

## Settled, Steadfast, and Sure # 6

Colossians 2: 1-7

*If someone were to ask you to suggest the most important qualities a minister can possess, you might argue for intelligence, education, leadership ability, boldness, holiness, or speaking ability. Although all those are essential components, perhaps the most necessary ingredient in the life of any minister of Jesus Christ is love for the church. No one can truly serve God in the church without that motivation.<sup>1</sup> As you study the life and ministry of Paul, his love for the church is beyond question. Clearly he loves the Colossian church, but that love isn't reserved for them alone. He is passionate about and committed to the church as a whole. Paul knew the eternal importance of salvation and a proper relationship with Christ. He wanted the church to prosper, being effective in reaching the lost and encouraging all believers.*

In our previous text, Paul exalted the Lord Jesus Christ in a magnificent way. This was done with purpose. He wanted to establish a solid foundation upon which to build. He now turns his attention to the church, in an effort to encourage them in their walk with the Lord. Through Christ they had everything necessary to serve the Lord and experience victory.

I am convinced Paul was looking well beyond his present time as he penned these words. He knew the church would endure until Christ returned for her. Although these words were written thousands of years ago, they continue to speak. This letter was written to the church at Colossae, but it was also written for Fellowship, and the church at large. I want to examine the [exhortations](#) Paul leaves the church as we consider the thought: [Settled, Steadfast, and Sure](#).

**I. Paul's Concern for Colossae (1-3)** – As we begin Chapter 2, we discover the heart of a committed pastor. Paul reveals his passionate concern for Colossae. Consider:

**A. His Activity (1a)** – [For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you](#). It is suggested that Paul had never personally visited the church at Colossae, and even if that were the case, his love for them was not diminished. He was as committed to the welfare of Colossae as any other local body of believers. Even though absent in body, Paul was not passive. He was actively involved in the ministry of Colossae. He reveals the [great conflict](#) he has for the church there. This speaks of “*a struggle, contest, or contention, often in reference to the Greek games.*” Paul was not a silent observer; he was an active partner. He labored in prayer and ministry for Colossae, struggling against opposition and the forces of evil.

- What a challenge from the Apostle. The modern church is filled with many spectators, silent observers, but few participators, those willing to actively engage in ministry. We need to find our place in the body of Christ and contend for the faith!

**B. His Association** (1b) – *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;* Paul's concern was not limited to Colossae. He was concerned for Laodicea and others whom he had not met. Paul was concerned for the entire body of Christ. He longed for a solid, biblical church in every city, one that shared the Gospel and thrived for the glory of God.

- We too need that same concern. I fear our vision and mindset is far too limited at times. We must realize that the kingdom work doesn't start and stop at the edge of our parking lot. There is work to be done outside these walls. We must engage our communities for Christ. Fellowship isn't the only body of believers serving the Lord. We need to pray for and encourage others in their ministries as well. We need a burden for the body of Christ, not limited to our local congregation.

**C. His Ambition** (2) – *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;* Paul revealed his desire for Colossae and the church as a whole. He prayed for the church to enjoy the peace and comfort of God, being united together in love, experiencing the abundance of God in full assurance and commitment to the Gospel. In essence Paul desired the church to be a healthy body. He wanted each member to thrive in Christ. He wanted the body to reach the lost, reproducing itself in the lives of others.

- Should that not be our desire as well? When you think of the goals and vision for our church, what do you envision? Is it all about our facilities and congregational ministries, or do you have an ambition similar to Paul's? I pray the Lord will create passion within our hearts and give us a biblical vision for ministry!

**D. His Assurance** (3) – *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Paul wasn't skeptical concerning Colossae. He wasn't doubtful of their ability. He was certain they could accomplish much because he knew the source of their strength. He knew Christ was more than able to equip and use the believers there to accomplish His purpose. The world looked to material and social means to accomplish their goals, but Paul pointed the church to Christ. In Him are hidden the great treasures of life, including knowledge and wisdom. In ourselves we are weak and frail, prone to stumble and fall. In Christ we are more than conquerors. In Him we can do all things! Take comfort and courage in Christ. He can equip us to overcome and endure.

**II. Paul's Confidence in Colossae** (4-5) – As Paul continues to speak, he reveals his confidence in the church at Colossae. Notice he speaks of:

**A. The Possibility of Failure** (4) – *And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

Now, you might think that Paul revealing the possibility of failure doesn't sound much like confidence. We need to understand Paul isn't anticipating their failure; he is equipping them to encounter adversity that will surely come. He knows if they are trusting in the Lord, they will not give heed to the false doctrine and enticing words of false teachers. However, the church needs to understand and respect the lure of the flesh. If they are to overcome, they must never get proud or over-confident in themselves. Genuine confidence is obtained through complete reliance in Christ.

- We need to heed these words as well. Confidence is good as long as it is focused on Christ. If we are resting in Him, fully relying upon His guidance and ability, we cannot fail. If we ever get to the place we feel as if we have arrived, we are destined for a fall. We must be cautious and constantly aware of the tactics of the enemy.

**B. The Power of Faith** (5) – Now Paul discusses the strength of the believer, always founded in faith. When faith is strong, victory is sure. We discover the benefit of faith is two-fold. We see it:

**1. Endures Separation** (5a) – *For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit.*

Surely the church was encouraged through Paul's involvement with the church, and yet he was not with them in body. He was a great pastor and leader and yet they were forced to make decisions and endure without him being present with them. Paul teaches a fundamental truth to Colossae. There is certainly nothing wrong with gleaning wisdom from others or admiring their work for the Lord, but we must keep our focus on Christ. Paul had not saved them and they were not worshiping him. Even though they may have desired his presence, their faith in Christ would sustain them and guide them, even in Paul's absence. They could rest in knowing he was with them in spirit and that he was praying for them continually.

- Surely we have all had mentors we looked up to in our Christian lives, maybe a Sunday school teacher, pastor, deacon, etc... Maybe the Lord chose to move them to another work or take them home to glory. We may have wondered how we would make it without them, but somehow we did. Our faith sustained us through it all. Strong faith will endure the most painful separations.

**2. Enables Steadfastness** (5b) – *For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.* Even though Paul was not present to provide day to day guidance, they remained steadfast in the Lord through faith. Trouble and adversity were present, but faith endured and enabled them to press on in the work. We too need that type of faith. There will be struggles and disappointments along the way. Our hearts will be heavy and burdened at times, but we must continue by faith in Christ.

**III. Paul's Charge to Colossae (6-7)** – As he concludes this thought, Paul offers the church a specific charge to fulfill. Let's take a moment to consider the charge. Consider:

**A. The Reminder (6a)** – *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:* He offers a stirring reminder of their relationship with Christ. They were not without hope. They were not expected to accomplish the demands of ministry alone. Their relationship with Christ afforded many great and wonderful benefits. Paul encouraged them to keep their focus, and in times of difficulty, remember Christ.

- Often we are faced with difficulties and trials in life. There are times when we are tempted to abandon the work and walk away from serving the Lord. We too need to be reminded often of our relationship with Christ. I rejoice that I do not walk alone. I am glad that it isn't up to me to provide the answers or the strength necessary to endure. I have a hope that exceeds life. The saved are secure in Him, regardless of outward circumstances.

**B. The Requirement (6b)** – *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:* The church must realize they were no longer their own. They no longer had the liberty to live as they pleased. Their relationship with Christ came with the obligation to walk with the Lord and honor Him with their lives and service. This was not a simple request, but a biblical requirement.

- We share the same requirement. Every believer has an obligation to walk with the Lord, in His will and in His way. We have been bought with a price; we belong to Christ. Our lives are to be completely surrendered to serve the Lord.

**C. The Resolve (7a)** – *Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith.* The charge Paul left would not be an easy one. In fact, it is impossible apart from Christ. If they were to endure and fulfill their work for Christ, they must resolve to be rooted in the Lord, built up in Him, and established in the faith. Temptation would continue to come. Trials would be ever present, seeking to discourage and defeat. Only those who were settled in the faith, with a determined desire to serve the Lord would endure. Maintaining a close relationship with the Lord would be imperative to their continued success.

- I certainly want to finish well. I never want to bring shame or reproach to my Lord. I have served the Lord for many years, seeing many come and go. I realize it is by the grace of God that I haven't abandoned the church as well. I need continued faith and resolve to continue for the Lord and you do as well.

**D. The Reflection (7b)** – *as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving*. The believers in Colossae were not the first, nor would they be the last, but there was an obligation to represent the Lord well. They were charged to continue in that which they had been taught, the fundamentals of the faith. In so doing, they would ensure new believers receiving the Gospel and coming to faith in Christ. They were expected to live their lives in thanksgiving to the Lord. In essence, they were to display the love and righteousness of Christ to the world, being a thankful and gracious witness to Him.

- My how we need that reflection in our day. We need those who are totally committed to the Truth. We need those who will continue for Christ, without wavering. The world needs to experience a joyous and thankful church. If our lives never portray anything of value, how can we expect others to desire what we have?

**Conclusion:** I trust you have been enlightened and challenged by our study this evening. We are part of something far greater than we can imagine. The believer is placed within the body of Christ, the blood bought church. We are blessed beyond measure, but with those blessings come responsibilities. I want to fulfill my obligations in a way that pleases the Lord. I want to remain Settled, Steadfast, and Sure.

Are there needs in your life? Is your commitment and resolve all they need to be? Are you serving in a way that is pleasing to our Lord? Maybe you haven't come to Christ by faith in salvation. You are not familiar with all that we have considered. If so, I encourage you to respond to the leading of the Lord. I can assure you, He wants you to be part of His body as well.

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Colossians and Philemon.