

Prayer List

Judy
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

What book mentions the custom of giving a person one's shoe as a sign of transferring property?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Ahasuerus's - Esther 4:3

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Paul's Urgent Concern for Colossae; Three Specific Defenses

"For 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, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words." (Col. 2:1-4)

Paul wanted God's people in Colossae and Laodicea to know of his urgent concern for them. Why? What was up? As you read further into the chapter you discover the specific threats to their faith that provoked the apostle's sense of urgency.

He knew there were deceivers in their area using persuasive words to dissuade people away from their faith in the deity and sufficiency of Christ. He was well aware of the aggressive campaigners of a false religious system, who would "cheat" Christians "through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the

world, and not according to Christ," (v.8). The apostle had in mind the threat from religious defrauders (v.18) who would make their appeals through "an appearance of wisdom and self-imposed religion," yet would enforce a "neglect of the body," (v.23). These were the specific threats Paul was concerned about, for those in the Lycos River Valley. The same kind of dangers abounds in our time.

How do you strengthen Christians against threats to their faith? You use teaching to get courage into their hearts, unity into their relationships and lead them on toward a fuller assurance of understanding. This is what every Christian needs today, as urgently as then.

ENCOURAGED HEARTS

"...that their hearts may be encouraged..." The Word of God received in good and honest hearts will result in moral courage. Paul knew this is what they would need, so he was anxious to teach them carefully to build them up in internal courage. "These brethren needed to be strengthened or fortified inwardly to the end that they might both advance in the faith and be equipped successfully face the threat of false teaching," (Walton Weaver, Truth Commentaries, p. 404).

UNITY

"...knit together in love..." This is not coerced unity (like a prison chain-gang). This describes people who love each other, and want to be together and work together in what is right. When a crisis comes against a group, they generally either fall apart or they pull together. Paul, anticipating an intensive threat and temptation mounted by this false religion, wanted the Christians to pull together in unity. The approach of error should be answered by a united front. There is strength in unity. Albert Barnes has observed: "It means

properly to make to come together, and hence refers to a firm union, as where the hearts of Christians are one. Here it means that the way of comforting each other was by solid Christian friendship, and that the means of cementing that was love. It was not by a mere outward profession, or by mere speculative faith; it was by a union of affection."

MATURITY IN UNDERSTANDING

"...the full assurance of understanding..." Christians who are knowledgeable in the Word can be "quicker on the draw" when approached by false teachers and defrauders. In view of the danger in the area of Colossae and the seductions they would have to answer, Paul wanted them to have a rich and deep understanding; to have the capacity to properly and quickly distinguish between truth and error.

These are three defenses every Christian should seek: encouraged hearts, unity in love, and maturity in understanding. Preachers, teachers and elders need to present the Word of God in such a manner, these defenses are promoted. Every Christian should study and apply the Word of God with steadfastness, so that the enemy simply cannot find his entrance.

Warren E Berkley