

August 16 - Week 6 – Colossians 1:24-29 – Make Christ Known

Call to Worship

Read

Colossians 1:24-29 ESV

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, **25** of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, **26** the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. **27** To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **28** Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. **29** For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Pray

Glorious Father, we are grateful for Your work to adopt Your people, make Yourself known to them, call them to make You known, and to strengthen them as you use the suffering of the saints to make them more like Christ. We are honored that you consider us your people, worthy to carry the message of Hope in Christ, and to suffer like He suffered. We need your strength to be faithful servants!

Sermon

Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

Opening Idea

Servants Carrying a Message of Care and Concern are Abused

The king died! The king had a friend and an ally who was the king in a neighboring country. When the friend learned of the king's death, he honored their friendship and loyalty to the dead king's son by sending messengers to console and encourage the son (who is now the new king) during his time of grief. The messengers approached the kingdom, and the new king's advisors caused him to doubt the kindness and loyalty of the friend. The young king captured the messengers, abused them, cut their clothes off at the waist, and shaved off half of their beards (2Samuel 10:1-5). King David, the loyal friend, sends another group of messengers to find the first group of messengers and tells them to go to Jericho to recover.

This is a good instance of people sent by a kind king with a message of consolation and care who experience suffering. Those who are commissioned with the Gospel have faced and do

face similar situations, yet their desire to obey and please the King, God, is greater than the hardships they face and will bring joy as they obey, suffer for the King's message, and look more like God The Son who suffered to bring hope and save God's people.

Let's continue studying the letter from Paul to the saints in Colossae and grow making Christ 1st Over All!

Read

Colossians 1:24-29 ESV

(SLIDE 2) **24** Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, **25** of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, **26** the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.

(SLIDE 3) **27** To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **28** Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. **29** For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Series Graphic (SLIDE 4)

Notes on Colossians 1:24-29

Ministry – Splendid Suffering (v. 24)

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church,

Paul has declared in verse 23 that the Gospel that brought salvation to the Colossians, which has been and is being declared throughout all creation, is what God commissioned Paul to serve. Paul is a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul writes about this life of service (**minister = diakonos = servant**). He reveals that this life began with his visitation of Jesus on the road to Damascus. We read in Acts 9 that Jesus visited Paul (Saul at that time) and brought Paul salvation. Paul is blinded and escorted to Damascus to the home of Ananias, who is waiting for Paul. Jesus tells Ananias that He (Jesus) has told Paul how much he (Paul) will suffer for the sake of Jesus' name. Paul reveals two things in this statement about suffering. One, that he (Paul) has and is suffering. The commission from God leads Paul to actions and areas that are met with rejection from people in those places and that he (Paul) is continuously living dependently upon God. Paul will also suffer from friendships and partnerships that fail and betray. Paul will suffer from wicked and unregenerated people who are rebellious and do evil deeds, just like Paul used

to do. God will send Paul to start churches, preach, and proclaim in places that are spiritually dark. Paul will suffer, but God's work in Paul causes Paul to rejoice rather than despair.

Paul writes that he was "filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions". Paul isn't contradicting himself in that Christ is solely responsible for salvation and justification. Paul's understanding of his suffering is that he sees his sufferings as God's continued work to empower Paul to live in reconciliation, to grow in obedience, to grow in living by Christ's peace and strength, to participate in God's salvific work, and to become more like Christ each day. Paul's sufferings were the fulfillment of God's prophetic word (how much Paul would suffer for Christ) and evidence of effective work in partnership with God. His sufferings were for the sake of the Colossians saints and for the Church (Body of Christ).

God Determined Service (v. 25)

25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,

Paul states, again, that this isn't a self-determined mission. Paul is not the commissioner of his work and ministry. He was conscripted to serve and is identified as a minister. This word is translated from the Greek term "diakonos" which is where we get our word "deacon". It is translated to mean "servant or minister". This is more about the action than it is as a title or position. Paul is writing that he is one of God's servants given the task to serve the King in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The emphasis in this phrase isn't the position or authority that Paul has, but that God has given him the Gospel and directed him to proclaim it to all people. This commission is from God, and the directive Paul has is to "make the word of God fully known". The gifting of the Gospel to Paul and Paul's good work is the evidence of God's stewardship (management, plan, task) to grow His kingdom and save His people. Paul is part of God's greater work! Paul is directed to make God's word "fully known". This means that Paul is to share God's word in all the places he is sent and will go. It also means that Paul is tasked with ongoing instruction to those who hear and believe. This is evident by this very letter. Paul didn't actually start the Colossian church, but he is writing them a letter that is part of God's work to transform them and set them apart for His good works. A third meaning is that Paul is compelled to teach and speak about the fullness of God. He is not to overlook or over emphasize any aspect of God. To overemphasize God's goodness, kindness, generosity, wrath, justice, or anger would be disobedient. God's people must know all of God and come to understand that knowing all of God is wonderful and terrifying.

Mystery Revealed (v. 26)

26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.

From the moment Adam sinned, and sin entered the world, Adam and Eve knew that there was hope. God gave them hope in Genesis 3 as He revealed the curse placed upon them due to sin. This hope was in the son born of woman who would destroy the deceiver and destroy sin and

death. This is the one who will be anointed to save God's people. People know that God would send the Messiah/Christ (Anointed One). The mystery for God's people lay in when He would arrive and who would He be. Richard Melick (theologian and author) writes that this mystery was complex. It was a mystery for the Jews as to when the Messiah would come for them and bring salvation. They believed by faith! It was also a mystery to the Gentiles. The mystery to the Gentiles was in the need for a Messiah/Christ, when the Messiah/Christ would come, and who would He be. This mystery is dispelled and God has sent a messenger to proclaim the truth and Good News that the Messiah/Christ had come, that He had come for them, and that the Messiah was Jesus the Christ. For God's people, the mystery was revealed!

Christ is No Longer a Mystery to the Saints (v. 27)

27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Paul has stated that the mystery of Christ was revealed to the saints, the sanctified people of God. He adds clarity to that statement in verse 26 by writing in verse 27 that God chose to unveil the mystery and reveal that Christ was the man Jesus (Fully God and Truly Man) who would justify God's people and bring salvation and peace. Paul emphasizes that there is a special thing happening in Colossae. They are the evidence of the richness of God giving faith and salvation to those who believe, regardless of their national origin or family line. They were once without Christ and now they are in Christ and Christ dwells in them (Eph. 3:16-17, 2 Cor 13:5, Gal 2:20). The mystery in part is that Jesus is the Christ and that those who believe in Jesus as the Christ alone, by faith alone, and by grace alone are justified. The mystery is also that justification is given to Gentiles. The mystery also includes that Christ dwells in the saint, the saint is alive in Christ, and that one day they will be gathered up to Jesus Christ and dwell with Him for eternity! People who once had no hope now have Christ and He brings hope of glory!

God's Work on the Saints (v. 28-29)

28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Christ dwelling in the saint brings work upon the saint. The Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, is the great agent of change and help. The saint isn't just a member of an exclusive club but has been given hope through Christ and now they are commissioned to proclaim Christ. Paul writes that there is a fullness to the evangelistic work. There are three parts to what the saint shares. Those three parts of proclaiming and warning. Proclaiming is sharing Good News that there is hope. Telling people of Christ and His work to adopt, give hope, and of God's great love for His Son and His people. This is an important part of the message. The second part includes a message of warning. This includes who God is as a just and powerful God with perfect knowledge who will judge people. Those who do not belong to Him will be sent away and those

who do belong to Him will be welcomed into His presence. This is a heavy message and carries with it rejection and anger. Learning that God hates sin and will pour His wrath out on those who from an unregenerated heart commit sin (John 3:36, Nah 1:2, Ro 1:18) is difficult to accept yet is part of God revealing Himself to people. Those who are given faith, accept these truths about God and the warning reveals faith as they humbly repent and receive forgiveness. The point of this full message is to, in Paul's words, "present everyone mature in Christ." Paul concludes this idea of proclaiming, warning, and teaching by writing that as God works powerfully in him, then he toils and struggles with all the energy and effort that God gives Paul as He works in Paul. The struggle is splendid in that it is the evidence of faith, God's work in Paul, brings honor, and is part of God's work to shape Paul into the image of Christ.

God Calls His People to Serve in Making Christ Known (SLIDE 5)

God's Work on the Saints (SLIDE 6)

Salvation and Maturity

Knowing God

Know More about God

Full Message

Whole Personhood of God

Hope and Warning

God's Word and God's Work

Scripture Informs Life

Servant Experience (SLIDE 7)

Joy of Obedience and Pleasing God

God's People Want to Obey and Please God

Suffering as Refining Work

Becoming More Like Christ

Shining light in dark places

Removing Idols and Ignorance

We Will Make Christ Known (SLIDE 8)

Join God's Work

Use His Word and Our Life

Embrace Joy and Suffering

Read

Ephesians 3:4-6 ESV (SLIDE 9)

4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. **6** This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Series Graphic (SLIDE 10)