

Colossians 2: 1-9

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

2-For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face. 2 I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I am saying this so that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments. 5 For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Fullness of Life in Christ

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily

**Jan's Story

Jan, a member of St James Holt has struggled with ongoing illness over the last few years. With Brett, the associate minister of St James she had prepared for her possible funeral. It was Jan's wish that Brett would speak and share the gospel with her family and friends. The importance of this wish became really clear over time. Brett went on extended leave and soon after Jan's condition deteriorated. We were wondering whether Brett would be back in time, but Jan waited. Brett returned and was able to see Jan. She passed away hours after. At her funeral, which I can only describe as inspiring and wonderful, Jan's wishes were met.

Brett clearly, sensitively explained that Jan, who was a very good person was in heaven but not because of her own goodness or achievements. She was in that place because of what Jesus had done, because of the forgiveness that came through his death on the cross. Brett invited more than 200 people present to respond to Christ, acknowledge their need for forgiveness, live their lives in Jesus and receive this assurance of life in eternity.

For Jan this was the most important news she could offer at the end of her life.

Take Away

Strive, work hard for what really matters; maturity in Christ for ourselves and in our brothers and sisters.

Look out for distractions. Stay focussed and centred on the core of our faith. Jesus needs to be at the centre.

Maturity in our knowledge of Christ and the gospel is very important but maturity is also seen in our Christlike actions and character, in the amount of thanksgiving in our lives.

Commented [C(A1): Contending, striving, working Hard
What is the focus of your hard work in church life?

Paul's hard work is for a focussed purpose – the maturity of those who follow Jesus

See 1:10 - so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God.

Notice this is a two-fold maturity

- Growing knowledge and understanding - THOUGHT
- Bearing fruit in good work and character – ACTION

The need for balance

Commented [C(A2): One part of Xn maturity is growing in understanding of Christ
Unpacking the mystery
Spiritual wealth is in

- assured, firm, complete understanding
- knowing God's mystery

The complex gospel, takes time to understand - like a diamond with many facets

The simple gospel: do / done

See **Jan's story

See note on vs 8-9 below

Commented [C(A3): Xn maturity is also practical – living your life in Jesus

1:10 - bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God

True knowledge of God transforms us, changes us into people whose lives are fruitful in good works

Also internal strength of character emerges

1:11 - prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father,

Commented [C(A4): Here and in 1:12. Thanksgiving is mark of maturity - generous amounts of thanksgiving.
Abounding, overflowing, filled with thanksgiving

Commented [C(A5): WARNING! Distractions!

Don't be deceived by plausible arguments 2:4

We can get side-tracked into ideas and practices that inhibit maturity in Christ – Colossians has a long list of em!

Bodily circumcision, food and drink laws, observance of particular days or festivals, self-abasement, worship of angels, visions from strong individuals.

What distracts us today from the core truths of our faith?

Vs 9 reminds us that even though it might be hard for modern people to accept; Jesus Christ was God – the whole fullness of deity dwells BODILY in Him