



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Colossians 2:1-5

Read Colossians 2:1-5 (and pray)

1. You may have heard of the Screwtape letters by C.S. Lewis. It's a fictional book of letters between two demons. One is a more senior demon, trying to teach a junior demon how to derail a person from coming to Christ, and from persevering in Christ. ***If you wanted to discourage, divide and derail Christians from trusting in Jesus, what lies would you tell them?***
2. Look at v. 1-2. ***What is Paul's struggle? How does telling us about it encourage us, knit us together in love and reassure us?***
3. In Christ are "hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." ***How does knowing this...***
 - a) ***Shape the way we think about Christ?***
 - b) ***Shape the way we think about other worldviews?***
4. Look at v.4. The danger facing the Colossians is "being deluded with plausible arguments." ***The key to good lying (which I hope you won't use) is to make your lie sound true...***
 - a) ***What were the "plausible arguments" threatening the Colossians? Why were they so attractive? (Hint 2:8, 2:16-23)***
 - b) ***What "plausible arguments" do we face today? Why are they attractive?***
5. Read v. 5. Paul started by rejoicing in his sufferings (1:24), now he rejoices because he expects the Colossians to stand fast (2:5). ***What is "good order" and "firm faith in Christ"? How can we help each other to resist plausible arguments and look to Christ for what we need?***
6. Paul deeply cared for other Christians even though he never met them (2:1) and wasn't with them (2:5). Too often it's 'out of sight, out of mind' in our concern for others. ***How can your growth group better love and support other Christians that you don't know or see often? (e.g. the persecuted church, missionaries, other growth groups or other churches)***

Leaders Notes

1. There are all sorts of things that can cause problems and discouragement for the church. It's good to think about these things so we can prepare ourselves. A good demon would whisper lies about Paul's imprisonment, "how can the Gospel be glorious when its servants are so shameful?" They would want the Christians keeping their eyes off the hope they have and on the suffering they are facing. They also would promote false worldviews ("plausible arguments") to make Christianity seem pathetic in comparison. Today for us it could be the worldviews of materialism (this life is all there is), atheism (there is no God), hedonism (do whatever feels good) or post-modernism (all truth is relative).
2. Paul's struggle is to prayerfully preach the Gospel in the face of great hostility and persecution. But Paul doesn't tell us his struggle so that we will empathise or to set an example. He wants us to see that everything is going according to plan. The Gospel pattern is suffering now and glory later. If we get this we will be encouraged, loving and confident.
3. Christ is God. Therefore he is eternal. We can never exhaust the depths of Jesus Christ. There is always more to learn from him and about him. Also we have everything we need in Jesus Christ. We don't need to look somewhere or someone else for wisdom or truth. If we all share this view, the encouragement, unity and confidence of verse 2 spring to life. There are no special Christians with an inside track on everyone else.

Seeing Christ clearly helps us to see other worldviews for what they are. They are empty and deceptive (2:8). This doesn't mean we shouldn't understand them. Quite the opposite if we are to defend ourselves against them we need to understand them. But we can be confident that this world's wisdom has massive flaws, which stand out when contrasted with Christ.

4. People were trying to add things to Christ. They were saying Christ was not enough, and you needed things on top of Christ (religious rituals – 2:17, mystical religious experiences - 2:18, and religious rules - 2:21). If you add to Jesus, you take Jesus away. They look impressive because these self-made rules are strict or these experiences are amazing. They are attractive because they give you something out of the ordinary and something to boast in.

Some of these worldviews are above in the answers to Q1. These are easier to resist when they are out and out worldly. The hidden danger is when these worldviews get baptised in Christian language and thinking. Suddenly they become more attractive to us. E.g. Many churches emphasize what Jesus does for you now and never talk about life after death. This is materialistic thinking. Can you think of other views that have crept into our thinking or the wider church?

5. These two terms are military terms. Paul is expecting the Colossians to hold their ranks and stand firm together as soldiers would. The ways we encourage each other are only limited by our creativity. Your group could text each other Bible verses about Christ. You can make resisting the wisdom of this world a regular prayer point. You could all agree to read a book together e.g. D.A. Carson, *the Intolerance of Tolerance* or Brian Rosners *Beyond Greed*.
6. Pray for and write to our missionaries. Get prayer points from Open Doors or Barnabas Fund. Get excited, encouraged and rejoice when we see other ministries or groups going well.