**Colossians:** God’s Secret Plan to Save Your Soul

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| 7.12.15 | Grace | Col 1:24-2:7 | Pt 4 | Steadfast faith is evidence of JC’s work | 35 Min |

**Prayer and Introduction:**

Attn: 67 yr. old blood donor (A-1) Not your blood that saves. Nothing but His blood.

Relv: Faithfulness is not what you do, it is who you pursue. Fruit of F is evident.

Them: “a long obedience in the same direction” (Peterson). What does it mean to be F

Struct: Con’t with “Col” and find a sharpening focus in the midst of life’s distractions.

**Turn to Colossians 1:24 on Page 983.** Take a Bible if needed READ ALL VERSES

Context: (before) The gospel of Jesus Christ proclaims that Christ is our **creator, sustainer and redeemer. By Him only we find purpose, comfort and acceptance**. (After) “In Him” – **The work of Christ in us is made clear in the next passage**.

**It’s all worth it: Suffering for Christ Sake is a part of God’s Plan (24-29)**

* **Rejoice in my suffering**—is countercultural. The pursuit of happiness is the goal of Americans, yet Paul (James, and Jesus) rejoiced in their suffering. Rom 5, Jam 1:2
  + **Are Christians masochists?** A m. is someone who take pleasure in pain. We rejoice in pain b/c by suffering we develop the virtue of perseverance, maturity.
* **For your sake**—the hope that through his loss others might gain. What a great perspective. App: There is nothing like suffering to bring out selfishness; yet in our suffering we should have an attitude to serve. Keither served well. Suffer unselfishly.
  + Paul’s attitude was that JC took the blows for Him, so will take the blows for JC.
* **Suffered as part of God’s plan**: Written from prison. **Earthly loss, heavenly gain**.
  + **Paul’s attitude—**“Oh Death where is your sting?” **Ho 13 and 1 Cor 13.**
  + **Filling up what is lacking in Christ’s affliction** is not insinuating that we add anything to Christ’s atonement: Rather, living out a predetermined amount of suffering to be endured by God’s people before JC returns (see Rev 6:9-11)
  + **JC accepted Suffering as a part of his call,** “Not my will, but yours be done.”
* **Suffering well is a part of stewarding my call**: Paul said that it was a **stewardship** of his call as a **minister of the Gospel.** We all have a call—if you follow JC you’ve been called to stewardship of your one life. *oikonomia* which means “administrator”
* **(26-29) WHAT are we stewarding**? The call to make the hope of glory known!
  + The **mystery** revealed was the glory of Christ in [you] us, which is the hope of glory. Christ is God Himself and *elis doxa –* **hope of glory** now richly in our life.
  + When we get this hope, we are to live it our for the sake of maturity in Christ.
* 29-Christ supplied Him with spiritual energy **powerfully working within him**.

**He struggled for the Gospel but made it through with flying colors:**

* v. 1 - mentioned group of believers in Laodicea. A larger city on the trade route, 9 miles NW. B/c these two cities were so close they probably worked together. MHC
* **Struggling** or **agonizing** to point of exhaustion. Yet energized by Christ’s power.
* **Dependability is fulfilling what I agreed to do even when it requires unexpected sacrifices (Prov. 15:4).** Sitting with Jacque this week. **Hope of Glory!**

He prayed that their: True faith goes into operation when there are no earthly answers.

1. **Hearts would be encouraged:** nothing lifts our eyes better than the hope of G
2. **Hearts would be knit together in love:** They will know we are C by our love.
3. **“Reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery”—**Which is Christ! No special rev. needed. Christ is for all people.

**Knowing the person of Christ and the power of the Gospel is the believer’s best protection against deception. (1-2)** easily sway w/o truth.

* **Paul didn’t want them to be swayed by smooth words or convincing** (possible) arguments. He wanted them to be presented **complete in Christ.** Firm Foundation.
* **Though the philosophy may sound good (Plausible) they had everything they needed in the revelation of Christ** (2:8-10; 2:3). Don’t be easily swayed!
* **Christ, being the exact imprint of God (Acts 17:27) embodies all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**. We experience and express JC’s supremacy when we value Him above all things. Young: Throw off Childish things. Old: Invest in young
* **“It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”** 1 Cor 1:30 NIV

**Jesus cannot be ignored and adored. (3-4)**

Be honest: **Do you adore JC in some spaces of your life and ignore Him in others?**

* Yes! We want to be free from the distractions that accidentally replace Christ. **You fix this by valuing Christ more**. What is replacing Christ in your life? It is weak.
  + Your object of affection is known by what or who you pursue with your life.
* **If you are ignoring JC you adore something else**. App: Evaluate & realign.
* **v-5** When two people believe in Christ, they are presumably together **in spirit.** Geography didn’t keep the hearts of Paul and the Colossians from being knit tgthr
* Two military words are used here to exhort the Colossians – **good order** and **firmness**. Like troops drawn up in a battle, standing firm and resisting the enemy.

**To Walk in Him requires growing roots in a firm foundation. (5-7)**

* He is calling them back to their foundation in Christ Jesus the Lord. **Walk in Him**
* Giving your life to Christ begins at salvation but is a continual submission to His leadership. This results in being **established in faith, rooted** and **built up. Ps 1.**
* **True faith shows up in faithfulness.** We discipline ourselves for godliness.

**In *A Joyful Christian*, C.S. Lewis said that we see three reactions to Christ in the Gospels: Hatred–Terror–Adoration**. “No trace of people expressing mild approval.”

* When we follow Him, it is an all-out surrender and adoration of Him as Lord of our life. **It is often the good things in life that nudge Christ aside in our life**.
* Our ministry or activity in church can move aside JC from His rightful place in life
* **When we make JC stand beside/behind things in our life we’ve completely missed his supreme value & vital impact.** Good things=distraction**.** Focus=value

**Steadfast Faith is Evidence of Christ Working In Me** (not “If” but “Will”)

* **A life of prayer and worship is outflow of steadfast faith**. Public and private fruit.

1. **In prayer** (eight times, Lk 18:1–8; Col 4:2): Like persistent widow, trust that God’s purposes will be fulfilled when you are joining his purposes continually.
   * “Satan trembles when he sees, the weakest saint upon his knees.” – Newton
   * I want hell to say when I step out of bed, “Oh no, he’s up.” And fight w/ prayer
2. **In well doing** (five times, Rom 2:7; Gal 6:9): patient in well-doing, never neglecting to “Love God and Love others.” **Knit together in love**. Making most of every opp.

* **The shooter in Charleston almost didn’t shoot b/c of their love.**
* **The forgiveness the showed him was not their own** but strength of JC.
* **Do you do things for selfish gain or are you genuinely working for others?**

1. **In Christian teaching** (four times, Acts 2:42; 2 Tm 3:14): Devoted to Apostles teaching. Acts 6:4, prayer and teaching God’s Word. Corp and Private study.

* **The truth doesn’t’ change according to our ability to stomach it.** We study with faithfulness in order to be convicted, changed and made Christ-like.
* Steadfast faith stays committed to what God teaches to have more of what God offers us. “The truth will set you free” in Jesus Christ.
* **Love God’s word because you love God.** Find a way to be in it everyday.

APPENDIX:

**A-1: The Man who gave 100 Pints of blood**

* There was a man named Bill who gave over 100 pints of blood over the years of his life.
* Many people owed their lives to this man’s kindness.
* The man was asked in an interview why did you give so much blood?
* Response, “Well, when the final whistle blows I will stand at the gates of heaven and St. Peter will ask me what I did to earn the right to enter. I will tell him I gave 100 pints of blood, I figure that will get me in.”
* Probably joking, but what if he wasn’t?

(cutting room floor):

* He uses the image of being **rooted** like a try or being **built up** like a building.
* **join continually, follow steadfastly** (Lit. meaning of *proskartereō*)
* We live out our **established faith**, **walking in Him**, by:

1. **Committing to be submitted/surrendered to His will** (Romans 12:1-2)
2. **Seeking to learn from Him, His life and his teaching** (cf. 3:16)
3. **Recognizing the Holy Spirit’s power working in me** (Acts 1:8; Gal 5:22)

* John 15—**As a plant draws nourishment from the ground (or the branch from the vine) we too draw out life-giving power from Christ**. When Christ is our strength, we are not bound by human boundaries. Joshua. Moses. Esther. David. Ptr.
* v. 7 - We are to **abound in thanksgiving** because we cannot stay rooted in our own strength but **need to work of God to sustain us** and guide us away from disaster.