

# COLOSSIANS

## "FINDING SPIRITUAL FULLNESS IN CHRIST

Colossians Chapter 2 (NIV)

<sup>2</sup> My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup> I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. <sup>5</sup> For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

<sup>6</sup> So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

<sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

<sup>9</sup> For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. <sup>11</sup> In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, <sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

<sup>13</sup> When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

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## **IN-CHRIST – Finding Spiritual Fullness in Christ**

For most all of us, we want to lead a life of meaning, significance, joy and satisfaction. We want to live Christ-centered lives that serve as an example to those around us and a light to the communities in which we live and work. Today, we continue the series in Colossians and in this Scripture passage, Paul begins to shed light on how we can find spiritual fullness in Christ to guide our journey as we move ahead.

In our first week in the series. I shared what it means for us to live IN, THROUGH AND FOR CHRIST. We learned together from Paul in this opening Chapter, the power of thanksgiving, prayer, and fellowship to create the connection IN CHRIST that will empower us THROUGH CHRIST to accomplish God's desire FOR CHRIST at the hub of our lives!! It is not what we know, but WHOM we know that gives us our salvation and spiritual growth. We explored how knowing Christ is to know God. Growing in Christ is to grow in the Father's Word. Going with Christ is to go in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In our second week. Joe Hill shared for us the image of Christ on the THRONE AND THE CROSS. He helped us develop a picture of Jesus that we can carry with us each day in our hearts and minds – one of King and Savior. Jesus ruling over our lives on the Throne and sacrificing His life for us on the Cross. God's plan was to give us himself – fully, completely, and sacrificially. We learned that we were to be spiritually reborn in Him and through Him. Joe reminded us that Jesus does not care if you, if we, go to church. He wants you, wants us to be the church!

### **{Slide 1 - Glen Eyrie Conference Center}**

Debi and I spent this past week at Glen Eyrie in Colorado Springs. We helped guide and instruct more than 70 missionaries, pastors and church lay leaders on a journey to equip them to live a life of significance.

### **{Slide 2 - Navigator Church Ministries and NALC Life, Leadership and Discipleship Coaches}**

Over three days of experiential workshops, each leader learned proven biblical principles to strengthen their giftedness as disciple-makers and coaches to leave a legacy by how they live out their daily lives with intentionality.

Joining us to lead the charge and share his wisdom was Daniel Harkavy, author of *Living Forward: A Proven Plan to Stop Drifting and Get the Life You Want*.

### **{Slide 3 – Daniel Harkavy}**

As a leadership coach for many corporate executives, church pastors and organizational leaders, Daniel helps others learn from, as he termed it, a “covert” Christian perspective what it means to see with clarity a pathway toward the life God desires from us and learn key ways to make a difference in the lives of others along the way. Our goal over the three days was to envision our futures, become inspired by God’s Word, assess our current realities, prayerfully seek God’s guidance and then intentionally create a life plan with clearly outlined commitments to pursue God’s promises for our lives.

### **{Go to Blank Screen}**

As I reflect on Chapter 2 of Colossians, Paul is helping the believers in Colossae to become similarly equipped. Paul brings clarity to his calling by sharing in verses 2-3, *“my purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*

We all have our life anchored in human experiences. We look to “man-made” approaches to try to solve life’s challenges and overcome our daily battles. So many of us are looking for treasures in all the wrong places. Some of us are looking for it in the pursuit of wealth, material possessions, power, authority, position, title, pleasing others, or being accepted. We have built our foundation on half-truths. However, we all need to remember that eventually as Jesus warned us -- the winds, waves and ravages of circumstances would shake all our human foundations. Only those who have built their houses on His Rock will be able to stand the storms, floods, and other adversities of life. (Matt 7:24-27)

We must seek the “full breadth and riches of understanding” in the “treasure of His wisdom and knowledge” to guide our emotions and thoughts IN HIM so we can be “encouraged in heart and united in love” THROUGH HIM, then we can begin to pursue our purpose in life FOR HIM.

The single most important takeaway for us today is that each of us having received Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Each of us seeing him on the Throne and the Cross. Each of us can strive to live “in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened by our faith in Him and overflowing with thankfulness for Him, and His sacrifice for us, as we live out our lives.” (v.7)

As we explore these passages further, I believe Paul is asking us to commit our lives and submit our wills to Christ; to grow and learn from His teachings; and to recognize the power of the Spirit at work in us and through us to stay aligned to God’s plan for our lives. I believe Paul is giving us insights on how to live our life with Christ at the center of all we do. Along the way, he gives us some warning signs to be aware and dangers to avoid.

Paul tells us not to be “deceived by fine-sounding arguments” and not to be taken “captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world.” What Paul is telling us here is simply that key to staying on track in our growth as disciples is to stay centered on Christ, to ground ourselves in His Word, seek Christ daily in prayer for His guidance.

We are to remain humble and curious about what it means to live a purposeful life but in doing so not to allow the teachings of the world to distract us from the truth of His wisdom. We cannot take a merely humanistic approach to solving our problems, overcoming our challenges or reaching our goals.

We must keep our attentions on Christ and recognize He is our all-knowing, all-loving God. We will come to realize, as one mentor in my life once shared, “the more we become nothing the more Christ can use us to do everything.” The more we become nothing, the more Christ can use us to do everything.

We become His vessels; we become His vehicles for bringing the Good News to life. He becomes our “every power and authority” as we let Him bring us to fullness in Him. Each day when we pray, we can view it as a renewal of our baptism in Christ. In our baptism, Jesus calls us to die to ourselves and live for Him. He raises us through faith to a new life – alive in Christ! Through Christ, and His cross, we triumph over our flesh, our desires, and our sinful natures to influence and affect the lives of those around us.

#### **{Slide 4 - Life Purpose... Eulogy}**

Return with me to the mountainside of Colorado... as I sit among the trees overlooking his awesome creation and asking the Lord to search my emotions and thoughts to align them to His. During this blessed time of reflection as I was looking to develop my life plan, I responded to the task Daniel Harkavy had given us to either write a eulogy or revisit our life purpose statements to envision the future we believe God is asking us to move forward to pursue.

With my pride fully intact, I decided I was not yet ready explore what the eulogy might look like, so I more fully engaged the life purpose I first crafted over 12 years ago as a young and maturing Christian.

My life purpose as written on the inside cover of my bible dated 11/15/2005 reads:

*“my purpose is to love God and love others by helping them develop as intentional-relational disciples, growing in spiritual maturity to be difference-makers in the lives of others as they become more like Christ. I am committed to using the spiritual gifts that God has given me to be earnest and disciplined in my prayer life, meditating daily on a closer relationship with Christ, and seeking His continuous counsel as directed by the Holy Spirit.*

*My life's purpose is to live faithfully in obedience to God while exhibiting moral excellence and personal character that will make the invisible Christ visible in my daily walk. I will seek daily ways to grow closer to God developing self-control, perseverance, and patience in the midst of the character tests and challenges that life will bring my way each day.*

*I am committed to love others as Christ would love them and share my knowledge of Christ to help develop them, and myself, into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. I enjoy spending time with people, both young and old, modeling a Christ-honoring lifestyle before them, and equipping them for areas of service. I see ministry as a team effort that together will communicate Christ to the world and cultivate personal growth in Him one-step at a time, one-day at a time among a body of believers seeking to become His disciples."*

My hope and prayer is that each day I take one more step forward, living out this purpose, the one the Lord laid on my heart, living it out with intentionality, following the steps He has shown me to find my fullness in Him.

In closing today, my challenge to you is this: are you living your life rooted in Christ? Are you allowing Christ to search your heart and your mind giving Him full permission to transform and change you to align you to His purpose for your life?

If you were to write your eulogy today, as if your life were to end today – how would you want to have others remember you? What words would you want God to speak over your life?

If you have not crafted your life purpose statement with Christ anchored on the throne, what would your purpose statement say?

In the next 7 days, I challenge you to be "strengthened in your faith, to overflow with thankfulness, to be rooted in Christ, built up by His Word." I challenge you to craft your life's purpose or your eulogy. Then share it with at least one other person asking them to hold you accountable to live out that purpose with intentionality starting today. God's promise when we do so is that we will be encouraged in heart and united in love having the full riches of complete understanding – IN CHRIST, THROUGH CHRIST AND FOR CHRIST.

Let us pray.