

# “The Spirituality of Long-Distance Relationships”

*by* Rev. John C. Tittle

**Scripture:** Colossians 2:1-7 NRSV

<sup>1</sup>For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face. <sup>2</sup>I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ himself, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup>I am saying this so that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments. <sup>5</sup>For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ. <sup>6</sup>As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What jumps out at you about this passage?
2. What is your favorite form of long-distance communication: letter writing, phone calls, emails, texts, zoom, social media?
3. In this pandemic, how has all of this physical distancing in all of life impacted you? What have you liked? Struggled with?
4. Paul talks about struggling *for* his church, but why is it so easy in hard or stressful times to struggle against others?
5. What does it mean to struggle in prayer for others?
6. Paul prayed that the people of God’s hearts would be encouraged and that they would be united in love. How might God accomplish that in us today?
7. Paul writes in our passage that “in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” How might Christ give us wisdom and insight for our living?
8. Paul mentions the deceptive but plausible arguments of the world that lead Christians astray. What do you think those might be today?
9. What does Paul mean by the phrase, “absent in body, but present in spirit?”
10. Much of the New Testament was birthed out long-distance relationships—i.e. Paul’s letters to his churches that he couldn’t be with in body. How might that help your faith in this pandemic.
11. Paul was in prison in Rome when he wrote this letter. In all likelihood he would be executed by Nero. Yet he encourages the church to overflow in thankfulness. How can we do that in hard times?