

***“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —
The Great Transition, The Glorious Sweep of God’s Abundant Grace — Part 26
Blessings Untold for the Colossians Too Under Grace, Chapters 1 & 2***

Review: Blessings Untold for the Colossians Too, Under Grace: The Essence of Grace Doctrine, Colossians, chapter 1

- ***Our Privilege: Living Life to the Fullest, Filled with His Joy (Col. 1:1-11)***
- ***Our Position: Having Been Translated into the Kingdom of His Dear Son Who Is the Fullness of God (Col. 1:12-20)***
- ***Our Prospect: Being Found Holy, Unblameable and Unreproveable in His Sight (Col.1:21-23)***

- ***Our Prospect: Being Found Holy, Unblameable and Unreproveable in His Sight (Col.1:21-23)***

Col. 1:21-23

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

- ***And now we learn that this reconciliation even applies to us sinners! Most wonderful. It was accomplished of course as he now again states “In the body of his flesh through death”.***
 - ***Now the desired consequence in us is stated. This is what the foundation provided has enabled: “to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight”. This points forward to the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3).***
 - ***There, at this judgment reserved only for believers, members of the Body of Christ, “every one shall have praise of God”, according to 1 Cor. 4:5: “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”***

- ***In the depths of our beings, we shall never be*** “moved away from the hope of the gospel”, ***since that is the foundation of our faith. All that might take away from that will be removed according to the Corinthian passage and we shall stand before Almighty God and our Lord Jesus Christ*** “holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight”. ***Amen and amen!***

Background Text:

1 Tim. 1:15-16

15 This [is] a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.**

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom Paul is the first in a long series of those who were saved by grace through faith alone and not by works of law.

Paul, as he has written to Timothy in 1 Tim. 1:15-16, has been therefore set forth as our “super-type” or pattern for living out the newness of life that we have all been gifted with. We are to look to him therefore as our pattern or example to see how God is working today under grace abounding.

This provides the context for our study today on Paul’s sufferings on behalf of Gentiles that they might have the truth that transforms. This is a remarkable section of scripture. It reveals what is not found so clearly and powerfully revealed elsewhere. That is why I am focusing in these days on these “prison” letters so that we may all see again

Today’s Outline: Paul’s teaching gives us the Word and the Enabling for a Life of Joy:

- ***Paul’s Teaching is Clear: He Fulfilled the Sufferings of Christ in His Body***
- ***Paul’s Teaching is Complete: The Mystery Was Delivered to Him for Us***
- ***Paul’s Teaching is Powerful: We are Enabled to Suffer as Paul Did***

I. Paul’s Teaching is Clear: He Fulfilled the Sufferings of Christ in His Body (1:21-24):

[READ] Col. 1:21-24

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

○ ***Some conclusions really MUST be drawn from this:***

- ***This was fact, was history, and in his letters we have the record of it.***
- ***Paul writes that his suffering “fulfilled” [WORDING??] the sufferings of Christ that remained; additionally, his sufferings were “for us”. If so, the question must be: “how?” In what way were the sufferings of Paul the sufferings of Christ? Verse 27 is the key: “To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” This is what was demonstrated so clearly in Paul’s many references to his suffering which was to be our example or “type” (as he calls it in 1 Tim. 1:16).***
- ***The Head and Body analogy gives us a key of understanding. CHRIST HAS SO SHARED HIMSELF WITH US ALL (1 COR. 15:45!!) AND HAS BROUGHT INTO BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST WITH HIMSELF AS ITS HEAD. Therefore, when one member or part suffers so do all the other members.***

1 Cor. 12:25-27

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but [that] the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

- *So because of such an intimate connection with his Lord and the Head of the Body Church Paul could suffer also with Christ and this was his privilege indeed, as he writes so often.*
- *Paul's sufferings are amplified as a major theme of the Colossian letter in chapters 1 & 2. But even more central to the theme of these prison letters are the many verses dedicated to what has been secured for us by his grace, entirely based on his finished work and God's grace towards us. It is the revelation of that working under grace that is so central to our faith and our experience as well of what God is doing today under that grace.*
- *His sufferings with Christ on behalf of the great message he was given for us (the Mystery) completes the chapter and introduces the next. They are to be understood as fruit produced in the believer as God's grace properly works. Paul writes about this in 1 Cor. 9:*

1 Cor. 9:16-17

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

- *But for us to fully grasp this teaching we need the completed word of grace and that was delivered Paul writes to him for our benefit:*

II. Paul's Teaching is Complete: The Mystery Was Delivered to Him for Us (1:25-29)

[READ] Col. 1:25-29

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Col. 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you

- ***Paul is the administrator of the new dispensation (like Moses was of the Legal or Peter of the Pentecostal dispensations)***
- ***What is a dispensation? It is simply “what God is doing and how he is doing it”, in other words, the principles behind God’s working and how his people have been included in that working.***
- ***Take heed, brethren, to the Pauline teaching therefore. So we indeed need to know this teaching or we will not know what God is doing today under grace. It is that simple. And, if we do not know what God is doing today we cannot know what our place is in his working. Right.***
- ***The blessing of it all: Yes, that is what Paul is writing about here. “. . . to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”. This is all about therefore the full knowledge of and recognition or acknowledgment of our completed position in the Lord Jesus Christ and the full working of God today under grace in each of us believers. AND THIS INVOLVES AT ITS VERY HEART THE RECOGNITION THAT CHRIST IS IN US AND THAT IS OUR HOPE OF GLORY. THERE ARE MANY IMPLICATION OF THAT TRUTH SOME OF WHICH WE SHALL CONSIDER IN DETAIN THIS MORNING. Paul provides through his teaching the spiritual food we need to grow and prosper as believers.***
- ***Finally, the energizing of the believer for this great work is mentioned by the apostle here in passing. A great statement indeed, perhaps the greatest of all in Paul’s letters, for here we find five different words used to describe the great work of God under grace in the believer.***
- ***Note also the references here to “word” in a number of dimensions in verse 29. The word of grace is necessarily in the center of this revelation for therein is defined how God is working today.***
- ***He explains what a “mystery” is in verse 26: It is the revelation of what had been hidden from ages and generations until it was***

revealed (by Paul). It was hidden in God according to Eph. 3:9: “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world **hath been hid in God**, who created all things by Jesus Christ”.

- ***This statement here though is crystal clear if only we would receive it as intended. Here the word “fulfill” is NOT to be understood in the sense of the fulfilling of prophecy. For the next words identify what is being written of here as “the mystery” that was not revealed before but was hidden always [“from ages and generations”]. Additionally, he is writing about “the mystery” or the sacred secret.***
- ***So this that “fulfills” of “fills full or completes” the word of God is the revelation itself that was given to Paul by the ascended Christ Jesus!! And it, the written word given to Paul as identified here is in fact the previously kept secret truth (or mystery) concerning the dispensation given to Paul, the dispensation of the grace of God [see Eph. 3:1-5] It was the revelation of the mystery that was given to Paul that completes the written word of God. PROPHECY + THE MYSTERY COMPLETES THE REVELATION OF GOD TO MAN. Therefore Mystery and Prophecy always need to be distinguished, for they are NOT the same. The one is not hidden in the other.***
- ***Although there would be more details in the prophecy yet to come (from John, for example). But now the revelation of God to man regarding his eternal plan has been completed. The remaining part had now been added. That is what he is saying here. This crucial part of the plan of redemption is now revealed. Before this revelation was given, it was therefore impossible for anyone to know these truths! Do you feel privileged?***
- ***The Mystery revealed to Paul for us completes that outpouring from God to man regarding himself and his work. And it is absolutely critical that we understand it if we are to be protected from the false religions of this world as the following verses make so evident.***

III. Paul’s Teaching is Powerful: We are Enabled to Suffer as Paul Did (2:1-7):

[READ] Col. 2:1-7

1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict [agony] I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

- ***Paul's commission and work WAS EFFECTIVE: Acts 9:16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. This was to prove the effectiveness of God's working in the saints under grace. God was changing the plan in raising up Paul and he needed to know that. And so do we. He writes so clearly of that in 2 Cor. 4 & 12:***

[READ] 2 Cor. 4:8-12

8 [We are] troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you. *[Add my testimony in coming into the knowledge of God's unlimited grace.]*

2 Cor. 12:10 *[compare Acts 9]* Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

- ***So we see that it was for Christ's sake AND for us! These are such important proclamations. So Christ himself suffered in the atonement for our sins and now we see that Paul also suffered for our sakes. That is clearly stated. And it is my conviction that it can***

be understood if we have a clear view of the Body teaching that Paul alone reveals. But how can we suffer for his sake? And, is this only something that the apostle could experience? The Body analogy should have convinced us that this is not only for the Apostle.

Well we know that we can also be so engaged in this new life since Paul reveals it so clearly:

[READ] Phil. 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake

- ***So also we have a glorious opportunity to suffer with Christ as Paul demonstrated. He is our example. In this it is the DEATH → LIFE principle.***
- ***Verse 12 states the reality of this working and it seems to me that the entire dispensation depends upon its reality and therefore effectiveness. Does it work? You tell me! Testimony time.***

There are other confirming scriptures as well, and these may be the very most important of all:

Rom. 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. [in respect of our relationship with Christ - we belong to him, and are members of his body church]

- ***So we may suffer as Paul did - and we are so exhorted (he is our example)!! This is surely not only Paul but also ourselves! Amen and amen. Lest we might think that this for Paul and not for us “ordinary” believers, we are taught by Paul in 2 Cor. 1 that the sufferings of Christ may indeed abound also in us:***

[READ] 2 Cor. 1:1-7

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy [our] brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

2 Grace [be] to you and peace from God our Father, and [from] the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed [be] God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you [is] stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so [shall ye be] also of the consolation.

- ***There is ever so much emphasis in contemporary “christianity” on God working on behalf of his people to ensure our “good” without understanding even what that means. God is working all things for our good. Yes. But what does it mean? And what about the emphasis here in Paul’s letters on those other things abounding as well – and perhaps they are actually the MOST IMPORTANT?***
- ***Our suffering is Paul’s often repeated subject. Isn’t it? May it even be the most important of all. AND TO LEARN THIS AND KNOW THIS THEN SHOULD BECOME OUR GREATEST INTEREST IN THIS LIFE. Our simple faith in our Lord Jesus and his completed work and then taking him at his word regarding his work today under his unlimited grace is enough. INDEED, HIS GRACE IS ITSELF SUFFICIENT even without all of those other things we might want and desire to possess. His grace meets all of our needs.***
- ***What about suffering? What about suffering for Christ’s sake as Paul has set for us the example? May his comfort abound in us as we by faith alone enter into his sufferings. That has been our theme for today.***
- ***May each of us who hear these words and read these scriptures take to heart what God’s greatest work is today in the hearts of his people. And may we echo Paul in our heart response when he writes also of this in Phil. 4:11-12:***

Phil. 4:11-12

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

Conclusions & Application:

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