

Sixth meeting on Colossians: A MINISTER FOR YOUR MATURITY

- **Share:** Who has inspired you / continues to inspire you to be a Christian? Why?
- **Pray.** Give thanks for the shared stories. Give thanks for God's Word and humbly ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and to help you understand and apply God's Word
- **Read** Colossians 1: 24 – 2 : 5. Tip/suggestion: Always do the Bible reading **twice**. And always read it a bit slow, since it contains so much.
- Pay some attention to the **structure** of the text. Do you see how the passage is structured?

Every time you do Bible study, you can at home ask yourself the question: what (in main line) is the structure of this passage? When you do Bible study, you can take some time to share what you found. Suggestions how to do this at home:

- *As Bob and Annet showed, you can use crayons to mark similar words with similar colours to find it.*
- *As they also showed, you can type the passage for yourself and indent the text where needed, to make the structure clear.*
- *To find a structure you can look at connector-words like: because (indicates a reason), to/for (indicates a purpose), by (indicates a means) etc. For example:
They went to eat (action: what they do)
 because they were very hungry (reason for the action)
 since they had not been eating for hours (explains reason)
 and had worked very hard (adds to / furthers explanation)*
- *You can also look at the form of the verbs: active / passive / participles.*
- *Do this to see how every passage communicates ideas and connects these with each other. Sometimes you see a chiasm:
 Idea A
 Idea B
 Idea C (sometimes the middle is of special importance)
 Idea B restated
 Idea A restated*
- *To pay attention to the structure of the text is a way to spend longer time with the Bible text and find more joy in reading the Bible. Just to look at the text sometimes doesn't help you further. It is good to ask yourself questions like: why is this mentioned here, why in this way, has this word been used before, is the passage that follows meant to explain the previous? etc. However:*
 - *Pray for insight. We need the help of the Holy Spirit in this.*
 - *The structure is not the goal, but a means to the goal: hearing what God says*
 - *Often you will not get it completely clear. Thank God for what you found and avoid to get frustrated about what you didn't see or understand.*

Questions on the meaning of the text:

- What does Paul's ministry involve?
- Why is Paul concerned with the Christians at Colossae although he has never met them?

- What is the aim of Paul's ministry? What does this imply for us?
- How could the Colossian Christians be 'deluded/deceived' (2 vs. 4)?
- The deceiving persons seem to have taught that the Colossians were missing essential things (fulness/wisdom/maturity) that they could provide.
 - Why/wherein does Paul disagree with them?
 - What do we learn from this?

Application

- Paul was willing to suffer for the Colossian Christians and to further teach and preach them a supreme Christ who had suffered for their sins, salvation and sanctification. Paul was willing to work to see all of them stand mature, so that they would be 'windows to Christ'.
- Do you feel that ICF-Delft enables you to grow in Christ and to help others grow in Christ? What is important regarding this?
- Take time to pray together!