

Proclaiming Christ in Ministry

Colossians 1:28-29

Open your Bibles with me this morning to Colossians 1 as we finish the first chapter of Colossians this morning.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Colossians 1:28-29 (NASB)

²⁸ We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. ²⁹ For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

In the first chapter of Colossians, Paul has told us of the preeminence and sufficiency of Christ.

When we say Christ is **preeminent**, we are meaning that He is above everything in importance. After Christ died on the cross for our sins, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the **name** which is **above** every **name**. There is no person or thing that is more important to mankind than Christ. If He is preeminent in your life, you will have made Him have first place in everything you do. He is our only hope to have our spiritual side restored back to God.

When we refer to the **sufficiency** of Christ, we are saying that He is the only source we have and is **all** we need in life to be reconciled back to God. Christ died on the cross for all of our sins once and for all. When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior and make Him **preeminent** in our lives, we are forgiven of our sins and have our spiritual relationship with God restored. We become a part of the body of Christ which is the church and our citizenship is transferred from this world of sin back to the Kingdom of God.

Paul first tells us this in Colossians.

Colossians 1:9-14 Bible (NASB)

⁹ For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹² giving thanks

to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

¹³ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

It is by the grace of God and the work of Christ, that we have been restored back to God. When you **truly realize how glorious** this transformation is, you will **WANT** to make Christ preeminent in your life. The **quest** that is preeminent in your life will be the activity that occupies the most of your time. The decisions you make in life will be based upon how it **affects the end goal** of that **quest**. It will be something you enjoy doing and you will be willing to sacrifice time, energy, and physical pain for it because you realize that it is only through sacrifice that you can serve the Lord. You will "joyously ¹² give thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light."

I have been using the illustration of a deer hunter, but today I am going to use the illustration of a football player to emphasize the point.

ILLUSTRATION:

If you were a dedicated football player for a high school team, your ultimate goal would be to win all of your football games and win the state championship. Think of all the things that you are willing to do in order to have a successful football season. You have to spend many hours in the training room lifting weights to build up muscle mass and running to build endurance. You would have to spend hours learning the plays. You would have to constantly be aware of what you eat and avoid activities that could downgrade your conditioning. You will also have to spend hours in running drills and practice on the football field. More hours would be spent watching videos of opposing teams to learn their offensive play trends and defensive patterns. This means you would have to sacrifice time that could be spent driving around town, dating, watching movies, and being a "**normal teenager**". You spend all of this time and energy in order that you can win football games. You enjoy willingly sacrificing that time, energy, and discomfort because you know that it is the only way that you can possibly realize your goal of attaining a state championship.

If Christ is preeminent in your life, you would be like the football player. Your **quest** in life would be to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;" You would read the Bible and attend church regularly to learn **how** to live for Christ and act upon that knowledge. Every decision that you made, just like the football player, would be based upon how it would **affect** your ministry for Christ.

In the last two messages we discussed the **Source of the Ministry** and the **Proper Heart for Ministry**.

The **Source of our Ministry** is God. When you were saved,

- God had in mind a role for you to serve Him.
- He also supplied the gifts or talents that you will need to perform that role.
- Through the Holy Spirit, God will plant a burden upon your heart to do His work.
- God will provide opportunities for you to minister in that role.

The gift was not given to use as you please, but it was given to you to for His GLORY.

The **Proper Heart for the Gospel Ministry** is a heart that accepts sacrifice joyously. The ministry is a sacrifice. . If Christ is truly first in your life, you are willing to suffer ridicule, weariness, money, time, and even pain to further the Gospel because it will be the passion in your life.

The main difference between the deer hunter or football player and the ministry is that the hunter and player are sacrificing to **please themselves**. We are in the ministry to **serve God and to do His will**.

Let's look at the last three aspects of the Gospel ministry.

BODY:

I. The Method of Ministry

Colossians 1:28a (NASB)

²⁸ We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom,

The method of ministry is to proclaim Christ.

We have one message. We are to proclaim the person and work of Christ to the whole world. Everything that the church does is to proclaim that message.

Paul says that we are to proclaim this message in two ways.

A. Admonishing/Warning Everyone

We are to confront anyone who needs to change their belief, attitude, or actions that are not consistent with Christ's teachings.

This type of admonishing was a central aspect of Paul. Paul wrote to the elders in Ephesus and said,

Acts 20:28-31 (NASB)

²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

This should be central to the ministry of the minister and elders.

Paul wrote of how our Christian conduct should be in

1 Thessalonians 5:12-14 (NASB)

¹² But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, ¹³ and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. ¹⁴ We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

Part of the job of ministers and elders is to warn someone of a sin of wrong. They should admonish you to turn from going the wrong way in your thinking, attitudes, or actions.

But admonishment is not only the responsibility of ministers and elders. This responsibility belongs to every believer.

Colossians 3:16 (NASB)

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.

Paul tells us to let the word of Christ richly dwell within you so you can recognize wrong and be able to admonish based upon the scripture.

The first aspect of proclaiming the Gospel is by admonishing one another, but we also proclaim the Gospel by teaching everyone.

B. Teaching Everyone

Paul not only said to admonish one another in Col. 1:28, but he also says to teach with all wisdom. It is the idea of training. Warning focuses on what needs to be changed in one's life. Teaching focuses on how one should try to live their life.

This is also a central aspect to the ministry of the Gospel.

Jesus himself said,

Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Jesus not only said to teach a few basic commandments, He said to teach ALL that I have commanded you. This is critical when teaching a disciple.

This is an important role of the minister and elder, but it is also the responsibility of all believers.

2 Timothy 2:2 (NASB)

² The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

So as leaders in the church, we should prepare faithful men in the church and entrust them to teach others also. Ultimately the ministry is a teaching ministry that all of us should do. When we think in a broader context of the entire

churches ministry, there will be some who never preach or ever teach in the classroom, but what they do for the Lord could make it easier or even possible for the teacher to do his job. Whatever you do should be for the purpose of furthering the Gospel.

II. The Aim of Ministry

What are we aiming at in the ministry? Paul says in

Colossians 1:28b (NASB)

so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

Just as verse 22 tells us that Christ reconciled us back to God through His death in order to **present** us holy and blameless before God, Paul says that the aim of the ministry is also to prepare the believer that we may **present** them "complete in Christ" as His pure bride.

The word complete would suggest a mature Christian who is perfect, mature, or full grown in Christ. Not perfect by our behavior, but through Christ's forgiveness of sin. It is the idea of bringing him to completion. This was the drive and focus of Paul's ministry.

The ultimate aim in our ministry is to see people built up to maturity in Jesus Christ.

Paul says in Eph. 4:12-13 that each of our roles is

Ephesians 4:12-13 (NASB)

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

This is what we are trying to do as a church. To "attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

This is why it is so important to attend church and study God's Word. So we can reach out to people and bring them into the church and build each other up unto the Lord. It is important that a good balance is kept between the two groups. The work of evangelism and build up of the church is as important as admonishing and teaching the believers to maturity.

III. The Power of Ministry

Colossians 1:29 (NASB)

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

It is important to realize that we can do nothing of value without the help of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We are merely servants of Christ allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us to accomplish God's will.

Paul put it this way:

1 Corinthians 3:6-7 (NASB)

⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷ So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

Jesus explained our role in the parable of the True Vine.

John 15:1-5 (NASB)

¹⁵ "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

All of us have a gifting given to us by God. Are you toiling and struggling in the Gospel ministry with that talent?

We will all have to give account to God someday on how we used our talents.

CONCLUSION:

The typical ministry within a church is somewhat like a football game. In the latter part of the game there are 22 players on the field who desperately need a break and forty more on the sideline who need the exercise.

The church is a lot like the football game. The difference is that you can put yourself into the game of ministry. You have been gifted to do God's work. Let us seek to be faithful.

Are you are allowing Christ to be Lord of your life? It is only by giving Him have **first place** in your life and serving Him that you can inherit His promises.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. He died for you, because He loves you and wants you for His own.

If you have accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior and you are still living like the world and not living a life fully pleasing to God. I urge you to seek the will of God in your life and rededicate your life to him. You are either "**dead to sin**" or you are "**dead in sin**". There is no in between.

He is Lord, He is Lord. He has risen from the dead and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, That Jesus Christ is Lord.