

**Monday 2/28****Colossians 1:15-19**

**15** Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,

**16** Because <sup>1</sup>in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether <sup>2</sup>thrones or <sup>3</sup>lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created <sup>4</sup>through Him and <sup>5</sup>unto Him.

**17** And He is <sup>1</sup>before all things, and all things <sup>2</sup>cohere in Him;

**18** And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the <sup>1</sup>Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

**19** For in Him <sup>1</sup>all the <sup>2</sup>fullness was pleased to dwell

**Related Verses****Ephesians 1:21-23**

**21** Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;

**22** And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

**23** Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

**Hebrews 1:3**

**3** Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

**Matthew 8:9**

**9** For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my slave, Do this, and he does it.

**John 1:3**

**3** All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not one thing came into being which has come into being.

**Portions from the footnotes****Col. 1:16<sup>1</sup> in**

In Him here means in the power of Christ’s person. All things were created in the power of what Christ is. All creation bears the characteristics of Christ’s intrinsic power.

**Col. 1:16<sup>2</sup> thrones**

Thrones refers to those who are in authority on the throne.

**Col. 1:16<sup>3</sup> lordships**

*Rule* refers to the highest office, *authority* to every kind of official power (Matt. 8:9), *power* to the mere might of authority, and *lordship* to the preeminence that power establishes. Subsequently, we see that what is listed here includes not only the angelic, heavenly authorities, whether good or evil, but also the human, earthly ones. The ascended Christ was seated by the great power of God far above all rule, authority, power, and lordship in the universe. (Note 21<sup>1</sup> in Eph. 1.)

**Col. 1:16<sup>4</sup> through**

Through Him indicates that Christ is the active instrument through which the creation of all things was accomplished in sequence.

**Col. 1:16<sup>5</sup> unto**

Or, for Him. This indicates that Christ is the end of all creation. All things were created unto Him for His possession. In, through, and unto indicate that creation is subjectively related to Christ. The creation was created in Him, through Him, and unto Him.

**Col. 1:17<sup>1</sup> before**

This indicates Christ’s eternal preexistence.

**Col. 1:17<sup>2</sup> cohere**

Or, subsist together in Him. To cohere in Christ is to exist together by Christ as the holding center, just as the spokes of a wheel are held together by the hub at their center.

**Col. 1:18<sup>1</sup> Firstborn**

Verses 15-17 unveil Christ as the first in creation, as the One who has preeminence among all creatures. Verse 18 shows that Christ is the first in resurrection as the Head of the Body. As such, He has the first place in the church, God’s new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

**Col. 1:19<sup>1</sup> all**

All the fullness refers to the fullness in both the old creation and the new creation.

**Col. 1:19<sup>2</sup> fullness**

The word fullness has no modifier, indicating that this fullness is the unique fullness. It denotes not the riches of what God is but the expression of those riches. The full expression of the rich being of God, in both creation and the church, dwells in Christ. All creation and the whole church are filled with Christ as the expression of God’s riches. Such a fullness is pleased with this. This is pleasant to Christ.

The fullness in this verse refers to the image of God in v. 15, who is Christ, a living person. Such a fullness is pleased to dwell in the expression of God and to reconcile all things to the expression of God.

**Portions from the Life-study messages**

All things came into being in Christ, through Christ, and unto Christ. Nothing should be regarded as separate from Him. All things were made in the intrinsic power of Christ’s person, through Him as the active instrument, and unto Him as the consummate goal. Furthermore, all things cohere, are held together, in Him as the hub. Because all things were created in Christ, through Christ, and unto Christ and because all things cohere in Christ, God can be expressed in creation through Christ who is the image of the invisible God.

Verses 15 through 19 make up one section of...Colossians. In this section Christ is revealed as the first both in the old creation and in the new creation. As...[such], Christ is the expression of God. God is expressed in Him because all things have come into being in Him, through Him, and unto Him, and they cohere in Him. This is true not only of the old creation, but even the more of the new creation. The new creation, the church, is Christ’s Body, of which He is the Head. Through His subjective relationship to creation, Christ is the fullness of the unseen God, the image of the invisible God. The fullness in verse 19 is not a thing; it is a person who is the expression, the image, of the Triune God. (*Life-study of Colossians*, pp. 82-83)

*Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 14 – Sections: How To Enjoy God By Matching Reading With Praying; Reading And Praying Needing To Be Combined; The Lord Being Enjoyed by Us in the Spirit and in the Word*

**Tuesday 3/1****Colossians 1:19-23**

**19** For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell

**20** And <sup>1</sup>through Him to reconcile <sup>2</sup>all things to <sup>3</sup>Himself, <sup>4</sup>having made peace through the blood of His cross-through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the <sup>5</sup>heavens.

**21** And you, though once alienated and <sup>1</sup>enemies in your <sup>2</sup>mind because of your evil works,

**22** <sup>1</sup>He now has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and without reproach before Him;

**23** If indeed you continue in the <sup>1</sup>faith, grounded and steadfast and not being moved away from the <sup>2</sup>hope of the gospel, which you heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, of which I Paul became a minister.

**Related Verses****Colossians 2:9**

**9** For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

**2 Corinthians 5:18-20**

**18** But all things are out from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

**19** Namely, that God in Christ was reconciling the world to Himself, not accounting their offenses to them, and has put in us the word of reconciliation.

**20** On behalf of Christ then we are ambassadors, as God entreats you through us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God.

**Colossians 1:20-22**

**20** And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross-through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.

**21** And you, though once alienated and enemies in your mind because of your evil works,

**22** He now has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and without reproach before Him;

**Portions from the footnotes****Col. 1:20<sup>1</sup> through**

Through Him means through Christ as the active instrument through which the reconciliation was accomplished.

**Col. 1:20<sup>2</sup> all**

Not “all people” but “all things,” referring not only to human beings but also to all creatures, which were created in Christ and now subsist, cohere, in Him (vv. 16-17) and are reconciled to God through Him.

**Col. 1:20<sup>3</sup> Himself**

Himself here refers to the fullness in v. 19.

**Col. 1:20<sup>4</sup> having**

To reconcile all things to Himself is to make peace with Himself for all things. This was accomplished through the blood of the cross of Christ.

**Col. 1:20<sup>5</sup> heavens**

Not only things on the earth but also things in the heavens needed to be reconciled to God. This indicates that things in the heavens also are wrong with God because of the rebellion of Satan, the archangel, and the angels who followed him. His rebellion has contaminated the heavens.

**Col. 1:21<sup>1</sup> enemies**

Because we were sinners, we needed redemption. Because we were also enemies of God, we needed reconciliation.

**Col. 1:21<sup>2</sup> mind**

Our enmity toward God was mainly in our corrupted mind.

**Col. 1:22<sup>1</sup> He**

Both He and Him refer to the fullness in v. 19. It is the fullness that dwells in Christ (v. 19), it is the fullness that reconciles us to Himself (v. 20), and it is to the fullness that we will be presented. This fullness is God Himself expressed in Christ.

**Col. 1:23<sup>1</sup> faith**

Not our act of believing but the object of our belief.

**Col. 1:23<sup>2</sup> hope**

Christ in us the hope of glory (v. 27), from whom we should not be moved away.

**Portions from the Life-study messages**

The fullness, the expression of God, is a person. Many of the personal pronouns in the verses following 1:19 refer to the fullness as a person. This indicates that the fullness is the expression of God, even God Himself. In this fullness the Son is preeminent, for all the fullness is pleased to dwell in Him. Therefore, He must have the first place in the environment and in the church. He is the preeminent One.

He is also the all-inclusive One. Christ is the reality of all the positive things in the universe. If we know the Bible and God’s economy, we shall realize that Christ is the heavens, the earth, the sun, life, light, the stars, trees, flowers, water, air, and food. The material things are pictures of what He is to us. Furthermore, Christ is all the divine attributes, such as power, holiness, righteousness, kindness, and love. He is also the human virtues, such as humility and patience. Moreover, He is the church and every member of the church, God’s building and every stone in the building. This means that Christ is you and me....As the all-inclusive One, Christ is the centrality and universality of God. (Life-study of Colossians, p. 43)

*Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 14 – Sections: Examples of Enjoying God through Mingling Reading with Praying; Meditating to Turn the Word into Prayer*

**Wednesday 3/2****Colossians 1:24-25**

**24** I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and I fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church;

**25** Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship of God, which was given to me for you, to complete the word of God,

**Related Verses****Philippians 2:17-18**

**17** But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all.

**18** And in like manner you also rejoice, and you rejoice together with me.

**2 Corinthians 1:5-6**

**5** For even as the sufferings of the Christ abound unto us, so through the Christ our comfort also abounds.

**6** But whether we are afflicted, it is for your comforting and salvation; or whether we are comforted, it is for your comforting, which operates in the endurance of the same sufferings which we also suffer.

**Ephesians 2:19-22**

**19** So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

**20** Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;

**21** In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

**22** In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

**Ephesians 3:2**

**2** If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

**Portions from the footnotes****Col. 1:24<sup>1</sup> fill**

The afflictions of Christ are of two categories: those for accomplishing redemption, which were completed by Christ Himself, and those for producing and building the church, which need to be filled up by the apostles and the believers.

**Portions from the Life-study messages**

Although we cannot participate in Christ’s suffering for re-demption, if we are faithful to Him, we must share in His suffering for the producing and building up of His Body. Paul was a pattern for us in this matter. Immediately after his conversion, he began to share in this suffering of Christ, to partake of the afflictions of Christ for the sake of His Body.

This is contrary to the concept that nothing related to Christ can be lacking. According to this concept, whatever Christ is and does is complete. But here is a word telling us that at least one thing related to Christ is lacking—His afflictions for producing and building up His Body. For the producing of His Body, Christ suffered a great deal. But because this suffering has not been completed by Christ Himself, there is the need for His faithful ones to make up this shortage. Paul did not suffer for redemption, but he did suffer for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ.

The apostle Paul was a pattern for the believers to follow (1 Tim. 1:16). We must consider Paul as a pattern, not as someone who was so high that no one else can be like he was. Because by the Lord’s mercy Paul was set up to be a pattern for us, whatever he was, we can be also. We must believe in the Lord’s mercy. If the mercy of the Lord made Paul a pattern, then His mercy can accomplish in us the same thing that it did in Paul. This means that just as Paul suffered for the producing and building up of the Body of Christ, so we must also suffer for the church.

Christ, of course, took the lead to suffer for the producing and building up of His Body. But the apostles and the believers must follow Christ’s

footsteps in suffering this kind of affliction. In John 12:24 the Lord Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” This verse does not speak of Christ’s redeeming death, but of His producing, generating death. Christ fell into the ground and died as a grain of wheat in order to produce many grains for the church. According to John 12:26, those who desire to serve Him must follow Him in this regard.

In Philippians 3:10 Paul speaks of knowing the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings. These sufferings are not for redemption, but for the building up of the Body. We cannot have fellowship in Christ’s sufferings for redemption, but we need to have much fellowship in Christ’s sufferings for the church.

The fact that Paul mentions the afflictions of Christ [v. 24] in connection with the stewardship of God [v. 25] indicates that the stewardship can be carried out only through suffering. If we desire to share in the stewardship of God, we must be prepared to suffer. All those who participate in the service of the church or in the ministry must be ready to partake of the afflictions of a steward. This means that we must be willing to pay whatever price is necessary to fulfill our stewardship.

To carry out the stewardship of God by dispensing the riches of Christ into the members of God’s royal family is worth any kind of suffering, great or small....The sufferings in which we share are for the building up of the Body of Christ. They are in no way related to the accomplishment of redemption. (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 98-99, 92-93)

**Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 14 – Sections: Supplying Ourselves and Others**

**Thursday 3/3****Colossians 1:24b-26**

**24b** ...the church;

**25** Of <sup>1</sup>which I became a <sup>2</sup>minister according to the <sup>3</sup>stewardship of God, which was given to me for you, to <sup>4</sup>complete the word of God,

**26** The <sup>1</sup>mystery which has been hidden <sup>2</sup>from the ages and from the generations but now has been manifested to His saints;

**Related Verses****Colossians 2:2**

**2** That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

**1 Corinthians 9:17**

**17** If I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a stewardship.

**Ephesians 3:2-4**

**2** If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

**3** That by revelation the mystery was made known to me, as I have written previously in brief,

**4** By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,

**Ephesians 4:7**

**7** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

**Ephesians 4:29**

**29** Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.

**1 Peter 2:4-5**

**4** Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,

**5** You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

**1 Peter 4:10**

**10** Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

**Portions from the footnotes****Col. 1:25<sup>1</sup> which**

Referring to the church in the preceding verse, indicating that Paul became a minister not of a certain teaching, preaching, or mission work but of the church, the Body of Christ, for its building up.

**Col. 1:25<sup>2</sup> minister**

In Greek, the same word as that for deacon, meaning one who serves.

**Col. 1:25<sup>3</sup> stewardship**

In Greek, the same word as *economy* in v. 9 and in 1:10. In relation to God, this word denotes God’s economy, God’s administration; in relation to the apostle, it denotes the stewardship (*stewardship* is used also in 1 Cor. 9:17). The stewardship of the grace is for the dispensing of the grace of God to His chosen people for the producing and building up of the church. Out of this stewardship comes the ministry of the apostle, who is a steward in God’s house, ministering Christ as God’s grace to God’s household. (Note 2<sup>2</sup> in Eph. 3.)

**Col. 1:25<sup>4</sup> complete**

The word of God is the divine revelation, which had not been completed before the New Testament was written. In the New Testament the apostles, especially the apostle Paul, completed the word of God in regard to the mystery of God, which is Christ, and the mystery of Christ, which is the church, to give us a full revelation of God’s economy.

**Col. 1:26<sup>1</sup> mystery**

According to Greek grammar, the mystery in this verse is in apposition to the word of God in v. 25, showing that the mystery is the word of God. This mystery concerns Christ and the church (Eph. 5:32), the Head and the Body. The unveiling of this mystery through the apostle Paul is the completing of the word of God as the divine revelation.

**Col. 1:26<sup>2</sup> from**

From the ages means from eternity, and from the generations means from the times. The mystery concerning Christ and the church was hidden from eternity and from all the times until the New Testament age, when it was manifested to the saints, including all of us, the believers in Christ.

**Portions from the Life-study messages**

In 1:25 Paul says that he “became a minister according to the stewardship of God.” For the sake of the full expression of God, there is the need for the stewardship of God... At the time of Paul, many rich families had stewards whose responsibility was to dis-tribute food and other supplies to members of the household. Our Father has a great family, a divine household. Because our Father has such vast riches, there is the need in His household for many stewards to dispense these riches to His children. This dispensing is the stewardship. Hence, a stewardship is a dispensation.

According to the Epistle to the Colossians, God’s family is especially rich in Christ as the all-inclusive and preeminent One, as the One who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, and the Firstborn from the dead. The riches of such a Christ, who is the full expression of the Triune God, need to be dispensed into the members of God’s family. This service of dispensing, which in 1:25 is called the stewardship of God, was the work of the apostle Paul. It also should be our work today.

The desire of God’s heart is to dispense Himself into man. This is the central point of the whole Bible. God’s economy is to carry out the dispensing of Himself into man. We share in this economy through our stewardship, our ministry of dispensing the riches of Christ. After the riches of Christ have been dispensed into us, we need to take up the burden to dispense them into others. With God these riches are His economy; with us they are the steward-ship; and when they are dispensed by us into others, they become God’s dispensation....Hence, we have the economy, the steward-ship, and the dispensation.

May the Lord open our eyes to see that we all have part in the stewardship of God. In every aspect of the practical church life, even in such things as ushering and cleaning the meeting hall, we need to dispense Christ into others. Firstly, we need to be filled with Christ and then, minister the riches of Christ to others. This is our stewardship. (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 89, 90-91, 92)

*Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 14 – Sections: The Way to Enjoy God through Reading with Praying; Reading the Bible Sequentially; Emphasizing Digestion Rather Than Content; Stopping Frequently to Meditate*

**Friday 3/4****Colossians 1:26-27**

**26** The mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from the generations but now has been manifested to His saints;

**27** To whom God willed to make known what are the <sup>1</sup>riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, <sup>2</sup>which is <sup>3</sup>Christ <sup>4</sup>in you, the hope of <sup>5</sup>glory,

**Related Verses****Ephesians 1:18**

**18** The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

**Ephesians 3:16**

**16** That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

**Romans 8:10**

**10** But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

**Romans 9:23**

**23** In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,

**2 Corinthians 13:5**

**5** Test yourselves whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Or do you not realize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are disapproved?

**Galatians 2:20**

**20** I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

**Galatians 4:19**

**19** My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,

**Philippians 3:21**

**21** Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.

**Portions from the footnotes****Col. 1:27<sup>1</sup> riches**

The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles are the riches of all that Christ is to the Gentile believers (Eph. 3:8).

**Col. 1:27<sup>2</sup> which**

Which refers to this mystery. This mystery, full of glory among the Gentiles, is Christ in us. Christ as life in us is mysterious as well as glorious.

**Col. 1:27<sup>3</sup> Christ**

Christ, who dwells in our spirit to be our life and person, is our hope of glory. When He comes, we will be glorified in Him. This indicates that the indwelling Christ will saturate our entire being that our physical body may be transfigured and conformed to the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21).

**Col. 1:27<sup>4</sup> in**

In this book a number of important phrases point to our experience of Christ: Christ in you (v. 27), full-grown in Christ (v. 28), walk in Him (2:6), according to Christ (2:8), made alive together with Him (2:13), died with Christ (2:20), holding the Head (2:19), out from whom (2:19), and grows with the growth of God (2:19). These expressions give us a complete picture of the proper experience of Christ.

**Col. 1:27<sup>5</sup> glory**

Christ is the mystery that is full of glory now. This glory will be manifested to its fullest extent when Christ returns to glorify His saints (Rom. 8:30). Hence, it is a hope, the hope of glory. Christ Himself is also this hope of glory.

**Portions from the Life-study messages**

Today we focus our attention upon Christ as the mystery of God and upon the church as the mystery of Christ. As the mystery of God, the all-inclusive Christ

is the embodiment of God and also the life-giving Spirit. As the mystery of Christ, the church is the Body of Christ, His fullness, and the new man to be the full expression of Christ as well. This is the mystery that has been made manifest to the saints.

The word “whom” at the beginning of [verse 27] refers to the saints mentioned in the preceding verse. To us God has willed to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery. This mystery, which is Christ in us as the hope of glory, is made known among the nations.

At the time Paul wrote to the Colossians, the Jews regarded the Gentiles, the nations, as swine. Nevertheless, Paul says that God has willed to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, that is, among the Gentile “swine.”...Although we were sinners, enemies, and rebels, we have become sons of God. We are also heirs of God, joint partakers of Christ, and even the members of Christ. Furthermore, the New Testament reveals that we are priests and kings. As heirs of God, we shall inherit not only God Himself, but all things. We are sons of God, heirs of God, partners of Christ, and priests and kings. What a glory this is!

As believers in Christ, we know the riches of the glory of this mystery. We cannot exhaust the items of the riches of such a glory. All the blessings in the Bible are included in the riches of this glory, which is our portion. This glory is the glory of the mystery among the nations, and this mystery is Christ in us. The Christ who dwells within us is the mystery full of glory, with countless riches. This is the key point in the book of Colossians. (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 115-116, 117)

**Corporate Reading of “How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God” Chapter 14 – Sections: Interceding; Praying with Reading Issuing In Enjoying the Glory of God**

**Saturday 3/5****Colossians 1:28-29**

28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man <sup>1</sup>full-grown <sup>2</sup>in Christ;

29 For which also I labor, <sup>1</sup>struggling according to His operation which operates in me in <sup>2</sup>power.

**Related Verses****Colossians 2:1**

**1** For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those in Laodicea, even all who have not seen my face in the flesh,

**Colossians 4:12**

**12** Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

**Ephesians 1:19**

**19** And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength,

**Ephesians 3:20**

**20** But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us,

**Ephesians 4:13**

**13** Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

**Hebrews 6:1**

**1** Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

**1 Timothy 4:6**

**6** If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.

**1 Peter 4:11**

**11** If anyone speaks, as speaking oracles of God; if anyone ministers, as ministering out of the strength which God supplies; that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

**Portions from the footnotes****Col. 1:28<sup>1</sup> full-grown**

Or, perfect, complete, mature. Perfect denotes full in quality, whereas complete denotes full in quantity. The apostle’s ministry, whether in announcing Christ or in admonishing and teaching men in all wisdom, was altogether to minister Christ to men that they might become perfect and complete by maturing with Christ as the element of the divine life unto full growth.

**Col. 1:28<sup>2</sup> in**

The preceding verse says that Christ is in us; this verse, that we are in Christ. First, we are put into Christ; then Christ is in us. The more we get into Christ, the more He comes into us, and the more He comes into us, the more we get into Him. It is by this cycle that we grow in life.

**Col. 1:29<sup>1</sup> struggling**

Or, contending (as in wrestling). So also in 4:12.

**Col. 1:29<sup>2</sup> power**

The power of the resurrection life (Phil. 3:10), which operated within the apostle and operates within all the believers (1:19; 3:20). By such an inward, operating power of life the gift of grace was given to the apostle, that is, produced in him. (Note 7<sup>3</sup> in Eph. 3.)

The inward power, referred to in 1:19-20, is God’s resurrection power, not His creating power. God’s creating power produces the material things in our environment (Rom. 8:28), whereas God’s resurrection power accomplishes within our inward being the spiritual things for the church. (Note 20<sup>3</sup> in Eph. 3.)

**Portions from the Life-study messages**

Paul’s ministry, whether in announcing Christ or in admonishing and teaching every man in all wisdom, was to minister Christ to others so that they could be perfect and complete by maturing with Christ unto full

growth. To become full-grown in Christ is a matter of life. Christ must be added into us. Then we need to grow in Christ and gradually gain more of the stature of Christ. Eventually, as Christ is wrought into us, we shall become full-grown in Christ....May our eyes be opened to see that the goal of our work and ministry must be to minister Christ to others so that they may grow with the measure of Christ, who is the mystery of God’s economy.

In 1:29 Paul said that he struggled according to Christ’s operation within him. This struggle was his labor to present every man full-grown in Christ. He endeavored to do this by announcing Christ, by admonishing every man, and by teaching every man in all wisdom.

The operation of Christ operates in us in power....Every saved person has at least some experience of Christ’s operation. To be saved is not merely to have our sins forgiven and to be justified by God. It is also to have Christ imparted into us. The Christ who dwells in us also operates in us....His operating becomes the operation that operates in us. Paul’s struggling for the saints was according to this operation. Some saints may feel that they sense very little of Christ’s operation within them. The reason for this lack is the shortage of prayer. We need to go to the Lord with a repentant heart and say, “Lord, I am still so natural, so much in the self and in the old man. Lord, forgive me and cleanse me with Your precious blood. Lord, I desire to be enlightened, purified, and made transparent. I ask You to show me what You want of me. Expose me so that I may be filled with You.” If we pray in this way, Christ’s operation will have a way to operate within us.

Christ’s operation operates in power. Paul refers to this power in Ephesians 3:7 and 20. In Ephesians 3:7 he speaks of “the operation of His power,” and in 3:20, of the “power which operates in us.” This power is the power of resurrection life (Phil. 3:10) within the believers (Eph. 1:19). It is the very power that operated in Christ to raise Him from the dead, to seat Him at God’s right hand in the heavenlies, and to subject all things under His feet (Eph. 1:20-22). Hence, this power is the resurrection power, the transcending power, and

the subduing power. According to Christ’s operation in such a power, we may struggle to present others full-grown in Christ.

What Paul did in struggling to present others full-grown in Christ is an example which serves for the perfecting of the saints for the building up of the Body of Christ. It is to struggle according to the operation of Christ that operates in us, that is, to labor by the resurrecting, transcending, and subduing power within us. (Life-study of Colossians, pp. 119, 120, 143, 144)

**Hymns, #495, #197, #949, #394**

### *Outline*

II. The preeminent and all-inclusive One, the centrality and universality of God (1:9—3:11)

B. The image of God and the Firstborn both in creation and in resurrection (1:15-23)

C. The mystery of God’s economy (1:24-29)

### *Crucial points*

Colossians 1:9—3:11 unveils Christ as the preeminent and all-inclusive One, the centrality and universality of God. Chapter one reveals that Christ is the portion of the saints (w. 9-14), the image of God and the Firstborn both in creation and in resurrection (w. 15-23), and the mystery of God’s economy (w. 24-29).

In verses 15 through 19 Christ is revealed as the first both in the old creation and in the new creation. As such, Christ is the expression of God. God is expressed in Him because all things have come into being in Him, through Him, and unto Him, and they cohere in Him. The fullness in verse 19 refers to the image of God in v. 15, who is Christ, a living person. Such a fullness is pleased to dwell in the expression of God (v. 19) and to reconcile all things to the expression of God (v. 20). To reconcile all things to Himself is to make peace with Himself for all things (v. 20). This was accomplished through the blood of the cross of Christ. Because we were sinners, we needed redemption (v. 14). Because we were also enemies of God (v. 21), we needed reconciliation (w. 20, 22). In the body of His flesh Christ has reconciled us to God in order to present us

holy, blameless, and without reproach to God (v. 22). However, we still need to “continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast and not being moved away from the hope of the gospel” (v. 23).

In verses 24 through 26 we see that for the sake of the full expression of God, there is the need for the stewardship of God. The fact that Paul mentions the afflictions of Christ (v. 24) in connection with the stewardship of God (v. 25) indicates that the stewardship can be carried out only through suffering. To carry out the stewardship of God by dispensing the riches of Christ into the members of God’s royal family is worth any kind of suffering, great or small. The sufferings in which we share are for the building up of the Body of Christ. They are in no way related to the accomplishment of redemption.

Paul “became a minister according to the stewardship of God...to complete the word of God” (v. 25). In the New Testament the apostles, especially the apostle Paul, completed the word of God in regard to the mystery of God, which is Christ, and the mystery of Christ, which is the church, to give us a full revelation of God’s economy.

Christ, who dwells in our spirit to be our life and person, is our hope of glory (v. 27). When He comes, we will be glorified in Him. This indicates that the indwelling Christ will saturate our entire being that our physical body may be transfigured and conformed to the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21).

Paul’s ministry, whether in announcing Christ or in admonishing and teaching every man in all wisdom (v. 28), was to minister Christ to others so that they may grow with the measure of Christ, who is the mystery of God’s economy. What Paul did in struggling to present others full-grown in Christ is an example which serves for the perfecting of the saints for the building up of the Body of Christ. It is to struggle according to the operation of Christ that operates in us in power (v. 29).

### **Further Reading:**

*Life-study of Colossians*, msgs. 9-10, 12-16

### **Lord’s Day 3/6**

### *Related Verses*

#### **Hebrews 1:8**

**8** But of the Son, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

#### **Hebrews 2:9**

**9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything.

#### **Hebrews 3:1**

**1** Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus,

#### **Hebrews 4:14**

**14** Having therefore a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession.

#### **Hebrews 5:10**

**10** Being addressed by God as a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec;

#### **Hebrews 7:24**

**24** But He, because He abides forever, has His priesthood unalterable.

#### **Hebrews 8:1**

**1** Now in the things which are being said the chief point is this: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

#### **Hebrews 9:12**

**12** And not through the blood of goats and calves but through His own blood, entered once for all into the Holy of Holies, obtaining an eternal redemption.

#### **Hebrews 9:14**

**14** How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

#### **Hebrews 10:37**

**37** "For in yet a very little while the Coming One will come and will not delay.