

Colossians Bible Study

1:24-2:5

Questions will be posed and space will be allowed for a written response. Make every effort to answer the questions before looking below for the answer. **The answers will be in bold print.**

1. In Paul's closing words to this part of his Epistle, he describes how he feels concerning his task as a minister of the Gospel. What insights do you gain about Paul the pastor?
1:24-25

1:28-29

1 Corinthians 4:15
2. Verse 24 seems to be an unusual statement. Paul is not saying that his sufferings, or the sufferings of any Christian, complete Christ's sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice was complete in itself for the salvation of all people. Based on the references below, what is Paul actually saying in verse 24 concerning the sufferings of believers in this world?
Matthew 10:22

John 17:14-16
3. The "mystery" referred to in verses 26-27 is not something that is meant to be kept secret. Rather, it is something that we can understand only by God's revelation. Many false religions have secret information meant only for a few, exclusive people. Paul wanted the Colossians to know that God's riches in Christ Jesus are for all people, including the Gentiles. Read Matthew 28:19-20. What particular help can you ask God so that you can better proclaim the Good News of Jesus as supreme Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer?
4. The verses for study today offer a preamble to the warning that is at the heart of Paul's letter to the Colossians. Through Paul's words, we receive insight into the feelings and concerns a pastor can have not only for his own flock but for all the believers in God's church, including those Christians whom he has never met. The "struggling" in verse 2:1 is the same agony of which Paul speaks in 1:29 and 4:12. This struggle is like the struggle marathon athletes experience as they agonize through the grueling miles of a race. As Paul struggles in prayer for the souls of the people in Colosse and Laodicea, he engages in spiritual warfare against Satan. In his prayers for the Christians of these cities, Paul seeks God's help to battle Satan's attempts to influence them through the false teachings of the Gnostics and Judaizers.

Summarize in your own words Paul's desires for the people at Colosse and Laodicea (a city 11 miles from Colosse) as expressed in verses 2-4.

5. For whom have you recently (or currently) struggled in prayer?
6. We often pray that the hearts of those who do not yet know Christ may be led to faith in Him. Why is it important that we remember as well to daily pray for the hearts of other Christians? See 1 Peter 5:8-9
7. Despite the efforts of the false teachers in Colosse, what reasons does Paul have to rejoice as found in verse 5?

Whatever this false teaching is that has infiltrated the Colossian Church, it is not the teaching of Jesus Christ. We, too, can be drawn away from Christ by all sorts of attractive thoughts and words. Eventually, Christless or Christ-lite teachings will separate us from God and from one another. But the treasures of His wisdom and knowledge overcome all temptation and defeat all deception. His words will always encourage us and strengthen us in faith and love. • Grant, O Lord, that Your Word would be taught in its truth and purity in Christ, and protect us from those who would do otherwise. Amen. (TLSB)

Some Answers to the above Questions:

1. Paul rejoices in what he has suffered while preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul considers himself a servant of the church, commissioned by God to present His Word in its entirety to all people. Paul's lifework is to proclaim Christ so that by faith in Christ and by God's grace, all may be presented perfect to Him. Paul works for God as His instrument, straining with God's power within him.

2. In verse 24, Paul is saying that as believers, suffering for Christ and for His Gospel are to be expected. Jesus Himself warned His disciples concerning the hatred they would suffer because they were His followers. Jesus says in Matthew 10:22, "All men will hate you because of Me." In Jesus' high priestly prayer He asks His Father to protect all believers from the hatred in this world (John 17:14-16). Even after they crucified Jesus, Jesus' enemies were not yet satisfied. Once Jesus was no longer physically present on earth, His enemies directed their hatred at Jesus' believers, including Paul (and believers today). By suffering for the sake of the Gospel, Paul was undergoing hardship in Jesus' place. Paul could rejoice in these sufferings because they benefited others in the church. Paul's sufferings often spared other believers from such harsh treatment. Being one in Christ means sharing in His sufferings. The mockery, ridicule, and physical and psychological hurts we suffer as Christians are hurts directed at Jesus Himself.

3. Answers will vary. Requests for God's strength, wisdom, knowledge, endurance, and patience would be good things to seek. These are all things for which Paul prayed to God to give the Colossian believers.

The revelation of the mystery via the Word means that the mystery is “Christ *in* you.” This mystery is revealed as Christ makes himself known to the church, which is created and sustained by his Word and Sacraments. Through these, the mystery is revealed and hence made known as God imparts faith. The nature of this mystery as the *hope* of glory is revealed also through the Sacraments, for in Baptism one is already raised from the dead with Christ (2:12) and in the Lord’s Supper one ingests Christ’s body and blood and receives a foretaste of the banquet of eternity (Mt 26:26–29; Mk 14:22–25). This further accents the significance of the ministry of Word and Sacrament, highlighted elsewhere in this section (see further the commentary on Col 4:2–6). “Christ in you” (1:27) may be the reciprocal of baptized believers being “in Christ” (see 1:2). (CC p. 74)

4. Answers will vary. Paul wants to encourage the Christians of Colosse and Laodicea in their Christian faith. He wants them to depend exclusively on Christ for salvation. By encouraging them in their faith, Paul wants them to become more united in Christ’s love (v. 2) as “knit together in love.” As united believers, the Colossians would be more likely to stand firm in God’s Word and would also be better able to detect the errors of the false teachers in their midst and to fight against them.

The phrase “*no one*” in verse leaves no room for error, because it is a persuasive deception that will lead people away from Christ. (TLSB)

5. Answers will vary.

6. Every Christian is a target for Satan’s deceit and hatred. All our hearts are in constant danger from this powerful enemy. Following Paul’s example, God wants all of us to engage in spiritual warfare against Satan as we pray for one another for protection from the devil’s schemes and threats.

7. Paul is delighted “to see how orderly [the Colossians] are and how firm [their] faith in Christ is” (v. 5). By calling attention to their order and fullness in Christ, Paul gives the Colossians encouragement to continue to rely on Christ alone.