

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Colossians 1:23-29**.
- B. This morning's lesson was about the all-sufficiency of X:
 - 1. JC has taken care of all things. All things were created by and for Him.
 - 2. All we need is JC. God fulness is in Him, and we are therefore complete in Him.
 - 3. God is pleased when His Son, JC is honored and given the preeminence.
- C. Paul takes this opportunity in this letter to talk a little about himself. He does three things; shares the gospel, suffers for the Gentiles, and strives for the saints.

I. SHARING THE GOSPEL (Col. 1:21-23).

- B. Paul discusses everyone's past alienation from God due to sin (1:21).
Sin makes us hostile (enemies; Jas. 4:4b) to God.
- C. But there is reconciliation with God to be found in X (1:22).
We now stand holy and blameless (not alienated and hostile), beyond reproach!
- D. The must continue in their glorification of God in X (1:23).
Faithful living keeps the hope of heaven live and must be practiced by all (Rev. 2:10).

II. SUFFERING FOR THE GENTILES (Col. 1:24-27).

- A. **Paul's rejoicing** (1:24).
"Instead of being ashamed of my suffering, I am rejoicing in it!" How could anyone rejoice in suffering?
Three ways:
 - 1. Paul was suffering because of JC. See Phil. 3:10; Ac. 5:41; 1Pet. 4:15-16; Mt. 5:10-12.
(Phil 3:10) that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;
(Ac 5:41) So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.
(1Pet 4:15-16) By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.
(Mt 5:10-12) "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
 - 2. He was suffering because of the Gentiles.
Paul was the chosen apostle to the Gentiles (Ac. 9:15; Eph. 3:8).
(Ac 9:15) But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;"
(Eph 3:8) To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,
 - 3. He was suffering for the sake of the church.
Paul was "filling up in his turn the leftover parts of X's sufferings." The sacrificial sufferings of X are over, but His body, the church, experiences suffering because of its stand for the faith.
- B. **Paul's responsibility** (1:25).
Had Paul compromised with the Jews and stopped ministering to the Gentiles, he could have been spared a great deal of suffering. But he had been given a "stewardship" and he had to be faithful to it (1Cor. 4:2).
Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,
- C. **The mystery** (1:26,27).
 - 1. Paul's special message regarding the Gentiles had to do with what he called *the mystery*.

2. A *mystery* is that a “sacred secret” or something yet to be revealed. Paul’s ministry was to reveal a wonderful secret to the Gentiles--they could be saved in X!
3. Read Ephesians 3:4-6.
4. Imagine what this message meant to the Gentiles. They were no longer excluded from the glory and riches of God’s grace. Both Jew and Gentile alike are saved by faith in JC (Rom. 10:12,13).
For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for "WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."
5. No wonder the Jewish teachers opposed him, he says of Jews and Gentiles, “There is no difference!”

III. STRIVING FOR THE SAINTS (Col. 1:28-29).

Some congregations of the churches of Christ use these two verses as their purpose statement or mission statement. It is used to succinctly sum up all the works, programs, and ministries that the congregation is involved in.

A. Paul’s instruction (1:28a).

1. Preaching. This means to announce with authority as a herald.
2. Admonishing. This means to warn and build up in that warning.
3. Teaching. This means to understand the truth in as much detail as needed or possible.

B. Paul’s intent (1:28b).

Using the words of the Gnostics, Paul wanted Xians to be perfect and complete. Spiritually mature in every way, and that in X.

C. Paul’s intercession (1:29).

1. A literal translation of first part of this verse might be; “For this I labor to the point of exhaustion, agonizing...”
2. The latter part of the verse stresses the power of X that makes all this possible. It is not the power to be had by what the false teachers had to offer but by what X can do.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Part of the greatness of X is in the fact that both Jews and Gentiles find salvation there.
- B. As always, Paul stresses the fact that Jesus is the all-sufficient One.
- C. As Paul did, are you fulfilling your God-given ministry?
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring-Xians.