

"SERVING JESUS"

Colossians 1:24-29

"What are you going to do with the time, the talent, and the treasure the Lord has given you?"

That was the question we posed in last week's sermon from the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. One day in the future Jesus will come and He will hold us accountable for what we do with the opportunities we've been given.

Grab your Bible and find the book of Colossians. This is one of my favorite epistles. It features the twin themes of the supremacy and the sufficiency of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wrote this letter to the church at Colossae while he was imprisoned in Rome. That factor adds weight to this epistle's Spirit-inspired words.

Keep in mind that the Lord Jesus had called Paul to the ministry of sharing the gospel with the Gentiles...

Acts 26:16–18... "But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; **17** rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, **18** to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

Do you realize that you have the call of God on your life? That's right, the resurrected and reigning Lord has appointed you to have a viable, victorious ministry. *Serving Jesus is not optional!* With that thought in mind, let's take our text and see what it really means to serve Jesus. First, there is . . .

1. THE PRICE YOU MUST PAY

Colossians 1:24... *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on*

behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

Suffering. That word sends cold chills down our spines, doesn't it? However, it is a reality for any believer who takes seriously his/her commitment to the Lord Jesus. He told us to expect suffering...

Matthew 5:11–12... "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. **12** "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Paul suffered because of his commitment to the Lord Jesus, to the Word, and to His church. In spite of this suffering, he rejoiced. As we said last week, he served the Lord with gladness!

Let's get something straight here. In no way is Paul suggesting that our suffering is needed to supplement the efficiency of the atoning death of Jesus on the cross. Jesus suffered when He provided the gospel; we suffer when we proclaim

the gospel. Here's the thought I want you to grasp today...

SERVING JESUS IS A JOY AND A PRIVILEGE!

What does it mean to serve Him? First, there is *the price you must pay*. Then, there is...

2. THE MINISTRY YOU MUST MANAGE

Colossians 1:25...*Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of the word of God*...*

The Lord Jesus gave Paul a stewardship over the gospel and the Word of God for the benefit of the church.

False teachers were self-appointed heretics who were committed to spewing forth their hellish message in an effort to demean the Lord Jesus and to impugn the gospel. Paul elaborated further in the next verse...

Colossians 1:26...*that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints...*

The word "mystery" is a truth that would have remained unknown had God not revealed it. With the death, burial, and the resurrection of Jesus the glorious gospel has been manifested for the whole world to see.

Every believer has a ministry that has been given to them as a stewardship. You have been blessed with a spiritual gift to build up the body of Christ and to expand His kingdom. Listen to the Word...

1 Peter 4:10...As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

You are accountable to the Lord for the use of your gift. Manage your ministry to bring optimum glory to Jesus!

What does it mean to serve Jesus? First, there is the price you must pay. Second, there is the ministry you must manage. Then, there is...

3. THE TRUTH YOU MUST TREASURE

Colossians 1:27...to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

In this verse, Paul gives a precise description of the mystery. It is "**Christ in you, the hope of glory**." What did Paul mean by this? Let's look at his letter to the Ephesian church for clarification...

Ephesians 3:1–7...For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— **2** if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; **3** that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. **4** By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which in other generations was not made known to the sons

of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; **6** *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, **7** of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

All of the glorious riches and power of the resurrected Christ are available to you through the Holy Spirit. Now that is a truth to treasure!

Shouldn't things be different in our lives as a result? If you really embraced this truth...

- **would you have been discouraged or frustrated or angry this past week?**
- **would you have said some of the things you said to your spouse or to your kids?**
- **would you have entertained some of the thoughts that filled your mind?**
- **would you have wasted your time on the things of this world?**

Christ in you, the hope of glory is a truth to treasure!

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What does it mean to serve Jesus? First, there is the price you must pay. Second, there is the ministry you must manage. Third, there is the truth you must treasure. Then, there is...

4. THE CHARGE YOU MUST COMPLETE

Colossians 1:28... We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

Paul was charged with the responsibility of exalting Jesus as the One who is preeminent over creation and the church. He was also charged with the assignment or presenting every man complete in Christ. Pay close attention to these present tense verbs . . .

"Proclaim" focuses on declaring the gospel with boldness and confidence.

"Admonishing" means to confront and it emphasizes repentance and correction.

"Teaching" is the orderly presentation of Christian truth for converts so that they may know how to grow.

The church must insure that all of God's truth gets to all of God's people so that all can become spiritually mature in their faith!

You might be thinking, **"Pastor, that was Paul's charge. What does that have to do with me?"**

Every believer has been charged to use the Word effectively as you disciple your children, as you counsel those who come to you for wisdom, and as you share the gospel with the lost...

Colossians 3:16...Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

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What does it mean to serve Jesus? First, there is the price you must pay. Second, there is the ministry you must manage. Third, there is the truth you must treasure. Fourth, there is the charge you must complete. Then, there is...

5. THE EFFORT YOU MUST EXERT

Colossians 1:29...For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

How was it possible for Paul to accomplish so much in such a short period of time? We find the answer in this last verse of chapter 1.

These two words—"labor" and "striving"— were used to describe backbreaking manual work and athletes who passionately pursued athletic glory. Paul was a tireless worker for Jesus. Listen to his explanation...

1 Corinthians 9:24–27... Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. **25** Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. **26** Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; **27** but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Serving Jesus is not easy. He never said it would be. However, the Lord Jesus has made the supernatural energy and power of the Holy Spirit available to believers who are serious about serving Him!

CONCLUSION

I want to close by letting you listen to Jesus' own thoughts about those who would serve Him...

John 12:25–26... "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. **26** "If anyone serves Me,

he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

I pray that this thought will capture your heart and soul...

SERVING JESUS IS A JOY AND A PRIVILEGE!

What does it mean to serve Jesus? There is...

1. THE PRICE YOU MUST PAY
2. THE MINISTRY YOU MUST MANAGE
3. THE TRUTH YOU MUST TREASURE
4. THE CHARGE YOU MUST COMPLETE
5. THE EFFORT YOU MUST EXERT

Will you devote yourself to serving Jesus with all your heart? One day in the future you will stand before Him and give an account for your service to Him.

Colossians 3:23–24... Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you

will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Listen, you can't serve Jesus if you haven't been saved by Jesus. He is your only hope for this life and for the next one in eternity. Will you repent of your sins and place your faith in Him?

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