

# The Hope of Glory:

An Exposition of Colossians

July 5, 2020

*Sermon 6: Suffering & the Hope of Glory*

*Colossians 1:24-29*

**Opening Illustration:** When I was a little child, I hated taking medicine. I would run away from my grandmother because I didn't want to take my medicine. I guess all little kids do that. On the other hand, I could hear the ice cream truck from miles away. When Mister Softy (the ice cream truck) was in our neighborhood, I would always run to my Grandmom and beg for some ice cream. Why is that a child will run away when it's time to take their medicine, but they will run toward an ice cream truck at full speed? Well, this is not rocket science: Ice cream tastes good and cough medicine does not. Humans, by nature, crave the things that are pleasant and delicious and do their best to avoid the things that are unpleasant and bitter.

## I. Introduction

### A. Why is the world hostile to the gospel?

**Simple answer:** Because the world sees the gospel as bitter instead of sweet and negative instead of positive. We must go a step further, though, and ask, "Why does the world see the gospel this way?" or "Why is the world so hostile to the gospel?"

1. Sometimes, the world is hostile because Christians have misrepresented the gospel.
  - a. **Romans 2:24** For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written.
  - b. **2 Peter 2:2** Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;
    - 1) **Because of this, we have to be especially sensitive to how we represent Christ in the world.**
      - i. **Ephesians 5:15-16** Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,<sup>16</sup> making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
      - ii. **Colossians 4:5** Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.
2. Sometimes, the world is hostile because Christians have NOT misrepresented the gospel.
  - a. The very nature of the gospel is to expose the sinfulness of humanity. They don't like that.
    - 1) **John 3:19** This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.
    - 2) **John 7:7** The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.

### B. What's the point?

1. The point is simply this: If we are to stand up, and if we are to speak up, we will suffer for it. As the world increasingly sees the message of Christianity as something to be opposed or even eradicated, we may really have no other choice but to suffer for the gospel.
  - a. **2 Timothy 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

## II. A Call to Suffer *Colossians 1:24*

### A. What does this mean that Paul rejoiced in his sufferings?

1. Does this mean that Paul was some sort of sick-o who delighted in suffering?
  - a. No, because otherwise it wouldn't be suffering, would it? We never call things we enjoy "suffering".

### B. Why would Paul rejoice in his sufferings?

1. Because suffering is the example that Jesus passes to us.

- a. **1 Peter 4:1** Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
- b. **Matthew 20:28** just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

**ILL:** WWJD? Be very careful that it is actually Jesus you are looking at. So often we hear about what Jesus would do and it is really nothing more than the imagination of the one saying it. What would Jesus do? How would you know? How about focusing on what did Jesus do?

- 2. Because suffering is good for us.
  - a. **James 1:2-3** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
- 3. Because suffering for Jesus is a great honor.
  - a. **Acts 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.

**C. What does it mean that Paul was filling up what was lacking in Christ's sufferings?**

- 1. What it cannot mean
  - a. This cannot mean that Jesus' death is somehow insufficient to save us. That would be an impossible interpretation.
- 2. What I think it does mean.
  - a. As Jesus' body, we are called on to continue His earthly work, which was to teach and to suffer.
  - b. There is still some teaching and (therefore) suffering to do.

**III. A Call to Speak** *Colossians 1:25-29*

**A. We Preach Him**

- 1. Why?
  - a. Because it is our stewardship from God. v. 25
    - 1) What do you mean, "Stewardship"?
    - 2) A stewardship from whom? From God Himself.
    - 3) A stewardship for whom? For your benefit.
    - 4) A stewardship of what? To fully preach the word of God.
  - b. Because it is the means by which people will be saved. v. 27

**1) Romans 10:13-15**

**2. How? (vv. 28-29)**

- a. Admonishing everybody
  - 1) You cannot preach Christ without pointing out human insufficiency and correcting human attitudes and practices.
- b. Teaching everybody
  - 1) You cannot preach Christ without imparting certain doctrinal truths.
- c. With an eye toward everybody
  - 1) With wisdom as to how to treat each individual
  - 2) Without leaving anyone out
    - i. Nobody is unworthy of the teaching/preaching of Christ.
    - ii. Nobody is above correction.
    - iii. Nobody has "arrived" yet.
    - iv. Remember, Paul even had to correct Peter...to his face...in public!

a) **Galatians 2:11-14**

- d. With all of our heart
  - 1) Striving according to His power—everything He gives
  - 2) Which mightily works in me—everything I have

#### **IV. A Call to Stand Conclusions**

A. We must speak, even if it means we will suffer.

1. **Luke 6:26** Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way. (see following verses)

B. We must trust God even when we are suffering.

*I know that sufferings are not excellent in themselves, nor are they to be desired for any profit that they can yield, but God uses them as a teacher to make known the riches of his goodness that are seldom known by other means unto the sons of men.*

**John Bunyan**