

## Further Bible Study Questions

- A) Read Colossians 1:21-29. Colossians 1:24 is one of the most debated verses in Scripture because it implies that there was something lacking in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Does this perspective balance with the rest of Chapter 1? Read the entire chapter at once to get a flavor of Paul's approach and perspective on this issue.
- B) The Catholic Church's teaching on Purgatory (the extra-biblical teaching which states that some people, upon death, enter into a state of Purgatory to be punished because they have not fully paid the satisfaction for their transgressions. The purpose of Purgatory, in Catholic doctrine, is to purify the soul for entrance into heaven) bases some of its teaching on Colossians 1:24. How would you answer your Catholic friend who was utilizing Colossians 1:4 to support the concept of Purgatory for the purification of sins?
- C) Many people would identify themselves as being disciples of Jesus Christ, but not many people consider themselves "disciplinators" of others. Yet, the call for all Christians is to have a disciplinatory affect on those who are around them. Is this true in your life? Who are the people in your life which you would consider your "disciples?"
- D) Paul speaks of doing the work of discipleship in such a way that it is obvious that the source of power for being a disciple is Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:28-29). How do you think this can be assured, both privately and publicly, so as not to lead people to become disciples of men, or of movements, etc.? How can we assure that people follow Christ, and no one or nothing else?

# Do You See What I See?

Long Beach Alliance Church • August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**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.**  
**~COLOSSIANS 1:28-29 (NASB)**

### **1) Be Faithful To The Hope**

- A) The Great News (the Gospel) of Jesus Christ had both a present sense of salvation (Ephesians 2:8) and a future sense of salvation (Romans 8:22-25).
- B) Whenever the future sense of salvation is being emphasized, it is called "the hope" of our salvation (cf. Colossians 1:23). This hope of a the future "completion" of our salvation provided an "established and steadfast" walk with God.
- C) The followers of Jesus Christ in Colossae were delighted with the present sense of their salvation (cf. 1:3-6), but were lacking in their future focused "hope" (1:23).

- D) The Apostle Paul, in an effort to jolt the Colossians out of a soft faith which could not stand the heat of real life, calls them to live according to the hope of the Gospel, so that they will become disciples who disciple others (1:24-29).

## 2) Temporary Sacrifice For The Hope

- A) Despite having never met the Colossians personally, Paul expresses joy at his physical sufferings, noting that his sufferings are on behalf of the Colossians (1:24).
- B) Paul notes that he can endure his hardships because he "is filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (1:24). Note that he expresses this focus in the midst of speaking of ministry and his role as an apostle in the church (1:23-27).
- C) Paul's apocalyptic\* (future focus) reference to "filling up what is lacking" is meant to draw the reader to the pursuit of completing the task which Christ had begun.
- D) It should be noted that the "lack" to which Paul refers has nothing to do with a incompleteness in Christ's work on the cross (cf. 1:13-23), and cannot be supportive of any derivative concept of "making amends" for earthly actions.
- E) Rather, Paul invites the Colossians into the worldwide work of the "hope of the gospel" by engaging in the church, in ministry (1:24), in preaching (1:25), and in evangelism for the Gentiles (1:26-27).

## 3) Not Just Disciples, Also Disciplemakers

- A) Paul summarizes the life of following Jesus Christ with a focus which extends beyond our own salvation into the lives of others. Whether family, friends, co-workers or others, we are called to the great discipleship verses of Colossians 1:28-29.
- B) Note the emphasis on the centrality of the message of God's Word (proclamation of Him, 1:28) which we are to speak to all men, and the future focus of "presenting" others "complete" (or 'perfect,' 1:28) in Christ.
- C) This is the "purpose" of our labor (1:29). It's not just about our own walk, but how our walk with Jesus impacts others! So important is the work of discipleship that Paul emphasizes the essential nature of Christ working in us so that no one will mistake "the hope of glory" for anything but Jesus (1:29)!

\* Jewish apocalyptic writing often pictured the catastrophes and sufferings which must break in upon the earth according to God's definite design, and which must even fall upon believers. All this must transpire before God's new world dawns. War, want, and plagues will befall mankind; the earth will withhold its produce, women will no longer bear children; the cosmic order will be so disturbed that the constellations will no longer follow their regular paths; and the pious shall experience persecution and bitter suffering. When, however, these horrors reach a zenith, the turn of events will come. For this reason the sufferings in the last days are also called woes of the Messiah, because they immediately precede the advent of the Anointed Ruler. The Christian community's expectations for the end time were formed from these apocalyptic conceptions of Judaism. God has determined the measure and extent of these afflictions and thereby has limited them (Mark 13:19f, 24; par.). The final horrors can be compared with the labor pains which come upon a woman in childbirth (13:8; par.), because the coming turn of events is announced by pain and suffering. When this has been completed, the end is at hand; then the old aeon passes away and the wonderful new world dawns. For this present, however, this is not the case; something is still lacking in "Christ's afflictions." This lack is what the apostle through his sufferings is completing. The verb ἀναναπληρῶ (to complete) occurs in the New Testament only in this passage; it emphasizes that what is now being completed is a compensation which will be substituted for what is lacking. The apostle, through the sufferings which he painfully bears in his own flesh, contributes to foreshortening the eschatological afflictions. This, in turn, brings the dawning of the future glory all the closer. *Hermeneia Commentary, Colossians & Philemon*, by Eduard Lohse, Fortress Press, pages #70-71.