

Colossians 2:1-7/Prayer

## LAST MONTH

Last month we launched a new website for our church. Our old address was [metroeastbaptist.com](http://metroeastbaptist.com), which still works. But the new address is something else. Do you know what it is? It's **treasuregod.org**. Now *why* would we change that? The reason is, our hope is to do that. We want you, us, to treasure God.

We want to:

*enjoy Him,*

*adore Him*

*exult in Him*

*delight in Him*

*obey Him*

*proclaim*

*make much of Him*

*value Him as*

*find Him **beautiful** not just **useful**.*

## LETS BE HONEST

The temptation to use Jesus is very powerful. The Christian life works. It provides great ways to handle money, raise your children, enhance your marriage, endure suffering, build relationships, and be good citizens. It does! And there are tons of sermons and books and studies and websites that magnify your needs and use Christ to meet them. He becomes a Coke machine. But no one hugs a Coke machine.

## NOW YOUR NEEDS MATTER

Your marriage and parenting and money matters. But I'd rather exalt Christ and let Him meet those needs. See, He offers tremendous benefits. But if you just want the benefits, you'll miss Him and the benefits.

So what does it mean to treasure Christ? Treasuring Christ means that we:

*Discover the Treasure (vv.1-3)*

*Defend the Treasure (vv.4-5)*

*Devote Yourself to the Treasure (vv.6-7)*

First of all, he wants them to **discover the treasure.**

**Verse 1:** Paul begins by confessing his struggle for “*you [Colossians] and for those at Laodicea [a city near Colossae] and for all who have not seen me face to face...*” So he is struggling greatly for them. He is thinking of them and praying for them. He wants their joy, he wants their best. He is laboring for them. But *why* all the labor? **Verse 2:** “*that their hearts may be encouraged...*” That is one reason. He wants their hearts to be comforted and encouraged and exhorted.

## HEART IN OUR DAY

The word *heart* in our day usually implies emotions or feelings. But in the Bible *heart* is much deeper.

Proverbs 4:23 says: “*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*”

Life comes from the heart. Decisions, passions, motives, desires, affections, and wants all flow from it. The heart is the **command center** of your life. It is the **Pentagon** of your soul. And Paul wants that encouraged because when your heart is encouraged, you can endure anything. You listen better. You are more aware of God and in sync with Him. You love others better. You are free and joyful and trusting and hopeful and playful and fruitful. Paul knows this and he is struggling for it.

### **BUT SOMETHING ELSE HE’S STRUGGLING FOR**

Look at verse 2: he wants their hearts to be “*being knit together in love...*” The language here is body language. The body is knit together with bones and cartilage and joints. He wants that for them. He wants their hearts as close together as cartilage to a bone. In other words, he wants them **unified**. He wants the church to one. **Unity is huge to Paul, but even bigger to God.**

### **BOOK OF ACTS PROVES THAT**

God does some amazing things to protect the church. They are somewhat comical to me. In **Acts 5** there is a couple Ananias and Sapphira, who lie about some property. What did God do? He killed them. Bam! Dead! That is in Acts, not Judges or Numbers, but Acts. And then Luke says in Acts 5:13 Luke says, “*None of the rest dared join them...*”

### **Acts 19**

Then in Acts 19 there are some itinerant Jewish exorcists. They are trying to use Jesus’ name to cast out demons. A demon says to them, “Paul I know. Jesus I know, but who are you?” Then he beats them half to death and Luke says, “*they fled out of that house naked and bleeding*” (Acts 19:16). I love that! See, if you begin a fight with clothes on, and you leave naked and bleeding . . . you lost.

### **WHY THOSE STORIES?**

Why are they in Acts? They show us how serious God takes unity. Any threat to his church whether, *extortion, greed, heresy, lies, deceit or hypocrisy*, He acts against it. He wants us unified, knit together. Is that your hope? So if you’re in **Walmart** and you see a church member, what do you do? Do you avoid them? Sneak around them? Ignore them?

### **I FOUND A NEW SIN THIS WEEK**

I was reading Edwards and he says that humble people don’t have “*leveling behavior.*” What is that? He says it means to *bring those above you down to yourself*. **So it means this:** *you see someone who is above you, has more wisdom, more experience, more talent, more humility, more honor, more wealth, and more knowledge of God than you, and you go, “What do they know?” “I could do that job.” “I should be there.”*

### **So At Conferences**

When I hear other preachers, I find myself thinking, “*I could do that. I should be up there. What does Piper know?!*” But a voice, God or mine, whispers to me, “*They didn’t ask you. You paid to be here. They are getting paid to be here. You are paying them.*”

So *encouraged* and *unified hearts* is what Paul wants.

## **BUT WHY?**

Verse 2 tells us: “*to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ...*” That is why! Paul wants them to discover over and over and over and over and dig and mine and search for this Treasure, which is Christ. **Verse 3:** “*in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*” So its not Jesus + wisdom, or Jesus + knowledge, like the false teachers said. Its just Jesus. Its like a **Russian doll**. You have one big doll and out pops a smaller one, then a smaller one, then a smaller one, then a smaller one. In Christ, all this treasure of wisdom and knowledge and beauty and glory and power just keeps unveiling.

## **NOW THEY’VE DISCOVERED**

Now they have discovered Christ. They believed in Him, they’ve met Him, and they know Him. But Paul wants more for them. You **cannot exhaust** Jesus. He is limitless. You can’t reach His depths. He is too vast and too deep and too exalted to ever fully explain who He is.

## **THINK OF HOW PARADOXICAL HE IS**

A paradox is seemingly a contradiction. So God is 3 and 1. He is One God, Three Eternal Persons. Its a *both-and*, a paradox. So Jesus is both:

Word and Flesh,  
God and Man,  
Lion and Lamb,  
King and Servant,  
Master and Slave,  
Lord and Son,  
Exalted and Humble,  
at God’s Right Hand and On The Throne,  
He is full of Grace and Truth,  
He gives Life and Gave His Life,  
He has a Crown and a Cross,  
He was Righteous and Became Sin,  
He is the Good Shepherd and the Slain Lamb,  
He was Rich and became Poor,  
He is First and Last,  
Beginning and End,  
Alpha and Omega,  
He was Dead and Alive Forevermore.

Anselm (a 12th Century Theologian) said God is: “***that than which no greater a being can be conceived.***”

If you learned one thing about Christ per day, for 10 billion years, you would barely scratch the surface.

## **ARE YOU?**

So are you discovering Him? Are you diving into Him? Are you walking with Him? Does His Name quicken your soul? Do you find yourself adoring him? Are you seeking to do what He says? Is lust adultery to you? Is anger murder to you? Is your treasure Him or your money and house and car and clothes and golf clubs and TV?

So first treasuring Christ means discovering Him more and more, but second, you must

### **defend the treasure.**

I'll be brief here. Look at **verse 4**: "*I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.*" So apparently in Colossae, there were arguments and teachings that might delude Christians. Scholars aren't sure what they were exactly. Some say it legalism, others paganism, some said it was Judaism. Most agree that some kind of **syncretism** was going on, the *mixing* of religious practices. The message seemed to be, "*You must go beyond Jesus for salvation.*" Christ wasn't enough for them. Something else, some deeper knowledge, some hidden secret, some other method and means, that is what saves you they said.

### **IN THEIR DEFENSE**

But in their defense, the Gospel sounded foolish to them. Paul even admits that. In 1 Corinthians 1 he calls the Gospel the "*foolishness of God.*" The Gospel is foolish! It sounds ridiculous.

### **I Heard Matt Chandler Say**

*"The Gospel says that God became a man, by a virgin, he lived sinlessly, so they killed him, he rose again, he floated to heaven, he is returning on a white horse to get us."* I would add, he forgives all the sins, past, present, and future of anyone who trusts in Him, for free.

That is ridiculous! That is why they said, "**Jesus + something else =salvation.**"

### **EVERYONE IS SEEKING SALVATION**

See, everyone is seeking salvation, not just Christians. Salvation is simply being worthy, being approved. Everyone wants that. Even atheists want that, they want worth and joy and peace without God. Even **Madonna** wants this.

She told Vanity Fair in 1991, "***My drive in life is from this horrible fear of being mediocre.***"

You hear what she's saying? She is saying "*I want to be worthy. I want to matter. I want to be approved.*" We all want this. You have **two options**: 1) You can find it yourself. You can work and labor and strive to be worthy. You can look to your health, your job, your talent, your looks, your possessions, your kids, your spouse, or your spiritual activities, to be your salvation. That is one option.

### **The Second Option**

2) You can consume yourself with Jesus. You can let Him be all you need for your worth, your identity, your value, your hope, your success, and your joy. He has done all the work for you. All you need is to need to Him. And then *spend your life being a pleasure to Him.*

So treasuring Christ means *discovering* the treasure, *defending* the treasure, and finally...

### **devoting yourself to the treasure.**

Now the first word in **verse 6** is blazing with truth. This entire letter, and I think the whole Bible, hinges on that word. If you miss this word, and what's behind it, you've missed freedom. Look at **verse 6**: "Therefore..." That is a great word. It is two Greek words. You might say, "so then" "because" "in light of the fact" "in view of" "on account of" "henceforth." So Paul is reaching back and grabbing all he just said in chapter 1. **Verse 6**: "as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him..." You see what he is doing here?

### **HE IS GROUNDING IMPERATIVES IN INDICATIVES**

He is grounding his imperatives in the indicatives. What does that mean? Indicatives express reality. They express what has been done. Imperatives express what to do, they are commands. An **example** would be this, "I bought you a car (indicative), now drive it (imperative)!" That is what Paul is doing here. He is saying, "**You received Christ as Lord. All that He is, all He has done; He rescued you, He reconciled you, He redeemed you, He forgave you, He delivered you, He brought peace with His Cross, you just received that, by grace through faith, it was given.**"

### **THOSE ARE INDICATIVES**

Now comes the imperatives in **verse 6**, "so walk in him..." Live for Him now. Obey Him now. Please Him now. Dwell in Him. This language is everywhere in the Bible. For examples:

Ephesians 5:2 says this, "And walk in love [imperative] as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us [indicative]."

### ***Parent This Way***

You should parent this way, because I've mastered it. Watch using the word *but*. "I love you but . . . you better obey!" Instead say, "I love you, so you need to obey me." This is how you obey God, you focus on what He has done for you. You dwell on it. You gaze on it. I promise that if you will **immerse yourself in what Christ** has done for you, you will search for ways to please Him.

### **BUT OUR PROBLEM**

But our problem is that we reverse the imperative and the indicatives. We think, that if obey the imperatives and do what God says and **pray** enough and **give** enough and **condemn** ourselves enough, we'll achieve the indicatives. **If we obey, God will accept us.** But the Gospel is the radical opposite. **The Gospel is we are accepted in Christ, therefore we obey.**

### **IF YOU'RE NOT A CHRISTIAN YET**

I am guessing you think that Christians do and do and do and do for God, then He accepts us. Some Christians think that. But the Gospel is the opposite. We think Christ has done and done and done and done what we couldn't do, and that is why God accepts us.

### **VERSE 7**

In verse 7 Paul gives 4 metaphors, a tree, a building, a legal document, and a wine jug. Lets read it. **Verse 7:** *“rooted [like an oak tree] and built up in him [like sky scraper ] and established in the faith [like a binding contract with no opt out clause], just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving [like a full wine jug thats overflowing].* Is that you? Are you that devoted to Christ? He is worthy of that.

So treasuring Christ means we discover Him,  
we defend ourselves against threats,  
we devote ourselves to Him.

## **HOW?**

But how do you get there? How do you in your heart, treasure Him above everything else? You treasure Him when you realize that He lost all His treasure, to gain you. See, on the Cross He lost His righteousness, He lost His riches, He lost His blessings, He lost His Father, that you might treasure Him. Gazing on that, melts your heart.

## **IN THE LORD OF THE RINGS**

In the last book, there is a huge battle. **Eowyn**, the king’s niece, who is so pure and beautiful, enters the battle secretly. She is facing this huge demonic half-dead, half-alive creature that she is not match for. With her is the hobbit **Merry**. Hobbits are...well hobbits. Little short, furry, unassuming, creatures who are always laughing and smoking and dancing. He is mortified watching this. Tolkien says, *“Pity filled his heart and great wonder, and suddenly the slow-kindled courage of his face awoke. He clenched his hand. She should not die, so fair, so desperate! At least she should not die alone, unaided.”* Merry goes to her aid.

So here is Eowyn, this fair, desperate beauty, fighting for her people. She shouldn’t be there. She is too beautiful, too precious. But seeing that, seeing her there fighting, gives him courage. It kills his fear. It moved him.

When you see Jesus Christ in all His beauty and glory, dying for you, hanging there for you, losing His treasure, it will move you. He shouldn’t be there. He is too fair, too glorious. But He was there. Lets treasure Him.