

OCTOBER 19, 2020

The Key to Spiritual Growth

Colossians 2:2-15

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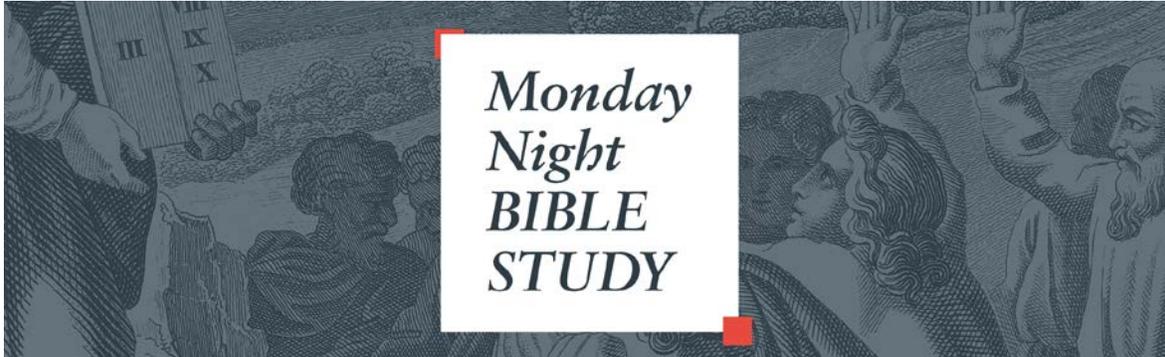
In order to understand Colossians Chapter 2:2-15 better, we must answer two questions: (1) According to the apostle Paul, what is one of the key things we need to do to grow spiritually and live an abundant life? (2) And with that, what does Paul mean when he talks about the “mystery of Christ” and having “wisdom” and “knowledge”?

Paul states in chapter 2 that he’s praying earnestly for the church. What was Paul praying for? What did he want God to do for this church?

- He wants them to be rooted in Jesus in such a way that they experience great encouragement. No matter what they’re going through, no matter what happens, God is with them and that they will be victorious.
- He wants them to be confident in God. He doesn’t want them to see themselves as weak, helpless victims in this world. Rather, he wants them to have an attitude that they can face any giant and overcome any adversity.
- He also wants them to be strong in the understanding of Who Jesus is so that they are not led astray by false teachings.
- And he wants them to continue walking in the truth of Jesus without being tricked by the enemy’s subtle lies.

Verse 2 - “Mystery” means that through Jesus’s death and resurrection God has won the victory over the evil forces that corrupt humanity and separate them from God. The gospel, the good news, announces God’s saving plan that in Jesus God defeated the forces of evil that blind and control humanity and it brought forgiveness of our sins. This hidden plan, now revealed, is what Paul calls the mystery.

Paul believes that this victory of God through Jesus is so large, so all encompassing, that it must be searched out and explored for the rest of your life. The cross, God’s victory over evil, isn’t something you simply acknowledge when you first become a Christian. Rather, the victory of the cross is something you continue to seek out and explore. To understand all the cross accomplished is to know Who Jesus is.



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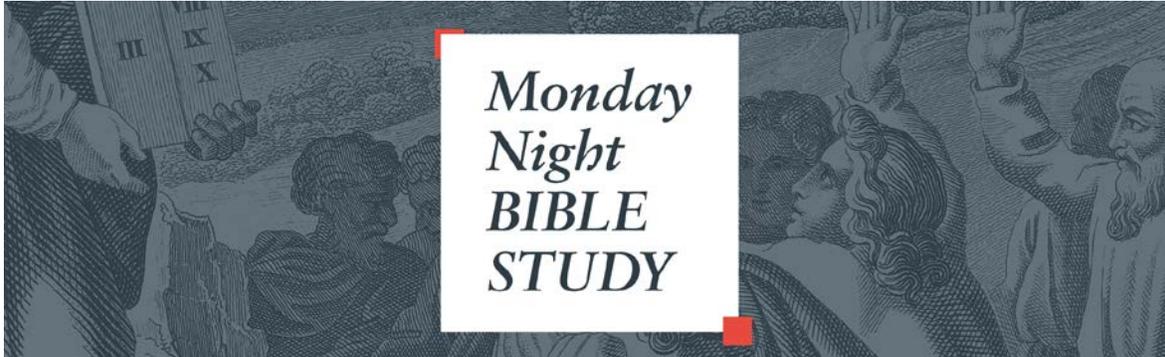
Paul encourages us to search out the meaning of the cross like a treasure hunter searches for precious gold and diamonds. He calls it the full riches of understanding Jesus and the treasures hidden in Him. Having a greater understanding of Jesus and the cross is the greatest treasure of all. The Christian life is about finding out how the cross changed everything. It's about discovering how the victory of the cross effects everything you could ever face. There is nothing outside its reach.

For Paul, here in Colossians and elsewhere, being able to apply the cross to how you see your problems is a large part of Christian growth. When you see your situation through the lens of God's victory in the cross, you'll know beyond any doubt that God has good for you, not evil. The will of God is seen and known in what the cross accomplished. In other words, look at what the cross did, and you'll see what God's will is for you. If Jesus died under the weight of sin and death and every evil force, then that should tell us He wants us to live free from all those things.

Verse 3 - "In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge". When Paul says knowledge, he is speaking specifically about knowledge of Jesus and all the cross accomplished. Wisdom, for Paul here, or in all of his letters, is the ability to apply your knowledge of the cross to your personal daily life. Someone who is demonstrating wisdom is one who not only knows what the cross accomplished, but is also able to see their whole life, everything they face, through the lens of that victory. It's about always considering, first and foremost, "What does the cross have to say about this?" "Did Jesus win the victory over what I'm facing?" If He's Lord over all, then what I'm facing is no match for Him.

How great and valuable would it be for you to have peace in the midst of any storm because you know the cross already took care of it? It would be very valuable. It is so valuable that Paul calls wisdom and knowledge "treasures". Knowing Jesus in the cross and applying it to your negative situation that causes you to have peace instead of fear is a "treasure" beyond anything. But like any treasure, it must be explored, it must be sought out. In other words, you have to seek out the meaning of the cross. Knowing Jesus in greater ways is real treasure because it changes the way you think and feel. It has the power to change the circumstances you are facing. To see things accurately, according not to what the world says, but according to what the cross accomplished prevents us from being deceived – from being tricked into thinking things that aren't true.

Verses 4-5 - This church needed to be grounded because, like us, they face the usual difficulties and setbacks of life. They needed a clear understanding of what the cross accomplished, so they are not deceived, not tricked, by what Paul calls "fine-sounding arguments". These are things that



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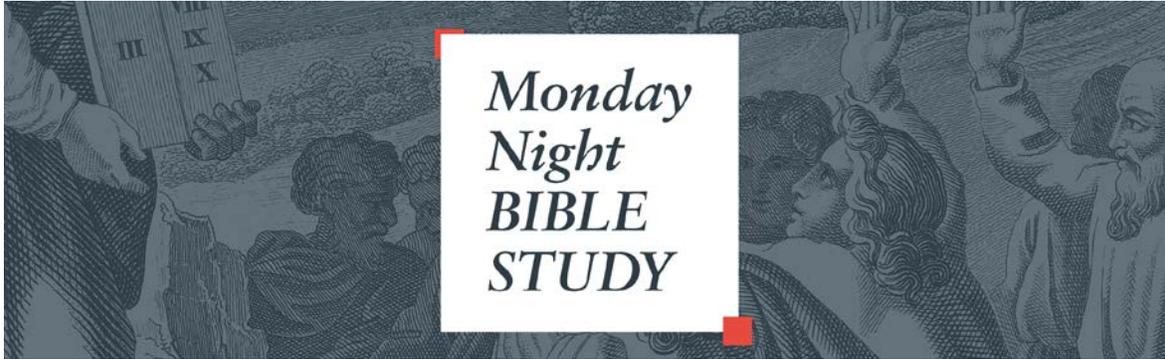
sound good at first, but aren't really accurate according to the cross. The world has a way of telling us things that seem right, but in reality are not. Only the cross can give us an accurate view of our lives and the situations we face. Paul wants them to be built up more and more, and for their roots to go deep into God.

Verses 6-7 - Paul is saying this is what you first received (the importance of growing in the knowledge of the cross and applying it to you daily life and circumstances) and you need to continue in it. Don't think you can change the process. Don't modify it. And don't listen to others when they tell you they've figured out a better way. Simply put, continue in what you've been taught. Continue growing in your understanding of Jesus, learn more of how the cross defeated all evil, and learn to apply it to your daily lives.

Verse 8 - Trusting in another way, adding something more than Jesus and cross, will take you captive, or handcuff you. It will stop you from growing in your walk with God. Knowing Jesus and His cross more and more is all that was needed to grow. Try and add something to that and you'll find yourself stuck, hindered in moving forward.

Verse 9 - Paul is again reminding them that Jesus is supreme – He is the head over every power and authority. As we grow in our understanding of who Jesus is, and the complete victory of the cross over evil, we will see ourselves being less fearful and anxious. The cure to fear, for the apostle Paul, is a deep understanding of Jesus and the victory of the cross. It goes back to continuing to grow in our knowledge of Jesus and the cross and also applying that victory to the problems that we face. Another trap some in the early church fell into was thinking they needed to add things, beyond knowing Jesus, in order to have full access to God. There is nothing else needed beyond faith in Jesus to have fullness, full access to God. That's why Paul says, "In Him you have been brought to fullness."

Verse 12 - This is an amazing verse as it reveals what the cross did. It says that we when confessed our faith that Jesus is Lord, we took a journey. We went from one location to another. We moved from the realm of sin and judgement to the realm of forgiveness and victory. That's what it means when it says we were buried with Him and raised with Him. You are no longer who you were because you are no longer where you were. It says the same thing in Colossians 1:13 - that we were rescued out of the domain of darkness and brought into the kingdom. Since we have been delivered from the power of the enemy, there is no need to fear evil.



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Verses 13-14 - Simply put, the Law that brings condemnation was dealt with in the cross. Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who believe in Jesus. Knowing the victory of the cross is important because it reveals to us that we are no longer under God's judgment.

Verse 15 - The enemy has been defeated. That means Jesus is greater than anything you are facing, and the cross proves that God's will for you is to live in victory, in peace, in abundance.

God wants us to grow in our knowledge of Jesus and the cross. Hearing about Jesus and the cross isn't a once and done thing that happens when you first get saved. Knowing His more and more through the victory of His death and resurrection is a lifelong process – it never ends because there's so much to explore. Like a treasure hunter looking for treasure, we also seek out and explore the meaning of the cross. And as we learn more and apply what we learn to our daily lives, our minds are renewed. We begin to live a more transformed life and we experience all that God created us to be.

