

Colossians 1:24–29

“Heavenly Glory in the Nitty Gritty Details of Life”

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What does Christ’s glory have to do with our suffering, our calling, our learning, and our effort?
Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. Colossians 1:24–29 prepares us for the second serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us how Christ’s exaltation in glory marvelously connects to the nitty gritty details of believers’ everyday lives on earth.

Thursday, October 21, 2021 • Read Colossians 1:24–29

Questions from the Scripture text: How does the apostle respond to his sufferings (v24)? For whom? What is he “filling up”? In what? For the sake of what? Which is whom? What did he become with respect to the gospel (v25)? How did he become one? For whom? To fulfill what? What does he call the gospel in v26? When and from whom was it hidden? To whom was it revealed when? Who willed the apostle to become a steward of the gospel (v27)? In order to make known what? Among whom? What is this richly glorious ministry (end of v27)? Of what does “Christ in you” give you a sure hope? What do the apostles preach (v28)? What two types of preaching are involved in this preaching of Christ? Whom do they warn? In what do they teach every man? In order to do what to them? What else does the apostle do to this end (v29)? How is he able to strive in this work?

The heights of Colossians 1 are as high as anywhere else in the Bible, as they trace the person and work of Christ. But it doesn’t stay in the eternal Godhead or the heavens where the crucified and risen God-Man reigns and intercedes in glory. This gospel comes down into the nitty gritty of the apostle’s life.

Rejoicing in Suffering, v24. With a Lord that glorious who has suffered that much for His body, it becomes not just tolerable but enjoyable to suffer for that same church. The afflictions of Christ have fully accomplished our atonement, and the application of that atonement to believers is appointed to come through other suffering of those who are united to Christ. Paul rejoices that his flesh has this privilege.

Fulfilling a Stewardship, v25. This isn’t just providentially appointed. Paul has a calling as an apostle that is an obligation. He’s a “minister,” which sounds lofty, but it just means “servant.” Paul doesn’t get to fulfill his own word. He has a stewardship from God. Christian ministry is counterintuitive to the flesh. Not only does he rejoice in suffering (v24); he is happy to be humbled (v25).

Revealing a Mystery, v26–27. “Mystery” here (and throughout the New Testament) isn’t a puzzle to figure out, but a plan of God that He chooses to unveil at the proper time to the proper people. This one was hidden from ages but has now been revealed. This one was hidden from generations but is revealed to His saints.

And this mystery is a biggie—“the riches of His glory” (cf. 1Cor 2:8–9). What is as big as the glory of God? Only Christ. And here’s the amazing reality of the gospel: Christ dwells in, and joins Himself to, those who believe in Him. This is what makes everlasting glory such a sure hope. “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Preaching a Messiah, v28. So Christ Himself is the mystery. That means that gospel preachers are preaching a doctrine, but they are preaching much more than a doctrine. They are preaching a person. But this increases what’s at stake in this gospel; those who reject it are not rejecting an idea but the infinitely glorious Son: “Him we preach, warning every man.”

As believers are taught who Christ is, and come to believe in Christ, and come to be indwelt by Christ, this is the means by which they are perfected: “Him we preach, teaching every man... that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

Working a working work, v29. This isn’t a low effort task. The apostle has to “labor” at it and “strive” at it. But, it is a successful-effort task, because God is the one working His work mightily. Paul’s work works because it is God Who is working.

Suffering. Preaching. Working hard. In it’s actions, pastoral ministry doesn’t seem very impressive. But it’s suffering *together with Jesus for the same things for which He suffered.* And it’s preaching not only a doctrine *but Jesus Himself.* And it’s not just a man working, but *Jesus working through him.* So, on one hand, pastoral ministry is suffering, preaching, and working hard. But, gloriously, pastoral ministry is *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.*

And really, this is true of every truly Christian life. It’s done in union with Christ. To serve Christ and show His glory. In dependence upon Christ. Is this true of your life?

Why can you rejoice in suffering? Who is being glorified by it, and who is being served by it? Whom do you serve and in what actions? Upon Whom do you depend in this work, and what by what habits of life and of mind do you exercise this dependence?

Sample prayer: Lord, You are the all-glorious God, and You have given Yourself both for us and also to us. Forgive us for depriving ourselves of joy in our suffering or the privilege of humility as servants; for, when we do this, we are not just miscarrying a duty but denying a person. You. Yet, it is exactly for our sin and folly that You have atoned, so forgive us and cleanse us and warn us and teach us—until at last You present us perfect in Yourself, Christ Jesus, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP23B “The Lord’s My Shepherd” or TPH447 “Christ, of All MY Hopes the Ground”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Colossians 1 verses 24 through 29. These are God's words. 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 in which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God, which was given to me for you to fulfill the Word of God, the mystery, which has been hidden from ages and from generations.

But now has been revealed to his saints to them. God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery, among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you. You the hope of glory Him. We preach warning every man and teaching every man and always wisdom that we may present every man.

Perfect in Christ. Jesus to this end. I also labor striving according to his working, which works in me, mightily. So far the reading of God's inspired and inerrant art. The large middle section of this first chapter of Colossians. We've been here about the glory of Jesus, as the uncreated creator, the eternal God who has the first place and all things and to become a man and redemption.

And yet he becomes a man so that he can be glorified as the one who is God, in human flesh and the head of his church. The only redeemer the one who's glory is equal to that of God and who sacrifice because of who he is, as therefore equal to our sin against God's glory.

And and so most of this chapter, the big middle section has been the heavenly glories of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet it is exactly those heavenly glories that have and every day nitty gritty in the details of life impact in our lives. That was not that's not only true for us, it was true for the apostle Paul.

And that's what these six verses are primarily about. So, Jesus is glorified in heaven, but one of the ways that Jesus is glorified, was by his suffering's for the church. Now, Jesus suffered to a tone for our sins, but there's more suffering yet to be done for the sake of his church.

And that means that when we suffer, we may rejoice in what that suffering is designed to accomplish. And so that's the first part of the nitty-gritty details of all's life and how the glory of Jesus makes a difference in the everyday, details verse 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. Now, Jesus fully attuned, there was nothing lacking in his atonement for us, but the application of Jesus's redemption to those for whom he died, bringing them to faith and building them up and gathering them into his church and getting them ready for glory.

All those things that are yet to do those come in the same in part by the same mechanism as that by which Jesus attended for us by suffering. And so Paul who is united to Christ. As we hear the mystery in verse 27, that's a glorious mystery Christ in you, the hope of glory and as we hear in verse 28, that our being perfected happens in Christ, Jesus.

So also Paul suffering happens in Christ Jesus, he is part of Christ's body. The Lord Jesus is still enduring much by virtue of his people suffering and Paul may be knew this as well as are better than anyone. Not only had he suffered more than anyone, but remember in his conversion, the Lord Jesus had appeared to him and said, Saul saw, why are you persecuting me?

And so it's a great comfort to know that Jesus suffers with us. So he'd pay attention. Drop it. Turn your body and give me your eyes. Thank you. It's a great comfort to know that. Jesus, suffers with us, it becomes something we do together with our redeemer and not only does Jesus suffer with us, but we suffer for the same purpose for his body for his church.

If Jesus loves his church so much that he would suffer for it on the cross. Shouldn't we rejoice that we get opportunity to suffer for the gathering in building up in the perfecting of his church. So rejoicing and suffering and then fulfilling a stewardship recognizing as with Paul in verse 25 that the office that he has is one of service of which I became a minister the church.

He became a minister of the church according to a stewardship of God from God which was given to him. And so not only in the everyday detail of our sufferings and trials, does the glory of Jesus, make a difference, make all the difference, but also in the fulfilling of our tasks, our flesh wants to be recognized or obeyed or served or honored.

Not so our tasks are given to us for the honor and glory of Jesus that he might be admired and praised and obeyed. And so we have to resist our desire to be in the place of Jesus and rather see that what we have been given to do day by day even if you are ahead of a household boys, or if you come to the

office of the church office in the church, being an elder, or if girls, you end up being a mom someday, you maintain the honor of your office, not for yourself, not for your praise, but because it's a stewardship from Christ.

And so, when you think about yourself, you think about yourself as someone with an assignment privileged responsibility and you want to serve as well as you can because it's an assignment from Jesus. Well what if you're not yet a dad or a mom or an officer in the church or something like that?

What if Sophia Victoria? What if you're in family worship and you've been assigned? The job of a co-worker. If Jesus has assigned to some in his church, the duty of participating in his worship. By teaching, then there are others who participate in his worship by the duty of being taught.

And so the way you listen and pay attention gives honor to Christ, it's a service unto him. The he does, you much good. But the primary thing is not you're getting something out of it but you're serving him by getting something out of it. Just like for me the primary thing is not being a great teacher and a great dad.

And those you know wanting to be known as faithful but honoring him and fulfilling that service unto him and his church in this faithfulness, fulfilling the stewardship. So you receive Sophia so your sieve every assignment from him or you do every duty that you have. And us as an assignment from him, that makes everything we do.

Highly privileged can very important because it's an assignment from Jesus and we do it for him. Now, his particular assignment was to fulfill the word of God and diverse 25. And he starts talking about the mystery, which has been hidden from ages and from generations. And what is the mystery?

He's just been talking about how God, the son made everything and God. The son is the one who came and by his blood has bought forgiveness for sinners and is the head of the church. And this is something that from ages was hidden and from generations was hidden. So he says the mystery, which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed.

So is hidden from ages, but it is revealed. Now, it was hidden from generations, but now has been revealed to his saints, especially those who come to faith in him, who he has, decided, will be holy, and he brings them to faith and Jesus Christ. So that they may be forgiven and made holy made to be holy, like Jesus.

And so there's this wonderful role that the apostle has in telling people what was hidden before and it's not hidden anymore because he's assigned to tell it to then verse 27. God. Willed, to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery. And what are the riches of the glory of this mystery Christ in?

You the hope of glory that your hope for glory is not just that Christ died for you, that's the transaction by which your sin is forgiven. Not just that Christ obeyed in your place. That's the transaction by which your heaven has been earned. But that Christ himself is in you that you are united to him, that you are counted as his very own body and that you are joined to him by faith and a mysterious way.

Just as a wife is joined to her husband, my marriage and that mysterious way. So Fiat get up in your chair actually. Sofia, come here and sit in my lap since we are missing other help come now quickly. And, so, the riches of the glory of the gospel is not just how we would be forgiven and how our heaven would be earned.

But that we would be joined to Christ that when we at last are when our faith disturbed up, and we have sanctified, understanding and sanctified feelings. And at last, we see him in the last day, we'll know him as the heavenly room. The one who has taken us to be his own body and so loved us since a treasured us and joined us to himself forever and given us his own character to perfect our character and in, and is please to display his great glory and how he has made us glorious.

That's what the song of Solomon is all about, the great king, who takes a an unworthy bride and joins her to himself and love and make her fit and and glorious to, to be his. There's still a lot, we don't understand. But this is the riches of the glory of the mystery Christ in you as the hope of glory.

If you have been joined to him then you shall certainly enter into his blessedness and be glorified even with his glory. Now for Paul, there was the suffering and there was the stewardship and there was the revealing of that ministry, going around teaching these unimaginable, you glorious things to people.

But for us, there is the learning and understanding and growing and appreciating that mystery. So day by day, as we study the Bible, and we learn about more about who Jesus is and what he has done and what he has won for us. And as we as we have that hope and that hope is what enables us to rejoice in our suffering.

And as we learn about who Jesus is, and his making us, as very own and our being united to him. And that's

what gives us joy and fulfilling daily tasks. Like the dishes that I see on the counter and the school that everyone was avoiding right before we started worshipping together.

Just now that that we see it something we do in union with Christ and so as whereas Paul's every day job was to tell people about the mystery of Christ in us the hope of glory. So our job is to learn every day a little bit more and embrace every day a little bit more the the truth of unimaginably glorious mystery of Christ in us the hope of glory and then verse 28 which is I think fairly obvious at this point that we're not just preaching ideas or learning ideas.

Paul was not just breaching ideas and we are not just learning ideas, Paul was preaching a person, and we are learning a person and we preach. He says warning every man and teaching, every man in old wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ. Jesus. And so we are we grow in Christ and we are perfected in Christ.

Not merely by understanding ideas better but by embracing a person better him. We preach said Paul, and that's very important because he's has him. We preach warning, every man. If we reject, or don't put into practice, even what we hear from the Bible. We're not just rejecting ideas. We're rejecting a man that's why those who don't obey the gospel.

Second person, chapter one are going to be destroyed by the glory of his presence for unending ages because they will have rejected. Not just, an idea, not just a message, but a person, the Lord Jesus himself. But that also means on the flip side, if we do receive the truth and respond well to the truth, we're not just receiving ideas, we're not just developing a grasp of concepts and implementing them in.

We're receiving a person, these truths from his word, this theology that we learned day by day from his word, it's the way that he gives himself to us. So, the apostles says him, we preach. So, there's the suffering and there's the stewardship, and there's the learning, and embracing of the ministry, which is the embracing of a person.

And this, we do, even by his own working in us. Christianity is not a low effort. Enterprise, the apostle says, in our last verse to, this end, I also labor striving and come to the end of the day. And you say, oh man, I labored a lot today. I did a lot of striving today that would not describe a low effort day with it.

There are many who think that Christianity should be all laid back and relaxed and you shouldn't work hard because that somehow they think is incompatible with the gospel. Well, there idea of what the gospel is, is incompatible with Colossians 1:24 through 29. Jesus is glorified as having done everything and as having taken us to be united to him.

But being United to him doesn't mean never suffering. It means suffering with him and it doesn't mean never working. It means working with him and independence upon him. In fact, he is the one who works in us to this end. I also labor striving according to his working, which works in me mightily.

It's very similar, isn't it to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling four? It is God, who works in? You both to willing to work for his good pleasures. Same thing here to this end. I also labor striving according to his working, which works in me mightily.

So you get to the end of the day. And if you say, oh, I labored a lot today that a lot of striving today. Then you can say with a satisfied grin on your face because Christ was working to meet today. He worked in me mightily. I worked with my weakness, but he worked by his strength and so, that's strength, which I exerted today.

Was not from me. It was from my Lord, and we did a lot of work today. Together Lord helping me to organize my life better it would be very nice. Wouldn't it? If we were able to get that section of time? Not just the right family time and joining each other reading together which is all wonderful but it is a joy, isn't it?

A different kind of joy to accomplish a task together. It's one that you can have with one another, if you'll stop fighting over, who was the one who was supposed to do it and everyone do it together and you can enjoy the fellowship of working together. Well, the whole life of a Christian is a fellowship of working together with Christ and of knowing that he is the one who has working in us.

So, Jesus is glorified. He sits on high every every glorified saint and holy angel in heaven, bows and worships, and praises him. And yet that glory is applied in the nitty gritty every day details of our lives. And we're not going to perfectly grasp, that just by hearing it once.

But this is something that we study from a passage like this and hear about and then we look to the Holy Spirit to be growing us in our understanding and experience of this for the rest of our earthly lives. And we can even know that our studying it together right now as part of what he uses to do this.

So let us ask him let's ask him to do that. Let's break.

Holy Spirit, we thank you for this portion of your word. We thank you for the very high and exalted views of Christ. Glimpses of Christ that you have given us in the preceding passages and now in this one that we have just opened together we thank you for the instruction of how the glory of Christ makes all the difference in the details of our life, in our suffering, and our working, and our learning and our worshiping.

And we pray that you would continue to grow us in this approach to life, this understanding of life and therefore our experience of Christ himself in our lives, glorify him in each of us, we pray as you continue to make this portion of your word, fruitful in us and for us where we ask in Jesus name, amen.