Believe and Live 3.29.09

"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. 6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Colossians 2:1-7 ESV

"how great a struggle…" 'exerting,' where we get 'agony.' Not for pity party but to show his concern for them. He is in jail so he is likely talking about his prayers for them.
"Laodicea" Nearest city to Colossae, only 9 mi. away. Close relationship. Revelation.
"for all who have not seen me face to face" He has a ministry to others he has not seen also.

P: As followers of Jesus, we should struggle in prayer for one another—even those we don't know.

Am I struggling in prayer for fellow believers, those around me, even those I don't know?

"that their hearts may be encouraged" call alongside, strengthened ag. onslaught of error.
(by) "being knit together in love" lit. compacted, welded together in genuine unity, the means by which the encouragement will take place.
"to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding" a byproduct of being encouraged.
"and the knowledge of God's mystery which is Christ" Same thought…Concealed/revealed.
"in whom are hidden" Means stored up like a treasure.
"all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Against false teachers.

P: Community is an essential part of God's plan for us to deeply know Jesus.

Am I fully participating in this dimension of the faith? What is the next step for me to take?
Am I doing anything that could disrupt unity within the Body?

P: In Jesus, we have all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Am I living like this is true? Is there something that I need to examine in this area?

"I say this" All that he has just said about Christ in v.3
"in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments." Being led away by false reasoning and smooth-talk spirituality.

P: We must be on guard against 'smooth-talk' spirituality.

Am I on guard against this and growing in my knowledge of the Scriptures to be able to combat it?

"For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit" He is no detached bystander.
"rejoicing to see your good order" Military term, orderly array of disciplined soldiers.
"and the firmness of your faith in Christ." Stiffness, ref. to unyielding nature of their faith.

P: Our faith should grow stronger and sturdier as we mature.

Is this happening in my life? If not, what needs to change?
"Therefore" He is about to make application. "Because what I said is true, then do this."
"as you received Christ Jesus the Lord" Confession of historic Christianity and yours.
"so walk in him" Cultural way of saying "live out what you believe."

P: All who have embraced Jesus as Lord should live like it.

Overarching : ***Is Jesus the Ultimate Leader of my life?***
Moment by Moment : ***Am I doing what Jesus wants to do in this situation?***

1. The Bible tells us what Jesus wants done.
2. Practice the 'pause and pray' for God's guidance in the moment.

"rooted" Perfect tense. A one time event with ongoing implications.
"and built up in him" Present tense, what he is encouraging to be happening now.
"and established in the faith just as you were taught" Strengthened in what you began with.
"abounding in thanksgiving." Like a river overflowing its banks.

P: As followers of Jesus, we should be overflowing in thanksgiving.

As a follower of Jesus, am I growing in thankfulness?

The Gospel is where all of these points converge and real spiritual change begins.

Works Consulted: *Expositor's Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, ESV Study Bible, Messages by Darrin Patrick, John Piper, Tim Keller*