

A Heart for the Church | Colossians 1:24-2:5

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

A Heart for the Church

- Advancing the gospel inevitably brings suffering;
- What is true of Christ is true of Christians; that we will suffer as Christ suffered
 - a. Suffering is almost foreign in the American church; equating and confusing inconvenience with persecution; complaint with suffering
 - i. "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Timothy 2:10)
 - ii. Suffering is inevitable; sanctification ought to be desired;
 - b. Are you willing to suffer (or be inconvenienced) for the sake of others to be blessed?

The Mission to the Church

- Christ is proclaimed for the purpose of maturing the Church:
 - a. Warning like a prophet;
 - b. Teaching like an evangelist;
 - c. Applying wisdom like a counselor

The Maturity in the Church

- Paul delivers three marks of maturity within the church:
 - a. Hearts encouraged;
 - b. Being knit together in love;
 - c. Knowledge, satisfaction, and assurance in Christ
- Christian maturity is Christ-centered and community focused.

A Warning to the Church

- The mature in Christ are theologically stable; the mature church is healthy and ready to engage false teaching.

Benediction | Colossians 2:6-7

As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.