



Edgemont Bible Church
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Colossians

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Intro: Ministry was very important to Paul. He wrote about it often in his letters. From what Paul says in 1Ti 1:12-13 “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief,” one can understand the principle that Jesus cites in Lu 7:47 “Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.” One can also understand that God’s grace had done something in Paul’s heart. Like Jeremiah in chapter 20, verse 9; But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not. In 1 Co 9:16-17, Paul says similarly, For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

Paul often speaks of the ministry when establishing his authority and credibility. Here, he is having to establish his authority because of the heretics that would just say that what he was teaching was just his opinion.

VI. Paul’s view of the Ministry

A. The Source of the Ministry - vs 23c; 25a

1. Preparation for the ministry

- a. His Preparation - Php 3:5-6; Acts 22:5; Ga 1:14
- b. His Testimony - Ac 26:9-11; 12-18
- c. His Call - Ro 15:15-16; 2Co 5:18; 1Ti 1:12; 2:5-7; 2Ti 1:11
- d. The Christian’s call to ministry
 - i. Gifting for ministry - 1Co 12:11
 - ii. Responsibility to obey the call – Ro 12:5-8
- e. Stewardship - 2Co 4:1-2; 1Co 9:16-17; Ga 2:7 Eph 3:2, 7-8
 - i. **oikonomia** - administration (of a household or estate); specially, a (religious) "economy":--dispensation, stewardship.
 - ii. No glory for the steward, just the Master

2. The Church

- a. 1Ti 3:15
- b. the stewardship from God which was given to me **for you**, - 1Pe 4:10; Tit 1:7; Mt 25:14-30

B. The Spirit of the Ministry - vs 24a - I now rejoice

1. Joy is internal and should not be determined by circumstances

- a. Paul was writing from prison
- b. Ministry has its difficulties – Rom 9:2; 2 Co 4:8-9
- c. A Christian that loses joy in ministry does not have bad circumstances, but has a bad connection

2. Generated by Humility

- a. Loss of joy comes with self-centeredness thinking they don't deserve what they are going through
- b. Paul demonstrated this kind of Joy
 - i. He was Conscious of his unworthiness
 - ii. His response when
 - Imprisoned in Rome – Phil 1:18b
 - facing martyrdom – Php 2:17
 - beaten and imprisoned in Philippi - Ac 16:25

3. Marked the early Church

C. The Suffering of the Ministry - vs 24b

1. in my sufferings for you,

- a. Suffering brings believers closer to Christ – Phil 3:10
- b. Suffering assures believers that they belong to Christ – Jo 15:18; Mt 10:24; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pe 4:14
- c. Suffering brings future reward – Ro 8:17-18; 2 Co 4:17
- d. Suffering can bring others to Christ
- e. Suffering frustrates Satan – Job 2:4

2. in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,

- a. Catholic doctrine of purgatory
 - i. Christ' suffering was not sufficient to pay for all our sins (just Adam's)
 - ii. We must make up what is lacking
- b. Heretics taught works were necessary for salvation therefore suffering was a necessity
- c. Paul just demonstrated that Christ alone was sufficient to fully reconcile us to God 1:20-23
- d. Thlipsis never used in NT speaking of Christ' suffering

3. in my flesh – speaking of Paul's physical pain

4. what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ – what people want to do in their hatred of God to Christ or those in union with Him

D. The Scope of the Ministry - vs 25b

- 1. to **fulfill** the word of God, - **pleroo** - fully preach – Acts 20:27 - "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

2. Can we aim to high?

- a. Paul only had three missionary journeys
- b. all in the relative same area
- c. yet he had an impact on the world

3. Jesus' Example

- a. Limited His ministry to God's will – Jo 5:30
- b. Limited His ministry to God's timing – Jo 2:4; 7:30
- c. Limited His ministry to God's objective – Mt 15:24
- d. Limited His ministry to God's Kingdom – Mt 22:21
- e. Limited His ministry to God's people – first the 12 then the 3 disciple

E. The Subject of the Ministry - vs 26-27

1. the mystery

a. **musterion** - a secret or "mystery"

- i. De 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God,
- ii. Ps 25:14 And He will show them His covenant.
- iii. Pr 3:32 But His secret counsel is with the upright.

- b. which has been hidden from ages and from generations,
- c. but now has been revealed to His saints.

- i. Incarnate God – Col 2:2-3.9
- ii. blindness in part has happened to Israel - Ro 11:25
- iii. Unity of Jew and Gentile in the church – Eph 3:3-6

d. To them God willed to make known

- i. 1 Co 2:7-16 – revealed to the saints
- ii. what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles

2. which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

a. OT prophesied of coming Messiah

b. NT reveals

- i. the Spirit would live in us - Ro 8:9; 1 Co 6:19-20; Eph 2:22
- ii. the Church is the temple of the living God – 2 Co 6:16

c. the hope of glory

- i. not just the present joy and help
- ii. but eternal glory and blessing
– 2Co 5:5; Eph 1:13-14

F. The Style of the Ministry - vs 28a

1. Him we preach – **kataggello** - to proclaim, promulgate:--declare, preach, shew, speak of, teach.

- a. warning every man – **noutheteo** - to put in mind, to caution or reprove gently:--admonish, warn.

- i. Encouraging counsel in view of sin and coming punishment
- ii. Part of the job of spiritual leaders - Ac 20:31
- iii. The responsibility of every believer - 2Th 3:14-15

b. teaching every man – **didasko** - to teach, imparting positive truth.

- i. The responsibility of every believer - Col 3:16
- ii. Part of the great commission – Mt 28:20
- iii. The responsibility of Church leaders – 1 Tim 3:2

2. in all wisdom – **Sophia** – wisdom, practical discernment, understanding biblical principles for holy conduct.

G. The Sum of the ministry - vs 28b

1. The goal – Maturity of the saints

- a. Eph 4:11-12
- b. Col 4:12

2. that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

- a. perfect – **teleios** - complete; completeness:--of full age, man, perfect.
- b. The heretics believed perfection was only for their spiritual elite

H. The Strength of the Ministry - vs 29

1. To this end I also labor,

- a. **Kopiao** - to feel fatigue; to work hard:--(bestow) labor, toil, be wearied.
- b. 2Co 11:23-28

2. striving

a. **Agonizomai** - to struggle, literally (to compete for a prize), figuratively (to contend with an adversary), or genitive case (to endeavor to accomplish something):--fight, labor fervently, strive.

b. Ministry success requires hard work

3. according to His working which works in me mightily

- a. 1Co 15:10
- b. - Ga 2:20