

APOSTLE PAUL MISSION AND CONCERN

Colossians 1:24-29

Introduction:

Last Lords days we looked at verse 23 as the last verse of the message, so today we pick up again from verse 24 to verse 29 in our text.

We saw that Paul was introducing the major doctrines to the believers as a mark to stand against, as if there is a line that is drawn in the sand that must not be crossed over.

I said it was just as in a football match or any field sport, that there are lines marked out on the field boundary that represent the boundaries of the game to be played.

If at any time the rules governing the game are crossed then there, there is a penalty to be taken against the opposing side. (Judgement)

If then the church at Colosse or we today are to understand our position in Christ then we need to know those major rules of doctrines which the Apostle Paul was teaching and preaching. And what the consequences will be if they were not followed. The crossing over the line in the sand if you will.

But today we are going to focus on Paul's mission and concern.

Remember we said that from the scriptures we concluded the following as to what Paul was teaching. Paul's major theme was Christ the Lord, and His deity.

Those major doctrines presented to us the deity of Jesus Christ our Lord God and Saviour of the world. They were seen by us as

1. **THE DELIVERER v13.**
2. **THE REDEEMER v14**
3. **THE VISIBLE GOD v15**
4. **THE CREATOR v16**
5. **THE ETERNAL GOD v17**
6. **THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH v18**
7. **THE POSITION OF CHRIST v19**
8. **THE PEACE MAKER v20**
9. **THE PROTECTOR v23**

I would like for us this morning to take into consideration in light of what has been said in these verses and to now concentrate on the following verses on hand as a result of what we have already learned about our Lord through the Apostle Paul.

Colossians 1:24-29 (was written about 60AD) while Paul was in prison.

Paul was made a minister of Christ.

The last half of the previous verse 23 is transitional, in that it is shifting the reader's attention from God to the Apostle Paul's commission and also from the content of God's message to the character of God's messenger.

1. We can see that it was the Lord who said that Paul would suffer as a result of following Him.
2. All through history we see all those martyred as a result of standing up for or following the Lord God.
3. So when you are suffering as a result of following the Lord don't be surprised?

And now our text.....

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

1. When Paul begins with this opening quotation he is combining the love of Christ in him with the expected sufferings that would come as a result of following after His Lord.
2. Paul lets us know some of those hardships he had suffered already.

2 Corinthians 11:24-26 ²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

²⁶ In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

3. Would you or I today say that we are happy to suffer afflictions or any other discomfort for the Lord.
4. What about that we sometimes find it too much to sit through an hour of a sermon when the air conditioner is not on.
5. These inconveniences pale in comparison of true suffering for the Lord.

- a) The fact that Paul has to endure hardship in the ministry of the gospel is but only a pleasure for him. The reason for this is that Christ's treasures far outweigh the sacrifices he would have to make to serve the Lord.
- b) Those sufferings all the more sealed for him the value of his mission that God had given to him. The very reason why Paul had been made a minister.
- c) If we would remember back to the scriptures in Acts 9 we remember that the Lord said he would suffer for his name sake.

Compare Acts 9:15-16 (63-70AD)

¹⁵ But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

¹⁶ For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

- d) So it was evident that he would endure hard times for serving the Lord.
- e) At the time that Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians he was sitting in prison in Rome rejoicing for what he had done for the Lord.
- f) To **"fill up"** was a quote Paul used to demonstrate the need for the gospel message to be proclaimed as a result of Christ's sacrifice which was laid out for all men to receive as the saving grace of the gospel message.

Ephesians 1:21-23

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

²² And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the **head over all things to the church,**

²³ Which is his body, the **fulness of him that filleth all in all.**

- g) Paul was a faithful vehicle by which God had chosen to spread His wonderful message of salvation to a people that were not His people, the Gentiles.

²⁵ **Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;**

The transitional ending of verse 23 to the mission of Paul is again spelled out here for us all to read in verse 25.

- a) When the Apostles office of Paul was under consideration where was Paul?
- b) Well he was at his usual working place, persecuting the disciples.
- Paul was the obvious tool in God's hands, but Paul still had not known it. Like many even today, that God has not yet called.

As we read Acts 9 we see Paul threatening the disciples of the Lord.

Acts 9

9. And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

² And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

³ And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

⁴ And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

1. Paul had changed, because God had witnessed to Him. Though the bright light from heaven had blinded his eyes, yet now he could see spiritually clear.
2. It's at times like this when we are spiritually blinded by what the world has to offer, that we need to close our eyes and think on the things that God has offered to us instead. Sometimes you need to close your eyes to hear clearly what is being said.
3. The lust of the eyes is perhaps one of the greatest temptations that cause us to sin. Just because we see a nice car or a nice house, or a nice piece of cake does not mean that we ought to have it, or that it will be good for us.
4. Closing our eyes physically and opening them spiritually most often puts things into perspective and makes us grateful for what we already have, or how we should behave.

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world, **the lust of the flesh**, and **the lust of the eyes**, and **the pride of life**, is not **of the** Father, but is **of the** world.

The lust of the eyes is why what made humanity fall in the first place when Adam and Eve were tempted. Gen 3.

1. Paul was made a minister because Christ had made him a minister and had given him the mandate to preach.
2. Paul went into the world fighting and came out serving.
3. That is the true character of a Christian. If you don't see it in yourself....Question it.
 - a) The dispensation of God is a time period upon which God acts.
 - b) Paul was at the right time when God called out to him.
 - c) The fact that Paul says in verse 25 **the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;**

- d) This was the time God had chosen to reveal to the Gentiles His great and wonderful message of Jesus Christ our Savior.
 - e) It was also a time that God would use the Apostle Paul to capture the NT as we know it today.
- We can only know God through His word today.
 - **1 Corinthians 13:10** But when that which is **perfect is come**, then that which is in part shall be done away.

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

- a) The mystery is the Gospel message.
- b) The other mystery is that the Gospel message would be delivered to the Gentiles.

Romans 9:24-26 ²⁴ Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? ²⁵ As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. ²⁶ And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, **Ye are not my people**; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

1. For many generations people have been unsure or in question about Gods saving grace and how it was to be achieved. When we look at the NT it seems much clearer for us now.
2. So when we look at OT scriptures only it may not be to clear for us also. Case in point Hosea. (Osee).

Hosea 1:10 (Osee)

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, **Ye are not my people**, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

Hosea 2:23

And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were **not my people**, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

1. But thanks to the NT we can clearly review these scriptures with certainty and gather the grace of the gospel to embrace its love from our saviour.
2. The Book of Ephesians is also comparable with Colossians. In that it reveals the mystery of the resurrection of Christ and the power of the Gospel.
3. The message to the Ephesian church was very similar to that of the Colossians.

Ephesians 3:1-13

3 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places **might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,**

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

➤ **Paul uses the word “*mystery*” as a metaphor for God's plan of salvation for the Gentiles.**

1. The tendency today is for the Christian to plain sail across a smooth ocean water, with nothing but pleasure in his wake.
2. But it is a far cry from the contrast of the scriptures in the days of Timothy and Paul when they endured hardship for the gospel.

2 Timothy 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: **but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel** according to the power of God;

- Our Lord never leaves us wondering, especially wondering who He is.

THE GENTILE BLESSING.

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

- a) Perhaps the best scripture to sum up the riches of the glory of this mystery is Romans 8:10

Romans 8:10 ¹⁰ And if Christ be in you, the body is **dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**

- a) Your Body is dead.
- b) Your spirit is life because of righteousness.
- c) Your hope of Glory is to have Christ in you.

Romans 9:23-24

23 And that he might make known **the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy,** which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 **Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?**

- a) How much love did Jesus Christ show towards humanity?
- b) He showed the world enough love that all should not perish as we see in John 3:16.
- c) But, how magnificent it is to see that he would save the Gentile people among whom we once were?
- d) The Riches of the glory of this mystery is Jesus Christ being in us. (Gentiles saved by His blood).
- e) This means the riches of the glory is to spend our eternity with our Lord.

28 **Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:**

- a) The only message that came from the lips of the Apostle Paul was that of Jesus Christ. He said from his own lips "We preach Christ crucified".
- b) Even though the messages were often rejected, he preached nothing else.

1 Corinthians 1:23 But **we preach Christ crucified**, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

- c) The only thing that we are called to do just like the Apostle Paul is to preach.
- d) We are not called to change people's lives; that is between them and the Lord.
- e) If the Word of God won't change them, then we certainly can't.
- f) Just like the Apostle Paul, we too are to warn every man.
- g) We are to teach every man in all wisdom of the scriptures.
- h) The hope of the Apostle Paul was that those who embraced the scriptures and called upon the name of the Lord, would be presented perfect in Christ Jesus in the coming days.

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

- a) The first to acknowledge the severity of preaching God's Word was the Apostle Paul.
- b) He never excluded himself as working for the Lord. He would always be labouring in the Word for the Lord to warn and teach others.
- c) Paul was under conviction by the Spirit of God. He was Holy Spirit filled, which caused Paul to strive for the Gospel. He was never done in preaching and was always onto the next mission to preach. (Acts 16:10).

➤ Not to lose sight of this chapter in Colossians. The servant of God was busy.

1. Busy with sowing the seeds for the harvest. The great co labourer of Paul was Epaphras working in the Lord's fields of Gentiles.
2. And how do we know that?
3. The scriptures tell us he was.

Colossians 4:12

¹² Epaphras, **who is one of you, a servant of Christ**, saluteth you, **always labouring fervently for you in prayers**, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

- Thanks be to God for His Gentile Grace.
- All praise is given to Jesus Christ our Savior.

PRAYER.....