

Message #7**Colossians 1:24-29**

Paul viewed ministry God's way. His concepts of ministry and church were very precise, very concrete, and very biblical. For Paul, ministry was very serious. He was after a goal and he knew God's way to reach it.

A PURE APOSTOLIC CHURCH MINISTRY WILL BE ONE DEVOTED TO PROCLAIMING AND UNLOCKING THE WORD OF GOD SO THAT ALL WHO HAVE TRUSTED CHRIST MAY GROW TO A LEVEL OF BEING COMPLETE AND MATURE IN HIM.

The goal of ministry is to bring every believer to complete maturity and the way to accomplish this is through an accurate proclamation and unlocking of the Word of God.

All eight begin with the letter "A."

ASPECT #1 – The appointment to the preaching ministry. 1:23b, **25a**

Twice, in this context, Paul states, for emphasis, that he was "made a minister." The word "made" is one that actually carries with it the idea of being made something in the sense of coming into being or existence (G. Abbott, p. 92).

Paul's point was God made him a minister. God brought Paul's salvation and ministry into existence. Paul did not become a minister because he wanted to be one; he became one because, as Dr. Richard Melick said, God "divinely appointed" him to ministry (Melick, p. 241).

In fact, when we read the statements about Paul, it becomes very evident that the last thing he ever wanted to be was a minister of Jesus Christ. He was a zealous Judaizer who hated Christ and wanted to imprison and kill all Christians (Acts 9:1-2; 22:4; 26:9-11). God literally saved Paul and "made" him a minister and put him in ministry.

By using the aorist middle voice verb "made" in both places, Paul is stressing that at one moment in time God put him in ministry and now he was personally participating in the results of the ministry. In other words, God originally put Paul in ministry, but he, himself, was now participating in remaining in ministry. If he didn't remain faithful, his stewardship could be taken from him.

ASPECT #2 – The attitude in a preaching ministry. **1:24a**

Paul joyously served God; in fact, as we shall see in a moment, he even rejoiced when he was suffering in God's work. The present tense of the verb "rejoice" indicates Paul's continual and habitual attitude. He did have some down moments, but not continually.

Joy is not found in our circumstances, it is found in our communion with God. Dr. John MacArthur said: "A Christian who has lost the joy of ministry does not have bad circumstances, but bad connections (*Colossians*, p. 73).

ASPECT #3 – The afflictions in a preaching ministry. 1:24b

Those who purpose to faithfully minister for God and proclaim His truth will discover there will be afflictions, hardships and times of suffering. As we come to understand afflictions in ministry, it becomes obvious that, as William Barclay observed, suffering in ministry is not necessarily a penalty, it may be a privilege (Barclay, p. 126).

In the N.T., there are four kinds of suffering: 1) Suffering that is mediatorial; 2) Suffering that is ministerial; 3) Suffering that is militant; and 4) Suffering that is missionary. Missionary suffering is designed to bring one to Christ. Militant suffering is punishment designed to bring one back to Christ. Mediatorial suffering is redemptive suffering that only Christ could fulfill. Ministerial suffering is non-redemptive suffering that we experience as a result of being redeemed by Christ. The word "afflictions" is never used in the N.T., referring to Christ's mediatorial suffering.

The whole world had a major quarrel with Jesus Christ and since Christ is no longer physically here, it has a major quarrel with those committed to Jesus Christ (John 15:18-19). When we suffer as people of God, we are actually so vitally linked to Jesus Christ that we are filling up His afflictions. For 2000 years Christians have been suffering in the place of our Lord.

Let me give you six biblical reasons why ministerial suffering can make us joyful:

- 1) We suffer so that we may know more about Jesus Christ. Phil. 3:10; Rom. 8:28-29
- 2) We suffer so that we may have assurance that we belong to Jesus Christ. John 15:18-19
- 3) We suffer to enable us to earn rewards. Rom. 8:17-18; II Cor. 4:7
- 4) We suffer so that we may demonstrate our faith before the lost world. Heb. 11:36-38
- 5) We suffer to develop our character to the ultimate level of godliness. James 1:2-4
- 6) We suffer to fill up the whole program of God. **Col. 1:24**

ASPECT #4 – The assignment of the preaching ministry. 1:25

The assignment that Paul had in being made by God a minister was the assignment of preaching the Word of God. Paul was given the great responsibility of fully preaching God's Word. There is no doubt that he took this job very seriously, for he did not neglect to preach "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Bishop Moule said Paul's job was to develop and unfold God's message to the full (Moule, p. 91). The primary job of ministry is to proclaim the whole counsel of God. The job of the minister is to fully preach God's Word.

The word “stewardship” indicates that Paul viewed his ministry of preaching God’s Word as a management responsibility for the household of God.

ASPECT #5 – The apprehension of the preached message. **1:26-27**

The Apostle Paul brought clear understanding to a mysterious message. A mystery, in the Scriptures, is something God has not previously revealed. Paul was the apostle who was called by God to unlock the Gospel for this Gentile Age. Paul was given the responsibility to reveal the Gospel of Christ.

Look carefully at **verse 27**, for it states the reason why God manifested this truth to His saints is because God willed it. Ladies and Gentlemen, if you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, which understands that redemption and forgiveness are only found in Him, you have that understanding because God willed it. God manifested His truth to you!

Our hope of salvation, our hope of glory lies in the glorious reality that Christ is in us. Our hope is solely based on Him and in Him. If we have Christ in our life, we have hope today and we will have glory tomorrow.

ASPECT #6 – The application of the preached message. **1:28a**

Application #1 - Paul admonished every man. **1:28a-b**

The word “admonish” means Paul continually put into the minds of all people the truth of God. It didn’t matter who they were or what they believed, Paul continually challenged people with God’s truth.

John MacArthur says this particular word has to do with putting into the minds of people God’s truth “...in view of sin and coming punishment” (John MacArthur, p. 79).

Application #2 - Paul taught every man. **1:28b**

Paul continually taught the Word of God with all wisdom. In other words, his instruction and his doctrine were both systematic and practical. He did his best to put theology into reality.

ASPECT #7 – The aim of the preaching ministry. **1:28c**

The aim or objective of preaching and teaching the Word of God is so that every believer may wind up being complete and mature in his relationship with Jesus Christ.

Becoming complete and mature in Jesus Christ is determined by a preaching and teaching ministry that gives people understanding of God’s Word. If you are not being admonished or taught the deep things of God, you are stifled from becoming complete and mature in Christ.

ASPECT #8 – The ability for a preaching ministry. **1:29**

Paul “labored,” which literally means he worked hard to the point of growing weary in proclaiming God’s Word for the goal of presenting God’s people complete and mature.

Paul is very careful to inform us that his power for his preaching and impacting ministry did not lie in his education, it did not lie in his shrewdness, it did not lie in his ability or in his degrees; his power to be such a powerful and impacting minister was found in the reality that God was working within him.

Paul got his ability and power to minister directly from God. Learn an important lesson; success and power in Christian ministry and service comes from God!

A powerful church is one devoted and dedicated to proclaiming and unlocking the Word of God so that all who know Christ may grow to a level of being complete and mature in Him. That is really what church is all about. The Colossians didn’t need more vain philosophy, they needed more true theology. Paul taught them the pure Word of God so they could grow.