

Colossians 1:24 to 2:5

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[0 : 0 0] Colossians chapter 1 starting in verse 24 going into the second chapter ending in verse 5. Again just amazed at the way the Lord works all things out and the way the Lord moves things together because what we're going to cover this morning we have already kind of seen played out before us in a number of ways and it has been great to be in the house of the Lord already today so I'm just overwhelmed by his presence and pray that you are as well. So if you are physically able and desire to do so will you join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God starting in Colossians chapter 1 verse 24. I tell you what I'm going to back up to verse 21 because I think you need to hear what is at the end of verse 23 to get in context our text that we will see this morning and as is often the case Paul tends to write in run-on sentences so we'll have to catch a couple of verses that we've already looked at to get it. Colossians 1 starting in verse 21 says although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind engaged in evil deeds yet he has now reconciled you in his fleshly body through death in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard and here's the part I want you to pay attention to which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven and of which I Paul was made a minister starting in verse 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 and filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions 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 that is the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations but has now been manifested to his saints to whom God will 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 we proclaim him admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom so that we may present every man complete in Christ for this purpose I also I labor striving according to his power which mightily works within me for I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea and for all those who have not personally seen my face that their hearts may be encouraged having been knit together in love attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery that is

Christ himself in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument for even though I am absent in body nevertheless I am with you in spirit rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ would you pray with me well we thank you for your word we thank you for the privilege of reading it and hearing it and Lord now we would pray that you would speak through it Lord speak to our hearts and minds draw closer to yourself that we may see you high and lifted up and it is in Jesus name we pray amen you may be seated Colossians chapter 1 verses 24 through 25 admittedly a very difficult passage of scripture it is a passage of scripture in which there seems to be a lot of uncertainty or in clarity on clarity if you will when we read it at first sight I will admit to you this is a passage of scripture which I have read and reread and reread and reread and reread because Paul tends to get a little carried away in his writings Paul has a tendency like your pastor to get excited about the subject that he is on and get to going in a run-on sentence and he he's not very concerned about being grammatically correct as he is concerned about being theologically correct and that is lifting up

Jesus and it is in this passage he begins to use himself as the platform to exalt the savior he is talking about if you remember as we started the book of Colossians we are looking at the supremacy and the sufficiency of Jesus Christ he is both supreme that is he is above all and by being supreme that means he's above everything that you are concerned about okay he is above everything that is bothering you he is above everything that causing you fear he is above everything that is causing you depression he is above everything that is causing you joy he is above everything

that causes you happiness he is above and he is sufficient which means if we have nothing else besides Jesus Christ and friend listen to me we have all we need if we have nothing else he is sufficient we have more than we need take everything else away move everything else out of your life let it all fall by the wayside because he is sufficient and Paul is writing to the church of Colossae hoping to let the believers know those believers which he had never seen personally face to face we saw it in our text those which did not know him personally but had come to Christ through his ministry if you remember he had preached a series of messages or he preached a for a time being in a city in which a papyrus had been there and a papyrus came and came to Christ a papyrus went back home to the city of Colossae shared the gospel with people and a number of people responded and the church was born there Paul is concerned that they would understand Jesus is supreme he's greater than everything and that Jesus is sufficient because the problem going on in the church of Colossae is the same problem going on in the church of America today many many people thought they needed Jesus plus something Jesus plus comfort Jesus plus self sacrifice Jesus plus denial Jesus plus works Jesus plus efforts Jesus plus a greater understanding and they were always longing for the mysterious truth that seemed to be out there this is why in this passage in particular Paul uses the word mystery so many times friend you do not have to go very far in the world today to see that people are always looking for that mysterious truth they're always looking for that something that is out there the reality is is that something is not a something it is a someone and that someone came and dwelt among men and we call him Emmanuel which is God with us and he manifested himself to us and he revealed himself to us through his word it is no longer a mystery it is astounding that people are still searching for that which has already been clearly revealed but I want you to see this morning and it's kind of how we've already seen it played out because as we're looking at Paul discussing his own life here we would have a tendency to check out and say oh well Paul is speaking about himself well if you know much of the writings of Paul when Paul begins to speak of himself you need to pay attention because Paul was never really big about manifesting himself as a matter of fact he referred to himself as the apostle born out of due season he referred to himself as the least among the saints and then he finally referred to himself as the chief of sinners it is astounding when you study the writings of Paul of which we have a number of them in the new testament and you can go to some of the first writings of Paul and go all the way down to some of the latter writings of Paul Colossians would have fallen somewhere near the first some of his one of his prison epistles not necessarily first in time because they were followed pretty quick but Romans would have been near the end the book of Romans and as Paul got closer to Christ and he got closer and deeper in his understanding of Christ he saw less and less of himself he really lost himself in Christ and he began to see less of himself and he really is showing this to us here in this passage and rather than just referring to the ministry of Paul I want you to see what it looks like to live a life of commissioned living if Jesus is supreme and if he is sufficient then what does it look like to live a life of commissioned living because when he calls us to himself one thing we understand if you are with us if you are with us on Sunday nights we are in the great book of numbers we will be in numbers chapter 2 tonight that is enough to keep many of you away or enough to bring some of you say how in the world is he going to preach in numbers chapter 2 because you know exactly what numbers chapter 2 is about right it's about how the people tabernacle and and how they looked at the camp and how you had over two million people in the camp and everybody wants to hear what the camp of the nation of Israel looks like but it's there for a reason right so we don't make light of it we go to it and study it because God wants us to see something there but if you remember when we were in the book of Exodus that every time God calls his people out he is calling them out to bring them in right God didn't call you out of sin just to get you out of sin he called you out of sin to bring you into his presence and everybody he brings into his presence he commissions to do something in the world the reality is is he has called us to himself and commissioned us the only reason that I can even fathom that God would leave someone here once they have come to Christ look around the world friend it is not getting any better and I don't mean to bring a newflash to you but the Bible tells us in the book of Revelations this world is not on upward spiral in a downward spiral right things are not getting better they are getting progressively worse things are always going to get progressively worse and I'm not a doom and gloom pastor I'm not a doom and gloom preacher because I love the creation which God has called us to live in and I even love the time in history in which God has appointed that I would reside in but the reality is is this world is not our home he has got a much better place prepared for us and if the goal was just to get us to that better place in the

moment we accept him as our Lord and

Savior the most gracious thing that I could think of is that he would call us to his presence the only reason I can think he didn't do that is because he has a reason for us still being here and that is we have been commissioned to live a life at this time in history and I'm just going to go ahead and tell you the same thing I told a bunch of pastors the last pastors meeting I was at this is a great time to minister in it is a great time to minister in not just as a pastor but more importantly as a believer God has commissioned each one of us to be in his labor and I want you to see how Paul refers to himself he says there at the end of verse 23 that he was made a minister that's what I want you to see when I read 21 through 23 of which I Paul was made a minister so what does commissioned living look like number one it is a personal calling it is a personal calling of which I Paul the individual was made a minister he says now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake and I do my part or I do and I let me back up come on Billy Joe slow down 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 two things I want you to see there number one the personal calling is not calling to personal pleasure many people believe that if

[11:26] Christ has called you to labor for him then it would be easy many believe that if Christ has called us to labor and to move and to do things everything's going to be pleasant but look at what he says I rejoice in my sufferings a calling of the Lord to be commissioned for his service listen pleasure comes later right God has reserved the good stuff for last that is eternity in his presence casting our golden crowns before his throne that is being in his presence where there is no sweat there is no no dreariness of word there is no misery there is no pain there are no tears but God has not called us and commissioned us to something of personal pleasure he says I rejoice in my suffering for your sake the second thing we see here is that that calling is to be exhibited for the sake of others it is for the sake of others and that is always he says now in my flesh I do my share on behalf of his body which is the church this is what I think that we have already seen this morning God has called every believer with a personal calling and it is a personal calling that is to be displayed for the sake of others and the primary avenue that that is to be put on display is through the church that is we need to get beyond thinking that church is a part of society but that church is the channel to reach society

God is let's just bring it down to this okay God has gifted each one of us with a different giftedness now mine God has called me personally to be a pastor slash teacher those are put together in scripture pastor and teacher they are called it's much different than being an evangelist even though he's called me to do the work of personal evangelism that is to share the gospel personally but he's also called me I really feel this overwhelming parent he's called me to be a pastor slash teacher now let's just be honest that has its primary focus is really only done within the church walls right I can do it as an individual with you we can sit down and talk about the things of God and talk about things of scripture but its primary use is to be within the body that is in the corporate gathering of the church many believers most believers because only a minority are called to be that most believers are called to be something else and gifted for something else and that giftedness has a place in the world and it is that it could be used outside of the church building but it is my conviction that it is to be primarily channeled through the church give God of your first fruits you say what do you mean well this morning we've seen those who were gifted with musical talents we've seen those who were gifted with song we've seen those who were gifted with uh nursing skills we've seen those who who are gifted in in audio technology thank you for those people who were up there with audio and visual and and gifted those and channeling through the church some of you Lord bless you are gifted with administration that is not mine I am really bad at keeping things organized I'm really bad at keeping things where they should be others are gifted with intercession some are gifted with with caring and compassion and some are gifted with hospitality that is a gift by the way it is my understanding of scripture that every gift that God gives his people is to be primarily focused through the church for the benefit of others now he may enable you to use that in the world but its primary purpose that he has given it to you is for the church you say well wait a minute I don't make any money when I do it for the church but what a better master to work for than Jesus Christ because I can promise you that when that gift is exercised in the church he can more than meet that need in the world outside the church he can do it this is where we begin to see it is a commissioned living he says I do my part or I do my share now we need to make sure what we say here that he says of his body filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions Paul is not saying that Christ's

sufferings were lacking he is saying that there were more sufferings to come because Jesus said that if they had done it to him they would do it to you so he was continuing to feel if you will the sufferings of Christ now God has not called all of us to that but he's called some but he says of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit again see the giftedness which God has given us is a matter of stewardship it is a matter of stewardship let's just look throughout history because one thing I have found in church history and if you'll just bear with me for a little while we'll see if we can kind of flesh this out because is this really how it's supposed to work there are a number of prominent names which we know throughout church history but if we were to trace their roots back we would always see that those names were connected to an individual who had an ordinary job that began to use their giftedness through the body that is the church many of you know I am rereading again a book by Belmont on D.L. Moody a life in the ministry how D.L. Moody greatly shaped our life and many of you know D.L. Moody if not you know Moody Radio you can listen to that or Moody Bible Church or you can go to the Moody conferences and what an impact D.L. Moody has had not only in America but in all the world but what many many many people do not know is that it was a Sunday school teacher named Edward Kimball who decided one day while walking down the street in Boston and was so moved by a student he had seen in his Sunday school class named Dwight Moody who was working as a shoe salesman in a shoe store there and was so overwhelmed with grief one day because Moody would not commit to Christ decided he was going to go interrupt Moody's work day because he was on his way Mr. Kimball was on his way to work and decided to stop by the shoe store and ask Moody would he not give his life to Christ in that shoe store Moody gave his life to Christ and began to be used of the Lord many do not know Edward Kimball or maybe we don't know of the deacon who decided to go to church one day in London even though it was such a snowy day he knew nobody would be there as a matter of fact he knew even the pastor wasn't coming because there was so much snow on the ground so this deacon said well if anybody comes I'll go light a fire in the front of the church and warm the building up just in case anybody comes so he started the fire and he had the fire going and sure enough about five or six people came there and they were all people that he knew and they were sitting around talking and then a young teenage boy walked in and decided to sit down and the deacon was so moved and said well if he's here then we need to preach a message so he got up and he preached this very very just simple message about God calling people to himself little did he know that the young teenage boy who came and responded to that message his name was Charles Haddon Spurgeon who would become the prince of preachers in all of England we don't know about the dairy farmer in North Carolina who decided that because there was an individual holding revivals around that area and Billy Sunday had recently died that this dairy farmer decided to call some men to his farm and pray one day and then they called him over and they were praying and literally this dairy farmer had prayed

Lord raise up the next Billy little did he know that that next Billy was Billy Graham who was his son in his house see we don't know how when God's people begin to do the thing they were commissioned to do and to flow it through the church how God is empowering and calling people to himself it is story after story after story how God used people to do a mighty mighty work and I could continue to go on but I'm not going because we see here that when God has called us he's called us each person to be busy about the giftedness he has stewarded to us for his glory now that personal calling is secondly joined to a proclaimed message it is the proclaimed message because Paul says here that he had a stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit verse 25 so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God now this is where it kind of gets a little confusing but we need to just see the simplicity of it okay don't look at the multitude of Paul's words and try to catch the simplicity of it he says he was stewarded with the ability or the calling to preach the word as a matter of fact every one of your giftedness that he has given you is not only to flow through the church but is always to point to the word because the only way if you remember going back to verse 21 although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind engaged in evil deeds do you know how to reach people who are alienated from God hostile in deeds and actions engaged in all these different things and doing bad things do you know how to change them he says that they were changed because they believed in the gospel they were moved away from the hope they were established and steadfast and they continue in the faith which they have that came from hearing the gospel it is the word of God which changes people's lives not the judgment of God's people right we need to just admit that the pointing of the finger and the chastisement of actions is not what

changes hearts and minds it is the word of God so everything that God has called us to do we need to bring it back to the word of God and this is what he says here he says that he is fully carrying out the preaching of the word of God that is the mystery the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations but has now been manifested to his saints to whom God will make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles let me put that in context what he's saying is

God has called me to tell everybody that very thing that all of the world has been looking for and the Jewish people thought it was just for them alone but it has now been extended to the Gentiles and God took this mysterious thing that they were looking for this thing that would give them hope this thing that would give them purpose and he bestowed it to his believers and he bestowed it to those saints who would proclaim it to the world and if you're reading the Bible reading plan you're in the book of Acts and you see how God was moving it to the Gentile people but this is what that mystery is the mystery which is verse 27 which is Christ in you the hope of glory let me just read it to you without all his run on right that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God that is the mystery which is Christ in you the hope of glory you know the only hope you have for glory Christ in you I was overwhelmed this morning as I was just looking at that once again and again just re-reading and re-reading and re-reading and going back and checking cross references

[22 : 07] Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8 that Christ is in us and then Jesus himself says in those great passages right before he dies in John 15 and 16 and even in 17 John 17 the high priestly prayer of Christ Jesus speaks of him being in the Father right him being in the Father and he and the Father being in the believers as a matter of fact in the parable in the vine he says you abide in me and I abide in you and he says I and the Father will come make our abode in you and in his high priestly prayer he says Lord I thank you that I Father I thank you that I am in you and I am in them that you and I are one and me and the believers those who have accepted me are one that I am in them here's the reality when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior and we surrender our lives we have now become the tabernacle or the abode of Christ himself you know why that's good news because when God looks at the very core of you I heard one time preachers you're not supposed to point at people so let me just say okay I point back to myself that's why I say you do it open handedly point at everybody at one time when God looks at your very core how many of you get terrified you think

I don't want God to see what I look like on the inside you know if you've accepted Christ your Lord and Savior you've given your life to him when he looks at the very core of you you know what he sees Christ Christ in you there's the hope of glory you know the only hope I have I know who I am in the flesh I know how I fall I falter I mess up I stumble I've given my life to Jesus Christ by faith I've accepted him as my Lord and Savior by faith I believe what the word of God says by faith I believe that he died in my place was dead and buried on the third day raised again so that I may walk in newness of life never to be judged again by faith I accept these things and by faith I need to understand that when the devil says yeah but at your core being you are wicked I can say no the Bible tells me that the hope I have is that in me is not wickedness in me is Jesus Christ and when the Father looks in me he sees his Son who by the way was sinless and perfect and has already died and therefore will never be judged again it is the hope of glory that's the mystery not that God can come to us but that God can dwell in us that blows my mind because the heavens cannot contain him much less this earth even much less me but Christ in you the hope of glory it is the proclaimed message and he says this is what I proclaim that Christ is the hope of glory it is him in you he says in verse 28 we proclaim him we proclaim him nothing else friend people don't need to hear our opinions and our interpretations on things they need to hear about Jesus Christ we proclaim him don't ever exalt yourself don't ever exalt your work we proclaim Christ and this is the message we lift up third and finally we see that there is a purposed power not only is it a personal calling not only is it a proclaimed message there is a purposed power because this is the reality that when God calls us to himself and commissions us from his presence he always empowers us to do that which he is calling us to do he always empowers us to fulfill that which he has commissioned us many of us we have this kind of this gnawing in our stomach and this turning and we know we kind of sense that God is calling us to do something and we say but God I can't do it I'm just going to go ahead let me tell you that is a great place to be I love it when God calls me to do things I can't do you know why I like that because that means he has to do it I don't ever want to be called to do something that I can do and therefore it seemed like I accomplished it I always want to

step out in a calling or a commissioning in which he alone must come through because it must be his glory and his alone he always empowers us but that power comes for a purpose and Paul tells us what the purpose here he says in verse 28 we proclaim him admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom so that we may present every man complete in Christ for this purpose also I labor striving according to his power which mightily works within me Paul says I'm using the power that God is giving me through Christ in order to bring men to completion how do you bring men to completion letting them know who they are in Christ admonishing teaching and equipping every man so that we may present every man complete in Christ

I'm just going to step aside here and speak from a pastoral heart you know why I encourage so much for you to get in the Bible it's not because I want everybody to follow the same Bible reading plan that I have not that I encourage not that I want this good feeling it's not like I can go back to the association and be like oh I had so many people read through the Bible you know why I do this because my heart is is I want you to be complete in Christ and I know the only way for everybody that sits in front of me to be complete in Christ is to be in his word not necessarily just to rely upon my weak and sometimes failing interpretation of that the word of God will not fail even though I as a pastor may fail he will not fail so if I can push you to get in the word you'll grow and grow and grow and I'm just going to tell you I am beyond excited to see what God's going to do this year because I know how many people are reading through the word of God right now I mean I'm beyond excited it's going to be astounding I cannot wait to see so many people are like oh pastor I'm on track or pastor yes I'm doing it and I'm praying for you because I want you to finish and I want you to I know listen right now

I know you're going to get into some kind of drudgery reading here in just a little bit but it's good and I cannot wait to see what God does through his word in the lives of his people as they grow up to a place of completion Paul says this is what I'm using his power for he says for I want you to know chapter 2 verse 1 for I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea and for all those who have not personally seen my face see they didn't know him personally this is the struggle this is what he's trying to do that their hearts may be encouraged having been knit together in love the reality is the world we lives in wrestles against us right that their hearts may be encouraged and he wants to unite them in love having been knit together in love and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery that is Christ himself listen to this statement once again here it is this is reason enough to get in the word of God attaining to all the wealth which means God's got his riches stored up for us right there's a wealth waiting for us all the wealth that comes from a full assurance of understanding do you know why

[28 : 58] Satan has such a heyday among believers today just in my opinion it's because there's such a lack of personal assurance of who they are in Christ when we know who we are in Christ and we know who Christ is Satan begins to lose his grip on us Satan begins to lose his sway on us when it's no longer about us but it's about Christ and we begin to have this assurance I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand but let me just ask you a personal question how many of you daily weekly monthly doubt your own salvation and that doubt that doubt Satan uses just to kind of suppress and to push and to manipulate and that doubt of just who we are in Christ the forgiveness we have in Christ he uses to overcome us and to cause shadows to fall upon us and depression the only way to gain that full assurance of understanding is to know listen it's not to say oh I can go back to such and such date and tell you the exact day that I made a prayer and the exact day that I signed a card or the exact day I raised my hand no that's not where we get assurance

Carrie and I were blessed to work with teenagers for years and I will never forget we take those teenagers every year to evangelism conferences and every year we'd watch the same teenagers raise their hands stand up make commitments and every year they'd always have this struggle and we'd always tell them it's not that it's not about responding even though you need to respond right it's not about a response how do we know how do we have an assurance of who we are in Christ all we know is am I doing what the Bible says I should do that is do I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ am I confessing him privately and publicly am I following him he who has the spirit has the son and he who has the son has life everlasting right can I testify to the fact that the spirit is living inside of me again that's not goosebumps that's not saying I can jump around that's according to what the word of God tells me there's this conviction listen I just be honest with you as a pastor there are times I look at myself and when I look at myself there is no way but then open up the

Thank you.
[44 : 54] Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[47 : 24] Thank you.