

(Colossians) Christ Is All You Need

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon emphasizes the sufficiency of Christ, highlighting the importance of fellowship, understanding, and submitting to God's Word in order to live a life that glorifies God.

Duration: 1:02:28

Scripture: Colossians 2:1

Topics: "Christ Sufficiency", "Spiritual Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the concern that the Bible does not provide enough guidance for dealing with the traumas and crises of life. He argues that we should not rely solely on experts and how-to books, but rather on the Word of God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of loving God with our minds and thoroughly understanding Christ through Scripture and the assistance of the Holy Spirit. He highlights the responsibility to read, meditate on, and study the Word, as well as submitting to the authority of gifted teachers. Ultimately, the speaker encourages listeners to hold fast to Christ and His Word, finding complete sufficiency in Him.

Transcript

I'd like to read you verses 1 through 5. Colossians chapter 2, verses 1 through 5. 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. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

Let's pray. Lord, we pray today that you would help us to see that Jesus is sufficient. Lord, that we would have that strong confidence in him, and that we would know that there's not a single thing that we could have to deal with in this life that he is not able to help us with and enable us in.

So Lord, teach us today about the sufficiency of Christ in all things. Help us, Lord, to not be deceived by persuasive words, but to hold fast to your word. Amen.

The occasion for this epistle that Paul wrote to the Colossians was that there were men who had entered into the church, and they were undermining people's confidence in Jesus Christ. They readily admitted

that Christ was important, but they also stated that there was more that was needed. So in essence, they were saying that Christ was not sufficient for everything that they needed in order to live a godly life.

More precisely, they were saying, you are not complete in Christ. The information that we have is what will make you to complete, so you need to embrace our doctrine and follow us. That is more or less what these men were saying.

So Paul wrote this epistle to combat these men, and the theme of this epistle to the Colossians could be easily the sufficiency of Christ, because that's what Paul is really driving home over and over again in this letter, that Christ is sufficient, that Jesus Christ is all that we need as God's people in order to live a life that will glorify God here on earth. Now, the Colossians were not the last people to have their faith undermined in that subtle manner. There are many today who would also seek to deceive us with persuasive words, telling us basically the same thing, that Christ is not sufficient, that we need something more, that we're living in a different age than the apostles lived in, that life is more complicated than it ever was before, and that we can expect that the Bible should actually provide for us all the answers that we need.

And so they encourage us to seek for solutions to our problems and answers to our questions from other sources. And there are many in the church, many people in leadership in the church, that have embraced this idea that Christ is not sufficient for everything, that we need something more than Jesus when it comes to certain areas of life. Now, for Paul, this kind of teaching created a conflict in him.

Paul was in prison. He was hearing about this. He could not personally be there to instruct them, so he did two things.

He wrote this epistle, and he prayed for them. He prayed intensely for them. He describes in the word conflict here in verse one, he is actually describing his prayer life.

He's describing his prayer for them as a conflict. The Greek word that's translated conflict in our version here, it's translated struggle or striving in other versions, is the word from which we get our English word agonize. And the word originally referred to athletic competition, the athletes competing against one another, striving with one another.

And this is the word that Paul used here to describe his prayer life. It was a conflict. It was a striving.

It was a battle. In other words, W.H. Griffith Thomas had something quite appropriate to say in regard to prayer as conflict. He said prayer regarded as a conflict includes the two ideas of toil and strife.

The toil of prayer shows us the actual work involved in it. Sometimes, however, we hear the statement, if you can do nothing else, you can pray, as though prayer were the easiest of all types of Christian service. As a simple matter of fact, it is the hardest.

And further, no man knows the real meaning of it unless he experiences what it is to labor in prayer. The strife involved in prayer implies opposition, a struggle against unseen foes, the forces of one who wishes above all to check and thwart our petitions. We discern something of this opposition in the verb wrestle found in Ephesians chapter six.

And the words of the hymn are as true as they are familiar. And Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees. The apostle knew by actual spiritual experience that to pray was to arouse against

himself a mighty opposition.

And it was this malignant force that made his prayer life such a great conflict. You see, Satan was the one who was really inspiring these guys and trying to, through them, overthrow the faith of the Colossians. And so as Paul was laboring over them in prayer, he was actually battling for their souls.

He was battling with Satan. From the moment you become a Christian, Satan begins a campaign against you to try to overthrow your faith. If he cannot thoroughly overthrow your faith, he will seek to undermine it in various ways and to break down your confidence in Jesus Christ and your commitment to living for his glory.

That is what the devil will do. That is what he was doing with these people. And so Paul was experiencing this conflict for them.

The believers in Colossae, the believers in Laodicea, people that he had never personally met. He knew some of those in the church, but it appears that Paul hadn't himself visited these fellowships. But yet he has this tremendous burden for the people of God.

He has a tremendous heart of prayer for the church. I want to encourage you. If you are seeking a ministry and you're serious about serving the Lord, begin to pray for the church.

Begin to pray for God's people. Pray for the pastors and leaders. Pray for the flocks.

Pray for those congregations that gather together all over the globe and ask God to work on behalf of his people, to bless them, to pour out his spirit and so forth. That is a tremendous ministry that more and more people need to be involved in. Paul was a tremendous man of prayer, but he understood that prayer was a conflict.

It was a battle. And so be aware of that as you enter into it, that you are going to enter into battle. There's going to be opposition as you commit yourself to prayer, but know that the Lord will be with you.

Now in verse two, Paul expresses his desire for these believers. He understands what's happening with them. He sees that these men are coming in and trying to undermine their faith.

And so he expresses in verse two, his desire for them. First of all, that their hearts may be encouraged being knit together in love. The first thing Paul wants to see them do is to remain steadfast in fellowship, to remain steadfast in fellowship.

The devil will try to get you out of fellowship. He'll try to isolate you because an isolated Christian will never come to maturity in the faith. And so he will do everything in his power to keep you from the fellowship of the saints.

He wants to keep you away from other believers because when you're with other believers, what happens? You get encouraged, you get comforted, you get consoled, you get exhorted. Those are the possible interpretations of the word encouraged. It's in that loving environment that God is able to work and build us up and bring us to maturity so that we can be effective for him.

And so Satan in part of his campaign against you, he will try to keep you from fellowship. He will try to keep you from gathering together with other believers. We're reminded of the importance of being vigilant when it comes to fellowship.

In Hebrews chapter 10, we are told that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as some do, but we are to exhort one another and so much the more as we see the day approaching. So that's what fellowship is all about. It's about exhorting each other.

It's about encouraging. It's about consoling and comforting. It's about sharing the love of Christ with one another.

And you see, as I hear your experiences with the Lord, and as you hear mine, and as we pray for one another, we're building each other up in the faith. Satan knows that. And so part of his strategy against you is to keep you from fellowship.

And he has a variety of ways that he'll go about that. Have you had the experience that on those days that have been set aside for fellowship, it seems that all kinds of crazy things go on? Say you're committed to the midweek Bible study, or maybe you're committed to a home fellowship during the week, or you have a commitment to be here regularly on Sundays. Have you noticed how interesting little things will happen that will serve to seek to discourage you from being here, or being at that home fellowship, or being at that prayer meeting? It could be something like a mechanical problem.

Something in the house goes haywire. Or maybe the car breaks down only when you head toward the church. Or something that happens more frequently is you have some disagreement, some argument.

Husband and wife are at each other's throats. The kids are driving you crazy. They're fighting with each other.

At work, there's been a conflict with another individual. And of course, with these kinds of things going on, the last thing you feel like doing is going to church, and you feel entirely unworthy of even being there. The enemy comes in and begins to condemn you.

Oh, you can't go to church after you treated your wife that way. Oh, gonna go worship God, are you? You hypocrite. Everybody's gonna know.

When you walk in, they're all gonna turn and look at you. So you might as well just stay home. Or maybe you've committed some sin.

And as Sunday is approaching, the enemy is telling you, you can't go there. You're a phony. You're a hypocrite.

Remember what you did this week? They all know what you did. They're all gonna be watching you. And the whole purpose behind all of these kinds of thoughts, which are nothing less than satanic accusations, the whole purpose behind these things is to keep you from fellowship, to get you in the habit of not going, of not being with God's people, to drive you away from that.

Because if the devil can do that, he can have a victory over you, and he can prevent you from growing into maturity. Oh, it happens so often. And you could see in Colossae how these men would have come in, and they would have started backbiting the apostle Paul.

They would have started mocking his doctrines. They would have started spreading their little doctrine. And then they would have said, no, you shouldn't go over to fellowship with those people.

You don't want to be part of that. Why don't you come over with us? And pretty soon the people would be drawn away. And, you know, we see these things happen today.

People that go off and we don't see them for a while, then maybe I'll run into them somewhere out in the community. And where you been? Oh, well, you know, we're kind of having church in our home now. And, you know, we came to understand that the Bible teaches that, you know, there are home churches.

And, you know, the thing you guys are doing over at Calvary, that's really not biblical. But we've got our little group over here, and we're getting into the deeper things. You know, we've come to realize that the sovereignty of God is the most important thing that the Bible teaches.

And, you know, man doesn't have any free will, and you were teaching that over there. And so, you know, off they go, thinking that God has revealed something to them, and all the while the devil is leading them astray, getting them out of fellowship, getting them out from under the authority of gifted teaching. And you know what happens finally? They end up moving away from the Lord, slowly but surely.

You see, the devil has a strategy, and this is part of it. That's why Paul expressed, first of all, his desire was that they would remain steadfast in fellowship. That's what he's getting at here.

Their hearts being encouraged, being knit together in love. The second thing is that there would be an attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding. An attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding.

Now that's a mouthful, and we need to look at it closely to understand what the apostle is saying here. He's saying something. He's not just connecting words together that sound good but don't mean anything.

Some people have accused him of that, but there's something vital being said here. So let's look at it. First of all, he speaks of riches, attaining to all riches.

This is his desire, that they might attain to all riches. But the riches are a result of something which results from something else. The riches are a result of full assurance, or it could be translated complete confidence.

The riches are a result of full assurance or complete confidence, and complete confidence is a result of thorough understanding. You see, there are many people in the church today who do not have complete confidence in Jesus Christ. They don't have the full assurance that Jesus is all that they need, and unfortunately, many leaders in churches are actually undermining the confidence that people have in Christ.

They tell people, you can trust the Lord for everything, and then someone comes and says, I've got this problem, and they say, oh well, sorry, we can't help you with that. Why don't you go down to the local Christian counseling center, and they're trained in psychological theory and all, and they'll be able to deal with that. So what they're doing is they're contradicting themselves.

They're telling people, on the one hand, that Christ is able to take care of everything you need, but then they're sending people off to get help from other sources. It's a contradiction. That's the tragedy, that the leadership is undermining people's confidence in Christ.

This is one of the great problems in the church today. People do not have total confidence in the Savior. Their faith has been undermined, but this is where the riches are.

The riches are a result of total confidence in the Savior. Now, what are some of the riches that Paul might be talking about here? I'm sure there are many things that we could think of, but two things that stand out to me would be the riches of joy and of peace. Now, we use those terms a lot.

The Bible uses them over and over again, but this is the question. Do we really have joy and peace? They are indeed riches. You know why? Because they're rare.

It is rare to find a person who truly has joy. It's rare to find Christians that truly have joy. You see, it's one of the riches because of its rarity.

It's available in Christ. It can't be found anywhere outside of Christ. There's no joy in the world.

You have fleeting moments of happiness in the world. Happiness is contingent on circumstances, and once in a while, people's circumstances work to make them happy. But joy is a permanent sense of satisfaction, a permanent sense of thrill and excitement because of what God has done.

There is no joy in the world. There's joy in Christ, but unfortunately, many Christians don't experience it. They're not experiencing the riches because they don't have the complete confidence, because they don't have the understanding, and the same is true with peace.

There's no peace in the world. People aren't at peace with each other. They're not at peace with themselves.

And again, unfortunately, there are many Christians who don't experience peace. Why? Because they don't have complete confidence in Christ. But it goes back to the bigger problem of a lack of understanding.

A lack of understanding. They have failed to apply themselves. Not only have they have failed to apply themselves, but again, the responsibility must be put back upon the leadership in churches who have failed to thoroughly educate their people in the things of God.

See, this is a big, big, big problem. It's the big problem in the American church especially, that there's been a subtle, a very subtle undermining of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ, but it goes back to a failure on the part of the leadership to bring the people into a thorough understanding of Jesus Christ. But that's what God calls us to, a thorough understanding.

Listen, as a Christian, you are going to have to exercise your mental faculties. God has given you a mind, and Christianity is far from a mindless religion. Certain ignorant people say, oh, you know, you check your brain at the door before you go into church.

There might be some churches that they require that of you, but this isn't one of them. And of course, the faith itself, the teaching of the Bible, our minds are always included because our mind is the greatest gift that God has given us, and He expects us to use our mind in order to understand Him. He aids our minds.

We can't understand Him without His assistance, but it's through our minds that we come to understand the things of the Lord, but we have to discipline our minds. We have to apply ourselves, in other words. So you cannot expect to grow in the faith, to be strong in the Lord, to become mature if you're unwilling to

engage your mind in activity, sometimes strenuous activity.

We've got to be a thinking people. We've got to be a studying people. We've got to be a people who are mentally devoted.

Jesus said the great commandment is to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. See, we have a responsibility to love God with our mind. That means that we are called to come to understand Christ thoroughly through the scriptures and the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

We're to exercise our minds, and much of our spiritual poverty is due to an undisciplined mind, that we haven't come to understand Christ. We haven't subjected ourselves to the authority of God's Word. So this is Paul's desire, that we might experience the riches that come through complete confidence in Christ, that come through a thorough understanding of Him, and the Lord has given us a couple of things so that we might understand Him thoroughly.

He's given us, number one, His Word, and so we are responsible to read it. We're responsible to meditate on it. We're responsible to study it.

You see, this is the responsibility that is put upon us, and anyone who refuses to do that will remain in an immature state as a Christian, and always be very vulnerable to the enticements of Satan. We must submit ourselves to the Word. We must subject ourselves to it by reading it, meditating upon it, and studying it.

We also need to submit ourselves to the authority of someone that God has gifted to teach His Word. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4 that God has given some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ. So we have a responsibility individually to submit ourselves to men who have been anointed by God, gifted by God to communicate His Word, and that is really to be your number one priority in choosing a church.

You know, people choose churches for the craziest reasons today, and so often they're missing the most important thing. The thing that one needs to look for in searching for a place to be committed to in fellowship is a man who is gifted by God to clearly communicate the Word of God to people. You don't choose a church because of its location, per se.

Well, this one's the closest to us, so that's where we go. You don't choose a church because your favorite kind of people are there. You don't choose a church because they have the ideal program for you.

You don't choose a church because they've got the best food bar after the service, or they've got the most contemporary form of worship, or the most groovy people. But unfortunately, aren't those many times the reasons that people make their choices? Those are the things they're looking for. Those are all the wrong things.

You need to be looking for a place where Christ is honored, His Word is held up as the authority, and His Word is being taught by one who has been gifted by God to do so. That's what Paul is desiring for them, that they would grow, that they would come to complete confidence in Christ by having their understanding developed, by getting to know the Lord better. The more we get to know the Lord, the more we realize that He is truly all we need.

He is all we need. Now, as I said a moment ago, there are those today, just like there were at this time, who are out there with persuasive words, and they're deceiving many. They're leading people astray.

They're subtly undermining people's confidence in Christ. They're saying that times have changed, and the Bible was good enough for people 100, 200, 300 years ago, but it's no longer adequate for us today because we're living in the nuclear age. We're living under such stressful circumstances, and life is so complicated now, and the Bible doesn't specifically address these things, and you see, that's where its inadequacy comes in, and so we need some further information.

We need a more complete revelation, and I've actually had pastors tell me that the new revelation, the thorough, the complete revelation for all that we need to know in how to be a Christian in the 20th and the 21st century has come to us through psychology. Psychology is God's gift. It's come, they say, as a natural revelation, and those who embrace psychology, those who hold fast to it, they actually believe that God sent it to us to supplement what's lacking in the previous revelation that was given.

Now, in the next several weeks, we're going to be talking a lot about this whole subject, so buckle your seat belt and be ready to go because this is an issue that is so extremely important. In my opinion, it is the most vital issue facing the Christian church, especially in America today. It's the most vital issue, the issue of psychology in the church.

It is the greatest opponent to the evangelical faith, and yet it has permeated most of our churches. Evangelical churches are permeated with psychological concepts, ideas, theories, and so forth. And so we're going to be spending some time really delving in, digging in deep, and really seeking to discover what's happened and what the Bible has to say about it.

But you see, those who teach that, they are, among other things, contradicting the clear teaching of Scripture. The clear teaching of Scripture found in the second and third verse here of Colossians 2, also found in verse 3 of chapter 1 of 2 Peter. But now listen to what the apostle says here.

He wants them to remain steadfast in fellowship. They need to engage their minds and discipline themselves in order that they might understand Christ thoroughly. And now he says that they might attain 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.

You hear what he's saying? He says, in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Now this is a question we must ask. What are wisdom and knowledge? And what do these things refer to practically? The Bible speaks much about wisdom.

It speaks much about knowledge. What we're talking about here is very practical. We need to realize that.

What we're talking about here is very practical. When he refers here to wisdom and knowledge, he's referring to the things that we need to know and understand in order to live a life to the glory of God. That's what he's talking about.

And so what he's telling us is that everything that we need to know to live a life to the glory of God is available to us through the person of Jesus Christ. What is life made up of? Think about that for a moment. What is life primarily made up of? Isn't it made up of relationships? Life is made up of relationships primarily.

First and foremost, a man's relationship with God. Secondly, we have man's relationship with his fellow human beings. And then thirdly, we have man's relationship with himself.

These are the things that really make up what life is all about. It's all about relationships. Here we are told that all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are available to us through Christ.

In other words, all that we need to know to live life, all that we need to know in order to relate to God, to our fellow human beings, and to an understanding of ourself is contained for us in our understanding of Christ, our relationship with him, and in our increased knowledge of him. Second Peter 1.3 says essentially the same thing. All things that pertain to life and godliness, life on the horizontal level, relationships with our fellow human beings, and the relationship that we have with ourselves, life and godliness, our relationship with God, all things that pertain to life and godliness are given to us through the knowledge of him who called us by glory and virtue.

So you see, there are many in the church today, many pastors in the church today, who say on the one hand Christ is sufficient. But then when you come to them with a problem that's on the horizontal level, you come to them with a marital problem, you come to them with a problem on raising your kids, you come to them with a problem that's related to relationships on the human level, or you come to them with the problem of not understanding yourself or whatever the case might be, they will direct you to the psychologist. They will tell you that this is where you need to go and they can help you with that.

So what they're actually doing is they're, as I said earlier, they're contradicting themselves. They're saying Christ is sufficient, but they're not being truthful about that. What they will feel comfortable doing is helping you with your relationship with God.

And say, hey, I'm here to help you with your relationship with God, but I can't really help you on these other levels. They either will send you out to a counselor or many times today they will have provided one for you right there. Pastor says, oh, I'm sorry you made an appointment with me, but what you really need is you need to see our staff psychologist and he can help you with these kinds of relational things.

But that is a blatant contradiction of what Paul is saying right here and of what Peter is saying in his second epistle. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. Everything that you need to know about how to relate to God, your fellow man and yourself comes to you through Jesus Christ.

That's what wisdom and knowledge are all about. Very practical, the how-tos of life. But you see, they argue and they say, oh no, no, you're wrong.

That isn't true. Look at the Bible. It doesn't give us detailed information.

The Bible is so vague. What about marriage? Come on. You think the Bible is a thorough workbook on marriage? How are we supposed to know how to get along with each other as husband and wife? You mean to tell me that the Bible's got the answers for me and that going off to a counselor who studied marriage and family and looked at it from the psychological perspective, you mean to tell me that that's not going to be valuable to me? So you see what they're saying is that the Bible isn't adequate.

Oh, but what about all of these kinds of horrible things that are happening to people these days? All the trauma that they go through and the crisis and everything. And look at the Bible. It doesn't deal with these things specifically.

We need to go to the experts. And what they say about the Bible is that it's not detailed enough for us. They say we need more information.

What they want is a how to book, how to do everything. You know, they'll say, now, look, let's take, for example, here's a husband and wife and and they really love each other and they love God, but they can't communicate. They need to be taught communicating skills.

They go through a series of courses on how to communicate with each other. And they need to come and go through, you know, this seminar and so forth. Now, is that necessary? Is that true? Let me ask you a question.

Were people married before the 20th century? Did husbands and wives ever have communicating problems before the modern era? What in the world did they do? How did they ever get along? You see, because psychology is a recent is of recent discovery. What did all those poor people do for 17, 1800 years from the time of the establishment of the church to the present era? How did they ever get along in life? Well, they'll say, oh, well, they didn't have the problems we do today because they don't have the stresses and they don't have, you know, in modern society. And you mean to tell me that people living in those centuries didn't have problems? No, when the plague swept over Europe, there was no problem there.

Tens of thousands of people dying. Wars? No, no problem there. You know, they act as though, you know, we here in the 20th century are the only people that ever experienced any kind of complicated situation in life.

But that isn't true. It's not true at all. You see, we need to understand this.

God has provided for us all that we need. You don't need to go to a seminar on how to communicate better because you know what God's given you? He's given you his word. And guess what? No, it's not detailed in a lot of these areas.

You know why? Because God has given you the Holy Spirit who lives in you and who gives you by virtue of his presence in your life, the details. Have you ever noticed that there's a radical difference between the Old and the New Testament? The Old Testament, especially the Torah, the law, notice the Old Testament is very detailed about life, much more detailed than the New Testament. I mean, the Old Testament, Moses, they had a rule, they had a guideline, they had a regulation for everything.

They literally told you what to do when you went to the bathroom, bury it outside the camp. I mean, they got into the smallest details of family life, life as a community, all those things were very detailed under the Old Testament system. But in the New Testament, we find everything is so brief.

Why is that? What marks the difference between the covenants? You know what marks the difference? The advent of the Holy Spirit. You see, they had to have all those details under the Old Testament because the Holy Spirit did not dwell within them. The Holy Spirit did not reside within them.

The coming of the Holy Spirit is a new covenant thing. This thing of God taking up residence in us is a new covenant thing. And so under the Old Covenant, because the Spirit did not indwell them permanently as he does us, they needed to have all of those details.

But one of the distinctions for the New Covenant would be this, I will write my commandments upon their heart and in their mind, I will put them. So you see, the reason why the New Testament isn't so detailed when it comes to how do we deal with this particular thing and what about that? In the New Testament, we have many principles stated. And let's go back to marriage for a moment.

We have stated in the New Testament some instruction on marriage. We have instruction to the husbands. We have instruction to the wives.

And yet for the most part, it's in principle form rather than specific detail. So here's a man and a woman. They have a communication problem.

They come in. And how do we help them? What do we do? Well, we say, look here, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church. And we simply instruct them on how to practically do that.

But then we trust that the Holy Spirit who lives in them, who is working to conform them to the image of Christ, is going to do so to the extent that they will do what needs to be done. Do you think Jesus Christ knew how to communicate to people? I think he did. If Jesus Christ lives in you by the Holy Spirit and is conforming you into his own image, do you think you can long remain a person who doesn't communicate, a person who isn't sensitive, a person who's not growing in compassion and understanding those things? Of course you cannot.

See, the problem is not a lack of information. The problem is a lack of maturity on the part of many Christian people. It's not that the Bible isn't enough for us.

It's not that Christ is insufficient. It's that people have stopped growing, refused to grow. If you are growing in maturity as a Christian, guess what you're going to be? Men.

You're going to be the best husband possible. You're going to be the best father possible. Guess what? You're going to be women.

You're going to be the best wife possible, the best mother possible, the best friend possible. All of those things will come naturally because of your relationship with Jesus Christ. You see, when your relationship with him is everything that it is supposed to be, then your relationships with people are going to be perfect.

They're going to be what they're supposed to be. So you do not need the world's input on how to do that. And then of course we have ourselves to deal with.

A lot of people aren't so concerned about how to relate to other people. They want to know about themselves. They want to discover how to love themselves more and things of that nature.

So what do we do for people like that? Well, hopefully we point them to the word of God and show them the fallacy of that. That's not what you're supposed to be doing. The issue is not how do you love yourself? The fact is you already do love yourself.

And what you need to do is learn how to love others and get your eyes off yourself. That's what the Bible teaches. Now, of course, that stuff isn't all that pleasant to hear, is it? That's why it's not so popular.

You see, these are the facts about us as people. We want to do it our way. We want to have it our way.

A person in the fellowship was telling me about their encounter a few days ago with a person who used to be part of this fellowship who happened to be in jail. And the person was going on and on and on about, you know, how everybody else was such a jerk and couldn't come back to this church. Brian never makes me feel good.

And then the one said to the other, I really am trying to walk with the Lord, but the other inserted, you want to do it your way, right? Well, yeah, that's it. I want to do it my way. Now, you see, that does pose a problem.

You can't walk with the Lord and do it your way. You got to do it his way. But people don't want to do it his way so often.

And you know what psychology is? It's a way out. It's a way out. It's a way to not have to do it God's way.

And, you know, it happens. People embrace theories and ideas that are unbiblical. They sound good, persuasive words.

Well, that sounds right. That sounds good. I was talking to a lady the other day, and we were talking about this whole issue.

And she brought up to me, you know, the fact that she had had been helped through some psychological counseling. And she was saying that, you know, something that really helped her was to understand, you know, the child that was in her and so forth. And then she said this, which really got her off the hook.

She said, but I understood that that was my sin nature. See, she had enough of a biblical background to know that there is a sin nature, which was good and which helped her. But, you know, a lot of people don't know that.

So here you are as a Christian, and you go to a psychologist, and you start to talk to them about your problems and so on and so forth. And so they say to you, well, you know, that's the child in you. That's the child in you.

And, you know, you need to learn that you're an adult now. And, you know, childish behavior is no longer proper. So you need to, you know, behave in an adult manner.

And yet, you know, we're taking and we're changing, we're renaming certain things. And in doing so, here's the subtlety of it, in doing that, you take a whole different attitude in relating to it and dealing with it. Now, think about these two possibilities.

Here you are, you're a miserable person, you make everybody else miserable. I'm your psychologist, you come to me, and I tell you, well, that's the child in you. And now I'm your pastor, and you come to me, and I tell you, that's the monster in you.

That's the sinful nature, that's the beast in you. Now, you're probably going to like the child theory a little better. Well, I kind of like the child in me better than the beast in me.

And tell me, are you going to deal with a child differently than you would deal with a beast? You most certainly are, aren't you? For the child in you, you're going to make exceptions. You know, it's just a child, they don't know any better. You know, there's the pampering, there's the allowance, you know, it's just a child in me.

And one day I'll grow out of that, but, you know, we don't want to rush the child into adulthood too soon. And so pretty soon, you're making all these concessions for the child in you. But man, if you know you've got a beast in you, you're like, put that thing to death, kill it, do whatever you have to do to get rid of it.

You see how just changing just the name of what it is can actually undermine what needs to be done in dealing with it? And we see that has happened across the board. So things that used to be called sin are now called diseases. You obviously deal with a disease much differently than you deal with a sin, don't you? Or you talk about, you know, dysfunctional behavior and things of that nature.

And you're going to deal with these things a lot differently than you're going to deal with sin. If you know that your problem is sin, it's a beast inside of you, it's a monster, it's against God and man, and it's contrary, you're going to deal with it differently, you're going to be motivated to do so. You see, this is what's happening.

There are tens of thousands of Christians out there who are dominated by the old nature, by the flesh nature, by the beast that's in them, and they think it's a little child, and they're pampering it, and they're catering to it, and they're babysitting it, and they're not dealing with the issues. This is the fruit of psychology in the church. You see, it's an undermining of the authority of the Word of God.

It's an undermining of the authority of Christ, and it's a denial of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. As a Christian person, God has given you all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him. You see, through our relationship with Christ, we have been given the living Word, and the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in us, and that is all you need.

You need not spend another penny on a counselor. You need not go to another seminar on how to raise your kids. If you do, make sure it's strictly biblical, and don't allow, you know, these other theories to come in.

In a few weeks, we're going to talk about self-esteem, the great myth of self-esteem. Even the secular people are now talking about the dangers of self-esteem, and they're realizing what the Bible has always said. Self-esteem is nothing more than pride, and pride is tremendously dangerous in any society.

So you see, this is what the Bible says. The Bible says that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and this is the final key point that I want to drive home to you. I want you to notice that they're hidden.

They're hidden, implying they need to be searched after. They need to be mined for. We're talking about riches.

We're talking about treasures. How do we obtain these things? We have to dig for them. We have to search for them.

We have to pursue them with everything in us. You see, this is man's natural tendency. Man's natural tendency is to live independent of God.

So the human race is trying to do it. It's impossible to do, of course. You can't live independent of God.

He holds your very breath in His hand, but that's what people are attempting to do, and that's what they assume that they're doing, living independent of God by rebelling against Him. No one does totally live

independent of God, but that's the human bent. Even as a Christian, you know, here's the sad thing about our nature.

We will, even as Christian people, get by with as little of God as we possibly can. That's why the Lord has designed things so that we must seek Him. We must go deep with Him because He knows our tendency to get by with as little of Him as possible.

So He's going to make us search. He's going to make us dig. He's going to make us go deep.

But what happens? You hear people say, well, I tried the Lord. He didn't help me. No, you were scanning the surface, and you didn't find what you were looking for, but you haven't even begun to understand the depths that are there.

And unfortunately, many Christian people today have such a shallow walk in relationship with the Lord. And their assumption is, Christ can't help me. The Bible can't help me.

There's nothing that they can do for me over at the church, so I got to go to this therapist. I've got to go off and meet with this talk group or whatever the case might be. You see, it's all a result of the shallow Christianity that prevails all around us today.

We're trying to bathe in a teaspoon. And it just isn't working, is it? We have to immerse ourselves in Christ. We have to get deep with the Lord.

That's what He's called us to do. And that's why He tells us here that the treasures are hidden in Christ. All of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all the information that you need to know how to live for God, to live with your fellow man and to live with yourself, it's all contained in a relationship with Christ.

And you got to dig deeper in order to discover that. That's it right there. Are you willing to do that? Or are you going to sell yourself short? Are you going to buy into deception, being led away with persuasive words, and live on a shallow level and never grow, never impact anybody, never do anything of any significance in relation to the kingdom of God? You know, honestly, today, you guys, you know, we Christians, you know what we're supposed to be? The light of the world, the salt of the earth, all that.

We're supposed to be leading people on into a knowledge of the Lord and all that. But isn't it true that most Christians are so messed up today, they couldn't help anybody else? Their lives are such a mess. That's what we have.

We have this epidemic in the body of Christ of Christians who are suffering, Christians who are messed up, Christians who are so problemed that they couldn't begin to think of ministering to somebody else because they've got to deal with all of their own junk all of the time. That is an indication that there's a big problem in the church. We've become a man-focused generation, and it's happened in the church.

And until we get our eyes off ourselves and begin to dig deep into Christ, we'll remain that way. We'll remain ineffective, and Satan will have had the victory. He will have had the victory.

How could we become people of prayer when we're all preoccupied with our own little things? How can we go out and give our lives to service to God? We've got all of these problems right in our own home and things like that. We've got to dig into the Lord. Turn with me to Proverbs 2. We'll close with this.

Here is the practical instruction on how that's going to be done. And listen to this closely. It's so precise.

There is a biblical psychology. I want to clarify that. But a biblical psychology is pure.

It is not tainted with human theory. There is something today called Christian psychology, which is not Christian at all. And again, we're going to talk about this at length in the future, but you need to understand this.

When a person goes off to a college to study psychology, that person studies, whether he's a Christian or not, he studies the founding fathers of psychology and all their theories. There is no such thing as a Christian psychology. There is a biblical psychology.

A biblical psychology is a biblical understanding of man. A biblical understanding of his behavior and of his mindset. And that is what we have given to us.

And believe me, the two are in direct opposition to each other. Christian psychology, which is a misnomer, is in direct opposition to biblical psychology. It undermines what the Bible says about you and about what you truly need.

But here, the book of Proverbs, if you want some real psychology, study the book of Proverbs. Proverbs gives us much wisdom, not human wisdom. This isn't Solomon's thinking, because he lived a long life and observed a lot of things and concluded that these were, you know, right and so forth.

No, we are told specifically that Solomon was given a divine wisdom beyond any man that ever lived. So Solomon's Proverbs were inspired by God. The book of Proverbs falls into the category of inspiration.

Now listen, as we close, chapter 2, verses 1 through 9, my son or my daughter, whichever you are, if you receive my words and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding. Yes, if you cry out for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. Listen, for the Lord gives wisdom.

From his mouth comes knowledge and understanding, not from the mouth of Sigmund Freud, not from the mouth of Carl Jung, not from the mouth of any other psychologist, psychotherapist, but from whose mouth? From the mouth of the Lord comes knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright. He is a shield to those who walk uprightly.

He guards the paths of justice and preserves the way of his saints. Listen, then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity, and every good path. That's what life's all about right there.

Righteousness, justice, equity, every good path. That is life on the horizontal level. That is life with your fellow man.

That is life with yourself. And then, of course, there is life with God. Those are the three levels that we really spend our time here on earth involved in.

Our relationship with God, our fellow human beings, and with ourself. And the answer to all those things lies hidden in Christ, and this is what we must do to get at those treasures. This is what we must do to get at those riches that are there.

Proverbs 2, 1 through 9. Follow it explicitly, and the promise is this. You will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for the fact that we are complete in Christ, that he is utterly sufficient for us in everything that we need in order to live for you, to live with each other, and to live with ourselves. And Lord, we pray that we would not be deceived with persuasive words. We pray that we would not be led astray, but that we would hold fast to Christ and to his word.

And we thank you, Lord, for the presence of your Holy Spirit in our lives. We thank you, Lord, that you have taken up residence in us, and by your very presence in us, you help us conform to your word. And Lord, we just so praise you for that.

And we think of the multitudes of people in the church today who are reading one how-to-do-it book after another because they haven't realized that you have been sent, Holy Spirit, to be our helper. Lord, may they just understand that. May they know, Lord, that it's not outside of them any longer.

It's not the old covenant, but it's the new covenant, the law written on the heart and in the mind. Help them, Lord. Help them, your people, to understand you, to be totally confident in experiencing the riches that result from that, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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