

Stable Faith Anchored Above

Col. 2:1-3:4

Introduction:

1. There is a lot to be said for stability.
2. Stability keeps you from falling.
3. Paul sees in these Colossians “the stability of their faith.” In the original language (“stereōma”) means “steadfastness.” It denotes “strength” and “unchangeableness.”
4. What has led to this condition in the Colossians? Is there a danger in their becoming unstable? And if so, what would lead to such instability?
5. How can our faith be stable like that of the Colossians and how can it become unstable, and what can we do to maintain stability?



Discussion:

- I. Paul rejoiced to see the good discipline and the stability of their faith (2:1-7).
 - A. Such good discipline and stability come from having received the word of Christ and then using it in the way it was intended in building up the body of Christ (Eph. 2:8-16).
 1. Christ gave gifts to be used to equip saints for the work of service.
 2. These gifts were given so that we not be tossed about by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine. The imagery is that of a ship tossed about, instead of being anchored in the revelation of God.
 3. Every joint has a part to supply. There are no spectators, only individual members working for the building up of the body.
 4. This stability of faith led to walking in Christ, rooted and built up in Him, established in faith, as instructed and overflowing with gratitude. Cf. Eph. 4:17ff.
 - B. But the churches at Colossae and Laodicea, and probably Hierapolis, the churches of the Locus River Valley, seemed to be influenced by a brand of teaching that was not good.
 1. Perhaps it was an incipient form of Gnosticism, popular in the 2nd-3rd centuries.
 2. It emphasized knowledge (cf. 2:2). Paul warns against their being deluded with persuasive argument, this in contrast to God’s mystery, Christ Himself.
 3. Whether some beginning form of Gnosticism or some other teaching, all of them stood in contrast to Christ. They were to remain stable, rooted and grounded in Christ.
- II. There was a danger in their being taken captive by “other” teaching (2:8-23).
 - A. Seeking out knowledge and wisdom seemed to be a characteristic trait of the world of Paul’s day. A trait of our day too. We have electronic information available at our finger tips on every topic imaginable.
 1. Luke observes the Athenians and those visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new (Acts 17:21).

2. Searching for knowledge was evidenced in the existence of the great libraries of the ancient world.
 3. Paul warns the Colossians not to be taken captive by philosophy and empty deception. Notice the two sources of information—principles of the world vs. Christ. There are those who practice deception. Attempting to use people for their own advantage (2 Pet. 2:1-3).
 4. The people of God have always been challenged by deception.
 - a. Eve was challenged by the deception of Satan, the deceiver.
 - b. Israel was challenged by the deceptive religions of Canaan (Deut. 18:9ff).
- B. For Paul, Christ was the fullness of Deity. This stands in contrast to the Demiurges of Gnostic teaching, who were all emanations from the deity. Christ is the one and only to whom authority belonged and who is the head.
1. Being circumcised was the mark of being associated with this one authority.
 2. Being baptized marked one as made alive to Christ.
 3. Being baptized into Christ cut one off from being associated with any other than Him.
 4. Being baptized with Christ so joins us with Him that we are joined with Him in disarming all rulers and authorities.
- C. Therefore no one is to act as our judge in regard to food, drink, festival, new moon or Sabbath day. These are things associated with the Law of Moses. Christ has superseded these things. Christ is the one to whom our allegiance belongs. When we died with Christ in baptism we were no longer given to the matters enumerated in 20-23. The distinction between Christ and “false teaching” may seem complicated. We must be familiar with the true if we are to distinguish it from the counterfeit. The counterfeit has the appearance, but it is of no value against fleshly indulgence.
- III. Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ keep seeking the things above (3:1-4).
- A. Christ is our anchor point.
 - B. Anchored with Him we must keep seeking the things above, not the things on the earth.
 - C. “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Conclusion:

1. The Colossians had a stable faith, but in order to maintain that stability they had to maintain exclusive allegiance to Christ.
2. They could not be taken captive by any “other” teaching.
3. Baptism was a turning point. Minds must be kept focused on the things above where Christ is. Minds set on things above are of value against fleshly indulgence (cf. Col. 2:23-3-17).