

Colossians 2 (Part 1) v1-5 • Christ, the Mystery of God

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

Colossians chapter 2, we're going to read the first five verses, and then we're going to pray, see what the Lord has for us.

“¹ For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. ⁵ For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.” (ESV)

Pray with me. Father, open our hearts to the word today, to the ministry of this word, and help us to see what you're saying to us and why. We pray for understanding. We pray for insight. We pray that your Holy Spirit would kind of just draw back the curtains and let us see the purpose and will, Lord, for the church. Be with us, we pray, Father, in Jesus' name, amen.

I thought about taking a little bit more here this morning than just these first five verses, but as I was looking at them, I kind of started thinking there's so much here as it relates to the Apostle Paul's heart, and desire, and goal and aim for the church. And I thought, this is good stuff from the standpoint of what's important in a church. So many times what becomes important in a church to us is a thing or are things that the Apostle Paul probably would never be on his radar. We're wondering about the volume of the music or the type of music, and how comfortable the chairs are and whether they keep it too cold or too hot or whatever, the things that affect us.

And yet the apostle Paul talks in these first five verses of things that are really, truly important for a church. And we're going to call these kinds of his goals, his concerns, his desires. But you'll remember that we ended the last chapter. And I want to remind you that, of course, in Paul's letter, there were no chapters. He wasn't writing a letter and going, alright, chapter 2, that's all for us. So this just flows from what he had been saying earlier. And let me put it on the screen for

you, just as a reminder of what we read. The very last thing we read in the last chapter was he said, for this, he's talking about his call to preach and teach the word and to encourage and mature believers. He says,

Colossians 1:29 (ESV)

For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

“For this I toil, (this is what I'm working to do, that you might be built up, that you might be strengthened and brought to maturity, and then he says this) struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”

And so he talked about struggling. Remember we talked about that last time? Well, as he goes on here now in the first verse of chapter 2, notice that he uses the word struggle again. And he says, “¹ For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all those who have not seen me face to face.”

And that tells us that Paul didn't actually preach the gospel, or he wasn't the first one to preach the gospel at Colossae or Laodicea. Somebody else brought the gospel there, and started some churches, but he heard about them and wrote letters to them and so forth. But he talks here about the fact that he wants, that he's struggling for them. And I read that, and I thought, what does he mean by that? Because keep in mind, we've already told you that he was incarcerated when he wrote this letter. So just exactly how was he struggling? What was he talking about? Was he talking about just his incarceration? Was he talking about spending, praying for them? Is that the struggle he's talking about? Well, look at what he goes on to say, he wants to come out of his struggle.

Verse 2, again: “...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of the full assurance of understanding the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ...” and on and on and on. And that's basically where he's outlining the goals of his struggle.

And when we look at Paul's goals or aim of his struggle for the church, what we're really seeing here, Christians, is we're seeing what the church ought to focus on and what the church ought to find is important. These things ought to be high on our list as it relates, and there's basically three things. Let me put him up on the screen for you that we're looking at. We'll just call them Paul's goals for the Colossians.

Paul's goals for the Colossians...

- **that their hearts may be encouraged**
- being knit together in love
- to reach all the riches of...
 - full assurance of understanding
 - the knowledge of God's mystery

Essentially, he said that their hearts might be encouraged. This is what he wanted for them out of his own struggles. He wanted them to be knit together in love. He wanted them to reach all the riches of full understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery. And I want to look at these. I want to look at each of them, and you can see that we've highlighted the first one there, and that is **that their hearts might be encouraged**. This is his first expressed goal.

When's the last time you had your heart encouraged? Hopefully when you—maybe walk through the doors of a church for the first time in a long time. But encouragement is important, isn't it? Let me just remind you what it means to encourage. I know you all know what it means. Sometimes it's good just to remind ourselves of the definition.

en·cour·age

(verb)

give support, confidence, or hope

It means to give support. It means to pass along a sense of confidence. It means to give hope. And this is what we're to do.

Now, I believe that there are people in the body of Christ who are gifted with the ability to encourage. What I mean by that is they have literally a spiritual gift from God to encourage others.

Do you know that Barnabas was such a man? In fact, his name means son of encouragement. And he just had that heart to encourage, and I've seen it in people over the years. I worked under a guy up in the Seattle area, a pastor who had the gift of encouragement, and he could draw big crowds as a senior pastor just because he was so encouraging. People would leave church, and they would just be built up, and it's a wonderful thing. And Paul wanted his sufferings to do that for the churches. And it is our calling in a general sense to do it for one another. Let me show you what the author of Hebrews said about this.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

He said, “ *And let us consider how to stir up one another* (think of it, you get a big spoon. You're stirring people up, but to what?) *to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some* (but look at this), *but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near* (meaning the day of the Lord).”

So we are to all be about the work of encouraging one another, right? And then in the book of Acts, we see this happening repeatedly. This was something that the book of Acts that Luke recorded for us. Let me run through a couple of passages.

Acts 15:32 (ESV)

And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.

Acts 16:40 (ESV)

So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

Acts 18:27 (ESV)

And when [Apollos] wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed.

And then Paul wrote elsewhere about encouragement in Romans chapter 1, saying this,

Romans 1:11-12 (ESV)

For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you — that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

Isn't that interesting? I like that last one particularly because Paul not only understood the importance of bringing encouragement, but he also understood the importance of seeking encouragement from others. I need your encouragement just as you need much as you need mine. I need to be encouraged just like you need to be encouraged. We all need that together. It's

something that we ought to be doing for one another and all the more as we see the day approaching.

How do you give encouragement? Just exactly how do we do that? Well, let's face it, the reason we sometimes need to be encouraged is because we're discouraged. And we understand probably what it is to be discouraged, and we probably even understand how we get discouraged or what brings discouragement.

I'll tell you what brings discouragement in my life, getting my eyes off Jesus, every single time. Get my eyes off the Lord, I get discouraged, just like anybody else. So, what I need when I get discouraged is people helping me get my eyes back on Jesus, back on His Word, back on His promises and the hope that comes from them. That's what we need.

It's like, well, I don't really know how to encourage people. Well, it's just to get their eyes back on the Lord. Can I pray with you? Sometimes you say hey, can I just pray with you? Yeah, okay. Grab their hand. Lord, just take my brother or my sister's eyes and get them back on you, on the hope that is ours in you, the power that you give to believers to overcome. We're all just like Peter. We're looking at the wind and the waves and we're sinking. And we have to come to the Lord and reach out to him and get our eyes back on him.

Paul's second goal for the believers in Colossae:

Paul's goals for the Colossians...

- that their hearts may be encouraged
- **being knit together in love**
- to reach all the riches of...
 - full assurance of understanding
 - the knowledge of God's mystery

You'll notice that we highlighted there on the notes **is that they might be knit together in love**. And I want you to notice specifically Paul's use of those words "knit together." It's interesting because he's calling to mind here the imagery of a human body. Because as the body of Christ we're given that image of the human body. But the human body is knit together with tendons and ligaments and muscles, and the things that go along that, and it becomes a complete whole.

But in the case of the body of Christ, Paul says, my desire and all of my struggling for you, I'm hoping that it would knit you together in love. We're

moving away from sinew and tendons, ligament, and he says, I want you to be knit together in love.

What does that look like? What does it look like for the body of Christ to be knit together in love? Talking about basic concerns for people, relating to one another as if we really are a family. We like to say that, hey, you're my brother, man. You're my brother in the Lord, my sister in the Lord.

But are we treating people that way? Are we responding in a true and genuine sort of a way? Are we showing loyalty? Are we showing support? And I know that it's hard. Personality conflicts being what they are, issues rising up, as they do, the drama that comes into people's lives from time to time that we don't like but we know happens, and it separates people, and it makes us feel awkward with one another. And then we start to keep our distance because who wants to be around somebody that doesn't like you? Or that can't even look you in the eye. It's tough to be around people like that. And then I look at a passage like this, and I realize I'm supposed to show them love. And I'm thinking, Lord, how can I do that? And I know that it's very, very hard.

Sometimes, you know what—showing love is just a simple act of being obedient. You know what I mean? In other words, I show love to my brother or my sister, maybe with whom I have some kind of an awkward relationship, but I'm doing it not because it feels good, or I have all kinds of warm fuzzies about it. I'm doing it because of obedience. Jesus says in His Word, Love them, right? Just love them. But Lord, I know, just love them. And you can be just as hard to love, that's probably an important thing to remember, too. I love what Peter says about this. Let me put this on the screen. 1 Peter 4:8,

1 Peter 4:8 (ESV)

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

“Above all (Peter says) keep loving one another earnestly, (Why?) love covers a multitude of sins.” It does, doesn’t it? When you love somebody, when you love them covers over a multitude of sins.

Third expressed goal in Paul's struggles:

Paul's goals for the Colossians...

- that their hearts may be encouraged
- being knit together in love
- **to reach all the riches of...**
 - **full assurance of understanding**
 - **the knowledge of God's mystery**

You'll notice that I've kind of highlighted it, and then there are two sub-points on it. The third goal of Paul's struggling is that the believers in Colossae and Laodicea, and of course, this means for you and me, that we might **reach the riches of both the full understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery.**

But I want to talk first about this idea of the full assurance of understanding. Stop for just a moment, think about that. What does it mean to have full assurance of understanding? Well, I can tell you based on the number of emails I get from people every single day, I can tell you that there is a shocking lack of assurance among God's children. Shocking. The number of people who write to me and have very shaky assurance, and sometimes none at all. And these are people who know that Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sins. And these are people who have embraced that sacrifice on a personal level. They believe Jesus died for them, and yet they have very little assurance of the ongoing work of God's love, grace, and salvation in their lives. Paul says, I want out of my struggling to come into your life a full assurance, a full assurance of understanding.

When Christians don't have that, it is the worst of the worst. It's like people sitting at a banquet table with all the food in the world, and they're starving. And you're kind of looking at it and you're saying why are you even hungry, let alone starving? You have everything in terms of what the Bible would speak to you about the assurance that we have in Christ Jesus, and yet, you're telling me you don't have assurance.

I was writing with a young man back and forth from India who was just— and sometimes it's challenging, believe me. The language barrier is challenging, even finding out what is going on, let alone trying to address it. But there was a young man, and I only say this because I think it's a common thing. And he was dealing with an area of sin in his life and a sin that he hated, but yet was recurring and it absolutely blew his assurance out of the water.

I usually ask people when I recognize that there's a lack of assurance, why is it that you don't feel assured in your salvation? And the response is always the same, because of the sin I'm dealing with, right? And I say, yeah, who gave you the idea that when we become a believer, we stopped sinning? We still have that

sinful nature. We still mess up. We still make some mistakes, and sometimes they're even serious ones. But what people are stumbling over is this idea that somehow after I get saved, thank you Jesus for dying for me on the cross. Thank you God that you gave this free gift of salvation through Jesus, but now I got to work hard to keep it. I got to. And if I sin, now it's in danger. See my assurance goes out the window because you see sin has come into my life and I've seen this ugly side of my heart.

And so I'm sitting there going, yeah. So, I came along and I asked him, do you have assurance of your salvation? No. Why? Because of this sin? Oh, I get it. What you're telling me is you believe you were saved by grace through faith, but you have to keep yourself saved. That's what you're telling me, right?

And this one guy wrote me back and said, yes, it is my job to safeguard my salvation. I said, you'll never have assurance. You will never have assurance if it is your job to safeguard your salvation. My Bible says in Jude, I believe it's the 24th verse, now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy...to Him be glory and on and on. It's called the Jude doxology. Have you ever read it? To him who is able to keep you, to him, right? Oh no, pastor, it's my job. Well, that's one of the reasons why there's just this horrible lack of assurance.

In fact, I kind of wrote down three reasons why people lack assurance.

Reasons people lack assurance

- Ignorance
- Unbelief
- Deception

One is ignorance. They just don't know the Word of God. They don't know what it says about the fact that their assurance is in Him.

And then there's just flat out unbelief. And unbelief means that they know what the Word has to say, but they don't believe it. Do you know that Christians can do that? Do you know that Christians can be saved? And then they can read some other aspect of the Word of God and not believe what it says. Did you know that's possible? Christians can have unbelief in groupings.

And then the other reason is deception, and this is the big one. This is the person who knows what the Word of God has to say. They want to believe it, but they've become convinced by the enemy that they're unworthy of it. They're unworthy of embracing God's promises. Why? Because of sin. Pastor Paul, I'm not worthy. I know that. You never were. You never were worthy. So, you're going to let that stumble you?

“...*Jesus Christ came to die for sinners—of whom I am the worst,*” Paul wrote right to Timothy (Timothy 1:15). Get over yourself. You never were worthy. Just accept what he's done and accept the fact that it is by also through your faith that you are kept by God. Now, let me show you what full assurance looks like. Romas chapter 8:

Romans 8:38-39 (ESV)

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, (nor things in the past or things) present (rather) nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation (just in case I might have left something out), will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

That’s what Paul wanted for the churches, for them to be able to say, I am sure. And I hope you can say that today. I hope you can say concerning your salvation, I am sure. I am sure. If you died today, would you go to be with the Lord? I am sure that I would. Because you see, it's all about what He did, right? Paul wanted this. In fact, it was a sign of a healthy church to be assured.

The second part of that last goal, we'll put it back up on the screen there for you, is the knowledge, the full riches of the knowledge of God’s mystery.

Paul’s goals for the Colossians...

- that their hearts may be encouraged
- being knit together in love
- **to reach all the riches of...**
 - **full assurance of understanding**
 - **the knowledge of God’s mystery**

And he right away tells us what that mystery is, which is Christ. And he reveals here that he wants this understanding not to be a thing, but to be a person. It's Jesus.

And then he goes on in verse 3 to tell us why we are to seek Jesus as this, the riches of this full thing. He says, “...*in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*” Guys, soak that in for just a moment, okay? He's

talking about Jesus Christ: “...in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” All of them, not some of them, all of them.

I sat and thought about this verse for a while. These five verses of Colossians really were hard for me because I would read it and I'd say, what are you saying? And it was just so much there. I had to like sometimes get up, and go for a walk, and just think about it. But then I read a quote by Harry Ironside about this particular statement about all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Christ. And I thought, well, I can't do any better than that, so I'm just going to put that up for you, okay? I love Harry Ironside, one of my heroes. He writes this, he says,

In Christ—or, if you prefer, in this mystery of God now revealed—“are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” It is not necessary to go elsewhere—that is, to investigate human systems and philosophies—to find an explanation of the mystery of the universe and the relationship of the Creator to His creatures. [In Christ] every question is answered, every perplexity made clear, and every doubt dissolved. Why turn aside to idle speculations...when God has spoken in His Son?” — H.A. Ironside

Isn't that good? I read that and I went, oh, Harry, Harry, I can't do any better than that, so I'm just going to, here you go as good as it gets, it's all there.

And then Paul explains his reason for giving these exhortations. Look at verse 4 in your Bible here in Colossians. Verse 4, he says, “*I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.*” Your Bible may say, “*persuasive arguments.*” It refers to an argument that sounds reasonable. The only problem is it's not true, right? But that's exactly why God has given us his Word and His Holy Spirit so that we can know what is true, right guys? How do I know what's true? Look, there's a great promise in the scripture from John chapter 16. It goes like this,

John 16:13 (ESV)

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth... for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Do you know why he's going to be able to lead us into all the truth? Because the Spirit comes to take from what is, belongs to Jesus, who is the source of all wisdom and truth. He says, so He's going to come take from what is mine and give it to you, and He's going to lead you. He will lead you into all of the truth, right? What a wonderful promise. What a glorious promise.

And then, Paul says in verse 5 here in Colossians 2, “*For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the*

firmness of your faith in Christ.” And there are basically two things in this last verse that we're looking at and that Paul was pleased to see. We'll also put them up on the screen.

Two things Paul was pleased to see

- their good order
- the firmness of their faith in Christ

Two things Paul was pleased to see in the church at Colossae was their good order and the firmness of their faith in Christ. First, they're in good order. Paul obviously got a report, remember he hadn't met these people personally, so he obviously got a report on how the church at Colossae was doing and their gatherings, and their services, and he found out that they were orderly.

No, that doesn't mean it's boring. It means orderly. When we say something is orderly, we're saying it's not chaotic. We're saying that there's some organization and so forth. And that's a good thing for the church, right? To be orderly? Yeah, I think so. So, you ask the question, well why is that important? Why was Paul so happy to see that they were orderly? I mean, of all the things to say, why was that important to Paul? Well, he made a statement elsewhere to the Corinthians who were always out of order. And let me show you what he said to them.

1 Corinthians 14:33 (ESV)

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

And that word “confusion” can be translated as disorder. Our God is not a God of disorder and the confusion that comes from disorder, but he is a God of peace. That word in the Greek refers to instability and chaos. I get heart-wrenching emails from people in other countries who say that they've gone to church and they'll describe for me just absolute chaos. And I know that happens here in the United States too. But I just got a note last week from a man who was telling me about one church that was so bad that he and his wife, he said, his wife and his son were actually frightened by what they saw and heard in church.

Can you imagine leaving church and thinking and being frightened by what you saw and heard? And you know, somebody could say, well, no, wait a minute, Pastor Paul, I mean, the power of God can be frightening. And you know what? That's true, but it's never chaotic, and it's never confusing, and our God is not a God of disorder, but he's a God of peace. And so, when we look at that passage

and it says he's not a God of confusion, but of peace, we ought to say, well, that where He is, there ought to be peace, right?

Are you at peace when you're in the presence of God? I sure hope so because that's the hallmark of his presence, that there's peace. You go to a church and there's a lack of peace, and you're kind of thinking to yourself, huh, okay, what's going on here? It's confusing— one person saying one thing, and another person gets up and says something else, and I don't even understand what they said, and I'm confused here and so forth. Well, that's not the Holy Spirit. That's the soul of man expressing itself, which can be very chaotic and extremely confusing, but it's not God.

Here's the point: we ought to strive in our gatherings, according to what Paul's saying here in Colossians, to be consistent with the person of the Holy Spirit, right? That is so much my heart, or at least it has been over the years, because I believe that when we try to be consistent with the personality of the Holy Spirit, there's going to be a greater freedom that he's going to have to move and touch hearts. I think we create a difficulty for the Holy Spirit to move and to move powerfully when we're not cooperating with his personality in the fellowship.

Do you know what the Holy Spirit wants to do most among people? Do you know what he wants to do? He wants to reveal Jesus. Jesus, we saw that earlier in that other passage from John, he says, the Holy Spirit will take from what is mine and He'll reveal it to you (John 16:14). I believe that it delights the Holy Spirit no end to reveal Christ, that Jesus is the focal point, right? And yet, so many times, churches come together, and they want to focus on the person of the Holy Spirit, and all the gifts and things like that, and there's nothing wrong with the gifts of the Spirit, nothing wrong. But when they are focused on to the exclusion of what the Spirit comes to do, which is to reveal Jesus Christ, there's a problem. And we start getting out of order, right?

The second thing that caused Paul to rejoice in the Colossians and their fellowship, he was pleased to see the firmness of their faith in Christ.

Two things Paul was pleased to see

- their good order
- the firmness of their faith in Christ

And firmness is also translated in other Bibles as stability and steadfastness. We're talking about their faith here. He was commending them for their faith. It was strong. It was unwavering.

Do you want to know how you find out whether or not you have a strong faith? It's when you're under attack. Anybody can appear to have a strong faith if things are going okay. But when you are under attack, when something comes into your life that was unexpected and scary, you find out whether or not your faith is flimsy or whether your faith is strong and stable.

And as we get further into this letter, you're going to see that Paul is going to expose the fact that these people, these Christians were under attack from outside forces who were doing their best to bring false teaching into the church to kind of derail them and so forth, and so it's significant that Paul is saying at the outset here, I'm delighted that the strength of your faith is such that you guys are doing good.

But he wanted to make sure that they continued to be strong in their faith. And so he's going to go on in this letter, and that's what we're going to see in Colossians. Paul is going to go on to give a full rebuttal of all of the ridiculous and worldly philosophies, and some even religious sorts of things that people were being confronted with.

And we'll cover those obviously when we get to them, but for now we're going to close our time with just a simple question, and that is, are you standing firm in your faith? Simple as that. Are you standing firm? Are you firm in your faith? Let me give you some quick exhortations. First, from 1 Corinthians chapter 16:

1 Corinthians 16:13 (ESV)

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

Yeah, how do you like that? We're not worrying about this gender sensitivity here, are we? We're talking about acting like men. We hope that at least men are strong. But he says, "...*be strong*." This is a strong exhortation, stand firm. Stand firm in your faith, right? And then 1 Peter, chapter 5: 8-9, he writes,

1 Peter 5:9 (ESV)

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith...

You can start to see here, can't you, how important being firm in your faith is because see it's not just people, people that come along and try to do things or say things that mess you up. You've got an enemy who is very much not on your side, and he's working too to overthrow your faith. So, Peter here says, be sober-minded, be watchful, you've got an enemy. And then there's a statement that God made through Isaiah to one of the kings saying,

Isaiah 7:9 (ESV)

“If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.”

And that kind of gives you a little bit of a sense of uhhh for just a moment, but it's like, you know what Lord, I need to be firm. The question is, how are you doing? How's your faith? Is it strong? Stable? Secure? Unwavering? Or a little bit flimsy?

Well, again, you may not even know unless you're going through some difficult season. You may not even be aware of it. You might just be cruising along through life thinking you're doing good, and then, BAM, something happens. And you're like, Lord. And when that happens, when people, come to me and say, God has abandoned me, I know what's going on, and it's not God abandoning them. Their faith wavered. They weren't strong. They weren't strong in their faith. There was a weakness. The enemy found it, and he exploited it, and he'll do it viciously, so we need to be strengthened in our faith.

Faith comes by hearing, by the Word of God. Stay in the Word. Stay connected to the body of Christ. Be praying about areas of your life that you know that the Holy Spirit has showed you, shown you in the past can be a weakness, and hopefully we've gotten to know some of those areas, hopefully that we've been paying attention through life, and we realize our Achilles' heel (or heels, plural). I have several.

And so I have to really keep an eye on those areas of my life because I know the enemy is going to, that's where he's going to bite, right on that soft spot. And I just have to come to the Lord on a regular basis and say, I am such a weak man. I am so weak, and Lord, I need you to make me strong. I need you to give me your strength, and stabilize my life and my faith in you, and my trust in you, and my hope in you. Because left to myself, oh, mercy, look out, the walls collapse. The ceiling comes crashing in. Only through the power of the Spirit, the strengthening of our faith through His Word, are we going to stand, right?