

Paul's Sufferings (vv. 24-27)

VERSE 24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake (Νῦν χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν [*adv nun now + pres.act.ind.1s. chairō rejoice, be glad + prep en + noun loc.nt.p. pathema suffering + prep huper on behalf of + pro.gen.p. su*], **and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions** [καὶ ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία [*conj + pres.act.ind.1s. antanaplerōo fill up, complete; only here + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.p. husterema what is lacking + d.a.w/noun gen.f.p. thlipsis affliction + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. Christos + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. sarx flesh + pro.gen.m.s. ego + prep huper on behalf of + d.a.w/noun gen.nt.s. soma body + pro.gen.m.s. autos + pro.nom.nt.s. hos + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. ekklesia church*)]).

VERSE 25 of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit (ἧς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς [*pro.gen.f.s. hos which + aor.dep.ind.2s. ginomai become + pro.nom.m.s. ego + noun nom.m.s. diakonos minister + prep kata + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. oikonomia stewardship + d.a.w/noun abl.m.s. theos + d.a.w/aor.pass.part.acc.f.s. didomi give; "bestowed" + pro.dat.s. ego + prep eis for + pro.acc.p. su*], **so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God** [πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ [*aor.act.infin. pleroo fulfill + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. logos + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos*]]),

VERSE 26 *that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints* (τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ [*d.a.w/noun nom.nt.s. musterion mystery, secret + d.a.w//perf.pass.part.acc.nt.s. apokriptos keep secret + prep apo + d.a.w/noun gen.m.p. aion age + conj + prep apo + d.a.w/noun gen.f.p. genea generation + adv nun + conj de + aor.pass.ind.3s. phaneroo make known + d.a.w/adj.dat.m.p. hagios + pro.gen.m.s. autos*]),

VERSE 27 *to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory* (οἷς ἠθέλησεν ὁ θεὸς γνωρίσαι τί τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὃ ἐστὶν Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς δόξης [*pro.dat.m.p. hos + aor.act.ind.3s. thelo will + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. theos + aor.act.infin. gnorizo make known + pro.nom.nt.s. tis what + d.a.q/noun nom.nt.s. ploutos riches + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. doza glory + d.a.w/noun gen.nt.s. musterion mystery + demon.pro.gen.nt.s. houtos + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.nt.p. ethnos Gentile + pro.nom.nt.s. hos + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + noun nom.m.s. Christ + prep en + pro.loc.p. su + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. elpis hope + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. doza glory*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 24-27

1. Paul shifts to the subject of his role as an apostle who suffers for the Colossian saints.
2. “Now” refers to Paul’s present state of mind as he suffers as a prisoner of Rome (cf. 4:3, 10, 18).
3. He wants the Colossians to know that his focus is on the positive aspects of his sufferings as an apostle to the Gentiles.
4. Rejoicing and suffering coexist with those who are acclimated to the Plan of God.
5. Cf. 2Cor. 6:10 where these two seemingly exclusive experiences of the believer are found (“as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.”).
6. When suffering is related to the proclamation of the truth this is especially true (Phil. 1:18-19 “What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and will rejoice.”).

7. By remaining true to his calling Paul recognizes that all he endures is for the benefit of positive volition, and in this case as he writes “for your sake” (cf. 2Cor. 1:8).
8. Paul’s sufferings point to his imitation of Christ’s sufferings (1Thess. 1:6 “You also became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit.”).
9. Paul’s status as an apostle was a call to a life of suffering (Acts 9:16 “for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”).
10. There a number of reasons for the believer to rejoice when undergoing adversity (cf. Rom. 5:3-4 “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, and perseverance, proven character, and proven character, hope.”; Matt. 5:12 “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”).
11. Paul is suffering for a congregation that he has had no face to face contact.
12. They were the beneficiaries of this epistle which would not have been the case had he folded under duress.
13. In Eph. 3:13 Paul highlights implications of his “tribulations” for the Ephesians (“Therefore I ask you not to lose heart in my tribulations on your behalf for they are for your glory.”).
14. The second part of v. 24 serves to demonstrate the eschatological of his sufferings as apostle to the Gentiles.
15. Paul says that he is doing his part to “in filling up” that which “is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.”
16. “In my flesh” refers to his mortal body that suffers a variety of things related to the fulfillment of his ministry (cf. 2Cor. 6:3-9; Gal. 6:17).
17. Paul serves the body of Christ which he once again identifies as “the church” universal (cf. vv. 19, 22; 2:19; 3:15; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30; 1Cor. 10:17; 12:13-14, 27).
18. The idea here is that if the Head (Christ) suffered so the body will suffer; but only so much, which is determined by God and then comes the end (Rapture).
19. As individual members of the body of Christ to suffer in this life for the sake of the truth there is a “filling up”
20. The verb “filling up” (pres.act.ind.1s. *antanapleroo* complete, fill up; only here in NT) has as its subject Paul who is but one member of the body of Christ—the church corporately.
21. “What is lacking” (d.a.w/acc.nt.pl. *husterema*; 9x; Lk. 21:4; 1Cor. 16:17; 2Cor. 8:14; 9:12; 11:9; Phil. 2:30; 1Thess. 3:10) denotes a deficiency.
22. This deficiency is linked to “Christ’s afflictions.”
23. The deficit that Paul is completing constitutes a grand scheme whereby the sufferings of the Head of the church are in various ways replicated in the experience of the members of the body over the course of the history of the church.
24. This quota is of course known only to God.
25. There is a parallel quota of members of the body of Christ which are added as individuals come to saving faith in this dispensation.
26. The relative pronoun in v. 25 “of which” refers back to the church and Paul’s self-portrayal as on who is subservient to his calling of proclamation of the word of God.
27. In v. 23 Paul says he is a “servant/minister” of the gospel, here Paul is “a servant” of the church.

28. To be servant of the body is to serve the head and in so doing to benefit the body as in the case of the Colossians (e.g., “on your behalf”).
29. “According to the stewardship of God” reinforces Paul’s self-portrayal as a fully qualified servant on behalf of the Colossians.
30. “Stewardship” (*oikonomia*) is used of the management of a household (Lk. 16:2-4).
31. It is the noun for dispensation in Eph. 1:10 and 3:9.
32. It is used of Paul’s apostolic certification in 1Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2 and here in v. 25.
33. In 1 Tim. 1:14 it is used in the sense of spiritual edification.
34. Here it is “from God” (ablative) and “for [their] benefit.”
35. In this letter Paul goes to special links to confirm in the minds of the recipients that his credentials and therefore his authority over them is fully established.
36. The clause “to fulfill the word of God” here translated “so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of the word of God*” is similar to Paul’s description of his ministry in v. 24 in regards to his sufferings.
37. With regards to his sufferings there is a quota to be fulfilled here as well but here the object is “to fulfill the word of God.”
38. V. 26 makes it clear that the subject is spiritual information regarding “the mystery” dispensation—the church age.
39. Paul describes his ministry within the context of a previously hidden mystery; one that “has now been manifested to His saints.”
40. This “mystery” stands in apposition to “the word of God” of v. 25.
41. The content of “the word of God” includes but is not limited to this “mystery.”
42. Paul was the one principal and primary articulator of this “mystery.”
43. This noun (*mysterion*) is used of anything that is hidden (Matt. 13:11//Mk. 4:11//Lk. 8:10) and only revealed to positive volition (cf. 1Cor. 2:1; 4:1; Rev. 1:20; 10:7; 17:5, 7).
44. The mysteries (truths) of the kingdom of God were hidden in Jesus’ parables.
45. It is used in a similar fashion in 1Cor. 4:11 “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (cf. 1Cor. 13:2; 14:2; 1Tim. 3:9, 16).
46. This term is used of the current dispensation in which the Gentiles are accorded a standing, equal to, and even superior to, that of the chosen people Israel (Rom. 11:25 “For I do not want you, brethren to be uniformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”).
47. It is used in connection with the resurrection of church age believers in 1 Cor. 15:51.
48. It is used in connection with those who are at the forefront of the NWO and the secret societies (2 Thess. 2:7).
49. Here and elsewhere in Paul’s letters it refers to the dispensation of the church.
50. Here in v. 26 this “mystery” refers to truth once “hidden from the *past* ages (dispensations) and generations”; and only “now has been revealed” to believers.
51. In the following verses Paul says the same thing: Rom. 16:25 “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret (pf.pass.part. *sigao* be silent) from long ages past.”; Eph. 3:9 “and to bring to light what is the dispensation/administration of the mystery which for the ages has been hidden in God who created all things.”).
52. Certainly this does not refer specifically to the gospel as it was revealed from the garden of Eden forward.

53. Paul was the one who was the primary instrument of bringing this mystery into the light (Eph. 3:3-4; 8-9)
54. It is a great mystery and it concerns Christ and His relationship to church age saints (Eph. 5:32 “This mystery is great, but I speak concerning (*eis*) Christ and the church.”).
55. Salvation (Ph 1) is the same in all the dispensations but in this dispensation it confers an exalted status on believers.
56. We are royal family—bride of Christ exalted to share in Christ’s royalty.
57. This like all things God does is related to the attribute of sovereignty (v. 27 “God willed”).
58. “To whom” refers back to “His saints” in v. 26.
59. “What is the riches of His glory” refers to Ph 3 glory that church age saints will enjoy for all eternity.
60. This previously hidden mystery brings “the Gentiles” into this most favored situation.
61. The Gentiles are no longer put at a distance, but are brought near (Rom. 11:25; Eph. 2:14).
62. In connection with this mystery revealed and made available to the Gentiles is the reality of “Christ in you.”
63. The indwelling of Christ refers to doctrine in the soul (cf. Jn. 15:5-7; Col. 3:16).
64. Only here is the expression “Christ in you” and it stands in apposition to “the hope of glory.”
65. Hope being defined as all that pertains to ultimate sanctification in the coming kingdom of God on earth.
66. It refers to what Paul calls “the mind of Christ” in 1Cor. 2:16.
67. With completion of the canon of Scripture which was in process when Paul wrote Colossians this take on even a greater significance.

The Mandate (vv. 28-29)

VERSE 28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man

with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ (ὄν ἡμεῖς

καταγγέλλομεν νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ,

ἵνα παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ [*pro.acc.m.s. hos which + pro.nom.p.*

ego + pres.act.ind.1p. katangello proclaim + pres.act.part.nom.m.p. noutheteo warn, admonish

+ adj.acc.m.s. pas + noun gen.m.s. anthropos + conj + pres.act.part.nom.m.p. didasko teach +

adj.acc.m.s. pas + noun acc.m.s. anthropos + prep en + adj.loc.f.s. pas + noun loc.f.s. sophia +

conj hina + adj.acc.m.s. pas + noun acc.m.s. anthropos + adj.acc.m.s. telieos complete + prep

en + noun loc.m.s. Christos]).

VERSE 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which

mightily works within me (εἰς ὃ καὶ κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν δυνάμει [*prep eis + pro.acc.nt.s hos + conj also + pres.act.ind.1s. kopizo work hard, labor + pres.dep.part.nom.m.s. agonizomai struggle + prep kata + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. energia working; “striving” + pro.gen.m.s. autos + d.a.w/pres.mid.part.acc.f.s. energeo work; “works” + prep en + pro.loc.s. ego + prep en; with + noun loc.f.s. dunamis power; “mightily”*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 28-29

1. “And we proclaim Him” is to be connection with v. 27 and the words “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
2. Based on that analysis Paul is here referring to the realm of divine truth with special emphasis on the distinctiveness of the present dispensation.
3. “We” is taken as referring not only to Paul and his co-workers, but refers to all who are authorized to teach Bible doctrine to local churches.
4. The verb “proclaim” (pres.ind. *kataneglo* proclaim, make known, advocate) is a communication term.
5. “Him” refers to Christ and to do this one must communicate the content of Scripture.
6. “Admonishing” and “teaching” has to do with two aspects of “proclaim.”
7. The participle (pres. *noutheteo*) carries with it the idea of warning; here of the consequences of behavior and thinking that does not conform to sound doctrine (8x: Acts. 20:31; Rom. 15:14; 1Cor. 3:14; Col. 1:28; 3:16; 1Thess. 5:12, 14; 2Thess. 3:15).
8. “Every man/person” means that no one is exempted from the responsibility to conform themselves to the truth.
9. “Teaching” (pres.part. *didasko* 97) refers to the academic aspect of the ministry.
10. Again, “every man/person” indicates no exceptions (cf. 2:7).
11. “With all wisdom” refers to the entire realm to divine viewpoint contained in Scripture.
12. The objective: “to present every man/person complete/mature in Christ” (cf. 1Cor. 2:6; 14:20; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15; Col. 4:12; Heb. 5:14; Jam. 1:4; 3:2).
13. “In Christ” refers to positional sanctification.
14. “For this I toil” (v. 29) Paul returns to his struggles for the sake of positive volition.
15. “For this” refers back to presenting everyone mature in Christ.”
16. “With I toil” refers to Paul’s personal involvement in the communication of doctrine to those he is responsible for.
17. Paul goes on to explain how he is able to carry out his mandate to bring positive volition to maturity.
18. “Striving” (pres.part. *agonizomai*) is used by Paul in athletic imagery (1Cor. 9:25) and as well as warfare (Jn. 18:36; 1Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7).

19. There is a supernatural power behind Paul's labor and striving to bring positive volition to saving faith and maturity.
20. This is a power that transcends purely human effort--divine power ("His power").
21. It refers to the ministry of God the Holy Spirit that indwells each believer and enables them to overcome obstacles and fulfill difficult tasks.
22. Paul's *energeia* refers to the attribute of omnipotence working in and through him (cf. Eph. 1:19; 3:7; Phil 3:21; Col. 1:12; 2Thess. 2:11).
23. "Which mightily works within me" means that which is operative (pres.part. *energeo* be operative; here of supernatural activity) in him and "mightily" (*en dunamei*).
24. This power to deal with any situation no matter how difficult is available to all believers (cf. 1:11).

END: Colossians Chapter One
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