

Christ in You, The Hope of Glory

Colossians 1:24-2:5

July 30, 2017

DAY 1: The twofold ministry

1. Paul is countering the false teachers that were plaguing the believers at Colossae. It's not enough to just teach the truth to them. He must also counter their teaching with the signs or godly effects of his teaching and ministry, helping to add credibility to his teaching. We would say, "the proof of the pudding is in the tasting."

2. In our section of scripture for this week Paul tells them to examine:

- His calling,
- The shape of his ministry,
- The aims of his ministry, and
- The signs of God at work in Paul, himself.

Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Colossians 1:25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—

Colossians 1:26 ... the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

Colossians 1:29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

3. The first aspect of his ministry is this: he is a servant of the gospel, to make the word of God fully known.

a. Re-read 1:25.

b. Paul's eyes are on making sure people hear "the word of God in its fullness." The false teachers were insinuating that the gospel Paul preached was less than the full gospel that they had discovered.

4. The second aspect of his ministry is this: he is a servant of the church, to make the people of God fully mature.

a. Re-read 1:28.

b. "Perfect" in Christ does not mean "perfect" as we think of it. The Greek word means "mature."

DAY 2: The twofold proclamation

Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

1. Paul tells them there are two parts to his proclamation. The first is, “Christ in you...”
 - a. The staggering answer to the awful problem of rebellious nature is not just a new set of beliefs, nor a new set of religious deeds to do. The answer to the problem of rebellious human nature is a person!

 - b. The risen Christ lives in the heart of every genuine Christian. It is Christ, alive, in the human heart that daily works to reverse the old nature of sin, and to slowly transform our very nature, little by little into the likeness of Christ!

 - c. This part of the message has to do with the believer in this life, his present.

 - d. In spite of the rebellious nature we once had, and to some extent still have to fight until heaven, Christ comes to live in us—all by sheer grace!

2. The second part of Paul’s proclamation is, “... the hope of glory.” There are several very important ramifications we take from this point!
 - a. Though Christ does live in us, and we ARE saved, we do not have the full POSSESSION of salvation YET.

 - b. What we have is the PROMISE of full salvation, to come.

 - c. The greatest gift of Christ in the present is hope for the future.

 - d. Since He is in heaven our hopes are inevitably centered there.

 - e. For THIS life, grace is sufficient.

 - f. Glory belongs to the age to come.

3. What strikes you most from today’s devotional?

DAY 3: The twofold qualification

1. Paul now addresses two qualifications that should give him credibility with the church at Colossae.

2. His first qualification: he has shared in the fellowship in Christ's sufferings (hardships)

a. Re-read v. 24.

b. What does he mean by sharing in Christ's suffering?

c. Perhaps he was thinking back to his days prior to his conversion. He persecuted, not just a number of Christians, but the Lord Himself! (Acts 9:4) He also discovered that his chief privilege as Christ's instrument was to be understood in terms of suffering for the sake of the Name (Acts 9:15-16).

d. His ministry was not a posh, kick back and enjoy the ride kind of ministry. He was paying a price to get the gospel to people.

3. His second qualification: he has shared in Christ's resurrection through his toils.

Colossians 1:29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

a. Paul was not just "dabbling" in the ministry, doing something when convenient.

b. This verse is loaded with "power" words: labor, struggling, energy (all), powerfully, and works.

c. The false teachers were apparently offering some kind of more supernatural power than what Paul and his team had taught. Paul is refuting that false claim, not just through his teaching but by his life!

d. The power that Christ provides us does not come in a vacuum! It comes **as we need it, as we are engaged in the ministry with people!**

e. What Paul seemed less aware of was the feeling of power in his life. What he was more in tune with was the hard labor, the toil that power enable.

4. What strikes you most from today's devotional?

DAY 4: Paul's special concerns

Colossians 2:1 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.

Colossians 2:2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,

Colossians 2:3 ...in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2:4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.

Colossians 2:5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

1. Paul is now speaking very personally to the people. When I was a much younger Christian, the impression I had of Paul was one of Type-A, a driver, more mission-centered than people-centered.

2. I wonder if the false teachers were telling the people of Colossae the same thing!

3. It is one thing to “teach” a message of love. It is quite another thing to “live” a message of love!

4. Once again, “the proof is in the pudding!”

5. Re-read v. 1.

6. How is it that Paul could have such a determined commitment to people with whom he has never met?

7. What were some of the fervent hopes he had for these people?

8. Which of these is a fervent hope for you?

9. Would you be able to say, like Paul, that you had these kinds of fervent hopes for anyone in your life?

10. What strikes you most from today's devotional?

DAY 5: Paul's special warning and special joy

Colossians 2:4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.

1. What is it that the apostle fears will happen to the believers in Colossae? (v. 4)
2. It is one thing to be deceived by lies. What is trickier is to be deceived by “fine-sounding arguments.” He can either mean what we might call eloquence, or teaching that may sound “high-minded” (or what we might call today, “open-minded”).

Colossians 2:5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

3. What is it about the Colossians that brings Paul “delight?”
4. Is there a brother or sister in the Lord that is delighted by your progress in the faith?
5. Turn this around. Are there younger believers for whom their progress in the faith brings you delight? Have you told them?