

98-11-20a Colossians

Let's begin our fellowship in God's Word this evening with a word. Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your Word together. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us.

We pray that beyond understanding and gaining perception into these things, that we will move into the realm of wisdom and see their application and the effect that the power of your Word and the power of your Spirit can have in the everyday thoughts and activities in which we engage. We pray that in everything our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be glorified as we worship together this evening. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. We resume our study tonight in Colossians chapter 2. We have done a very extensive study of chapter 1. We have anticipated chapter 1, studied it in great detail. We have reviewed it.

So that's the last you'll hear about chapter 1 for the next 5 or 10 minutes. Chapter 2, Paul, and of course the original letter didn't have chapters and verses. So to try to say, well, here's the way that chapter 2 is tied to chapter that we just mentioned, is really sort of a false connection to make because it was all one letter without any interruptions before.

But Paul's thought is moving forward here. And he says, I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. Now this is important.

And the reason it's important is because we have to figure out which sense of sum bibadzo is being used in this passage. You may recall last week when we looked at verse 2, Paul states the purpose. He says, the reason I have this great agony, agonizamai is the verb from which this comes, this great conflict that Paul has for all of these that have not seen him in the flesh.

He says, I have this mighty struggle going on, this great conflict for you all, for those in Laodicea and for all these people that have not seen my face in the flesh. These people are scattered around, aren't they? People in Colossae may not know the people in Laodicea. All these other people that haven't seen Paul's face in the flesh, they're not all in one group.

And this is important because in verse 2 when he says, he states the purpose of this conflict. What is his goal? What is he wrestling against the principalities and powers to accomplish? That their hearts may be encouraged being, and in the New King James it says, knit together in love. The verb translated here, knit together, is sumbibazo.

S-U-M-B-I-B-A-D-Z-O. Of course DZ is one letter in Greek, but don't let that slow you down. Sumbibazo.

Sumbibazo, as I mentioned last week, has two different senses and they're related, just like some of our words that you can have a word that's spelled the same but has a different meaning. You

can see that back in the past where the meaning branched out. Well, *sumbibazo* can mean and often does mean knit together.

But it also means, generally, to be instructed or to instruct. In fact, the best definition for this sense of the word is to authoritatively guide. And the reason I'm emphasizing that is that's the sense that the word has here.

This word occurs 10 or 12 times in the Septuagint, which is the Greek Old Testament. Remember how long ago, ancient days, Abraham all the way down through King David and into the prophets, they spoke Hebrew. And then they went into captivity, went on to speak in Aramaic, down to Alexander the Great, 300 B.C. and so forth.

You have the great conquests and Greek becomes the common language of the Greek Empire and later the Roman Empire. Everybody speaks Greek. The Jews, they may speak some Aramaic but they also speak Greek.

Paul writes his letters in Greek. People get to where they don't really know Hebrew very well. They pick up the Hebrew or actually they don't pick one up.

There's not that many copies. But they hear the priest. If he's reading in the original Hebrew, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to them.

It'd be like people today have a hard time with the King James. What does it mean to have a froward heart? And if you say, well, a man will cleave unto his wife, well, we think cleave means to chop something apart. The words have changed and so forth.

So in a couple hundred years before Christ, they translated the Hebrew scriptures into Greek because everybody spoke Greek. And that translation is called the Septuagint, the LXX, which is a couple of different ways of referring to the number 70. Mythologically speaking, there were 70 translators who worked for 70 weeks or some such thing.

But that's its name, the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, this word, *sumbibazo*, always means to authoritatively guide. For example, Isaiah chapter 40, which Paul quotes in the New Testament, who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has become his counselor to instruct him? This idea of instructing is *sumbibazo*.

When you translate, this is Isaiah 40 and verse 14. With whom did he take counsel and who instructed him and taught him in the path of justice? This is talking about God. Did anybody have to teach God what he knows? Who taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding? Obviously, there's nothing here in the use of *sumbibazo* that you could remotely construe to have God's heart knit together, right? *Sumbibazo* here means who was the authoritative guide for God telling him how to create the universe and do all of his mighty wonders? Well, this is the use of the word every time you find it in the Septuagint.

Paul, of course, is deeply schooled in both the Hebrew and the Greek versions of the Old Testament, and this influences his use of the word in his letters. The reason this is important in Colossians chapter 2, verse 2, is not to say that we shouldn't be united in love. There are plenty of other passages that talk about one Lord, one faith, one baptism, the fellowship of believers, we should walk in love, speak the truth in love, and so forth.

Wonderful concept, but that's not what's being taught here in Colossians 2, 2. When Paul says, the reason I have this great conflict for all these people that haven't seen my face in the flesh is so that their hearts may be encouraged, being authoritatively instructed in love, not knit together. And if you think about it, it doesn't make any sense. All these scattered people that haven't seen his face in the flesh, his struggle is that all of these scattered people have their hearts knit together.

They don't even know each other. That sense of the word doesn't fly, but nearly all of your English translations pick that sense of the word, which is legitimate in some contexts, but not here. Paul's subject here is not the unity of believers in love, not in this section of the letter.

What has he been talking about? He has been talking about verse 28, teaching every man in all wisdom to present every man perfect, every man complete in Christ Jesus. He's talking about the preparation of the heart, the instructing of the heart in how to walk before God. His goal, his great struggle is to get the word out.

He can't sit in the prison cell and unite everybody's hearts in love. He can't light a campfire and sing kumbaya and have all the believers come around in the rosy glow and get all of their tensions resolved and have them all knit together in love. What he can do is teach pastors.

He can teach those who come to visit him. He can teach believers who hear the sound of his voice. He can write these letters under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit and send them, and he does so.

There's probably a lot of these letters that did not make it into the inspired canon of scripture, but Paul is constantly corresponding and talking to messengers and saying, take these words back to the church and tell them not to lose heart, not to lose their confidence. Stick with the things you've heard from the first. The faith in Jesus Christ is real.

It's life. It's what they've got to cling to in the face of oppression and in the face of discouragement, in the face of being scattered and so forth. So this is his purpose, that their hearts may be encouraged.

Now, the other interesting thing here about Psum de Bazo is this is an aorist passive participle. One of the first things a student of Greek learns when he starts getting around to participles, and you've got present participles, aorist participles, and so forth. There's a little thing you just memorize so that you know it.

The action, well, actually they don't. It's an amazing thing. I learned this listening to a good teaching pastor.

I never learned this in my Greek classes and seminary, but it's a wonderful rule. The action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. You can go to Mark, where Jesus goes across the lake, and it says, and there's a little description of action there.

It talks about Jesus getting out of the boat. If you read it in a lot of English translations, it says, and as Jesus was getting out of the boat, the deranged man came running down and fell at his feet. If you look at it in Greek, it's an aorist participle.

Jesus, having gotten out of the boat, it's not like he's got one foot in the boat and one foot out, and here comes the guy falling at his feet. It's an aorist participle. Jesus, having gotten out of the boat, saw this man, or whatever, I forget what the main verb is there, but the action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb.

What's the main verb here? The main verb is their hearts may be encouraged, that their hearts may be encouraged. What is it that's going to provide the environment for this encouragement? It's the action that has already taken place. Their hearts, having been knit together, is what you see in your English, but what Paul is saying in Summa Basa here is their hearts having been authoritatively instructed.

Our encouragement, now, it's great. We get encouragement from fellowship, but that's not the type of encouragement that Paul is talking about here. That's not the type of encouragement that he wrestles and struggles in chains to push out through his apostolic ministry to the church.

It is authoritative instruction. It's authoritative guidance. Who has known the mind of the Lord to give him authoritative guidance? But we have the mind of Christ.

Paul quotes that verse in the New Testament in Corinthians. He says, who is it that can give God authoritative instruction? Well, we certainly can't, but we have the mind of Christ, and with the mind of Christ, Paul implies, as an apostle, he can authoritatively instruct us. You can't instruct God, but you can certainly take the mind of Christ and instruct the church, and that's what he's doing.

So this is really important in understanding verse 2 because a lot of people will come to this verse and we are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord. Now, there is a place and there's a very important ministry that believers provide to one another in encouragement and in genuine love, speaking the truth to one another in love, being there and doing the things that love shows us need to be done for one another. But you come to the place of knowing how to do that by coming under authoritative instruction.

And part of the problem with the quote-unquote love in the church today is it is not functioning

under the authoritative guidance of Scripture, it is humanly guided. People have a genuine desire for ministry, they have a genuine desire to see the lost get saved, they have a genuine desire to be of benefit and be a blessing to other people. That desire is just as sincere and legitimate as it can be.

But if you are not functioning under the authoritative guidance to assume the bodzo of the Scriptures, to assume the bodzo of the Word of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit, your love is going to be misdirected, it's going to be misguided, it's going to step in at the wrong point, it is going to distract instead of encourage, it is going to operate in the human realm with human viewpoint and human sphere for human glory rather than furthering the objectives of God. It's very important to understand this. And Paul is going to emphasize this in another very unique way in verse 2. What does our passage say? I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and for those in Laodicea and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh that their hearts may be encouraged.

This is parakaleo, the same word that becomes the title of the Holy Spirit. Their hearts may be encouraged, their hearts having been authoritatively guided, authoritatively instructed in love. It's encouraging when you not only have the desire to love but you know the proper way to express it.

You know what's appropriate and what's not. Inappropriate love, there's been very sincere well-meaning counseling from a pastor to a woman in distress that has turned into misconduct, violation of marriage vows and so forth. Inappropriate mental and or physical relationship between people who meant well, whose heart went out in pity and sorrow for someone who was really having problems but their love was not authoritatively guided and it crossed a line and it violated love that was due to God and to others to whom vows and commitments had been made.

And every time you find a pastor or a counselor or someone else who gets in trouble in this way, they didn't start out a lot of times. They didn't start out looking for love in all the wrong places. They didn't start out, how can I have an illicit affair? They started out with the best intentions in the world and they wound up singing with Debbie Boone.

It can't be wrong if it feels so right. And in the heat of the moment and with their empathy and compassion and so forth, they just say, you know, the best thing to do right here is just put my arm around this person and just cry with them. And they start out putting their arm around crying and they wind up going into other areas and it was well-meaning but their love was not authoritatively guided.

We have a brain that directs and controls and enjoys our emotions but we don't function on the, we don't let our emotions tell our brain what to do. If we do, our life is a mess and we're inconsistent because emotions are, have no ability to think. There's no, I mean by definition, your

emotions are feelings.

They're not logical deductions. And sometimes you have a feeling that's just wrong. Dan sees this every day.

People come in, sit down in his chair, they have all kinds of feelings of fear and foreboding that they, and their mind has to control this. If you just listen to your feelings, why? You just pop right back up out of the chair and be out the door and say, you know, let's just try this another day. All your instincts, when you hear the sound of that handpiece turning on, see I know what it is now, it's a handpiece.

When you hear the sound of that thing turn on, your feelings say, fight or flight. Well, your brain says, this is a good thing. This, you know, at the end of this process comes relief, comes restoration, comes the ability to enjoy chewing again and so forth.

And the brain wins out. The brain was right. You wind up having a happy mouth when everything is done.

But it's an illustration that goes into many areas of life. We have thinking that governs emotion. We have thinking that governs feelings.

Love, you can't separate emotion from love. People have tried, even in Christianity and in Christian teaching, to sort of use a cream separator and take all of the emotion out of love. And you can get into definitions that are perfectly accurate.

Love is based on the character of the subject and not the character of the object. And love is the absence of mental attitudes, sins, and one thing and another. Well, I'm sorry, love has an emotional component.

It has a passion component. That's why it's called love. That's why it's one of the hardest words in the world to define.

But divine love is guided by principle. It's guided by thought. It's guided under the authority of God.

God's own love. God loved the world. But God didn't cross the line of his own character.

God didn't throw out justice. He didn't throw out righteousness. He didn't throw out what's meaningful and what's right in his own character and in his own plan because of his love.

God's love is under the authoritative guidance of God's character, his righteousness, his justice, his sovereignty, his immutability, the perfection of his nature and the perfection of his understanding and his view of the universe. Our love has to be the same way. And we don't want to go glossing by and miss just because there's been an unfortunate translation here.

There's a lot we can say and there's a lot we can see in the scriptures about our hearts bonding in the unity of the faith and the peace that God provides and the wonderful fellowship that we enjoy and the mutual upbuilding that occurs through the function of spiritual gifts. This passage is not one of those passages. This passage says, here's the apostle Paul struggling in chains, in prison.

All the circumstances are against him. I think there's probably demonic pressure and satanic attack because, figure it out, Paul is the pivotal guy on the planet in his generation. Who is going to have a greater impact in his generation and every subsequent generation of Christians than Paul? There is satanic opposition.

That's why Paul sends out the message. He says, pray for us that a door of opportunity will be open because there are people trying to slam those doors. We're wrestling against principalities and powers and rulers, unseen forces of darkness.

Wouldn't it be great if they could have snuffed out Paul, in their view, before he wrote these wonderful inspired books? He is engaged in a conflict and a great struggle. What is it he's trying to get out? He wants to get out the authoritative guidance that will encourage us by instructing us in love. This is the way love works.

This is what love can do and this is what love can't do. Driving down the road here, you get over there where Garland Road hits Gaston and you find these one-legged guys out there with a cardboard sign, why lie, I need a beer. That's the last one I saw.

They're asking for handouts and people stop at that light and you'll see a hand fly out and hand the guy a five or hand the guy a ten or whatever. Well, is this a part of Christian charity? Should we see these poor unfortunate people? I mean, it's an awful thing to lose a leg. It's an awful thing to be down and out and so forth.

These people ask for your sympathy and ask for your financial support by whatever means, either humor or, you know, they know that there's a certain percentage of people that will say, well, you know, at least he's honest and out comes money. And we pass unfortunate people with their hand out. And is it a part, is it brutally unchristian to not give to someone who comes up and asks? Well, we need authoritative guidance and love.

That's what Paul is seeking to give us here. So this is going to be, this is an important letter that the foundation that we've laid in the time that we spent in chapter one is going to help us make sense out of this. Because we're going to be focused on the Lord Jesus Christ, just as he was focused.

If you stop and look at his example, when he walks into the pool at Bethesda, does he heal every single person? Does he heal every single person every single time he sees them? He doesn't. Sometimes he does. Sometimes he doesn't.

It's guided. It's authoritatively guided by the word of God, by the plan of God for his earthly life. So Paul's struggle for us, because he hasn't seen our faces in the flesh, has he? And we haven't seen his.

But his struggle is on our behalf that we know how love works. Why is that important? Because as we saw in the first chapter, the Christian life can be defined by those three great Christian virtues, faith, hope, and love. Faith is the means.

Hope is the motivation. Love is the result. It's the fruit.

It's the outworking. Love isn't going to function if you don't have faith and if you don't have hope. Faith and hope are built on the truth of the word of God.

We have to have faith in something. Faith isn't just an attitude of hopeful expectation. Faith looks at a declarative proposition of truth.

There is a statement made. God makes the statement. He says, this is reality.

I will never leave you nor forsake you. I will never suffer the righteous to be moved. The seed of the righteous will not go begging bread.

I have not forgotten your work of faith and your labor of love. I have not departed from you. I have not left you or forsaken you.

If you wait on me, God says, you will mount up with wings as eagles. You will run and not be weary. You will walk and not faint.

These are declarative propositions. They're statements of truth, statements of fact that God makes. Faith is looking at that and saying, that is reality.

I believe that and I am going to function on that basis. Faith is a real process in the mind. It's not just sort of a nebulous clinging to some vague hope that things will be better by and by.

Any unbeliever could do that. Unbelievers cannot understand or claim propositional truth from the Word of God. We can.

And that's the means of living our life. The challenge is to relate those truths to our daily existence because we get distracted. We forget that there are any truths out there.

Our truth is what we see. Our truth is what we hear. That's what Paul is now going to address himself to in Colossians chapter 2. When we move on forward, he says, I want their hearts to be encouraged, having been.

Eris participle. The action of the eris participle precedes the action of the main verb. What precedes this encouragement of the heart? Authoritative instruction of the heart.

Authoritative guidance of the heart. You're going to be encouraged. You're going to have confidence.

You're going to feel better. You're going to function better. You're going to realize and have the sense that you've got momentum and acceleration in your spiritual life and your spiritual growth because you know how love works.

You know when and where to exercise that love and what its limits are. Parents love their children literally to death. They love them so much that they can't bring themselves to train them properly.

They can't bring themselves to discipline when discipline isn't necessary. They can't provide structure when the child's soul is crying out for structure. Because it doesn't seem compatible with the feeling of the moment.

We're having such a good time. This isn't the time to make a point about this disobedience that just took place. This isn't the time to spoil the mood or spoil the moment.

My cousin was one of the first in my generation of our family to have children. And I remember after his first couple had come along, I didn't have any yet. And he was saying, you know, we were talking about one of his kids had just malfunctioned a little bit there.

You know, it was a visit and everybody was seeing everybody. And he said, you know, the hardest thing about child training is just being consistent. Being consistent no matter what's going on.

To always hold them to the same standard. To always, so that their structure and they know exactly where the lines and the borders are. It's so hard to be consistent.

Well, that's authoritatively guided love. Is that it always functions in that mold and in the pattern of divine love. It's always guided by principle.

Even when love expresses itself in discipline, the issue is always made that here is the standard and here is where you have transgressed. It is not the parent's anger that is the issue. It isn't my exasperation and my impatience and my fed upness with what has just happened.

Anytime parents make that issue or anybody else, teachers and so forth in school, when they make an issue out of their running out of patience, their exasperation, their disappointment, it messes up the whole process. Because training children, especially for self-control, makes an issue of here is the standard. Here is your responsibility to meet that standard.

And if you fail, this consequence is not stemming from anger or impatience or something in the person dispensing the discipline. It is a law of the universe that when there is a rule and you cross it, here is the penalty. And you avoid any of these other things coming in and making a

distraction.

Because as soon as you start making an issue out of attitude of the dispenser of justice, whether it is the parent or the teacher or whoever, now you have ingrained in the child, I have got to make this person happy. I have got to find ways to shine this person up, rather than I have to be a person of character who knows the rules, who knows the standards and who holds, I hold myself to those come what may. It doesn't matter what people think.

Sometimes people may be pleased when I do the wrong thing. There are parents who point out how cute their kids are when they pull all your laundry out of the hamper or whatever. They come in and, oh, he is so precocious and he is just such a mess.

He just reminds me of Dennis the Menace. And people just kind of laugh these things off. And the child gets the idea, hey, I am kind of cute, disobeying and flaunting my independence and so forth.

You clear away the issue of attitude and you make an issue out of self-control in the face of an absolute standard. So that is authoritative guidance of love. Parents need it.

Anyone who exercises any authority over anybody needs to temper their authority with love. But they also have to express their love within the guidelines of principle. And so that is what Paul is talking about.

Your heart is being authoritatively guided in love. And then in the New King James it says, and attaining to all riches. Well, it is much more direct than that in the Greek.

You can cross out the word attaining. The word and is somewhat doubtful. Some manuscripts have it and some don't.

What is there is the word to. And it is the Greek preposition eis, e-i-s. And it means unto, with a view toward.

There is a progress of thought here. Paul says the goal here is that their hearts may be encouraged. Having been instructed, having been authoritatively guided in love with a view toward the riches of full understanding.

What we are shooting for in this process is the riches of the full assurance of understanding. And here is the great thing. We can talk about the riches of full assurance here.

The great word here is understanding. Because it is our old friend from chapter one, sunesis. Do you remember back in chapter one? I told you I would only give you a little bit of a rest, but then we would be back.

But do you remember verse nine of chapter one? Ever since the day we heard of it we do not

cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Remember we looked at those two concepts. The wisdom idea there, that is the facts.

This is the knowledge, the doctrines, principles, promises and so forth. The understanding, that is the word sunesis. And that is the, you not only know these things and have a perception and comprehension, understanding of them, but here now you can put them into practice.

It is the difference between having the facts and then developing a strategy based on those facts. You have this knowledge, now you are going to implement it. I got out this book, I did not bring it.

I have got a book at home that is called How to Do Just About Anything. It is one of those Reader's Digest books. And you cannot believe the stuff that is in there.

Just how to, I saw an article in there tonight when I was browsing through it, how to deal with a severed digit. If someone gets their finger cut off, here is what to do. Everything is in this book.

How to do just about anything. How to saw a miter joint. Of course if you had ever seen me try to saw a miter joint then you would be flipping over to how to, what to do about a severed digit.

Because trying to cut a 45 degree angle and get it to fit together. But the thing about this book is, it is a book. And it has the steps.

When you have this take place, your washing machine is leaking or you have fungus growing in your garden. You cannot believe the stuff that is in this book. It is really kind of, the problem is you do not know that all that stuff is in there.

So when you have this problem you do not think, oh that is probably in the How to Do Almost Anything book. But it has, and it is a very well written book. All of you I am sure have gotten an appliance or gotten a digital wrist watch or a VCR or something.

You open up the instructions and you have to flip around because it is in German and French and Spanish. And here is the English part and out of this big thick instruction book that you think is going to help you so much, there is only a page and a half in English. And you get in there and it is virtually incomprehensible.

This book, How to Do Just About Anything, is really well written. If you find a topic in there that applies, I mean it is great. It gives you good step-by-step instructions.

But if you think about it, let us say you read this article. I really like the severed finger section so we will use that. You read this and it says do not panic.

Find the thing that got cut off there and pack it in ice. Do some pressure point and bandaging and get the person and medical people as soon as you can. Okay.

In fact, I read that article twice. I found it very entertaining. What is the likelihood that you are going to read this and have it handy? But you have these facts.

Well, nobody here would say, well, I am totally prepared the next time somebody cuts their finger off because hey, I read the book, How to Do Just About Everything and I read the section on cut off fingers. But having that knowledge is no substitute for having a doctor who has sewed these things back on, who has restored and gotten somebody completely through this process. The knowledge is one thing and it is good.

It is better than no knowledge. It is better than somebody saying, well, hey, you cut the thing off, just get used to it. I had a teacher in high school that jumped off a hay truck with a ring on and when he got to the ground, he only had nine fingers instead of ten.

He did not really even realize it. You know, he said, well, now you can find those things, pack them in ice and they can generally put them back on. But the knowledge is not a substitute for the ability to implement that knowledge in a practical way, having experience, having the ability to put it into practice.

And of course, the knowledge that gets put into practice is the knowledge that you use on a regular basis. Some of us studied a foreign language in high school, but if you never went and spoke that language, I had five years of Spanish. I had two years of Spanish in high school.

I had three solid years of Spanish at the Naval Academy. And I promise you, if I went down to Ecuador, I could not ask a guy, where is the bathroom? I mean, I do not remember because I have never used it. I have never been down in the valley of Texas.

I have never been any place where I needed. In the grand total of my experience, I needed my Spanish one time. We flew into Torajón, Spain to get on a bus and go to the coast and get on a ship and come back as midshipmen.

And so in Torajón, whoever was leading us said, we have got to find a phone and let them know we arrived. They said, where is the phone? Well, nobody knew where the phone was. And so I walked up to a Spanish-looking individual and I said something like, dónde está el teléfono? And he pointed and we went and found the phone.

Well, I have used it a grand total of once. So my Spanish is useless to me because it was great knowledge at the time, but it has not become practical. Sunesis says, not only do you have the knowledge, but you have the ability and you have worked through experience and you have come to be able to apply it.

It is meaningful to you. All of us have skills that we use every day, whether they are professional skills or just coping skills of life and so forth. But the reason you know how to do those things is it has moved over into the realm of sunesis.

So what is Paul saying in Colossians 2.2? What is the purpose of his great struggle? That their hearts be encouraged and that their hearts be authoritatively instructed in love. What is the goal? Unto, ace, with a view toward sunesis, being able to put it into practice. We can sit here and talk about love and look at verses all day, but if it does not make a difference in the way you live and the way I live on a daily basis, it is just knowledge.

It is the puffing up knowledge. It is not the building up knowledge. It never gets into the realm of sunesis.

Paul says, I am not just writing these letters to make a name for myself after I am gone. My goal is that these people who have never seen my face can still know what love is and exercise it. Get into the practice of it.

Make it count in their daily life. Have it become sunesis. And it is going to give them assurance.

They are going to have encouragement. They are going to have that paraklesis that we saw at the beginning of the verse. And they are also going to have the riches.

It is such a wonderful thing to be fully assured that you are doing the right thing. You do not wrestle with guilt. You do not lay awake at night saying, did I do too little? Did I offend? Should I have done more? Should I have done less? What was the right thing to do? Here that person came up with their hat in their hand and they looked so pitiful.

And I walked on by. I did not give them a dollar. The guy could not buy his little can of beer.

One leg. I just drove on by. Am I just a callous individual? Is my faith? You can torture yourself.

Did I do the wrong thing? Did I step in? Did I get in somebody else's way? Maybe it was not my place to bring this meal. It seemed kind of awkward. You can torture yourself.

Well, you can also have full assurance. You can know that you did exactly the right thing no matter how the person responded. Maybe the person blew up in your face when you came over and expressed love.

Maybe you spoke the truth in love and they did not take it well. Maybe people were just appreciating you all over the place and you did not really in your heart do the right thing. You are not trying to measure yourself by reactions.

You are not trying to measure yourself by results. You have full assurance because you have been authoritatively instructed in love and you have the riches of full assurance that you have practical knowledge of how love works. It does not matter if people appreciate you or not.

Sometimes you get appreciated and you do not deserve it. Other times you richly deserve appreciation and it does not come. You cannot live your life gauging the strength and the validity

and the worth of your love by these reactions because generally speaking all of us fail to react appropriately.

I have had wonderful forbearance and long suffering and great expressions of love pointed toward me and it did not dawn on me until too late and my initial reaction was inadequate. It was awful that I did not let that person know what a great thing they had done at the time that they did it. But we are all that way.

We are fallible and I hope that the people that have genuinely borne the fruit of the Spirit and have directed love toward me are basing their confidence and their peace and their full rich assurance that they have borne the fruit of the Spirit on what God says and not on my pitiful reaction. Because I am just not, I do not react right. I do not appreciate.

Sometimes I may not have the capacity to appreciate and that is just the way life is. So Paul's goal is that we learn to express love intelligently, accurately, divine love that is powered by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God and that we have the full rich assurance that we did it right. This is wonderfully comforting because we know that God the Holy Spirit is active in our souls.

We know that the truth that we have been learning and spending time studying is making a difference, that we are being transformed by the renewing of our minds. That counts for a lot and the riches of full assurance, that is a gift from God. It is a gracious blessing from God to have in our soul and Paul does not want us to miss it.

So he is going to, in the course of this letter, give us that truth. He can do it from his prison cell. He can do it from a distance of 1,900 years here for us who have not seen his face.

We are going to pause now and take our break. When we come back, we are going to move forward in Chapter 2 and tackle some of the truth that Paul is putting before us here that is going to give us that assurance. So let's pause here and take a break.