

The Hope of Glory Colossians 1:24-27

Intro: Here in Ch. 1 Paul has been talking about the Preeminence of Christ { V. 15-19 – He Focused on the DEITY OF CHRIST

A) *Image of the Invisible God / Creator & Sustainer of all the earth /*

The Head of THE CHURCH

B) Then in v. 20-23 He focused on the **DEATH of Christ** – how Christ death provided the way for man to be **RECONCILED TO GOD**

C) Today we are picking up in v. 24 : Where Paul shares with us His Personal reaction to the **Preeminence of Christ**

1) When Paul discovered who Jesus was & what He did for Him – Paul's life was forever **ALTERED** - RD V.24-27

Paul points out here how the work of Christ affected his life in 3 ways

A) #1 He became a rejoicing **SUFFERER FOR Christ** / #2 He became a willing **MINISTER** of Christ / #3 He became a faithful **STEWARDSHIP** to...

B) 1st Paul Became a Rejoicing sufferer v.24 *I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church*

C) Now at first glance this is a difficult verse & one that has caused some confusion in Church circles – for instance

1) The Catholic Church uses this verse to support the concept of Purgatory

D) The doctrine of Purgatory says that there are some people who were so sinful, that Jesus couldn't have possibly atoned for all of their sins
1) And so they need to help Jesus out by suffering a little more themselves in purgatory.

Is that what Paul is suggesting here – Answer is no – First of all Paul wasn't in a place called purgatory – suffering for his sins -

A) He was in Prison suffering for the cause of Christ

B) **Second Paul had just spent v. 19-23 Discussing how the death of Christ on the Cross was fully sufficient to Redeem man**

1) **And to Reconcile man to God –**

C) See when Jesus Cried from the Cross it is finished – That is exactly what He meant – the work was done the suffering was over

1) He paid the Price for sin – all sin – **FULLY AND COMPLETELY**

So what did Paul mean when he said that he was filling up what was lacking in the suffering of Christ ?

A) This is what we need to understand – the word lacking here does not refer to being insufficient –

B) Christ suffering on the Cross was complete!!! Fully Sufficient in **ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION PURPOSES**

C) The word lacking here – in relationship to Christ suffering – Just means that his suffering isn't finished yet

1) See Jesus continues to suffer as His people / His Church sufferers

Recall in Acts 9 a great persecution had come upon the Church – led in part by Saul of Tarsus – Single handedly destroy this new movement.

A) On the way to Damascus – Blinded light – hears the voice of Jesus
Saul Saul why are you persecuting me

B) Saul could have argued I am not persecuting you – I am persecuting these people who claim to be followers of God

1) But when God's people suffer – He suffers

C) So what Paul is saying here – is his own sufferings were adding to the suffering of Christ – Because when one of his people suffer – Christ suffers

1) The Suffering of Christ – will continue on – it will never be finished as long as there are people on the earth who hate Him & HIS CHURCH!!!

But I guess the big Question is why would Paul say that he rejoiced in his sufferings?

A) Well Paul knew that Suffering does some amazing things in our lives as well as the lives of others/ Consider 5 ways today suffering can be beneficial

B) First, *suffering draws us closer to Christ.*
Phil 3:10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings,*

C) Suffering allows us to enter into a deeper relationship with the Lord because we are permitted to get a taste of what He went thru for us!!!

God spoke to Abe and instructed him to take Isaac his only son / his beloved son up to Mt Moriah to Sacrifice him to the Lord

A) What?!' Abraham must have thought. *Lord You've been good to me, unlike the pagan gods who demand child sacrifices.*

But now You're asking me to offer my son?'

B) Truly it must have been troubling and perplexing, yet Abraham obeyed. 1) He took 33-year-old Isaac up Mount Moriah – **Isaac carried the wood and the fire – up that hill**

C) How Agonizing that Journey must have been for Abe – knowing full well what was going to happen when the reached the top of that MT
1) Isaac – asked Father I have the wood & the fire but where is the Sacrifice

D) Abe made a statement that proved to be Prophetic In more ways than one – Abe said – **God will provide Himself a Sacrifice –**
1) That is exactly what God did — 1st immediately 2nd Prophetically or futuristically

D) Abe took Isaac place him upon the altar –{ Isaac willingness – There must have been some

explanation – Isaac – I don't understand why – but

1) Heb 11 tells us that Abe did so believing that if God had him go thru with this that God would raise Isaac from the dead – Promised Child

E) But you know the story – When Abe was about ready to Plunge the Knife – God stops him – shows him a Ram caught in the thicket –

1) That was the immediate Sacrifice – that God provided !!!

But 2,000 yrs later Jesus also at the age of 33 would climb that very same Mt – NT called Calvary –

A) He would climb it carrying the Wood – **the Cross** – Knowing full well that He was about to **endure the Fire** – the wrath of God upon Humanity

B) Here is my point: God didn't have Abe go thru with the Sacrifice of His Son – but God the Father did go thru with His Sacrifice

C) And Abe who is uniquely referred to in the Bible as **the Friend of God** in those excruciating hrs of agony was given a taste of what God the Father would endure to Save Humanity

D) Abe was better for it – Entered into a deeper relationship with God

That is what Happens when we go thru suffering it provides an opportunity for us to become closer to the Lord – We share in what He did

A) Personal Example: **I have experienced rejection:** There have been people that I have loved – people that I have poured time, love & energy into

B) But those people ended up discarding my love and rejecting me !!!

1) And every time that has happened it was a painful experience to go thru but you know what each time it has brought me closer to the Lord

C) **You see Jesus went thru that as well** – For 3 yrs He poured into his disciples only to have all of them forsake him in his darkest hour

1) For 3 yrs over and over He gave to the multitudes – only to have them in one week turn on him –

2) they went from Shouting – Hosanna to shouting Crucify

D) Now when we experience betrayal & or rejection from those that we love and give to we enter into the fellowship of Christ/A depth in our relationship

Now in my case I never imagined the people I was giving to turning on me – rejecting me – never imagined being betrayed or hurt by them

A) I trusted them – thought the best of them – and was completely caught off guard by their actions

B) But Jesus knew full well – that his followers would forsake Him / knew full well the Multitudes would reject Him

1) **He gave anyway – He loved anyway** – What amazing love that is

C) You know if I am even suspect that someone doesn't like me – **My first reaction is to recoil and to Protect MODE**

1) My first reaction is to not get too close – to protect myself from getting hurt – But Jesus Life teaches us to be DIFFERENT

D) Jesus did the opposite – **He reached out / He gave / He would be perfect and Blameless in His relationships** – even though it would include rejection

Listen if you have been rejected / Misunderstood / Falsely accused/ endured great physical & emotional pain at the expense of another person and their Sin – Listen – so did Jesus

A) Precious people, God will allow suffering in your life in order that you can relate to Him in a deeper way than you ever did before.

B) If you EMBRACE it – He will use it to make you a BETTER person – make you more like Himself !!!!

C) But if you are thrown by it you miss the opportunity for the fellowship of His suffering
1) Instead of becoming A BETTER PERSON – a little more like Jesus – You become a Bitter person / Poison those around you.

D) So first of all Paul rejoiced in suffering because – He knew that it was a tool that Brought Him into a deeper relationship w/ JESUS !!!

Secondly, suffering produces assurances in our hearts.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

2 Tim 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

A) If you're not suffering, guess what. It means you're not living godly. It could even mean you're not a Christian.

B) So when you suffer say, 'Thank You, Lord! This is great! I know I'm one of Yours because they're beating up on me just like they beat up on You.'

C) Listen your life is going to have the same influence on People that Jesus Did – Thru his life people were drawn to God – Glorified God
1) Or they hated him !!!! –

John 3:19-21 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

A) Your life is either going to draw people to Jesus or they are not going to want to have anything to do with you because of Jesus

B) Your life condemns them – Your Light makes them uncomfortable in their sin

C) So suffering gives us an assurance – I belong to Christ I am going thru what He did !!!!

3rd Suffering Promises rewards in Heaven 2 Cor 4:17-18

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

A) Paul's vision of Heaven – Words would not describe

1) I promise you, when you get to heaven, you won't say, *'It wasn't worth it!'*

B) *I suffered through cancer without murmuring. I accepted it as a way to bring You glory, Father — but now that I'm in heaven, it isn't so hot.'*

1) No. When you get there, you're going to say, *I made such a big thing about what I went thru on earth. But it was nothing compared to this!*

C) Light affliction – It doesn't seem LIGHT now – But it will seem like it then in comparison to the Glory of Heaven

1) So rejoice – Heaven is coming – Heaven is waiting – God will use your suffering now – to produce in you a greater longing for Heaven!!!

4th Suffering results in the salvation of others

A) In Acts 28, we read where Paul was shipped wreck on an Island – while interacting with the Islanders a snake fastened its fangs onto him.

B) The islanders looked at the serpent hanging from his hand and thought, *'This guy's a murderer. That's why the snake has bitten him.'*

C) But when Paul didn't fall down dead and instead shook the snake off, the barbarians changed their minds, saying, *'He's a god.'*

1) And Paul used the opportunity to say, *'I'm not a god — but God in Christ Jesus lives inside me.'*

Why does God allow suffering? Because it gives you the opportunity to show the Unbelievers who are very skeptical about us the reality of faith. A) When the child is taken Home unexpectedly; when the doctor says, 'It's malignant', when the boss says, 'you're through' — people WATCH

C) They expect the worst – They expect it to kill our Faith - But you have the chance to shake it off and embrace the suffering.

1)

D) And if you make that choice, cynics change their minds about Christians because they SEE the reality of your faith.

1) See the unbeliever is not impressed so much by our victories – but they sure take notice when we suffer

E) *Lets see if they sing now – lets see if they praise the Lord now*

1) They watch us when we go through trials

Paul said in 2 Cor 4 We are these Clay pots that the God has placed the light of His Son Jesus to shine into

A) But sometimes that light shines the brightest – when we are Broken / when We suffer that is when People are impacted the most

2 Cor 4:7-12 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed -- 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.*

12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

Finally, suffering silences Satan. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb,

and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Job 1:20-22

Job lost everything — his health, family, and wealth. Satan took everything but his wife — and even she said, ‘Curse God and die.’. Curse God and commit suicide - But Job wouldn’t, and Satan was defeated once again.

So Paul became a Rejoicing Sufferer – Because He knew that the suffering produced something in him{ depth in Christ

A) And it was beneficial to others !!!!

2nd Affect of Preeminence had on Paul it made him - A willing Minister: A)At the end of v.23 as well as in v. 25 Paul makes mention of the fact that he became a Minister of Jesus Christ

B) Now the word used here for Minister – means servant – or attendant –

One who was committed to **His Master completely**

1) In a couple of other places Paul referred to himself as the Bondservant –

A WILLING SERVANT – one who could go free – chose to serve

C) See Jesus looks for willing followers – Paul said I became a minister – not I was forced into it – I became one –

1) **Speaks of a Willingness on his part to respond to the call –**

D) Discipleship: *Not all believers are Disciples but all Disciples are believers* – Jesus had Multitudes who followed him – many from afar

1) **But only 120 Disciples in the upper room on the day of Pentecost**

E) The First step toward being a Willing Minister is to be a Disciple

1) Not following from afar but close –

2) He is not going to force that upon anyone – But that is part of his perfect plan for your life – His MINISTER – DOULOS

ANALOGY Dawson Trotman – Navigators

3rd Affect - A faithful Steward :

A) Paul was given a word to Preach a Mystery to make Known

B) Mystery is MUSTERION – something that was once hidden that has now been revealed –

1) For centuries people thought the way to Glory was thru Personal achievement – Being “good enough person” - Religious Etc

C) The Mystery ? Christ in you is your hope of Glory !!!!

1) **What is your Hope ? Christ in your heart –**

D) Not your performance but his

1) **Your goodness falls short – HIS DIDN’T**

2) **Your righteousness is filthy rags – His is Perfect & complete**

E) Christ in your heart

Listen what about you? You also are a Steward

A) Unbelievers : God has given you your life – what are you doing with it ? Made for his pleasure

B) Given you the gospel – Received it

Believers – Steward – Gospel – Everlasting life – Share it ?

A) Steward of family / giftings / blessings /