

Sermon or Lesson: Colossians 1:28-2:1 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Take On The Same Perspective, Mission, And Ministry Approach That Paul Has

READ: Colossians 1:28-2:1, with vv.1:24-27 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - Jesus is Jehovah God Himself, in fullness and in physical bodily form, which qualifies Him to "redeem" or buy "the forgiveness of sins" for humans through His suffering and death on the cross. (vv.19,14)
 - - Through that torturous self-sacrificing physical death of Christ, God has provided a way for humans to be reconciled to Him, even though we humans are born automatically alienated from Him and officially are an enemy of His. (vv.21-22)
 - - This way that God has provided for humans to be reconciled to Himself is called the "gospel" or 'good news'. (vv.22-23)
 - - God desires that every person hears the "gospel" message and responds in faith, followed by being firmly grounded in the doctrines that comprise the "gospel" and the faith. (v.23)
 - - By God's design, servants of the gospel are expected to endure the afflictions that accompany their activities of spreading the gospel and the word of God. (v.24)
 - - But, there is tremendous joy within sharing the gospel with unbelievers, even if suffering is incurred. (v.24)
 - - Previously essentially excluded, Gentiles are now being brought into God's kingdom, and furthermore they are being extremely blessed through God implementing new dynamics that greatly benefit them spiritually, such as "the church", "Christ in you", and "the hope of glory". (vv.12-13,24-27)
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v.28 - READ

[Lesson Question: Formulate and describe the essence of each activity cited in verse 28, and relate them to the ultimate goal that is cited here. Hint: Do not ignore the word "We" in this verse.]

SECTION POINT: Following the example of Paul, the approach used in churches should be to knowledgeably proclaim, admonish, and teach Christ and the Word of God, in order to facilitate the achieving of spiritual maturity in the life of every believer.

- - In the fulfilling of his commission by God, Paul, along with Timothy, abundantly supply the word of God to the Gentiles, which includes the Colossians. (v.25)
- - Paul and Timothy "disclose" and "make known" various aspects about God and the activities that God accomplishes through Christ. (vv.26,27)
- - Within their "making known" activities, Paul and Timothy "**proclaim Him**" - broadcasting, announcing, proclaiming, preaching, teaching, and explaining the information about Christ and how He provided a way for humans to be reconciled to God. (vv.21-23)
- - Paul and Timothy also "**admonish**" - using Scriptures to "warn or caution", which includes "reproving gently but earnestly, counseling against things that are to be

avoided, and reminding of things that are an obligation or a responsibility". (Strong's #3560; *AHD* - 'admonish')

- - Furthermore, they "**teach**" the Word of God - providing instruction, knowledge, and explanations about specific words, phrases, verses, and doctrines in the Scriptures.
- - These "proclaiming, admonishing, and teaching" are engaged in "**with all wisdom**" - meaning Paul and Timothy were disclosing this "mystery" about the "church" and Christ, and conducting this "proclaiming, admonishing, and teaching" from a position of personally having thorough "wisdom", knowledge, and understanding about all of the topics they were presenting and abundantly supplying from the word of God. (vv.24-28)
- - Technically, in and of ourselves, believers, ministry leaders, pastors, elders, and etc. do not possess "all wisdom", so none of them or us believers can proclaim, admonish, and teach the Word of God "with all wisdom" from ourselves.
- - However, the Lord is the source of all wisdom, and therefore those persons who proclaim, admonish, and teach the Word of God must be both fully trained in the Scriptures and fully yielded to and controlled by the Spirit of God in order to access His 'all wisdom'. (cf. Proverbs 2:6, Romans 12:1-2)

- - The objects or recipients of this "proclaiming, admonishing, and teaching" are to be "**everyone**" - every person - every man, woman, teenager, youth, and child.

- - The desired outcome is that every person becomes "**perfect in Christ**", meaning actually being complete in achieving and maintaining comprehensive spiritual maturity in their life.

- - God desires that every believer be "full-grown or complete" in the faith, making ongoing significant progress towards becoming spiritually mature, spiritually well-rounded, and spiritually complete in every aspect of one's life. (Strong's #5046)

- - The fullness of "Christ in you" should result in fullness of spiritual maturity. (vv.27,28)

- - Obviously, then, becoming spiritually mature requires that this "proclaiming, admonishing, and teaching" always be accompanied by applications that are targeted at and relating to the particular listening audience and that pertain to the Scriptural contents being taught.

- - God desires and indeed even instructs that believers "not merely listen to the word" but that they furthermore actively "do what it says". (James 1:22)

-- By implication, then, this "proclaiming, admonishing, and teaching" needs to always include:

- - - - Scriptural content that is predominantly featured, properly interpreted, adequately explained, and effectively applied;

- - - - teaching practical ways that help each believer move toward attaining and sustaining more spiritual maturity;

- - - - and encouraging, exhorting, and admonishing each believer to pursue, strive for, implement, and persevere in attaining spiritual maturity that is complete, full, comprehensive, consistent, regularly producing good deeds, and etc. (cf. James 2:26)

v.29 - READ

[Lesson Question: What do verses 1:28-2:1 suggest about Paul's mission, ministry philosophy, and ministry approach, and how do those relate to the Colossian believers?]

SECTION POINT: Highlighting his ministry work of facilitating Gentiles to place their faith in Christ and to grow to spiritual maturity, Paul further discloses the corresponding challenges for him, perhaps so that the Colossian believers will take on this same perspective, mission, and ministry work.

- - Notice from verse 28 that, like Paul and Timothy, those persons doing this "proclaiming, admonishing, and teaching" should personally possess a clear, distinct, and firm determination to do all that they can in their teaching to facilitate the accomplishing of these outcomes in the lives of their listeners, "so that [they] may present everyone perfect in Christ".
- - Also like Paul and Timothy, these ministry people should continue at this "labor" for as long as it takes in order for each and every believer to reach spiritual maturity. (v.29)
- - Even though this "labor" may be "fatiguing and strenuous work" that at times involves "struggling", nevertheless these ministry people have available to them energizing rejuvenation from God to empower them in continuing and persevering in their labor that He has them doing. (Strong's #2872)
- - When ministry work is conducted in the manner that God instructs, then God is actively at work in the life of that ministry person - energizing and empowering.

v.2:1 - READ

- - Paul informs the Colossian believers about "how much [he is] struggling for [them]" and for other Gentiles, some of whom he has not met personally.
 - - By implication, Paul has love and deep concern for them, particularly in regard to them achieving an excellent relationship with God, which will benefit them into and throughout eternity.
 - - Being a Hebrew, Paul nevertheless has a cross-racial love and deep concern for Gentiles that is generated from an eternal perspective and awareness of the conditions in eternity that await them if they do not acquire an excellent relationship with God.
 - - This love and deep concern evidently compels and propels him to strenuously labor for their spiritual well-being, even to the extent of "suffering" and enduring "afflictions", exhaustion, and "struggles". (vv.1:24,29)
 - - This love and deep concern of Paul furthermore equally extends to other Gentiles in the region ("Laodicea"), to those whom he has not met, and by extension to those in the entire world.
 - - From the evidence, Paul has a regional and a global perspective and purpose, which compel and propel him in the ministry work he is doing. (cf. v.1:6)
 - - Paul wants the Colossian believers "to know how much [he] is struggling for" all of the Gentiles, perhaps because he wants the Colossian believers to likewise possess a love and deep concern for other Gentiles in their region and globally, with the purpose that all Gentiles place their faith in Christ and grow to spiritual maturity. (see v.2:2)
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BIG IDEA: Churches and believers should take on the same perspective, mission, and ministry approach that Paul has - facilitating Gentiles to place their faith in Christ and to grow to spiritual maturity.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Does this church distinctly 'proclaim Christ'? Biblically accurately? And in fullness? Or instead, are only a few basic doctrines about Christ being taught?
- - Do any of the leaders in this church have substantial academic Bible training from which they proclaim Christ in fullness and with depth?
- - Do any of the leaders in this church refrain from proclaiming Christ in fullness and with depth, perhaps for fear that attenders who are untrained in the doctrines of Scriptures will be overwhelmed and chased away if the teaching is too advanced?

- - Is 'admonishing' accepted and actually practiced by leaders in this church, gently reproving and counseling? Or instead and in reality, is 'appeasing' practiced by leaders in this church, so that no one becomes offended?
- - Is 'teaching' 'the Word of God' actually practiced by leaders in this church? Or instead and in reality, is religious socialism actually what is being taught in this church?
- - Do all of the people who teach the Word of God here have sufficient training or sufficient materials to do teaching the Word with excellence, depth, fullness, accuracy, and sound doctrines? If not, why not?
- - Do all of the people who 'proclaim Christ', 'admonish', and 'teach' 'the Word of God' in this church personally possess 'all wisdom' - meaning that they each possess comprehensive wisdom: about God, about the Scriptures, about the doctrines of the faith, about successfully applying principles of the faith to one's life, about successfully defeating bondages to sin in one's life, about spiritual maturity, about living one's faith in the secular world, about serving God and the church, and etc.?

- - Have any disciples been made in this church during the last 5 years - people who while attending this church have grown to being 'complete' 'in Christ', but previously were questionable as to whether or not they were even saved and showed no evidence of being a disciple? Name them. How many do you count? Hold up your fingers.

- - For those of you who are doing ministry, do you personally possess a clear, distinct, and firm determination to labor and do all that you can in your ministry functioning to facilitate the accomplishing of salvation and spiritual maturity in the lives of the people you are ministering to?
- - Do you have a love and deep concern for each of them and an unsettling concern about the conditions in eternity that await them, which compels and propels you to strenuously labor for their spiritual well-being, even to the extent of you suffering and enduring afflictions, exhaustion, and struggles - if necessary?
- - From the contents of these verses, do you now think that God may allow or even ordain that you suffer and endure afflictions, exhaustion, and struggles as you appropriately do ministry work for the benefit of those persons you minister to? Or instead, do you think that you are entitled to doing ministry work that is easy, smooth, at your convenience, and submits compliantly to your every whim?

- - On a related note, are any of you here one of the persons, who by your words and/or your actions, you make doing ministry a struggle for ministry leaders and workers? If so, why are you a difficult person, a problem-causing person or parent? Why, why, why?

- - For those of you who lead ministries or play a vital role in a ministry, what do the contents of these verses imply about the realm or domain that God may want your ministry work to extend into and reach? Does God want you to expand or extend the realm or domain within which your ministry work functions? Or instead, are you being lackadaisical or complacent or shortsighted by settling for less?
 - - Think about the ways that you have observed ministries expand or extend into a previously unattained or unattainable realm or domain or region. Did their expansion happen entirely on its own, or did they have to take active steps that explored or fostered expansion into a realm or region beyond the perceived borders of their ministry functioning?
 - - What can you do to explore or initiate the expansion or extension of the functioning of your ministry into an unattained realm or domain or region or aspect - without significantly sacrificing the quality of the ministry functioning you already are doing?
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[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - How did Paul determine that this labor and struggle is to be an important goal for him to pursue? Hint: use v.1:25 with vv.23,28.
 - - Why is Paul's own energy not sufficient enough or suitable to him to carry him through the implementing of this ministry labor? (v.1:29)
 - - For those of us who lead ministries or play a vital role in a ministry, what do the contents of verses 1:24,29 and 2:1 imply about the kind of responses and circumstances you will encounter when implementing your ministry activities? Without disclosing names or identities, describe any situations you encountered in which there was significant opposition and resistance to the ministry activities you were appropriately trying to implement.
 - - Describe any ways you have experienced in which God was powerfully working in your life personally as you were doing ministry work.
 - - Extensively describe what spiritual maturity is, what aspects comprise it.]
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