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Read Colossians 2:1–15. I will print the Net–2 translation.

2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for those who have not met me face to face. 2 My goal is that their hearts, having been knit together in love, may be encouraged, and that they may have all the riches that assurance brings in their understanding of the knowledge of the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I say this so that no one will deceive you through arguments that sound reasonable. 5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

WARNINGS AGAINST THE ADOPTION OF FALSE PHILOSOPHIES

6 Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and firm in your faith just as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. 8 Be careful not to allow anyone to captivate you through an empty, deceitful philosophy that is according to human traditions and the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head over every ruler and authority. 11 In him you also were circumcised—not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, through the circumcision done by Christ. 12 Having been buried with him in baptism, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead. 13 And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nevertheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions. 14 He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. 15 Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

COMMENTS:

Here we have Paul's clear acknowledgment he had not been to Colossae or Laodicea. Since Paul started the church in Ephesus, some of them might have moved into the area, but most had not met him in person. He had his longest ministry there and also a very close personal relationship with that congregation.

He wants them to know that he prays for them as much as he does the congregations he started. Today we seldom pray for the congregations and church members or leaders in even neighboring congregations. I believe we should start to do so to keep reminding ourselves that the church of Jesus Christ is much bigger than our congregation.

In v. 2 he says his goal is that they may have their hearts knit together in love. He also wants them to have all the good that comes from being assured of God's love, mercy and grace. He says understanding the mystery of God comes from knowing Christ. It is in him that godly wisdom and knowledge are found.

He says I know these new and different ideas can sound reasonable, but they also can be deceptive. His plea in v. 5 is for them to keep themselves grounded in Christ and thus in the truth of God.

Now in vs. 6–15 he get more explicit about the false teachings which could lead them astray. Now he calls them keep their eyes focused on Jesus as your Lord. Remember what you were taught and stand firm in the faith, overflowing with thanksgiving.

Beware of the philosophy based on human tradition, rather than on Christ. Watch out for those who consider Jesus one god among many. V. 9 he declares that even though Jesus was in human form, we is the fullness of all deity. He is not one among many, but is the one over all.

We find our fullness in him (v. 10) and he is THE head, over EVERY ruler and authority. He is the one who circumcised you, not with a knife, but by the removal of the desires of the flesh. Now Paul connects the Old Testament initiation, circumcision, to the New Testament Sacrament of Baptism. The power of God who raised Jesus from death has also raised us from death to life.

Once we were dead in sin, but now made alive through Christ and all our sins are forgiven because of our connection with Jesus. Our debtors note was nailed to the cross when Jesus was nailed to his cross.

Verse 15 is the description of salvation as a victorious military parade. The captured people were often paraded through the towns of the victors along with wagons loaded with the bounty they captured. All the rulers and authorities of the enemy were disgraced by Jesus victory on the cross. That is the biggest surprise of all. In the past, the people who crucified were the victors.

Now the one who was crucified has become the victor by coming out of the grave with new life, offering new life to each of us who believe and trust him for the permanent sin solution, God's forgiving grace and mercy.

REFLECTION QUESTION: Do you know what book of the prophets is read on the Day of Atonement. I'll give you a hint. It is not a book that praises the prophet. It is a book that praises God. It is the book of Jonah because it shows God's mercy and grace on the highest Holy Day on the Jewish Calendar. Remember how the death of Jesus caused the curtain which kept everyone out of the Holy of Holies was torn in two and opened up the way to God's mercy seat.