

Lesson 6 – Colossians 1:24-2:3

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Review

The apostle Paul is writing a letter to the church at Colossae – a church he does not know and one that is facing heretical attacks on the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. Paul greeted the church (1:1-2) then prayed for the church, first giving thanks (1:3-8) and then praying for continued growth and steadfastness in their Lord (1:9-14). Paul then attacked the heresy that denied the deity of Christ (1:15-18) and sufficiency of His saving work (1:19-23).

Paul presented Christ as first, supreme, preeminent. Christ has reconciled you and I when we were alienated, hostile in mind, and engaged in evil deeds. He has saved us for the purpose to change us into worshipers of the true God being holy, blameless, and above reproach. That work is demonstrated by us continuing in the faith, being firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

Now Paul describes his and all believers' service in the all supreme and sufficient Christ.

The Supremacy of Christ in Apostolic Ministry (1:24-2:5)

1. The heart attitude of ministry (1:24a)

²⁴Now I rejoice...

²⁴Now I rejoice... (ESV)

Paul “was made a minister” or servant of the gospel (1:23). He was made a minister of the gospel by the will of God. He is not a self-made minister of the gospel, unlike the Gnostic false teachers.

“Now” looks back over the time since Paul had been “made a minister” and all the sufferings he had experienced.

“Rejoice” means to be glad and is in the present tense, and active voice (calling for a volitional choice of one's will) indicating that Paul continually made the choice to rejoice in the midst of his suffering. Believers are commanded to “rejoice always” (1 Thess 5:16). Paul demonstrated obedience to that command himself. He was able to make that choice in the midst of great suffering because he consistently walked in the Spirit. The noun “joy” in Galatians 5:22 is the same root as the verb in Colossians 1:24.

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ...

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:16, 22-23)

The is the same word used by James when he commands the believers to “Consider it all **joy**, my brethren, when you encounter various trials...”

²**Consider it all joy**, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)

“Consider” is a command calling for action. It denotes deliberate and careful judgment stemming from external proof, not subjective judgment based on feelings.

“Joy” is the deep-down sense of well-being in the heart of the one who knows all is well between them and the Lord. It is not an experience that comes from favorable circumstances, but even occurs when those circumstances are the most painful. “Joy” is from the root for “grace” and means having an awareness of God’s grace. It is grace dependent and circumstance independent. It is the feeling of inner blessedness or gladness of heart at knowing God’s favor.

The heart of ministry, service to the body of Christ, is joy. Paul rejoiced in the midst of suffering. For a believer who does not have joy, the issue is not that they have difficult circumstances. The issue is that they are not connected to the source of joy through the filling of the Holy Spirit. It is not about circumstances, it is about connection.

❖ **Are you joyful about ministry in the body or do you view it as drudgery?**

2. The suffering of ministry (1:24b)

^{24b} ...in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.

^{24b} ...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, (ESV)

All believers who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12). Suffering for the cause of Christ is for the sake of those who are being made disciples. Suffering could range from emotional and mental distress and abuse to physical distress and abuse. In all this Paul rejoiced. Here is Paul’s “suffering resume”. If any believer had the “right” to complain or be bitter, he did. Yet, that was not Paul’s choice.

¹¹To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; ¹²and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; ¹³when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even* until now. (1 Cor 4:11-13)

⁴but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, ⁵in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, ⁶in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, ⁷in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, ⁸by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true; ⁹as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, ¹⁰as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things. (2 Cor 6:4-10)

²³Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. ²⁴Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶*I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷*I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? (2 Cor 11:23-29)

So, what does this mean, “in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions”? In context, Paul had just stated that Christ alone is sufficient to reconcile believers to God (1:20-23). The Scriptures are clear that Christ’s death was fully sufficient to atone for sin. So, it cannot be anything related to our salvation or eternal destiny.

There is a sense in which Christ is still being afflicted when the church is persecuted. Jesus said to Paul, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4) when Saul was persecuting the church, the body of Christ. Paul told the church at Philippi that they (and us) would suffer for the sake of Christ (Phil 1:29).

Paul was receiving the hatred that was meant for Christ (John 7:7; 15:18-19; 17:14; 1 John 3:13; 2 Tim 3:12). Those “afflictions” are yet not complete since the church has not yet been raptured. The full measure of those afflictions is still lacking.

❖ **What afflictions for the cause of Christ do you have in your life?**

Suffering entered the world at the Fall (Gen 3). There are several ways someone can enter into suffering. Suffering can come about because we live in a fallen universe (e.g., disease and death). Suffering can be difficulty or hardship that comes on a person through no fault of their own (e.g., being laid off or an “accident”). Suffering can also be a result of being subject to difficulties due to another’s sin. Even so, God is sovereign over all suffering and in His sovereignty, He works **all** things for His glory and your sanctifying good (Rom 8:28-29). God calls believers who are experiencing these types of suffering to walk in the Spirit and rejoice (James 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-8; Gal 5:22-23) and persevere (Rom 5:3-4).

Suffering can also be a result of the consequences of personal sin – either the natural consequences of personal sin (1 Pet 4:12-16) or God’s discipline for sin (Heb 12:7-11) (e.g., revoked driving privileges because you broke the speed limit, marriage difficulty because you chose to sin, being fired or demoted because you chose to sin, being church disciplined because of sin, God’s weighty conviction of sin, or health issues because of sin) God calls believers who are experiencing this type of suffering to first repent (2 Cor 7:10-11) then by walking in the Spirit to rejoice (Gal 5:22-23) and persevere (Rom 5:3-4).

God is clear that believers should never be “suffering” because they have done evil. Tracing the concept of suffering through Peter’s first epistle is constructive.

¹⁹For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰**For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.** (1 Pet 2:19-25)

¹⁶and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. ¹⁷**For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.** (1 Pet 3:15-17)

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵**Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.** ¹⁷For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? ¹⁹Therefore, **those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.** (1 Pet 4:12-19)

❖ Are you quick to repent of sin?

3. The goal of ministry (1:25-27)

²⁵Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of* the word of God, ²⁶*that is*, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, ²⁷to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

²⁵of 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, ²⁶the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷To 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. (ESV)

Paul was “made” a minister by the will of God. Paul’s vocation of a minister was literally brought into existence at a point in time. The source of the “being made” is God. It is not something he sought since he was attempting to destroy the Way at that time.

“Minister” is the Greek “diakonos” meaning “servant”. It is the basic word to describe the spiritual activity of believers. “Diakonos” (servant) has a different view than “doulos” (slave). “Diakonos” views a servant in relationship to the work, where “doulos” views the relationship to the master.

In the Greek thought, “diakonos”, to give of oneself in free service to one’s fellow man, was looked down upon. “Diakonos” was viewed as degrading and dishonorable since it involved dependence, submission, and constraints of time and freedom. Paul’s declaration that God’s purpose for him (and us) was to be a “diakonos” was in stark contrast to their culture. It is becoming more and more opposite in our own culture as well. Paul’s example of service was his preeminent Lord.

⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

Ministry is a stewardship from God and should be viewed as such.

¹⁰As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Pet 4:10)

❖ Are you excited to be given a stewardship by God?

“Stewardship” means the managing a household on behalf of a master. In this case, Paul is managing the ministry that God had entrusted to him. Paul’s aim was to be found trustworthy by his Master, Jesus.

¹Let a man regard us in this manner, as **servants of Christ and stewards** of the mysteries of God. ²In this case, moreover, **it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.** (1 Cor 4:1-2)

❖ Are you striving to be faithful in your service to the body of Christ?

The Colossians were beneficiaries of Paul’s stewardship of ministry. The disciple multiplication that took place through Epaphras was benefiting them. This is another key point – believers are involved in ministry for the purpose of benefiting others, not themselves.

The phrase “so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of* the word of God” is literally in the Greek “to compete (or fulfill) the word of God”. The implication being to make known (v27 and ESV) and hence “preaching” (NASB). This is the goal of ministry – to fully make known or preach the gospel. In every sphere in which Paul found himself, his goal was to preach the gospel. But it did not stop there. His goal was to be involved in all aspects of disciple-making in order to present all who touched his life as complete in Christ (1:28).

The “word of God”, the gospel, is a “mystery”. A biblical mystery is something that has been hidden or vaguely foreshadowed, but not has been revealed. There are many truths that were hidden to the OT saints. Some examples are the incarnation (Col 2:2-3, 9), Israel’s unbelief until all chosen Gentiles are saved (Rom 11:25), the lawless work of Satan and the spirit of the antichrist (2 Thess 2:7; cf. 1 John 4:3; Rev 17:5, 7), the unity of Jew and Gentile in the church (Eph 3:3-6), and the rapture (1 Cor 15:51). Paul is directly attacking the idea that there is secret knowledge available to only a select few.

God has revealed His will to all through His word. It is available to all who desire to know Him. This “mystery” has been “hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints”. Specially, the mystery Paul is describing is that Christ lives in His redeemed church and redeemed individuals.

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Gal 2:20)

God has made known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles – us. Christ living in His people individually through the indwelling Holy Spirit gives believers the hope of glory (1 Tim 1:1).

Biblical hope is distinguished from English usage. In English, we use the word “hope” to describe desiring something good for the future with an unknown expectation that it will actually occur. Biblical hope is desiring something good for the future with the moral certainty that it will come to pass because God has promised it. Biblical hope is putting one’s trust in the promises of God. It is sure because God is faithful and sovereign.

The hope of spending eternity with God in glory is a blessing that impacts all areas of the believer’s life. Here are a few truths about biblical hope.

¹Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and **we exult in hope of the glory of God**. ³And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵and **hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us**. (Rom 5:1-5)

The Scriptures and evidences of perseverance produce hope.

⁴For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so **that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope**. (Rom 15:4)

The Holy Spirit causes believers to abound in hope.

¹³Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, **so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit**. (Rom 15:13)

Hope is an anchor of the soul at all times, difficult and easy.

¹⁹**This hope we have as an anchor of the soul**, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, (Heb 6:19)

❖ **Do you have biblical hope?**

4. The method of ministry (1:28)

²⁸We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

²⁸Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. (ESV)

Here is Paul's ministry statement. This is the how, the method, of biblical ministry. And Paul once again demonstrates that ministry is a team sport. But he also is refuting the false teachers. "You may preach something else, some hidden knowledge, but the Lord's apostle and all with him preach only Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:3)." The false teachers proclaimed a philosophy, but true ministry proclaims a relationship through the person of Christ.

"This Christ, so glorious in person and perfect in work—the incarnate God—the bleeding peacemaker—the imperial governor of the universe—it is He, none else, and none besides Him, whom we preach." (*A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians* by John Eadie)

Unlike the Colossian heretics, Paul and his ministry partners did not preach themselves or their opinions, but Christ Jesus as Lord.

⁵For **we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord**, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. (2 Cor 4:5)

❖ **Do you preach only Christ and His Word or do you preach your ideas?**

"Proclaim" means to publicly declare truth plainly and openly. It was a general term focusing on the extent to which the proclamation extended and was not restricted to formal preaching. This is in the present tense meaning that Paul and his team continually proclaimed Christ.

❖ **Are you continually preaching the gospel?**

Paul uses the phrase "every man" ("everyone" ESV) three times in his passage. He emphasizes that disciple making is for everyone, not just an elite few who adhere to the gnostic false teaching. This is instructive for us also – there is no place for prejudice in the body of Christ. Everyone needs to have Christ proclaimed to them.

❖ **Are you prejudiced in who you proclaim Christ?**

"Proclaim" is the main verb in this passage. "Admonishing" and "teaching" are the participles that describe how "proclaim" is accomplished; one negative and one positive.

"Admonishing" means to "place in the mind" and so to warn or give notice beforehand especially of danger or evil. The idea is to "lay it on the mind or heart" of the person with the stress being on influencing not only the intellect, but also the will, emotions and disposition. The idea is to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct. It describes a basic means of education. It is in the present tense indicating that the team was continually admonishing.

“Teaching” is means to provide instruction in a formal or informal setting and is the present tense meaning the team continually taught. It is teaching in such a way as to shape and influence the understanding and the will of the one taught. It is a critical part of disciple making (Matt 28:19-20). Teaching is the responsibility of every believer and is an outflow of a Spirit-filled life (Col 3:16).

❖ **Are you admonishing and teaching as an outflow of walking in the Spirit?**

The purpose of proclaiming by admonishing and teaching is to “present everyone complete in Christ.” “Complete” means complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, wanting nothing necessary to completeness. The goal of ministry is to present mature disciples to God. The only way to move believers to maturity is through proclaiming Christ via admonishing and teaching. Of course, individuals are also responsible for cooperating with God in their own growth (Phil 2:12-13; 1 Pet 2:2).

❖ **Are you striving to present people complete in Christ?**

5. The power of ministry (1:29)

²⁹For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

²⁹For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. (ESV)

Paul uses several words to describe the effort put forward towards ministry and the source of that power. The sentence literally is, “For this also I toil, striving according to the energy of Him, energizing in me in power.”

“Labor” means to engage in hard work, working to the point of exhaustion. It is in the present tense meaning Paul made this a habit, a life style. Other uses are translated: toil (Matt 6:28; Luke 12:27; 1 Cor 4:12; Phil 2:16), labor (John 4:38; 1 Cor 15:10; 16:16; Gal 4:11; Eph 4:28; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 4:10), weary (Matt 11:28; John 4:6; Rev 2:3), work hard (Luke 5:5; Acts 20:35; Rom 16:6, 12; 1 Tim 5:17; 2 Tim 2:6). A better word than “labor” is “toil”.

“Striving” means intensely struggling like an athlete; agonizing with great intensity, purpose and effort (this is the root word for the English “agony”). This is putting forth maximum effort. It is in the present tense indicating this was Paul’s continuous effort.

“Power” describes superhuman power (i.e. that power supplied by the Holy Spirit).

“Works” is the verb form of the previous “power” and means to work superhumanly, effectively to cause something to happen. Again, it is in the present tense indicating this continuously occurring.

“Mightily” is the root for the English “dynamite” and refers to inherent power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. The believer has this power available through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

This is the dichotomy, the balance of ministry effort. We must toil and strive, but it must be done in the power of the Holy Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit. The supernatural results of ministry only occur when are supernaturally energized.

¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and **His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.** (1 Cor 15:10)

❖ **Where do you get strength to walk the Christian life?**

6. The concern of ministry (2:1-3)

¹For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, ²that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God's mystery, *that is*, Christ *Himself*, ³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

¹For 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, ²that 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, ³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (ESV)

Paul's concern for those to whom he ministered was clear. It was their spiritual stability, spiritual growth, and protection from false teachers. Paul had this concern from the very onset of ministry. He loved the body of Christ and that showed throughout his life in the concern and action toward the body.

³⁶After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are." (Acts 15:36)

²⁸Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? (2 Cor 11:28-29)

❖ **Do you love the body of Christ? How is that demonstrated?**

"For" returns us to the previous verse referencing Paul's toil and striving.

"Struggle" pictures the struggle of the Greek athletes in the Olympiad agonizing to win at boxing, running, wrestling, etc. The idea is that of an athletic contest which is strenuous and demanding. This is the noun form of the verb for "striving" in 1:29.

²⁹For this purpose also I labor, **striving** according to His power, which mightily works within me. (Col 1:29)

Paul loved the body of Christ universal. He struggled, strove, agonized. Paul's struggle is so "their hearts may be encouraged."

“Heart” when used figuratively relates to the entire inner person of the will and emotions, but primarily to the intellect.

¹⁹For **out of the heart come evil thoughts**—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. (Matt 15:19)

“Encouraged” is literally “to call alongside.” The word has a wide range of meanings including: entreat, appeal to, summon, comfort, exhort, or encourage. In this context it is best understood as “strengthen” because the Colossians were attacked by false teachers and needed strengthening rather than comfort.

There are two ways the Spirit through Paul details that believers’ hearts are strengthened.

First, they are strengthened by the local body of Christ by “having (their hearts) knit together in love”. “Knit together” means that their hearts had been brought together into a united body. The tense points back to a specific time in the past and the voice is passive meaning that they did not knit their hearts together, but that God did that for them. This occurred when they were united with Christ and with each other at salvation.

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Cor 12:12-13)

“Love” is the sacrificial commitment of your will to someone else’s needs and best interests regardless of the cost to yourself. Believers’ minds and emotions are strengthened through their unity with Christ and one another as love is lived out. Again, Paul is addressing the Colossian heresy. Strengthened heart/minds do not come by elitist beliefs, but by the diversity of the body.

❖ **Are you involved in the body at a deep level so your heart can be encouraged?**

Second, they are strengthened by the “wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself”

“Wealth” means abundance or plentitude. “Full assurance” means perfect, most certain, entire confidence or firm conviction. It means assurance but conveys a stronger implication of certainty. “True knowledge” is that complete, full, complete knowledge as opposed to the Colossian Gnostics.

These thoughts together describe the maturity that comes from a vibrant relationship with Christ. This does not come from some elitist knowledge or extra-biblical teaching or extra-biblical methodologies. It comes from Christ and only Christ. Don’t be fooled by the wisdom of the world.

¹⁵This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. (James 3:15)

Only in Christ are found the “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”. “Treasures” refers to the place in which precious things are collected and laid up. Only Christ is sufficient for salvation and sanctification!

❖ **Are you seeking sufficiency (even a little) anywhere but Christ?**

Conclusion

Paul continues to attack the Colossian false teaching that denied the person and work of Christ while he presents his heart toward ministry, philosophy of ministry, and method of ministry. The heart of ministry is joy which we are able to possess in the direst circumstances by walking in the Spirit. Ministry is difficult and involves suffering. The goal of ministry is to fully preach the gospel. The method of ministry is to “proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ”. The power for ministry comes from the Holy Spirit. Finally, the concern of ministry is that hearts would be strengthened. I pray this is how we approach our service to the body!

Additional Study

1. Do you have joy (the deep-down conviction that all is well with your soul) in your life? Read Galatians 5:16-25 and Ephesians 5:18-20 and Colossians 3:15-19. Meditate on the source of joy, that is Christ Himself, and the power for joy, walking in the Spirit.
2. Think about your interactions with your believers and unbelievers. What is the goal of those interactions? Is it to fully preach the gospel as we seek to present everyone complete in Christ? Do you strive to leave other people better in their walk with Christ through every interaction you have with them?
3. Think about a time when you had a clear opening to share Christ and you chose not to take it? What were you trying to accomplish by not taking it? Maintain comfort or reputation or relationship peace? Control of your time and energy? How would that have been different if you were walking in the Spirit?
4. How would your mindset change if your concern for everyone you meet is that their heart would be strengthened in Christ?