

## Mystery and Maturity

The message of Paul's letter is to simply keep our focus on Jesus. Because it is in and through him that we uncover all the "treasures".

This letter was written basically to an illiterate people and was being read to them. As we read through our scriptures in Colossians keep that in mind and enjoy the story as it was written.

### Rejoicing in Suffering

***<sup>24</sup> Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. (Colossians 1:24)***

Paul is saying; whatever the cost I'm willing to pay it. Just days after he met Jesus on the road, the Lord spoke prophetically about Paul in **Acts 9:16:**

***<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."***

His purpose was to plow new ground taking the gospel to the Gentiles and this will involve suffering.

### Paul's Commission

***"I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— 26 the **mystery** that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:25-27)***

This was Paul's commission, but we've all been given an assignment. Don't be intimidated by the "big" ministries (commissions) they are as human as you are. Paul is bringing them to Jesus with all of his weaknesses and faults. The best way to find your assignment is to begin to serve.

### Christ in you: The Key to solving the Mystery

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*“...we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that **has been hidden** and that God destined for our glory before time began. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” (1 Corinthians 2:7-9)*

Remember the story is being read to the listeners, he's telling them about the “mystery” and you can feel them leaning in with interest. This mystery has now been revealed; *“Christ in you, the hope of glory...”* The Devil and all his cohorts did not understand this hidden mystery or they wouldn't have crucified Jesus.

The model for us as the church is Jesus. The key to understanding all of scripture is that the life of Jesus is expressed in people. Make no mistake; Jesus is not expressed in this world through institutions, politics, economics or anything else.

He was, **the God out there** who became **the God among us** and the mystery is that he is **the God in me**. This is a unique relocation of the most High God...in you!

## You in Christ: The Key to Understanding Maturity

*“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present **everyone fully mature** in Christ. <sup>29</sup> To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.” (Colossians 1:28-29)*

“Mature”: (“Teleion”) means to be designed for something and to have become that. (To be fully developed)  
We need some self-evaluation, are we mature in relation to the years we have walked with the Lord?

*“I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. <sup>2</sup> My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the **treasures** of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. <sup>5</sup> For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.”*  
**(Colossians 2:1-5)**

In chapter 2 Paul begins to deal with an issue that has crept into the church. The false teaching boasted an exclusive, secret, and mysterious “knowledge” available to only a few through some form of initiation or religious rites.

Paul is contending, agonizing for them the goal of this *agony* is that they:

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- *united in love*
- *may have the full riches of complete **understanding**, in order that they may know the **mystery of God**, namely, **Christ***

He is telling them that they don't need to be deceived by chasing after a mysterious, secret knowledge. For it is in Christ "*in whom are hidden all the **treasures of wisdom and knowledge***"

It is in him we find all that we need, including the: "treasures of wisdom and knowledge".

Paul's *agony* turns to *delight* as they mature and their faith becomes firm in Christ Jesus.

*"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured."* **(Colossians 4:12)**

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen."* **(2 Peter 3:18)**

*"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."* **(Colossians 2:6-7)**

## Receive Jesus

We receive Jesus in the same way that a groom receives his bride or the bride receives her husband. Receiving or taking her/him for all that she/he is. We receive "Christ Jesus as Lord" living our lives in him:

- Rooted
- Built up in him
- Strengthened in the faith
- Overflowing with thankfulness

In our world and culture when a person produces, then they get the rewards of that production.

In God's Kingdom, *connection* precedes production. To all who "received" "believed" become the children of God.

*"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet, to all who received him, to those who believe in his name, he has given the right to become the children of God, children not born of natural descent, or of human decision of a husband's will, but born of God."*

**(John 1:11)**

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Much like a bird that has been in captivity and hand fed, we can have undeveloped areas of our life. Be a person that digs in for yourself, dig into his word, start eating “meat chunks” of his word.

We should be thankful for the teaching of God’s Word and the prayer times in our large gatherings and our small groups. But there is nothing like wrestling through a passage or contending for someone in prayer or being alone with God by yourself.

*14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have **trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:14)***

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1) Re-read Colossians 1:24 and Acts 9:16 and discuss what it means to rejoice in our sufferings?
- 2) Paul talked about his commission from God, Randy pointed out that we’ve all been given an assignment. Some of our assignments are long term, some short term. Some span over decades and others are one simple conversation with a person God brought on your path that day. What is your commission? (Remember Randy taught us not to be intimidated by large ministries (commissions) since we are all human and we all have assignment/s)
- 3) Look again in verses 25-27 (and I Corinthians 2:7-9) and discuss what it means: “**Christ in you** is the key to solving the mystery”? Additionally now that the mystery is revealed what does this mean to you: “Christ in us the hope of glory”?
- 4) In a nutshell, verses 28-29 tell us that: “**You in Christ** is the key to understanding maturity”. Clearly God’s desire is that we mature. Do you find yourself growing and maturing in your faith?
- 5) Starting in chapter 2, Paul said he was agonizing and contending for something in the believers, what is that?
- 6) Lastly, we receive “Christ Jesus as Lord” as a bride or groom receives their espoused. How do we “*continue to live your lives in him*”? Name and discuss the four areas mentioned in 2:7.

