



Colossians 1:24-29

## Opening Up

- What are you thankful for this week?
- What is a challenge you're facing? Is there some way our group can help?

## Gospel Reverberation

- With whom did you share what you learned from the sermon or Small Group last week?

## Introduction

When Christians do not understand their faith, they are likely to water down the gospel and accommodate it to cultural expectations. When Christians have little confidence in their faith, they will be overly tentative in their claims and easily shaken by challenges. When Christians do not live with a deep sense of gratitude for what God has done for them in Christ, they will become engulfed in anxieties and will be tempted to look for security in something other than Christ. Paul wants to restore the Colossians' confidence in their hope.

***Pause and pray.*** Father, we recognize the temptation to trust in the things of this world more than we trust you. Help us to remember the supremacy of Christ above all things so that we can live lives of courageous faith that are pleasing to you. Transform our perspective today through the study of the Word. Amen.

## Bible Discovery

Read this week's passage out loud and discuss what the Bible says, what it means, and what it means for you and your group.



## Colossians 1:24-29

1. What is one thing you learned or took away from the sermon this week?
2. Paul makes a striking claim in v. 24 when he says, "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you..." In what ways do we know the apostle Paul suffered? (Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 to help you answer.)
3. How can he "rejoice" in his suffering?
4. In today's world we expect people to rejoice in their accomplishments, their blessings, their peace, their health and wealth. Paul's rejoicing over his suffering jolts a worldview that values comfort and ease. Paul obviously did not view his suffering as a problem to be escaped, as we might. Nor did it give rise to resentment or hopelessness. What can we learn from Paul's example when we are facing trials, hardships, or suffering of our own?
5. What does it mean to suffer with purpose? To what ends, or for what reason does Paul say he is suffering? For who or for what would you be willing to suffer?
6. Following after the pattern of Jesus, Paul suffers well in his trials by remaining others focused: First and foremost, Paul struggled for the glory of God. Paul has been commissioned by God (v. 25), and he is proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ (v.28). Paul is not concerned with his own glory, or making a name for himself, but rather he suffers for the glory of God among the Gentiles (v.27). Secondly, Paul's suffering is others focused because Paul toils, Paul struggles, for the sake of Christ's body, which is the church (v.24) for the purpose of **presenting mature believers** (v.28). Paul agonizes over bringing glory to God and for the good of others.

What does it mean to be "mature in Christ"?

How does one become mature in Christ?



## Colossians 1:24-29

- The end to which Paul is giving his life is the work of discipling. In his book, *Discipling*, pastor and author Mark Dever says,

*"At the heart of Christianity is God's desire for a people to display his character. They do this through their obedience to his Word in their relationships with him and with each other. Therefore, he sent his Son to call out a people to follow him. And part of following the Son is calling still more to follow the Son. Together they demonstrate God's own love, holiness, and oneness.*

*His Son therefore gave this last command before ascending to heaven: go and make disciples (Matt 28:19). The lives of these people, in other words, should be dedicated to helping others follow Jesus...discipling is deliberately doing spiritual good to someone so that he or she will be more like Christ."*

7. Are you making disciples? If so, what does that look like? If not, what is stopping you?

### Putting It All Together

Paul set a beautiful example for us by rejoicing in his suffering for the glory of God. But Paul was merely following the pattern set by Jesus Christ. Jesus delighted in doing the will of His Father, and the Father's will was to give the Son as a sacrifice in order that we could be restored back to God (John 3:16; Romans 3:23-24, 8:32). Paul was able to rejoice in his suffering by remembering the dreadful cross and the magnificent resurrection of Jesus.

Do you want to know the power of God and a faith that works? Then give yourself over to the struggle of working for the good of others, even as Christ himself worked and struggled for our good.