

## Sermon: Filled Up

**Text: Colossians 1:24-2:5**

### Introduction:

We've just completed perhaps the great Christological (Jesus-centered) passage in all of Scripture (**Colossians 1:15-20**), where the wonder, glory, and authority of Christ is made very evident. Paul then discussed God's great plan of redemption in **Colossians 1:21-22**:  
*"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death."*

Now, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, turns the corner and speaks about his own role in God's great plan of redemption. What part has God called him to play in spreading the Gospel? While this might on the surface sound arrogant, it's not at all. It's actually the question that God would have ALL OF US ASK, as we grow in our faith and in our understanding of God's Upper Story Plan for this world.

Two great themes appear in this passage, and to some extent, Paul hops back and forth between the two. They are:

- Paul's heart for the Colossians and the content of his desire for them. Look for this throughout the passage, and remember again, that Paul has never met a single member of this church, has never visited the town. His passion comes not from a long-lasting relationship, but from his passion for Christ.
- Paul's message that the great mystery and the hope of glory is Christ. Nothing more, nothing less. Paul is completely overwhelmed and captured by the GLORY of Christ!

**Colossians 1:24** begins with Paul stating that he rejoices in his sufferings. How odd does that sound! What could possibly possess a man to say that he rejoices in his sufferings?! As we look closer at this passage, though, we see that Paul's JOY was found in Christ alone—not in his circumstances, no matter how painful they may have been. Paul found JOY in the glory of Christ—and in sacrificing whatever he could to advance the ministry of the gospel.

Don't we all want to be a part of something so meaningful that we can rejoice in the suffering that comes along with the work? Where sacrifices produce joy? Where we give up things close to us with smiles on our faces, for the sake of something greater?

The truth is, many of us already do this in different areas of our lives. Think about the many nurses and firefighters who put the greater good of others above themselves, working long shifts, all the while serving others with smiles on their faces. Picture the sacrifice of a mother who endures the pain of childbirth—only to experience the great JOY when the newborn child enters the world. Think about marathon runners who train their bodies day after day and push through pain with the vision of the finish line on their mind. These are everyday people, just like us. And the good news is that, regardless of our jobs, relationship status, or athletic ability—God has called us to be a part of his glorious work. Each of us have different gifts that we are called to steward joyfully. Like Paul, each of us can follow Jesus and make disciples of all nations. We can live with the end in mind!

### Examination:

- Read **Colossians 1:24-2:5**

- “Suffering” is a word that appears quite often in the New Testament. It is certainly something that Paul reminds us of fairly regularly. What does Paul say about suffering in each of these passages? What is the role of suffering as a Christian? How do these verses help us understand how Paul can claim to rejoice in his sufferings for the church in Colossae?
  - **2 Timothy 1:7-12**
  - **2 Timothy 3:10-13**
  - **Philippians 3:7-11**
  - **2 Corinthians 1:5**
- What do you think Paul means when he states that he is “filling up in his flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions”? Is Paul saying that Jesus didn’t suffer enough? Why do you think Paul said this?
- Paul has a purpose in mind with respect to the suffering that he is enduring (v. 24). It is for the sake of...what? How does Paul’s suffering serve the church?
- Paul is crystal clear in verse 25 regarding the “commission” that God has given him. What is that commission? How does this personal commission relate to the “Great Commission” that God has given each and every believer?
- What does it mean for Paul to “present the Word in all its fullness”?
- What is the “mystery” that has been kept hidden (see v. 27)?
- Take a bit of time to consider what Paul means when he says, “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (v. 27).
- Paul states in verse 29 that verse 28 is essentially his personal mission statement. What is this mission? How is this the mission statement for every child of God?
- Paul says in Colossians 2:1 that he is “contending”—in other words, he is working very hard! Who is he working hard for?
- Paul clarifies several “goals” in verses 2-3. What are they?
- What do you think it means that “*all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” are hidden in Christ? Do you believe that this is true? If it is—what are YOU doing to diligently search for and uncover this wisdom and knowledge?
- In v. 4, we get a clue to the fact that other “voices” are trying to lure the believers in Colossae away from the truth of God. What are some “fine sounding arguments” that are threatening to lure people away from the truth of God in our current culture and world?
- Is Paul pleased by the way the church in Colossae is responding to the many distractions and deceptions that surround them? What role does discipline play? As you think of yourself—would you consider yourself to be disciplined and firm with respect to your faith?

### **Application:**

These words of Paul could have been written to us today! There are so many competing voices in our world. Meditate this week on the fact that it is Christ IN YOU, the HOPE of Glory!