

COLOSSIANS

CHRIST IS ALL WE NEED

WEEK OF 09/14/25

PAUL, WHY DO YOU PREACH?

COLOSSIANS 1:21-2:1

Silence (1-2 minutes)

Sit silently for a minute as a way to center your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to help you listen to and receive God's Word.

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Read: Colossians 1:21-2:1

Devotional (30- 45 minutes)

Last week in Paul's letter to the Colossians, we learned about the supremacy of Christ, which is to say, he reigns over all creation, including us. So pleased was Paul with the church at Colossae that he gave thanks for their faith, prayed for them, and burst into a hymn about Christ's supremacy. This week, Paul personalizes this hymn for them, narrating their life story from before their faith, to Christ's rule in their heart, to the people they have become. In this part of the letter to the church at Colossae, he answers the question "Why do you preach, Paul?" with his personal story. In paraphrase of these verses, Paul suffers to see the Church grow and he struggles so the Church knows Christ.

1. Struggle does not have to be as severe as Paul's imprisonment in Rome. Today, people struggle with things such as speaking in public and praying out loud (including at church!). What is your struggle, and where in your struggle did God's height, depth, and breadth shine through?
2. Think of a silly mistake you've made in the past—maybe you've used salt instead of sugar in your baked goods and served the dessert to your friends. How did you suffer from it? How did you grow from it? What do you now know that you didn't then?

Colossians 1:21–23 | If Paul with his colored past as a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent man can become a minister for the Church, then the people of Colossae can too (and so can we!). Using contrasting phrases, Paul points to the Colossians' past—"once...alienated and hostile in mind"—and to their present—"stable and steadfast" and "holy and blameless." These words suggest a powerful transition from a lonely, unstable space to a firm foundation. Paul essentially says, "As you were, you did not have the

foundation on which to build a relationship with God, but because of what Christ did, you can build on his firm foundation....and thrive even when suffering for Christ." We, too, can build on God's firm foundation because Christ died on the cross for us—for every person. Through the power of his love for us, we can move from "This is who I was" to "This is what Christ did" to "This is who I am."

3. What adjective would you use to describe your transition from before to after accepting Christ as your savior?
4. What in your past are you holding on to that may be keeping you from fully devoting yourself to God? Lay it at the cross and say to yourself "This is who I was, this is what Christ did, and this is who I am." Repeat if necessary.

Colossians 1:24–29 | In these verses, Paul extolls the "mystery" of salvation; that is, Christ's death on the cross, not Paul preaching, absolves people of their sin. Further, he encourages the church, saying, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake." In other words, he gives of himself so the church can grow and know Christ. He gives God all glory, even when he struggles, so all will know the gospel of hope.

5. God equips us for the "work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). Where can we serve that we've hesitated to because of discomfort? In what area of our lives is God calling us to pull back, perhaps because we've taken on too much?

Colossians 2:1–5 | Paul's letter proves faith can be seen from afar. Though imprisoned in Rome, he knows of their strong faith and commitment to the Lord, and more so, he tells them he is by their side spiritually, if not physically. He desires to share all of his knowledge of Christ so they, too, can spread the gospel of salvation. He preaches so they can grow in Christ; he preaches so they can know Christ.

6. From whom are you keeping the "mystery" of salvation for all a secret? Think of ways to preach to this person so they grow in Christ and come to know Christ. (You can even write them a hand-written letter to encourage them!)

Conclusion | The mystery is not a mystery at all—salvation is for everyone! One way to spread the gospel is to display cruciform love, a love in which suffering brings us closer to God, a love in which suffering is evidence we belong to God, and a love that causes us to experience the blessed presence of the Holy Spirit. As we go out into today, to work, to school, to the grocery store, let's rejoice in our trials, for things as simple as our behaviors and actions represent Christ in us to a world that may not know his greatness.

7. James 1:3 says, "for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." How has your faith produced steadfast service to God?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we confess that we were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds. Yet, when we placed our faith in you, we were reconciled and transformed. Help us to spend our days proclaiming the riches of your glory. In Jesus' name we pray – Amen.

Share Prayer Requests (10-15 minutes)