

Colossians: The Supremacy of Christ (Col. 1:24-29)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 June 2025

Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 00] When I think about the purpose of our life and our ministry, both here as a church, me personally, and for you personally, what is the end of your ministry with one another?

What's the end goal? What is it that we're striving to achieve? And where is the finish line, so to speak? And Paul today in our text is going to make the argument that the goal line is to, in working with God in concert with the Lord, to produce maturity in one another.

And that our goal for our lives is for us to be mature in Christ. And we're going to see that in our text today in just a moment. But for those of us who have received Christ, our aim is to live a life that is transformed.

Where our old self and the futile ways of thinking are slowly losing their influence and their grip on us. Each day as we abide and the gospel lives in us to submit more and more to the Lordship of Christ.

And we become increasingly more like our Lord and Savior Jesus. This is what it is to be a spiritually mature person. And they are beautiful people. These are truthful individuals.

[1 : 22] These are people who are filled with the fruit of the Spirit of love and love, joy, peace and patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. These are people who are humble.

They proclaim Christ to those around them. You want them as your neighbor. You want a spiritually mature person as your neighbor. You want them as an employee. You want to work for a spiritually mature person.

You want them to be in the church. These are people you want to be around. They're life-giving individuals. And so we find in our text today, Paul is writing to the church at Colossae.

He has... We have seen him elevate the person of Christ in the eyes of the church at Colossae. He has said already in our previous sermons, and previously in our text in Colossae, he is the image of the invisible God.

Speaking of Jesus, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things are created. You see, Paul is just portraying this person of Christ as nothing compares.

[2 : 29] He has paid the price for your sin. Believe in him. And he's painting this beautiful picture of Christ. And then Paul, in a very moving way, speaks very personally that he is...

It's as if he is dumbfounded that the Lord has chosen even him, one who is formerly a persecutor of the church, to now be a minister of the gospel.

And Paul's end goal and aim is to have someone be mature in Christ. And so let us look at this text today as we see this very moving, very personal part of the letter at the writing to the church of Colossae.

And so we read this in Colossians chapter 1, verses 24 through 29. Let's read the word of the Lord together. Now I rejoice in my suffering for your sake.

And in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's affliction 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 from ages and generations, but now revealed to his saints.

[3 : 51] 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.

In 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 and that he powerfully works within me.

So, if you're taking notes today, what is the big idea, so to speak? What is Paul's big aim is that this, that the goal of ministry is life transformation.

The goal of ministry is life transformation. The goal of your friendship with another person is that they have a transformed life, that they believe in Christ and they have a transformed life because of what Christ has done for them.

And so, what are, what are, there are four things in this text that I see that help us live a transformed life and communicate what God has done for us.

[5 : 07] So, the first one is this, if the goal of ministry is life transformation, then life transformation is aided, the first point is this, is aided when one sees himself as a minister.

Look with me in verse 23, it was in the previous text that Pastor Jay preached last week. The concluding line in verse 23 says, I, Paul, became a minister.

Paul sees himself as a minister and then look down with me in verse 25 in our text today, it says, of which I became a minister.

Paul sees himself as a minister. And what, what is the word that is behind this English word? It's the word where we get the word deacon today, diakonos, it's the Greek word there. And, and it's one who waits tables.

This is one who is a servant that would be some similar today as like a bus boy, a one who cleans your table and does your dishes at a restaurant. It's, it's one who stirs up dust.

[6 : 07] This is a common word, uh, deacon. It's, it's someone with, that does menial and unskilled service. It's someone who is, who does very common service.

Is, would, would be someone who is a deacon, uh, diakono in, in, in, in the first century. Paul saw himself as a very common person, given to a common service.

And, and, in fact, and I love, uh, how Paul writes of himself in, in second Corinthians four, seven, he says this, but we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

I, I love this. We have, we have this treasure in jars of clay. We have this amazing gospel in the, in Lord Jesus Christ in us, but we are just, but, but the container of this beautiful thing is just a jar of clay.

That's all I am, Paul is saying. The gospel is glorious, the Jesus is beautiful, but Paul is not. The gospel in clay pots, Paul saw himself as a clay pot, something breakable, usable, replaceable.

[7 : 25] It, we read in Timothy that a clay pot is something that people would have put like, um, their compost in, their, their, their food, extra food or rotten food and they would just take it out and throw it out and they use a clay pot to put this in.

And so, there's nothing special about a clay pot. It's something you just take garbage out in. There's no glory in Paul at all.

There's no glory in the vessel of being a clay pot, but the clay pot contains something very beautiful, very wonderful, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, I love how Paul sees himself as a minister and if we see ourselves as a minister, that helps us. There's other Greek words that are used for minister and a servant in the New Testament that Paul sees himself as.

I just want to share two more with you. It's interesting how the word minister or has become an elevated term in, in, in England.

[8 : 26] It is, you know, you, you hear terms of, oh, he's the minister of the interior and it's an elevated term. Even today, so politically, it can be used as an elevated term.

Even in the church, in some church cultures, they'll say, oh, that's the minister of music or something like this. So, it can be an elevated term. And yet, minister, in the, it was a, it was to be a common servant of the most commonest kind.

And, in, in Romans 1, Paul says, Paul, he speaks of himself, Romans 1, 1, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

And that word there is to mean a slave. Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ, Paul is saying, that's who I am, a slave. He is submissive. He is under orders.

He does not operate independently. So, this is helpful. We're, we're like clay pots. We're, we're of the most common kind of servant. We contain something beautiful, but the attention is not on us.

[9 : 33] It's on what we, what it is that we share and contain. And, and, and I'm a slave. I don't act independently. I'm under orders of another. And then third word I want to share is this.

Paul makes mention of it in 1 Corinthians 4. Another kind of servant is, is a word that, it's, huberates, it's a compound word that means under ormen.

And I think we have maybe an image for us. There was in the Athenian Greek culture a ship called the Trireme. And a Trireme, on the, there was a first, the top deck of the, of the ship.

And there were three rows underneath, three levels underneath the top level of the ship. And, and that was, and so you get Tri for that three levels.

And they were all oarsmen. And there were, there was these significant ships that were motored about. There's the, there's a replica today that is, you can find in Greece.

[10:36] And that's what the Trireme looked like. And it's this old Athenian ship. And so, Paul says, I'm an under oarsman. There's nothing flashy about being on the lowest deck of being an oarsman.

In fact, some even were shackled to that post because it was such a hard, laborious job. You may flee if you had the chance. And so, Paul says, hey, I'm a deacon.

I'm a servant. My aim is to serve. I'm a clay pot. There's nothing flashy about me, but what I contain is most glorious.

Thirdly, I'm just a, I'm a minister. I'm a slave. I don't act independently. And then third, I'm an under oarsman. I'm just a servant.

I work in obscurity. I work in obscurity. And you get this concept that Paul envisions himself as simply one who places, who takes upon a very humble position and a lowly state.

[11:47] That is how Paul sees himself. And so, if we want to be a transformed people, we must see ourselves administering this gospel as a very lowly person.

We're under orders of another. Life transformation is aided when one sees himself or herself as a minister. Becoming like Christ, it is critical to see oneself as a minister.

The goal of ministry is life transformation. Paul writes in verse 23 and 5 that he's a minister. And notice what he says he has made a minister by.

It wasn't necessarily because Paul was super educated, although he was. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees. It was not because of his formal training that he had received.

It wasn't by a council of some kind. It wasn't an institution that said, okay, now you are a minister, Paul.

[12:50] It was not his winsome personality. He must have had woo, this ability to win others over or anything like this. Paul says in verse 25 or he said verse 23, I became a minister.

And then in verse 25, I became a minister. Someone acted upon Paul for him to become a minister. And you say, well, how does Paul see himself being acted upon? When did that happen? We read, interestingly, if you read Acts chapter 9, you can get the whole account of Paul walking on the road to Damascus.

But in an abbreviated form, we read in Acts chapter 26 where Paul tells King Agrippa, this is when I became a minister and this is how it happened, Mr. King.

So this is, we want to read in Acts chapter 26. We'll pick up in verse 12. In this connection, I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priest. At midday, O king, and he's speaking of King Agrippa, the Gentile king, I saw on the way a light from heaven brighter than the sun.

[14:02] Don't miss the irony here. It is noon. And he says, and at noon, out in the middle of the desert with a high, bright sun, I saw a light that far eclipsed noonday.

Noonday. Anyway, I find that an interesting account. We need to think of that when he's on the way to Damascus when he says his bright light, it's noon. Okay. A bright light from heaven brighter than the sun that shone around me and those who journeyed with me and when we had fallen on the ground, I heard a voice say to me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

It is hard for you to kick against the goads. And I said, who are you, Lord? And the Lord said to me, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand to your feet for I have appeared to you for this purpose.

And so here it is. How did he become a minister? And it says this, I have appeared for you to do this purpose, to appoint you as a servant.

And there's that word huberates, the under oarsman. I have appointed you to be this under oarsman and a witness to the things to which you have seen me and those in which I appear to you.

[15 : 29] When did Paul become a minister? On this road when this bright light was shown to him, Christ revealed himself to him and he says, I have appeared to you for this purpose to appoint you as a servant.

When you have placed your faith in Christ, you have been appointed as his servant. Paul then, writing to Timothy, he says it this way. Again, these are abbreviated testimonies that Paul gives of what the Lord has done in his life, of how he became a minister.

So he says in verse 12, 1 Timothy 1 to verse 12, he says this, I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service. Though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, insolent opponent, but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in my unbelief. And he says there, I was appointed to, appointed me to this service.

So what is Paul communicating? I did not obtain this ministry, I did not deserve it, the path to become a minister was not earned, and I'm a servant, I'm a slave, I'm an under-oarsman.

[16 : 49] When I was 19 years old, I did not know the Lord yet, and my brother asked me a disruptive question as I was traveling from Harrington, the garden spot of Washington State, to Spokane.

So we were traveling and we were coming to Spokane to watch a movie and he asked me a disruptive question. He asked me too, Scott, what is it that makes you think that you're a Christian? Because we had grown up in the church, we've grown up in a Christian home, and so I gave him a works-based answer and he gently basically said, Scott, that's my concern that I have for you is we don't know the Lord because of our good works.

We know the Lord because God has forgiven us of our sin and we've placed our faith in Him. And he said, this may be familiar to you, but I fear that you have never made that decision.

I just want to watch a movie. But I'm grateful to the Lord that my brother had the courage to ask me a very personal question about my faith in Christ.

[18 : 05] And it was later that week alone in my bedroom that I received Christ as my Savior, considering what my brother had said, realizing the truth of what he had said, that one comes to faith in Christ or one comes to Christ by placing his faith in his life, death, and resurrection and his person and work on the cross, not because of good works.

And upon believing in him, I am now called into his service. And there's nothing special about me, but now I contain that good news, the glorious good news of Jesus Christ just as Paul had and now I have this entrustment to share.

There's nothing special about this clay pot, but the good news that I have is special, is glorious. Secondly, if our ministry is to have life transformation, then what helps us live transformed life? Well, it's envisioning joyfully enduring trials for the sake of Christ and for the sake of his church. To joyfully endure trials, adversity, for the sake of Christ and for the sake of the church. the church may give us trouble. We may trouble each other from time to time. The world may trouble us from time to time, but the church will, it may break our heart, but the church cannot steal one's joy.

[19 : 33] Look with me in verse 24. Now I rejoice in my suffering for your sake. Paul is rejoicing in the fact that he has had the opportunity to suffer for the sake of the church at Colossae.

And there's a vicarious nature to the suffering. In verse 24, I rejoice in my suffering for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of the body.

He says it twice, that is the church. For your sake, for the church at Colossae. He says, I rejoice, I consider it joy to have suffered for your sake that you may be mature in Christ.

what does he mean though when he says, in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's affliction.

And this is where we need to be very careful because there's many misunderstandings about what is Paul meaning there because the danger is to think this, is there something lacking in Christ's death on the cross?

[20 : 47] Is there something lacking in, and let me clearly say, adamantly, no. That is not what Paul is communicating. Christ, while he ended his suffering on the cross, he said, it is finished.

He lacked nothing offering himself as the perfect sacrifice on the cross to pay, to make payment for sin. There is nothing that Christ lacked in his finished work on the cross.

So then what is he saying? Perhaps 2 Corinthians 4 helps us when we read in verse 7, but we have this treasure in jars of clay to show the surpassing power that belongs to God, not to us.

And we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair. Paul is saying, I am suffering not because people hate me, but because people hate Christ.

And so, Paul had preached Christ, he had, let me say it this way, if Paul had not preached Christ, he would not have suffered.

[22 : 03] Let's put Paul on his missionary journeys. He goes to Lystra, he goes to Asia mining, he goes to all these towns. If he was like a tourist and just said, my, these are beautiful buildings, look at what you have constructed, tell me about this, look at this.

All the people would love Paul. All the people would have loved Paul. The problem is that Paul went to, with the end goal that they may believe in Christ, so he has to confront them in their sin and then go further than that and to hopefully preach and proclaim to present them mature in Christ for those who have believed.

And so, Paul is filling up more suffering that would have been inflicted on Christ if he had still been alive and living on earth, but Christ is in heaven, gloriously seated at the right hand of the Father, his suffering has ended, yet the world still hates Christ and still hates the gospel.

And so, the world now inflicts its blows not on Christ but for those who represent him and proclaim him. So, this is why Paul in Galatians 6-7 says this, from now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

Did you see that? I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. I don't know, you know, this would be antithetical to what Paul would have done, but just let me, just entertain me for a moment.

[23 : 50] But can you imagine Paul having split his hair and said, oh, do you see that scar on my head right there? Do you see that? That was the stoning, the result of the stoning from at Lystra.

Oh, do you see, oh, and then he takes off his shirt, he would not have done this, entertain me. And he was like, do you see that? Those were the rods that I was beaten with. Oh, this mark on my wrist and on my ankles, oh, let me share with you.

When I was in Philippi, when I was chained in prison, I'm still marked by those. And so Paul's very body bears the marks of the truth of what he's saying.

saying, I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of his body. I gladly bear these marks, and my body bears witness that I have not come as a tourist to these towns, but I've come as an ambassador of Christ to proclaim the good news of which now I've paid a price, and my body bears witness to the fact.

And that's what he's communicating. Beaten with whips, stoned, were evidence of his suffering.

[25 : 13] And in Paul's words, he says, and now I rejoice. He's rejoicing in the fact that he had the privilege to suffer for Christ's sake, for the gospel to be known and to present people mature in Christ.

And what's interesting is remember who is the one who is even talking here, Paul. He's the one writing this letter with Timothy. And remember where he came from.

Whose feet was it that the men who stoned Stephen laid their cloak at? Saul, who became Paul. It's at his feet that he approved of the stoning of Stephen.

He approved, if you will, of another man bearing marks on his body for the sake of Christ. And now what he once approved of, and he was on his way to Damascus to do the very same thing, and on the road to Damascus, he says, Jesus, with the bright light, says, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

Not the Christians, me? So he says, now my body bears the marks of Jesus. When I was in Jordan, quick story, when I was in Jordan, I was in a room full of people who were ministering in highly persecuted nations in the Middle East, and these were national pastors and ministers, of whom I've mentioned one of them to you before, a lady that was very emaciated, you may remember that story.

[26 : 52] In that same room though, there was this man, I'm going to call him Danny, it's not his real name, but Danny was a pastor in Syria. A couple years prior, his car was pulled over by the police, and he threatened, stop ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ, quit preaching Christ, or your family will be killed.

So he worked on a plan to get his family out of the country, and the day before his family left, was able to leave the country, people came into his home and killed his family.

And there he was in the room, now a single man who had lost all of his family. And he's sitting there in the room and he's giving a testimony and he's weeping, he's telling everyone what has happened, and they all have paid a price, similar to this, for the sake of Christ.

And he's weeping, and someone asked him, are you going to return? So he fled himself for his own safety for a while, and he said, I want to go back.

My people need to know Jesus. I don't know what has become of Danny. he may be with the Lord, but he had such a burden for his people.

[28 : 23] And Paul says, I rejoice in my suffering for your sake.

The goal of ministry is life transformation. The first thing we looked at, life transformation, it's helpful when one sees himself as a minister.

It's helpful to see oneself when one joyfully endures trials for the sake of Christ and his church.

Thirdly, life transformation occurs when we grow as stewards of the gospel.

When we grow as stewards of the gospel. Look with me in verse 25 through 27. 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.

Okay, I'm going to pause here. According to the stewardship from God. This word stewardship in a different form, it means house ruler.

[29 : 32] It's another type of servant. Life transformation occurs when we grow as stewards of the gospel. This stewardship word, house ruler.

This is another type of a servant. This is the type of a servant that is a manager of a home. So an owner of a home would make a deposit and say, hey, these monies are available for you to use to manage this house.

So make sure my servants are, make sure the field workers get paid, make sure the family, if they have expenses, they get paid, but I'm entrusting you to manage the affairs of the house. This is the kind of servant that this word would indicate.

The steward was responsible to dispense the owner's resources for the benefit of everyone in the house, family and servants, to distribute the owner's resources for the good and the benefit of everyone.

And this is how Paul understands his ministry. ministry. I have been given a deposit and it is from God and it is my responsibility to minister this deposit to everyone and for everyone else's benefit.

[30 : 41] I don't own anything. What I have has been given to me and I'm a steward of it and now I must minister it and give it for the benefit of others. This is not exalting Paul.

He did nothing to gain this deposit. but he has this ministry. And notice what he has a stewardship from God.

Now let's watch what this stewardship is. The stewardship from God that was given to me for you. Again, notice how it's an entrustment that's given to him but it's for the benefit of others.

To make the word of God fully known, okay, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to the saints, okay, so there's something that was hidden that is called a mystery and a mystery in the Bible is not an enigma too difficult to figure out.

Like, what is dark matter in space? I have no idea. And I don't, yeah, people far smarter than me probably know but to me it's a mystery and it will always be a mystery and I'm just, I'm okay with not knowing.

[31 : 51] That's how we typically use mystery in our English vernacular. That's not what this means. It means something that was, something was hidden but now has been revealed and even our text tells us that.

Notice this, the mystery, something that was hidden, concealed for the ages and generations of the Old Testament saints but now is revealed to the saints. Okay, so we're still trying to get at what is Paul a steward of.

He's a steward of this mystery, so far that's clear, and this mystery was concealed to the Old Testament people but has now been revealed to the saints but what is it? To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery.

He's building it but he's not really explaining what it is yet and then he says it this way, okay, let me be plain to you, it is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

That's the ministry that I have, this stewardship, this entrustment that has been given to me I didn't receive, I received it but I don't own it, it was given to me and I'm supposed to give it to everyone

else liberally who are in the house and so here's our job.

[33 : 04] It's helpful for a life transformed to see oneself as a steward, a deposit has been given to me and I'm to proclaim it and here's the proclamation, Christ is in you and it's the hope of glory.

That's the mystery that had been concealed, that has now been revealed, that the presence of God doesn't necessarily dwell in tabernacles anymore, it doesn't dwell in the temple anymore, he's in you and he's your hope of glory.

So now in Christ, the church, the church, and notice Gentiles are named, that this God is not just for the Jewish people, he's for the Gentiles, that the church now possesses the surpassing riches of the indwelling Christ and are described as temples of the living God.

He dwells with us, he walks with us, he will be our God and we will be his people and the indwelling Christ is the source of our hope of glory.

Jesus is not just promise of present joy and help alone, he is also the eternal promise of honor, blessing, and glory.

[34 : 35] He is the anchor of our promise in heaven, a guarantee of future eternal joy. joy. We have new life, a new hope, and the assurance of eternal life and glory in heaven with him.

Now think of this, doesn't that give you solace when the stones are thrown at you, when the rods are beating you, when you're in chains, when you can't take from me Christ in me who is my hope of glory.

And I have that good news and it is still a deposit in me that I am now responsible for communicating. If I kept it for myself, the good news of Jesus Christ, if I kept that for myself, I am not being a good steward.

I can't do that. So I have to communicate that to others and as a result, I know persecution will happen, but I am assured of Christ in me, the hope of glory, and so with joy I can continue.

This is what Paul is communicating. He makes one last point. We're talking about a life transformed.

[35 : 54] The goal of ministry is life transformation. So we have looked firstly, is it helpful to see oneself as a minister? Secondly, a transformed life continues when one joyfully endures trials for the sake of his church and for the sake of Christ.

And thirdly, a transformed life occurs when we grow as stewards of the gospel. We have courage and grow as stewards. And then lastly, it's this point. We have a goal.

Life transformation, but it's also by reminding us that it is by the power of God. Look with me, last two verses that we've looked at. In him we, Paul and Timothy, proclaim and warn everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Notice the plural pronouns. He switches from I to we, so he's likely referring to Timothy. And he says, for this I toil, verse 29, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

What is our responsibility? Why should we suffer joyfully? Why fill up afflictions and suffer and be persecuted? What is the aim? What is the goal?

[37 : 10] To present everyone mature in Christ. We collectively strive to present every member of the body mature in Christ. Not merely church bench warmers. Our aim is not to build a crowd or just merely attend a church.

This is not our aim. But our aim as we proclaim Christ to one another. We have a ministry with one another in the body. It's for each other's maturity.

And notice what Paul does. He says, him we proclaim. Him we proclaim. And notice what he does. He says, I want to warn everyone and teach everyone. There's a negative nature to this. I'm going to warn people. If someone is in sin, we warn. If someone is ignorant, we teach.

There's a positive and a negative side to our ministry as we proclaim Christ. And this word proclaim, we proclaim. It's a powerful word.

[38 : 10] It's like, imagine with me for one moment, a town crier or one who is a herald. What's the job of a herald? This is not a job I would really want, by the way.

Sometimes you live, sometimes you die. But here's one of the roles of a herald. You go before your king and army, and you go before them, and you say to the enemy, you say, I'm going to go before the king and my army.

I'm going to go into enemy territory. Those who oppose my king, those who oppose the army, those who have opposing citizens, and I'm going to say, my king is coming.

He offers terms of surrender. Put down your weapons, open your gates, surrender and receive him.

Become subjects to him, and you will live. But if you do not, he is coming with his warring army, and you will die. That's your job as a herald. Sometimes you die.

[39 : 16] But our job as a herald, Christ we proclaim. Warning and teaching. Christ we proclaim. We proclaim this. So our job as a herald, my king is coming, and he offers terms of surrender.

Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He offers forgiveness of sin through his son because of his work on the cross. He offers forgiveness. He is a benevolent king.

Surrender your life to him and live. But if you do not, the second death is coming, which is far worse than just a simple surrender.

Receive him. Christ we proclaim. We warn and we teach. to what is the end goal.

To present everyone mature in Christ. I love this. We're all not there yet. We all have areas of growth where we need to mature.

[40 : 27] Allow Christ's lordship to press in on. Grow in courage. All of us are on this path. And how does this occur for Paul?

He says it's hard work. Notice Paul works and God works. Paul says, for this I toil. Struggling. He uses two words there.

Toil has the implication of sweat unto exhaustion. And then the other word is to agonize. Is where we get our word to agonize. Do you seek to know the Lord so that you have something to teach with?

To exhort. To encourage. To rebuke. But also God works. Notice with me the last verse.

For this I toil. Struggling with his energy that he powerfully works within me. Paul works and God ultimately works. In producing maturity and in his hearers of his ministry of proclaiming both warning and teaching.

[41 : 38] And so do we. And this is a beautiful thing. So let's put this in context as we close. Paul just previous to this.

He has said Christ is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn of all creation. He paints this glorious picture of Christ and he is it's very personal and he says of this I have become a minister. I'm dumbfounded that the Lord found me and offered me forgiveness and I have I get the privilege to know him. And now it's my job as as one who has received a deposit to minister to others sharing this good news.

Otherwise I would not be a faithful steward. And that good news will work to me persecution of which my body bears witness to that.

But I joyfully am willing to suffer persecution for the sake of the church and for the sake of those who don't know the Lord and I proclaim him and I will not stop and with my proclamation I'm going to go before people as a herald and I will teach and I will warn.

[42 : 55] And that's all of our jobs. We all who have been called by Christ have this wonderful privilege of knowing this amazing Jesus whom we get to herald. We worship him.

We sing songs about him. We proclaim him. And may we be diligent about it this week. Would you pray with me? Father you are good. We thank you for the goodness of who you are.

We thank you for the work that you have done on the cross to offer forgiveness of sin. We are amazed. We are in awe of you. Thank you so much. Lord today I pray that we would be a people who would take courage.

Persecution is inevitable. Suffering for your namesake is inevitable. And may we take joy and delight knowing that it is you in us who is our hope of glory. Nothing can take that away.

Thank you so much. You are good and beautiful and it's in your name we pray. Amen. Amen.