

True Ministry Colossians 1:28-29

Paul has spent most of Chapter 1 talking about the Pre-eminence of Christ – His Deity : Image / Creator / Head /

A) And His Death – Which provided the Possibility of Reconciliation between God & Man –

B) Then Paul talked about – How the Preeminence of Christ affected him
 Personally – He became a Minister of Christ – Steward of Gospel

C) Paul wraps up Chapter one by giving us a Description of

True Ministry: Col 1:28-29

28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

D) As we go thru this passage today there are 4 things that I want us to consider as we see a description on true ministry.

#1 – We want to consider the **SUBJECT** of our ministry: Focus Person.

#2 We want to consider the **STYLE** of our ministry:

#3 We want to consider the **SUM** of our ministry: The Goal for God’s people

#4 We want to consider the **STRENGTH** of our ministry – How we go about accomplishing that Goal.

1st consider – The Subject of our Ministry: The Focus Person- Paul puts it this way – *It is Him that we Preach*

A) Our focus is not to be on Principles... How to have a good marriage / How to Successful parenting / friendships / work place

B) Not Principles / not programs / but a Person: *We preach Jesus !!!!*

Back in 1968, if you purchased a wristwatch at the local department store or jewelry store, chances were that it was a spring-driven, windup timepiece manufactured somewhere in Switzerland. At that time, the Swiss dominated the world market, selling two of every three watches sold. But just 12 months later, 50,000 Swiss watchmakers were out of work.

Within a decade their market share had plunged from a robust 65% to a paltry 7%. The obvious question is ... what happened?

Many industry observers point to the amazing development in 1967 of a new type of watch: an electronic timepiece that relied on quartz crystals. It was less expensive and more reliable than the mainspring watches. As news of the invention surfaced, the Swiss scoffed. Instead of capitalizing on the new technology, they concluded that electronic timepieces would never catch on.

Guess what ? They were wrong!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Today Japan is the center of the watch making industry.

But the development of a better watch isn't the real reason for the end of the Swiss dominance. Most of us today wear watches made anywhere *but* Switzerland because Swiss watchmakers simply *forgot what business they were in*. They totally lost sight of *what their product really was*.

They thought that they were in the business of producing handmade, spring-driven watches backed by a tradition of outstanding craftsmanship. But they weren't. In reality, they were in the business of telling time and their product was a portable timepiece. And whether that product worked because of springs or electronics didn't really matter in terms of the marketplace.

A similar observation could be made about many Churches today- They have forgotten what they are supposed to be doing – **What focus is**

Just as **WATCH MAKERS – make watches that TELL TIME**

CHRUCHES PREACH CHRIST !!!! /

Point people to Christ !

That is what the ministry is all about. That is to be the essence of it.

Heb 10:7 *Then I said, 'Behold, I have come -- In the volume of the book it is written of Me --*

A) For that reason everything that we cover from the Scriptures is to always be connected to Christ. You can't disconnect Christ from the Scriptures.

B) We are preaching a Person. Christianity is not a code of ethics. It is not merely a creed that one is to embrace, We present a Person to people.

1) And true Christianity, biblical Christianity, is the only religion in the world that is tied to its founder in such a way that you cannot separate the teaching from the founder.

C) You can separate **Buddhism from Buddha**. He was simply the so-called messenger. **You can even separate Islam from Mohammed.**

1) You can separate Hindu teaching from the various gurus, and so forth.

D) **But you cannot separate Christianity from Christ**. See, everything has to do with Him as a Person. **He is the focal point of all the teaching.**

When we call a person to become a Christian, we're not calling them to join a church, or to agree with a certain creed,

A) We are not calling them to agree to live according to a certain code.

B) **We are calling them into a relationship with a living being**. We're calling them into a personal relationship with God, God the Son, Jesus Christ.

1) We are calling them to Embrace Christ and to follow Christ !!!!

C) So you cannot disconnect Christ from Christianity. If you do, you have no Christianity. Paul said, *"Him we preach."*

You know, there are many subjects that we can address. We can address the subject of marriage and family.

A) We can address the subject of **ethics or morality** and things of that nature. We can address social issues and concerns.

B) But we must always do so with Christ at the center. Christ must be first. Everything must be under the shadow of Christ.

C) Those things are all secondary, and again they must be connected to Christ because Scripturally you cannot disconnect the two.

2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue*

One Commentator : *This is my conviction and belief, that if the church in America would simply return to the biblical model for ministry, of preaching Christ and making Christ the focus, this nation would be transformed over night. The tragedy of the modern church is this: there are hundreds of thousands of churches in America, but very few focus on the practice of Preaching Christ.*

Remember what Paul said to the Church in Corinth - 1 Cor 2:1-2

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified

A) Folks that is to be our Model as well – To **Preach Christ Crucified** for the sins of the world –

B) **Preach Christ Risen and alive** – living in the heart of all those who put their trust in Him!!

1) To preach Christ as our way of Access to the Father

C) **Preach Christ as our ADVOCATE** in heaven – our defense attorney

1) Satan the accuser of the Brethren comes to make accusation – Jesus our defense attorney pleads our case – The price has already been paid

D) We preach Christ our Victorious Hero over the enemy – which makes us more than conquerors thru Him who loved us
 1) We can walk in victory as we walk in the Strength of Christ living in our hearts by His Spirit !!!!

E) We preach Christ as our Merciful and faithful High Priest who can sympathize with us in our time of weakness

1) That is what is meant – when Paul says we Preach Christ –

F) Everything about our walks is connected to Who Christ is & Who we are in Jesus !!!!

In a True Biblical Ministry: Christ is the central message – Who He is God in the flesh

A) What He did – Cross – Paid the Price for the sins of Humanity

B) Where He is now : Risen and Ascended Sitting right hand of father

1) **What He desires** : To live in and thru the Life of His Followers

C) So first of all we see what is to be the subject of our Ministry: *Him we preach*

2nd We want to consider the STYLE of the Ministry:

A) Paul's proclamation included two aspects, one negative, one positive. **Warning & Teaching**

B) The gospel is a double-edged sword. On One side There is that need to warn, and to admonish, and to rebuke.

1) On the other side there is the need to comfort & to strengthen, & to build.

C) Those of you who are parents understand this: There is a place for comforting – teaching encouraging our kids

1) But we also need to Warn – We warn them because we love them

The stove will burn you – Plug shock / Drugs will destroy / etc –

D) We warn them because we love them / we want to protect them / We want the best for them

Listen a Church that loves it's people will regularly warn them about the dangers of living for the flesh /

A) They will warn about the wrath of God that will come against the sinner who doesn't repent of their sin

B) They will warn about the false teachers who come into the flock seeking to prey upon it

C) There are many signposts in the Scripture that say, "*Warning. Do not enter. Do not go in this direction. Do not listen to that*

1) Do not follow these kinds of teachings." And we have an obligation as ministers to set that forth.

D) It's part of the task and the duty of the minister of the gospel to do this, to warn. { Not always Popular

1) "*A Pastor who only feeds the sheep but doesn't warn the sheep is only fattening the sheep up for the kill*"

Now there are a lot of Churches today who IGNORE this responsibility of Warning the Sheep

A) And you can only conclude from this – that they really don't love their people

B) Their mentality is this: *We want Church to be a positive experience / Feel like coming to Church was a good thing today*

1) *We want people to feel good about themselves when they leave*

C) *So for that reason we are not going to talk about negative things – Not going to mention sin / Morality / etc – Only teach / build / comfort*

1) *Talk about family / talk about being successful as a Christian in the home in the work place / at your hobbies /*

D) That is a very popular approach to ministry today: Not going to WARN !

1) Not going to ADMONISH / REBUKE { Negative – don't want

Analogy: Oregon rafting trip - Danger signs – you need to get out of your boat walk it past the falls -

A) Now what if the park rangers said – *we don't want to ruin people's day – with this negative sign – we want them to have such a great experience on the river* – [Result people plunge to their death- One family ignored signs]

B) Listen there are people who are sitting in Church who are on their way to Hell – here is why they have been given this false sense of security –

1) Joined a Church – But they have never addressed their sin – Never repented of their sin { Become more moral / More religious / Better people

C) But they live a life w/ this false sense of security – living in Sin – think they are saved – **still living in sin** –

1) Because the sign post are never laid out – warnings are never talked about people think they are fine – when in reality – serious danger / eternal danger

D) **Blessing of verse by verse teaching vs. series** – I have to cover it all – Series I can pick out what I want to focus on – and avoid the difficult things –

1) Most Churches today teach topically – or series where study a part of a book – but not the whole book – **avoid certain themes** –

E) Paul *Sought to share with you the **Whole counsel of the word of God***

Listen we are called to warn about Judgment – Jesus Himself spoke more about Hell than he did about Heaven –

A) The reason – Real people go there – Breaks His heart

B) So if we are going to being doing our Jobs – loving our people there will be a degree of warning happening in our Studies – Warning about Judgment

1) **Warning about False teachers /..... about the dangers of indulging in the flesh /**

C) If someone comes here living in sin – I hope thru the teachings – they feel uncomfortable – But I also hope they repent – turn..... receive forgiveness

1) **But if they come here consistently and are living in sin and leave every week feeling fine in their sin** – We are not doing our Jobs !!!!

So the style of Ministry is to include – **WARNING But it is not to be exclusive to warning – it also involves teaching**

A) **Teaching refers to imparting positive truth**

B) It is not enough to warn people; **we must also teach them the positive truths of the Word of God. / Paul was a teacher of truth**

C) You know I spent a good deal of my early life – playing Sports – In that time I had some good coaches and some bad ones

1) All the good coaches were teachers – They would spend a lot of time teaching and instructing –

D) Showing you how to do something the right way & why it was important to do it that way.

1) Now sometimes they would warn – Throw like that hurt your arm / slide that way – break your leg – Then they would instruct

Listen God is the BEST coach- He doesn't just tell us what not to do but He tells us why and then He tells us what to do & why

A) The majority of the Bible is focused at pointing us to Jesus and instructing us in the Lord – Who Christ is / Who we are in Him / He in us

B) So that is the STYLE OF MINISTRY – TO WARN & TO TEACH IN ALL WISDOM

Next The Sum of the Ministry: The Goal - Col 1:28 that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

A) Listen the goal of ministry is not to make you feel better about yourself
It is not primarily to help you discover your purpose in life

B) It is not so you can have a feel good experience / not make you more religious or moral / Not so you can learn how to be a better parent

C) The goal is not primarily to help you get off drugs & alcohol

1) It is not to help you feel connected to a community

D) The goal is to present you **PERFECT** in Christ Jesus – The word perfect is complete –

1) The goal of any true ministry is to see People grow in their walks to the point of becoming more like Jesus / Completed Person / Whole Christian

Now this was a Serious thing to Paul – Writing to the Corinthians Paul draws upon the analogy of a wedding – Father giving his daughter

2 Cor 11:2 *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

A) Now as a father of two daughters I can really relate to what Paul is saying here –

B) You see I know that one day should the Lord tarry { Lord come quickly }

1) I know that if the Lord tarries the days will come when I will walk my daughters down the aisle of a Church – and present her to a young man

C) When that day comes for each of them – I want to do so w/ great Joy Present each of them – as being Complete – Ready for marriage

1) For that reason – Denise and I are investing in them now

You see I want to present my daughter to that young man as a young woman who is radically in love with Jesus

A) Two beautiful girls – Been telling them since they were little that what really matters is that they are beautiful on the inside { Heart for God !!!

B) I have a great desire to present them – as **VIRGINS** – time comes interested in boys – talk about those things with them

1) When they start to date – active role in their relationships – { Monitor what they do / where they go / how much time they spend together

C) Don't you trust them - YES – but I don't trust their flesh { 10 yrs of youth ministry – Great kids fall unsupervised

D) I also have a great desire to present them as being Responsible – They know how to do things / Cook / Clean / take care of kids

E) The last thing I want to do on their wedding day is to present one of them to some young man with this attitude – ***We can't figure her out we can't do anything with her – hopefully you can***

F) No we want to present them as COMPLETE – NOT PERFECT – BUT COMPLETE – Spiritually / Morally / Responsibility

Well that is our same desire as a Church – See people grow and become Complete in Jesus

A) Some of you really make me proud to say that I am your Pastor

Some one asks – *They go to CCV – Smile Yea*

B) Reason is you so reflect Jesus – *We beheld His glory only begotten of the father – full of grace & truth*

C) You full of grace – forgiving – loving – patient people / Truth you stand for righteousness

D) So the Sum or the goal is to present people Complete in Jesus – that is why we are committed to Discipleship as a Ministry.

1) Matt 28 Make Disciples – not converts – Followers – committed ones people who are becoming complete in JESUS

Finally consider the Strength of the Ministry:

Col 1:29 *To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.*

A) The word Labor means to work to the point of exhaustion

B) The word Striving = Agonizo in the grk – we get to AGONIZE –

1) The terms that he used are terms that were used quite often in the athletic context,

C) They were used to describe an athlete who would give himself entirely to being all that he or she could possibly be in the particular sport that they were involved in.

D) There was labor involved. There was striving involved. You know, physically as an athlete, you have to be in shape.

1) There's...there has to be a mental toughness and a physical toughness.

E) And this is all developed through hard work. Paul is saying here, the ministry is hard work. Striving and Labor involved

But Paul shares a tremendous insight here – look again v.29 *To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.*

A) The ministry is indeed hard work. But the Lord is the One who does the work through us.

B) See, that's the glorious thing. There is certainly an element of labor in it. But yet, it's not labor to the extent that, we fall down and say, "*I can't do it anymore.*"

C) Because Christ is the One who's laboring through us. He's the One who's doing the work. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, he said concerning the other apostles, he said, "*I have labored more than all of them.*" And he was right, he had. He said, "*but yet, it was not I, but the grace of God working in me.*"

D) IN this statement we see the wonderful balance between our involvement and God's Power when it comes to service

1) God does the work but He does it thru Human vessels

Paul did not have a LET GO AND LET GOD mentality –

A) Paul did not practice that concept { Rather Paul's mindset was one of reaching out to go for it

B) His mentality was to grab a hold of something with all his might and let God work in & thru his life

C) He was one to step out in faith at God's leading fully expecting God to meet Him – with whatever He needed according to his grace

1) He wasn't sitting around expecting God to just work miraculously but Paul was working – laboring – Striving – in God's Power

You don't know what God could do through you. Paul is proof to us that it doesn't take a great army for God to get something accomplished.

A) All it takes is one man, one woman, one dedicated person, one serious person. That's all it takes.

B) Historically, when God has worked, you know, He's never looked for a multitude. God never looks for a committee.

1) He doesn't necessarily look for a team. You know what He looks for? He looks for a man or a woman, He looks for an individual that He might demonstrate His power through.

C) And Paul was one of those people who was just yielded to God to the extent that God was able to work through him all that He wanted to work through him.

Now of course, we have varying capacities. And Paul had a lot that God wanted him to do. And he did it.

A) We won't all go out and be like the apostle Paul, travel around the world, plant churches all over the place.

B) But there is a sphere of ministry that God has for each one of us to do. And the important thing is that we fulfill that.

1) And we can do that if we take things seriously and understand that it's Christ who will work in us, and is at work in us, to complete that which He desires to do.

You see, it's Christ who will do it through you. And you would be amazed, will be amazed, at what it is that God might do through your life.