

Colossians 1:24-2:5

The measure of our success in life, and certainly in ministry, is ultimately summarized by one standard in God's kingdom—faithfulness.¹

²⁴ Now I rejoice 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, ²⁵ of 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, ²⁶ **the mystery hidden for ages and generations** but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To 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. ²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

2 For 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, ² that 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**, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. ⁵ For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Faithful Servants of Jesus:

1. Suffer as Servants of the Church (1:24-25)²

- A. By embracing suffering for Christ (1:24)
 - a. *I rejoice* (v. 24): This word means to be in a state of happiness or well-being. Paul can rejoice in suffering because he knows it is “for the sake of his [Jesus’] body” and is...
 - b. *...filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions* (v. 24): Jesus told his followers that they would suffer just as he did...*until* he returns! Paul viewed his sufferings as a part of the whole that would bring about Christ's eventual return.
- B. By enduring suffering for Christ (1:25a)
 - a. Paul's suffering was also a part of his ministry given to him by God *for* the church (v. 25)
 - b. When we suffer for Christ, it is never meaningless, it is *a part* of our ministry to the body of Christ. He uses our suffering to advance his kingdom as we anticipate the consummation of it.

2. Strive for the Mission of the Church (1:25-29)

- A. By laboring to make the mystery of Christ known (1:25b-27)
 - a. All of the Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ.
 - b. The “mystery” of God that was *not in plain sight* (hidden) has now been revealed.
 - c. Believers now possess the “mystery” within them- Christ, the hope of glory.
- B. By laboring to grow believers into maturity in Christ (1:28-29)
 - a. Evangelism + Discipleship
 - b. Paul emphasizes growth & maturity in Christ that will be perfected in heaven when we are united with him.
 - c. Everything we do should be driven by a similar aim- to bring people to Christ, to help them grow in Christ, so that one day they will be mature/perfected in him (in heaven!)

¹ R. Scott Pace, “Colossians,” in *Exalting Jesus in Colossians and Philemon*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2021), 41.

² Outline adapted from the above resource (CCE: Colossians).

3. Strengthen the Members of the Church (2:1-5)

- A. By affirming God's people with love (2:1-2a)
 - a. Paul uses an affectionate "you" to begin this section (2:1)/Personal affirmation
 - b. His desire is that their "hearts may be encouraged & knit together in love"
 - c. We should look for ways to affirm God's people in order to encourage their hearts, stimulate their affections for each other, and knit them together in love.
 - i. Ex. Life groups!
- B. By anchoring people in the truth (2:2b-3)
 - a. Paul's goal is not just that people will love each other, but that they will have *understanding* and *knowledge*. The sum of this knowledge is Christ, *in whom* are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. What a statement!
- C. By alerting God's people to the risk (2:4)
 - a. It is possible to be deluded by convincing arguments, winsome personalities, or even (I would argue) popular music
- D. By assuring God's people in the faith (2:5)
 - a. Paul assures the Colossians that their faith is firm and strong. His letter is not a rebuke, it is an encouragement to continue *standing firm*!

Discussion:

1. Are your pastors/leaders faithful in these things?
2. Are you *faithful* in these things?