Sunday, September 20, 2020—Colossians 2:1-3 Paul’s Great Conflict: How to Deal With Anxiety

**Colossians 2:1**

* **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 begins chapter 2 by telling the Colossians that he wished they “knew what great conflict” he had for them. The English noun “conflict” has a couple different meanings that we should consider.
  + A striking or dashing against each other, as of two moving bodies in opposition; violent collision of substances; as a conflict of elements, or waves; a conflict of particles in ebulltion.
  + A fighting; combat, as between men, and applicable to individuals or to armies; as, the conflict was long and desperate.
  + Contention; strife; contest.
  + Struggling with difficulties; a striving to oppose, or overcome.
    - I Timothy 6:12
    - II Timothy 4:7
  + A struggling of the mind; distress; anxiety. Colossians 2:1.
* According, to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* it is the fifth definition, “a struggling of the mind; distress; anxiety” that is in play in Colossians 2:1. Paul wants to Colossians to know how much mental and emotional energy he is expending towards them.
* **and for them at Laodicea**—Paul’s emotional expenditure extends to the saints in Laodicea as well. Please recall the following points about the church in Laodicea for our introductory studies.
* J. Sidlow Baxter provides the following details on the city of Colosse in his *Explore the Book*.
  + “Colosse was a Graeco-Phrygian city in the Roman proconsular “Province of Asia.” This province coved the western area of the large peninsula which nowadays is known as Asia Minor. The capital of “Asia” was Ephesus, situated near the middle of the western coast of the peninsula. Some hundred- and twenty-miles inland form Ephesus were three cities, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse, in the river valley of the river Lycus.” (Baxter, 198)
* Colossians 2:1, 4:13, 15-16—these three cities are mentioned in connection with each other in the book of Colossians.
  + Colossians 1:7-8— presumably, Epaphras got saved under Paul’s ministry in Ephesus who then carried the contents of Paul’s preaching to Colosse. Paul calls Epaphras his “dear fellowservant.” Epaphras appears to be the prime evangelist of the city of Colosse.
  + Colossians 4:12—Epaphras is from Colosse.
  + Colossians 4:13—his ministry seems to have extended to Laodicea and Hierapolis as well.
* **and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh**—this “conflict” of mind that Paul extended beyond the saints in Colosse and Laodicea to include all the believers that Paul had never met or labored among personally. The ministry is an emotional thing:
  + Acts 20:31
  + II Corinthians 11:28
  + Philippians 4:6
  + Colossians 1:3, 9—this why Paul prayed “always” and without ceasing for the Colossians. It was on account of the “great” emotional “conflict” he had for them.

**Colossians 2:2**

* **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;**
* **That their hearts might be comforted**—is the first thing Paul wanted and prayed for regarding those who had not “seen his face in the flesh.”
  + Colossians 4:7-8
  + II Corinthians 1:4-6
  + I Thessalonians 5:4
  + II Thessalonians 2:16
  + Romans 15:13
* **being knit together in love**—note the present tense on the word “being” in this phrase. I take this to mean that these saints are to take “comfort” from the fact that they are in the present “knit together in love.”
  + Colossians 2:19
  + Ephesians 4:16
* **and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding**—this phrases harkens back to Paul’s prayer for the Colossians in Chapter 1 Verse 9.
  + Ephesians 1:17-18
* **to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ**—“the full assurance of understanding” is wrapped up in them “acknowledging” the following three mysteries.