian TV...
- C. As you walk into A Christian bookshop, on the bestsellers table at the front door, there will be some books that will teach you more about Jesus, and some that will lead you away from Jesus. Just because it’s in a Christian bookstore...
- D. Even, dare I say it, just because you hear it from a preacher in a sermon... Is he being faithful to God’s word?

Paul says, **“I tell you this so that you will not be deceived...”** If you are constantly learning more about Jesus, you will be able to compare a fine sounding argument to what you know about Jesus, from the Bible, and you won’t be deceived.

So, learning more about Jesus will stop you from being deceived.

Let’s look at the positive aspects of learning more about Jesus:

### **“Encouraged in heart” (v.2) and “firm” (v.5)**

Paul gives a great illustration of the effect this will have on our faith when he talks about full **riches**, about all the **treasures** that follow.

As we learn more about Jesus, our hearts will be encouraged and our faith will be firmer.

### **“United in love”(v.2) and “orderly” (v.5)**

As a church, if we are being deceived by every fine sounding argument, **our unity will crack and crumble as we all take off on different tangents.** But if we are all focused on learning more about

Jesus, and making him the reference for every decision, we will be united in love and orderly, says Paul.

We'll be like **the spokes of a wheel, where Jesus is the hub** – as we all move closer to Jesus in the centre, we actually move closer to each other as well.

## Learn more about Jesus!

**Seek the full riches! Find all the treasure!**

**Yet so often, we think we know enough**, and as a result, we can be unstable in our faith, vulnerable to going astray, and we can miss the the joy and encouragement and wisdom...

**To the oldest, the newest, the youngest, those who love reading, those who love talking, those who love neither, the busy, the retired, the student, the pastor -- Learn more about Jesus!!**

My son, if you accept my words  
and store up my commands within you,  
turning your ear to wisdom  
and applying your heart to understanding,  
and if you call out for insight  
and cry aloud for understanding,  
and if you look for it as for silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasure,  
then you will understand the fear of the LORD  
and find the knowledge of God.  
For the LORD gives wisdom,  
and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 2:1-6