

The Mystery and Majesty of Christ: Joy in Suffering

| Colossians 1:24-29

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daly preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. Well, good morning, Ontario Community Church. It is great to be with you this morning as we have just had communion together.

What a great reminder of who Jesus was, who He is, and who He will forever be. That Jesus Christ is everlasting to everlasting.

He is our constant, and He does not change. Today, we are continuing our sermon series in the Book of Colossians.

We've been doing an expository sermon series which takes us through verse by verse, line by line of God's Word, because we know that the Word of God is living, and it is active, and it is so important for us significant in our life.

[1 : 09] We have learned how the church at Colossi, this small church that the Apostle Paul never visited, it was a church that was faithful to God, and exhibited the love of Christ to others.

And this last week, we went further into the attributes, the qualities, and the significance of Christ. You know, in being a Christian, we go from life before Christ, and we come to know the Lord, right?

Or eventually, we make a decision for Christ to receive that gift of salvation, to accept Jesus Christ into our heart. And in believing Christ, we are transformed by Him.

This moves us to live a life in Christ, to live for Him. And this leads us to today, it sets up the scene where we are going over the mystery and the majesty of Christ.

Today, we're going over this mystery that was revealed about Jesus Christ, who is the hope of glory. Christ dwells within us, and what was now hidden in the Scriptures has been revealed.

[2 : 24] It is now available for all who believe. And what I speak of is salvation. We will also talk about what it means to rejoice in suffering.

That's always a difficult one, but it's very important. But before we go any further, what I'd like to do, I would like for us to pray together, and let us ask God to be present with us, to reveal truth to us, and to comfort us.

Sometimes the truth can be painful, but God is always there with us. Will you pray with me? Let's pray together. Gracious Father, we thank you for this opportunity of bringing us all here together today.

We've sung praises of songs that have... They may be old, but they're not insignificant. They are important.

It is a great time for us to come together, and we sing praises to your holy name, to partake of the bread in the cup, and to hear from the Word of God.

[3 : 30] The name of Jesus Christ is the name that is above all names, and Father, may we take that to heart. We ask that you send down your Holy Spirit to dwell with us as we go deeper into the Word of God.

Help us to understand what it means to rejoice in times of trials and in times of tribulation and suffering. Help us to understand this mystery, how this mystery is revealed and available for all who believe.

Teach us what it means to have Christ in us, and why Christ is so important for this world. We pray that there will be nothing that will hold us back from learning more about you, coming to believe in you, growing in you.

We pray that there's nothing that holds us back from learning more about you, and that it will be good in your precious name. We ask all of these things in your Son, Jesus the Christ, the majestic King of all.

Amen. And last week we were learning more deeply about the attributes of Christ. We were learning about the preeminence of Christ, which means that Christ is in all things.

[4 : 45] He is before all things and reigns supreme above all things. And so now we're going to a section where we're learning about the mystery of Christ being revealed. And we will go further in this message about the idea of rejoicing in suffering.

I'd like to turn to verse 24. You can follow along on your screen or you can follow along in your Bible. It's Colossians chapter 1 verse 24 that we're starting at.

And it says in the Scriptures, I rejoice in my sufferings 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.

And the main idea in this verse is rejoicing in suffering. We start off with this very unique passage. The Apostle Paul mentions that he is rejoicing in his sufferings for the sake of the Colossians.

And it is interesting when we read that because typically, look, when we suffer, we're going through a hard time or anything. Do we rejoice? I know it's hard for us too and I don't think that we typically do.

[6 : 00] During the time of the letter to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul was in prison. And even though he was in prison, he was still doing the work of ministry.

He was dedicated to the cause of Christ. I cannot imagine being in prison, being away from my friends or my family, and still being joyful.

There must be a power that comes from somewhere else. The joy that the Apostle Paul is speaking of is the inexpressible joy that occurs when we know the Lord.

When we receive salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ, we also receive power from him. We receive the peace that surpasses all understanding and the joy that is inexpressible and inexhaustible.

This all comes from the pouring of God's love through the Holy Spirit, just like what's mentioned in Romans 5.5. When we understand the power of Jesus Christ, the power of his death, his burial and resurrection, we should get to a place where we realize that no matter what happens in our life, the good, the bad, and the ugly, we still have our confidence, our peace, and our joy in Christ.

[7 : 26] When we consider our journey in knowing the Lord, there is transformation that exists from the beginning of our new life in Christ. I've mentioned it before that the ability to discern from good and evil, right from wrong, truth from lies, is one of the many benefits.

It's one of the things that happens as you are a believer in Christ, as you grow in Christ. We must consider that the ability to trust in God, to rely on him, and receive strength and power, all of it comes from him.

Just like the famous song, Praise God from whom all blessings flow. In other words, it is the confidence in knowing that no matter what happens in our life, God will give us the necessary tools, and he will always be there for us no matter what is happening in our life.

When we face trials, when we're through the valley of the shadow of death, just like it says in Scripture, do you fear evil when you are going through a hard time?

Who do you turn to in times of crisis? There is strength that comes from Christ. It is the indwelling of Christ within us, just as mentioned in Ephesians chapter 3, verse 17.

[8 : 48] And we'll go further into what this indwelling means. So Paul is saying that he is filling up with what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of the body of the church.

We now go to verse 25, which says, 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 idea here is a minister to make God's Word known. It speaks about how Paul became a minister according to the stewardship of God.

This stewardship is but a gift that comes from God's grace. The apostle Paul was called by God to become an apostle and to do the work of ministry because of divine intervention, right?

The road to Damascus, right? Divine intervention. It can be noted that there are many times in our lives where God will divinely intervene, where we can come to know him or come to fulfill God's purpose.

[9 : 51] Have you ever experienced God intervening in your life? We don't like it, right? Sometimes we do, but most of the times it's... Sometimes there's a stranger that speaks to you and somehow is speaking to you in a way that did...

You were saying something of a question that I had a while ago and it's being answered or... I'm hearing a message from a podcast or something.

God has His way and He can speak through to you through other people, through situations and circumstances. The extent of divine intervention will differ from person to person.

God had a plan for Paul to no longer persecute Christians but to turn his life around where he would serve the Lord gladly. And this is all because of the stewardship. It is the specific gifting that comes from the Lord.

It is also a reminder that God calls every single one of us to come to know him. We may not have such a drastic divine intervention, but some of us will where God intervenes and wants us to turn our life around and go to him or fulfill his plan for us.

[11 : 02] As we become... As we come to believe in the Lord, there is much potential that lies within us to use for the glory of God. Do you use your time, your talent and your treasure for the glory of God?

Knowing that God gives you everything, do you even give but a little bit back to him? That's a question to think about. It's a very difficult one. And I want you to think for a moment how the Apostle Paul, he was a man who was against Christianity.

How God changed his life. The scripture mentions how God gave apostles, evangelists, shepherds to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

Just as God divinely intervened with the Apostle Paul, so too can God intervene in our lives. Just as how God called the Apostle Paul, so too does God call each and every one of us to come to know him.

God has a plan and a purpose for all of us. It is the question of whether or not you're going to choose to follow in the footsteps of Christ and see to it that you find out what is God's divine plan for you?

[12 : 11] Have you asked yourself that question before? The Apostle Paul became a minister to make the word of God fully known. The path of a minister is to preach and teach the word of God, right?

Making that word of God fully known. And when we consider those who minister or those who are in ministry, let us not forget the chief aim.

It is to make the word of God fully known. And all of this reminds me of the Great Commission where Christ tells his disciples to go out into the world and tell the good news of Christ.

Think about that. Let us now go to verse 26 here where it says, The mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.

It's the mystery of Christ now being revealed. This verse speaks about the mystery of Christ, something that was hidden by God until the appropriate time so that prophecy could be fulfilled.

[13 : 17] When we're considering prophecy, it's the promises of God. When God's saying this is going to happen, it is going to happen, right?

God saw to it that in his divine planning and timing, certain things needed to be hidden until the appointed time. And for those of you who are doing the God at center study, you'll remember the difference between Kairos and Kronos.

Kairos being the appointed time, God's divine time, and Kronos, right? Like a clock when it's ticking, right? Those are two types of time. Isn't it interesting how our English language doesn't have certain words but it exists in others?

It's just like the word love, right? Now, I love animals, but the type of love that I have for animals is not the same kind of love that I have for my children.

It's not the same kind of love that I have for my wife. If it is the same, then you really need to reevaluate the type of love that you have, right? Now, in all of that, it's still the word love though.

[14 : 25] And there's different types of love, much like there's different types of time. And when we're thinking about the mystery of Christ being revealed, it was God's planning for the appointed time for Christ to be revealed.

It has even been stated that the rulers, and it's in 1 Corinthians, chapter 2, verses 7 through 10, it's even been said in Scripture that if anyone knew what was going to happen, Christ wouldn't have been crucified.

So that's interesting. That certain things in Scripture had to be hidden for the prophecy to be fulfilled. And so some of you may wonder the question then, what is the mystery then?

Well, the mystery can be broken down into a couple things. It is that the Gentiles, us, right? The Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, the partakers of the promise in Jesus Christ through the gospel.

In other words, when you believe in the Lord, you are saved and you are an heir of the promise of God. That's something that's significant. It's the revelation about who Jesus Christ is, his significance, and that salvation is now available to all who believe.

[15 : 41] It is no longer this mutually exclusive salvation that is available only to the Jewish system and their Levitical sacrificial system, but it's now changed to belief in the Lord.

I don't know about you, but the idea of sacrificing animals to atone for my sin just is not the same as believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and knowing that he lived, he died, and on the third day he rose again.

I'd much rather believe in this than following that. What God has prepared for us is salvation to be available for everybody.

It doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't matter what your skin color is. It doesn't matter what you've been through or what you're going through. Can I get an amen for that?

That is the significance of Christ. That is why you hear me as a pastor say that we must all come to believe in the Lord, right? How easy it is to believe in the Lord, right?

[16 : 43] One of my favorite verses, you always see it on your notes, is John chapter 6 verse 47. Truly what Christ is saying, truly I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

It is that simple. It's not about I have to pray 10,000 prayers or I have to donate \$10,000 or I have to walk 10,000 miles.

It's about belief in who Christ is. And this is the interesting thing about the Word of God is that sometimes God, just like in the Old Testament times, the Jewish people didn't realize they didn't make the connections about the coming Messiah.

And you know what else is interesting about that? Think about how in 1 Corinthians chapter 18, it is said in Scripture that the Word of the cross is foolishness or folly to those who are perishing.

When we consider the fact that the Word of God is living and active, God protects His Word from the fools, the evil doers, right? Those who do not believe in the Lord.

[17 : 50] The revelation of Christ, the truth of Scripture, it comes to those who believe. That's actually a great encouragement for us to believe in the Lord because there's so much truth that comes from the Word of God that it helps us grow.

Helps us grow in Christ to know Christ better. How many of you have met someone who does not believe in the Lord and they open a Bible and they're like, and they scoff?

I can't believe that. It's because foolishness, right? They think it's foolishness to those who are perishing because God is hiding the truth of His Word.

He's protecting His own Word. Think of it like that. I know it's a very hard thing because you think when you read Scripture, anybody can read it. But when you believe in the Lord, there's more mystery and revelation that comes through the reading and studying of Scripture.

It's very interesting. The Word of God is powerful because God allows for us to read and study the deeper things of God. Just as there were things that were hidden from the Jews, God protects His Word from those who don't know Him and those who are against Christianity.

[19 : 07] Think about that. That is why sometimes when you've spoken to an unbeliever, they just don't get it, right? How many of you felt that way before?

They just don't get it. You're like, I don't understand why you don't get it. Well, it's because there's things that you know that they don't know. It's a big reason and encouragement from come to know the Lord and study the deeper things of God because when we seek God in His Word, we will find it.

You want to get closer to God, believe in the Lord, study the Word of God, read the Word of God. You'll find a closeness in it. And in all these things, I got to remind you that in studying the Word of God and reading it, let us not forget the love that Christ has shown to us that we show to others.

Let us not become like the Pharisees. They read and studied scripture, but yet very often their hearts were hardened. That is why we have to have love in all of this knowledge and wisdom from God.

Just like how it says in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, without love, I am nothing. So you have to have that balance between truth and love.

[20 : 22] Verse 27 talks about the Christ in you, the hope of glory. It says 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.

We go to verse 27 where the Apostle Paul talks about how God chose to make things known among the Gentiles in the riches of the glory of this mystery.

As I mentioned before, God saw to it that in his kairos, in his appointed time, in his divine appointment, if it will, his plan, his purpose, he would reveal Christ in the flesh.

Christ would dwell among us. Of course, with Christ being born in his ministry, there would be the revelation of salvation.

That salvation comes through belief in him and that God's grace is in abundance. It is not limited. It is available for everyone.

[21 : 33] It's not like God's going to run out and be like, hey, you know, you're the 12,365,122nd person. I'm sorry. We got no more.

We got no more grace. No, God's got plenty of grace and it's in abundance to believe in the Lord. You are safe and you are secure in the arms of the Father, the same God that created the heavens and the earth and created each and every one of us.

Do you really think he'd run out of grace? Grace is freely available. This should be a great encouragement for you knowing that when you have that salvation, when you believe in the Lord, you are safe, you are secure, and you have a sense of that eternal security to think of this idea of the riches of glory of this mystery.

It goes to show that God's grace is extensive. It is inexhaustible. When this verse speaks of the Gentiles, it's speaking about us.

We are the Gentiles that to believe in the Lord, you're entering into the new covenant. New covenant with the Lord.

[22 : 44] That God will always be with us and he will never forsake or abandon us. It is in being a Christian in all of this that Christ will dwell within us.

That's why we got to take care of ourselves, right? What we see, what we think, what we hear, what we do to our body, that's why it's so important. Just as it's said that the Holy Spirit dwells within us in 1 Corinthians 6:19, Christ dwells within us.

The triune God dwells within us. And the word of Christ should dwell within us. Let us not forget that famous verse from Galatians where Paul says that it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives within me.

Does that make sense? There's a connection there that Christ dwells within us. Paul is speaking of the transformation that exists when being a believer and living for him.

This should give us comfort. How many of us seek for comfort in this life? Knowing that Christ dwells within us and he's there with us in our minds and in our hearts.

[23 : 51] May we have Christ dwell in our hearts through faith and let us be grounded and rooted in love. Do you believe in the Lord?

Do you know that there is comfort and safety and peace that surpasses understanding and joy that is unspeakable in knowing the Lord? Do you know that by knowing Christ, God will work in and through your life with transformation, continued transformation?

Do you know that God will make you more like him? Believe in him. That is the most important thing. As we are talking about the abundance of God's grace, allow for the Lord to transform your life so that you can live a life that honors and glorifies him.

Verse 28. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

This now leads us where you see the Apostle Paul is proclaiming Christ and he is warning everyone and teaches everyone with all wisdom.

[25 : 00] Just as it was mentioned earlier, to be a minister of Christ is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul talks about this warning and teaching of everyone with all wisdom.

You know, next week, we're going to delve into what those false teachings were and how do we respond to that? Is that directly applicable to us in the church today?

What do we do with these warnings that the Apostle Paul was mentioning to the church at Colossae? It can be very easy for us to fall into another gospel or something that is more complex.

I want you to think about this for a second here. It is simple to become a Christian and us as human beings, how easy is it for us to make things complicated?

You find sometimes, and I don't mean to take a jab at people in their professional careers, but there are some people out there where they love to use big words that you don't understand what it means and they use these big words to kind of flex their muscles, their intellectual muscles, right?

[26 : 16] Well, in the same way, very often when we are considering false gospels or another gospel that is contrary to Christ, it is taking the simplicity of just believing in Christ and adding more things.

Well, you need to believe in the Lord and do this and do that, and don't forget these three things too. You start adding, like, wait a minute.

The Bible tells me that I must believe in the Lord and be saved. Why are you overly complicating it? And so that's one simplistic way of looking at how people try to make complex the gospel of Christ.

We must remember that in the proclamation of Jesus Christ, we teach the truth of Jesus Christ and His Word. It is about what the Word of God has to say.

We teach and preach the Word of God so that people can know the Lord, grow in Him, and do good in His name. The other side of this, right, you have Paul talking about teaching.

[27 : 16] There's the warning about telling people what is false, what is untrue, what is contrary to the truth that exists in Christ. And you know what's so interesting? I've always found this very interesting.

Is there so many warnings of false prophets, false teachers, right? False theology as it were. It's important to know that these false teachings, we'll just call them teachings, that existed in Scripture help equip us to discern right from wrong, good from evil, truth from lies.

Because sometimes you'll find patterns in things that were taught. Right? Things that were taught back then, you're like, wait a minute. There's a movement that's teaching this, just like how it was taught here.

Or, huh, that's interesting. Why is this being taught there? It's just like in Galatians where it says, if we or an angel from heaven teach anything that's contrary from the Gospel of Christ, let them be accursed.

Well, an angel from heaven is very specific, right? An angel from heaven revealing something in addition to Scripture.

[28 : 35] That makes your mind think for a second here. And I only bring up this example because of patterns, right? To help equip us to know the difference between truth from lies, right from wrong, good from evil.

That comes from God. So the Bible is full of these warnings and we need to at least consider it and use it to discern good from evil and right and wrong.

And as I mentioned before, I will say it again, to believe in the Lord is the beginning of your salvation story. You become a child and you begin on a journey to become more mature in Christ.

Be encouraged to read Scripture, to study Scripture, to be in the church, to be in Christian community where we can bear one another's burdens.

Do you realize that in times of crisis where you might have friends or families who they may not agree with what you're doing? Or there may be a crisis that you are experiencing in your life, your church family can help be there for you.

[29 : 36] I know in my own experience when I was a teenager and I was rebellious, my church family kept me in line. At the time I hated it. But when I look back at it, I'm like, you know what?

Maybe they weren't so bad after all. They were loving me, but they were being encouraging and they had the firm grip at the same time. And the same way when you're going through a trial or a tribulation, we help each other up.

So yes, read your Bible, study your Bible, but also be in Christian community where we can help one another, bear one another's burden and celebrate. And when things happen, when someone gets married, when a new child is born, that's part of the beauty of the local assembly, the church.

And also extend the love of Christ to others in the community in doing so become more mature and do good in the name of Christ.

May you be able to give an account for what you believe in and who you are in Christ. May you be able to give an answer to those who may question you. Right?

[30 : 43] Because there's a lot of people out there that have all these questions. And may you grow to the point, it is my prayer that you grow to know the difference between right and wrong, right?

Between good and evil, between false teaching and true teaching. I pray that this church becomes a beacon of hope for the community and that people will have a relationship with Christ and they'll grow in that maturity.

And it is in maturity that we are able to live our lives better because look, God is molding us and he's making us more like him. Of course, we're going to live life better.

And people notice that. You go in Target or you go in Walmart and people are like, there's something very different about that person. I don't know what it is.

And then you, next thing you know, you believe in the, you start going to church, you believe in the Lord, you get baptized and you're like, Okay, I figured it out. You know, it was that.

[31 : 41] And the thing is we as Christians can do amazing things in the name of Jesus Christ. It is a call for us to build up the saints for the work of ministry. Let us be that church, that beacon of hope for others.

And finally, we have verse 29. For this, I toil struggling with his energy that he powerfully works within me, right?

The apostle Paul is saying that through proclamation, the warning and the teaching, all of this is in preparation. Listen to this. It's in preparation to present everyone mature in Christ.

Okay. Because when you believe in the Lord and you're a new baby, you are presented to the Lord, right? You're saved. You have the new life. But here it's talking about being presented as mature.

This is what Paul is toiling over. He's struggling with all of his energy that Christ may work within him. And notice that Paul is a saved man who is continuing to do the work of ministry.

[32 : 47] He is continuing to work for the cause of Christ because Christ is working in him. This is much like how in the book of Philippians, many of you know this verse, right?

Philippians 4, 13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Well, the apostle Paul learned that even in prison, he has learned that the grace of God, it abounds in every circumstance in the good and the bad and the ugly.

And in all of these things, it is through Christ. He give Christ gave Paul the strength to continue to do in the work of ministry. What an encouragement for us to know as we're closing here, that when we speak of suffering, trials, tribulation, depression, even whatever it is you're going through, that we have Jesus Christ who dwells within us and he is our hope.

It is Christ who gives us the strength to face any challenge or any difficult day in our life. In all of this, it goes from the mystery of Jesus Christ to the majesty of Jesus Christ.

If you do not have a relationship with Christ, I encourage you to believe in the Lord and be saved, be transformed, be comforted, receive that peace that surpasses all understanding, receive that joy that is inexhaustible because God gives his grace in abundance.

[34 : 15] And if you're going through difficult days, may you turn to the Lord, may you ask him for strength, for comfort, for guidance, for wisdom and understanding in any situation.

For it is Christ who dwells within us. He is the hope of glory. Let us pray. Gracious Father, we thank you for giving us this opportunity again to come together and go deeper in your word.

May we take to heart the message from this morning. You Father God, you sent your son Jesus Christ to change the course of history. You had a plan all along and that plan was hidden as the great mystery and how privileged we are to know about that revelation, the riches of your grace and that salvation comes through faith in him.

We thank you for sending your son that all who believe shall not perish but have everlasting life. May we learn today that strength comes from you and that with Christ dwelling within us, we can endure and do all things through Jesus Christ who gives us strength.

May we learn how to do these things in you. Be with us as we sing this final song together. Let us lift up a shout of praise and may we thank you God for who you are, for all that you've done and all that you continue to do.

[35 : 47] We thank you Lord. We thank you so much. It is in Jesus's everlasting and eternal name that we pray and we all say together, Amen.

Thank you for tuning in to the Ontario Community Church sermon podcast. For more about our church and how you can get involved or support our mission, please visit ontariocommunitychurch.org.

May God's blessings be with you.