

## Colossians – The Supremacy of Christ

### [3] Christ: The Goal of Paul's Ministry (1:24-2:7)

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1. Reading: **Col. 1:24-29**
2. Paul's letters often include a section describing his work and care for the brethren to whom he is writing
3. Benefits of considering Paul's ministry
  - a. Certainly, of benefit for those who preach to see an example
  - b. But all Christians are to imitate Paul as he imitates Christ (**1 Cor. 11:1**)
  - c. Example for all of what dedication to Christ looks like
- 4.

Discussion:

#### I. PAUL'S JOY IN SUFFERING (**COL. 1:24**)

- A. Paul experienced tremendous suffering for Christ
  1. As did the other apostles (**1 Cor. 4:9-13**)
  2. A list of some of Paul's sufferings (**2 Cor. 11:23-29**)
- B. Yet Paul rejoiced in his sufferings
  1. Consistent rejoicing in suffering (c.f. **Phil. 2:17-18**)
  2. Paul in chains as he writes (**Col. 4:10, 18; Eph. 3:1; 4:1**)
- C. Description of his suffering – "Fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church"
  1. Not that Christ didn't suffer enough (c.f. **Is. 53:10,11**)
  2. But Christ isn't physically here, men still seek to persecute Him and do so by persecuting His people (Saul – **Ac. 9:4-5**)
  3. Hendrickson: *"The apostle is undergoing these hardships in the place of Jesus; since Jesus himself is no longer here to endure them. Not as if Paul were doing this all by himself, but he is contributing his share. Other believers contribute theirs"*  
 And, *"We should bear in mind that although Christ by means of the afflictions which he endured rendered complete satisfaction to God, so that Paul is able to glory in nothing but the cross (Gal. 6:14), the enemies of Christ were not satisfied! They hated Jesus with insatiable hatred, and wanted to add to his afflictions. But since he is no longer physically present on earth, their arrows, which are meant especially for him, strike his followers. It is in that sense that all true believers are in his stead supplying what, as the enemies see it, is lacking in the afflictions which Jesus endured. Christ's afflictions overflow toward us."*
  4. Supporting scripture: **Matt. 10:25; Mk. 13:13; Jn. 15:18-21; Ac. 9:4-5; 2 Cor. 1:5; 2 Cor. 1:10; Gal. 6:17; Phil. 3:10; Rev. 12:13**
- D. Paul was shown by the Lord he would suffer (**Ac. 9:15-16**)
- E. Christians should expect to suffer for Christ (**2 Tim. 3:12**)
- F. Paul was suffering for those to whom he was sharing the gospel (c.f. **2 Cor. 12:14-15**)
- G. Are we willing to share in the suffering Christ?
- H. How about for our brethren? (c.f. **1 Jn. 3:16-18**)

#### II. PAUL'S SERVICE AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL (**COL. 1:25-27**)

- A. Paul became a minister (servant) of the church (**Col. 1:24b,25**) of the gospel (**Col. 1:23; Eph. 3:6-7**), of Christ (**Phil. 1:1**)

- B. As a steward, Paul didn't make anything about himself but about Christ and those he taught (c.f. **1 Cor. 3:5-8**)
- C. A minister of the gospel – the mystery
  - 1. The mystery – hidden from past ages and generations but now revealed (**Col. 1:26**; c.f. **Rom. 16:25-26**; **Eph. 3:1-5**)
  - 2. The mystery – salvation to the gentiles – fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the gospel (**Eph. 3:6**)
  - 3. The mystery – “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (**Col. 1:27b**)
- D. Are we servants of Christ? (**Mk. 10:42-45**)
- E. Are we servants of our brethren? (**Gal. 5:13**; **1 Cor. 9:19**; **Eph. 5:21**)

### III. PAUL'S GOAL: TO PRESENT MEN PERFECT IN CHRIST (**COL. 1:28-29**)

- A. Goal: “to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (**Col. 1:28b,29**)  
-The goal of reconciliation in Christ (**Col. 1:21-22**)
- B. How? By Preaching Christ (**Col. 1:28a**)
  - 1. Warning every man (c.f. **Ac. 20:31**)
    - IF we continue in the faith... (**Col. 1:23**)
    - reproof, correction – **2 Tim. 3:16-17**
  - 2. Teaching every man in all wisdom
    - In writing (**Eph. 3:3-4**)
    - In public and private teaching (**2 Thess. 2:15**; **Ac. 20:7, 18-21**)
    - In example (**1 Cor. 11:1**; **2 Thess. 3:6-7**)
- C. To this end Paul labored – it took effort! (**Col. 1:29**; looked to God as he labored for Him- **1 Cor. 15:10**; **3:5-8**)
- D. Are we interested in helping others be perfect in Christ?

### IV. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE BRETHREN (**COL. 2:1-7**)

- A. Paul's deep conflict (concern) for the brethren (**Col. 2:1**; **2 Cor. 11:28**)
- B. Their hearts be encouraged (comforted) (**Col. 2:2a**; **2 Th. 3:16-17**) – he doesn't write of his afflictions to discourage them (**Eph. 3:13**)
- C. That they would be knit together in love (**Col. 2:2b**; **1:4**)
- D. Attaining to all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God (**Col. 2:2c-3**; **1:9-10**; **Eph. 3:3-4**)
- E. That they would stand firm in the Lord (**Col. 2:4-7**; **Gal. 2:20**)
- F. Are these things we are concerned about our brethren?

### Conclusion:

- 1. Paul's ministry was focused on bringing others up in Christ.
- 2. Paul took seriously his work in the Lord.
  - A. Paul's Joy In Suffering
  - B. Paul's Service and Stewardship of the Gospel
  - C. Paul's Goal: Present Men Perfect in Christ
  - D. Paul's Concern for the Brethren
- 3. Do we imitate Paul as He imitates Christ?
- 4. Invitation.