



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

Lessons from Dan Duncan

Colossians 1: 24-29

Lesson 5 of 15

2018

"Glory Road"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Larry. We are in a great book, the book of Colossians, a brief book but one that is just filled with lofty theology and important exhortations. And we come to such a text in our studies this morning. We're looking at Colossians chapter 1, and we're going to finish the chapter beginning with verse 24-29. Paul writes:

²⁴Now 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, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. ²⁵Of *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*, ²⁶*that is*, the mystery, which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, ²⁷to whom God willed 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. ²⁸We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. ²⁹For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Colossians 1: 24-29

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of studying together. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for this time together. It is a great blessing and privilege to gather with Your people, to gather with the saints— for it's what You instruct us to do.

It's not simply a good thing to do, it is a necessary thing to do. It's what the author of Hebrews tells us that we must not neglect: 'Do not forsake the gathering of the saints, as is the practice of some', (Heb 10:25). Too easily it can become our practice to 'neglect' it—But we should not do that for we need to be here fellowshiping with one another and doing what Larry has reminded us of as so important—and that is the ministry of the Word of God. And also, Paul reminds us of that importance in our text today. The essence and the heart of the ministry really is the preaching and teaching of the Word of God; of this Bible; of the Scriptures. And we seek to do that, Father, accurately and faithfully. But we look to You, ultimately, to give us understanding of this text. And that is why we look to You at this moment because the teacher is the Spirit of God who's within us; we pray that we will not resist Him, but that His ministry will be effective within us, and that He will illuminate our minds, enlighten us as to the meaning of Paul's instruction here—What he writes about, when he talks about “the mystery”, that great truth that was the reason he was taking the gospel throughout the lands to which he traveled; and “suffering” and ‘laboring’ so much, as he says. It's to make this “mystery” known. Bless us as we study that idea and the great blessing that it is.

Teach us, build us up in the faith, Father. We pray that you would enable us to understand well what Paul has written here and how it applies to us, and to move us to lives of active service and fellowship. So we look to You to bless us spiritually.

We have on our prayer requests in the bulletin, Lord, a number of names listed of those who are in a state of recovery; or dealing with issues that they are still having difficulty with physical problems—We pray for them. We pray that You would be merciful to Your people, and through those difficulties we pray that You would bless them spiritually and heal them physically. But throughout this time of healing, time of recovery, and recuperation, give them fellowship with You and teach them through that trial.

One thing we learn from our passage, and that is: Through trials and through difficulties Your good work is furthered. Your plan and purpose is carried on through the

labors and the trials that we suffer—Paul tells us that. And we pray that that would happen for those that are going through difficulties.

Bless us, Lord, as we sing our next hymn that You would prepare our hearts for our time of study and time of worship. Teach us and build us up in The Faith with prayer.

We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

Many years ago, I remember my father pointing up to the tall steeple of a large church just south of here and saying, "I want to put that on all my sons' watches." He was looking at the clock on the steeple that had two words on its face: "Night cometh" from John 9:4. "Night cometh when no man can work." It was the Lord's alarm to His disciples: 'Time is short. Be active.' I never got the words on my watch, but I often think of that when I drive by that clock tower.

Paul did more than think. He worked. In fact, no apostle worked like Paul. He spoke of that to the Corinthians in I Corinthians 15. He called himself "the least of the apostles" but said, "I labored more than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God with me." (vs9-10). He gives a brief account of his ministry in our passage, Colossians 1:24-29. It's just six verses, but it has the words "sufferings", "labor", and "striving." Paul was industrious and sacrificial. He worked for the Colossians, he said, and Gentile believers across the world and the ages so that they would know what he calls "the mystery" — and so that he could bring them to maturity. It was a labor of love and an example of serving God and serving His people.

But he wrote this not really to encourage us to work, but to encourage us with the lesson and the truth that he labored so hard to give. It was so important that he gladly suffered to give it. It's about "the mystery," as I said. It's about the "riches" and the "glory" that are "in Christ." His ministry was 'glory bound.' It was on the "Road to Glory." And that, too, is incentive to work and to labor.

But it was a rough road. Paul begins by speaking of the hardships he suffered in order to reveal this "mystery" to the Gentiles. He suffered physically in his "flesh", he

said—Still he rejoiced in it. Now how is that? The way he explained his joy in suffering is by the blessings he brought to the church through all that he did suffer. Paul rejoiced through it all. But in saying that, he also said his “suffering” was his “share” “...in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.” (vs24).

Now on the face of it, that's a puzzling statement. Especially in this book, this book of Colossians, which is all about the sufficiency of Christ and the sufficiency of His sacrifice—His “sufferings.” Paul has just said that through the Lord's sacrifice, God has rescued us from the “domain of darkness”, (vs 13). He has redeemed us and gained for us forgiveness. And He's reconciled us to God. Christ has done it all. There's nothing left to add to Christ's sacrifice. He made that very clear on the cross when He said, "It is finished." It's finished. Nothing more to be done—He's done it all!

What then could Paul mean—that by his “sufferings” he was “filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions”? Certainly, he didn't mean that he added anything to the efficacy of the cross—that he didn't add anything to the power of the cross to save. We have “... peace through the blood of His cross,” (vs20). Certainly, Paul is not so quickly contradicting himself. So how are Paul's “sufferings” ... “Christ's afflictions”? How are our sufferings “Christ's afflictions?” And how is Paul ‘filling them up’?

I think we get an indication of Paul's meaning from Acts 9, and Paul's conversion on the Damascus road, when Jesus stopped him and said, "Saul, Saul. Why are you persecuting Me?" (vs 4). Paul probably thought about that statement that the Lord made and puzzled a bit over it. Jesus was gone; resurrected; ascended; and sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven. How was Paul persecuting Christ? Answer: By persecuting His people—who are “His body.”

And that's how Paul frequently refers to the church: As “the body of Christ.” And it's how he describes the church here. In verse 18 he described Christ as the “head of the body.” So as a head feels pain in the body, so Christ knows affliction in the church. Suffering in a physical body is suffering in its head. When one part of the body hurts, the entire body hurts. A persecuted church, a persecuted Christian, is a persecuted Savior. So what this statement teaches is that ‘we are not alone’. There is a

close connection between our sorrows and joys—and Christ. He identifies with us in our trials. "If they persecuted me," the Lord told his disciples, "they will persecute you." (Jn 15:20). Now why is that? Because we are His representatives on earth. We are His "body". When the world sees us, it sees Christ. And when it persecutes us it's really persecuting Christ. The afflictions Paul experienced are the afflictions of Christ. The afflictions that Christ would have suffered if He were on earth. Since He is not, they are "lacking" (vs24). And so Paul suffered them in His place and for Him.

Now some have suggested that "filling up" could mean there is an amount of "suffering" the church will have before all is finished and the Lord returns. And Paul was "filling up", or contributing to, that by his faithful service, (and maybe that's the case). What this certainly does show, though, is that Christ is with us. We suffer His "afflictions" in His service. "The personal sufferings of Jesus are over, but His sufferings in His people still continue." (from commentator John Eadie). **He lives in us**: When we suffer hunger or a beating or imprisonment or humiliation or abandonment or loneliness, He is there, and He is aware; and He knows our pain and our shame.

That's illustrated in the life of the late Dr. Helen Roseveare. I saw an interview with her a few years ago. She was a British missionary who served for over 20 years in the Congo. She had a significant ministry. She was the only doctor in an area populated by more than half a million people. There was a revolution in 1964 and she and her workers were captured and subjected to brutal and degrading torture for almost six months. She was personally and violently attacked. She watched a 17-year-old student who was beaten and left for dead when he tried to defend her. It all put her in a state of despair—She didn't doubt God's existence, but she wondered if He had forsaken her.

It was at that time, while she was back in England recovering from all of this, that these words came to her, not audibly but convincingly, "20 years ago you asked Me for the privilege of being a missionary, the privilege of being identified with Me. These are not your sufferings. These are my sufferings." As she thought of that she was overcome with a sense of great privilege—that she had suffered in the place of Christ, she had suffered in the place of the Savior. Her recovery was not easy—She had to

recover physically. She had to recover emotionally and spiritually. But she was able to do that, and she was able to rejoice and say that the Lord is able to use many things to work out “His wonderful purpose”, (that's her expression). And many people came to know the Lord through those long, difficult days of suffering.

And that's Paul's response as well. This was his prayer in Philippians 3:10, (a verse that oftentimes I've seen people cite as their life verse, or they'll sign a Bible and put that verse ... a great verse, Philippians 3:10), "...that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death:..." That's Paul saying, ‘This is what I chiefly want in all of my life. It's not simply to carry the gospel out, as important as all that is. What I really want is to know Him, and the power of His resurrection; the power that's in me to know what to experience, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.’ There is a connection to each of the parts of this verse. The more we know Christ, the more we will be transformed into His image by His power—and then, the more we will suffer for being like Him...but then, the better we will know Him: And that made Paul “rejoice”. He knew Christ's life more deeply through all that he went through and he knew Christ's desire more clearly; which is for Paul to serve His people.

Paul was doing that; serving the church. He was made a minister of it, or a ‘servant’ of the church— literally a ‘deacon’ of the church, which means ‘helper.’ He calls this his “stewardship” in verse 25; that means ‘a special service’. Paul was like a servant in a large house to whom the master had given a specific and big responsibility. And in God's spiritual house Paul was over the Gentiles—That was his responsibility. The church has never had a servant like Paul for his “industry and heroism” (Eadie). If he had a sundial he would have put on it, “*erchetai nux*” — “Night Cometh”. He worked. He didn't waste time. He was always on the road. As he told the Corinthians, traveling the world, doing the work God gave him to do—” preaching the Word of God” he says here. (vs25).

But his service wasn't only one of energy and accomplishment, that of establishing churches and writing scripture, tasks which were, in themselves, Herculean;

it was also a service of humility. There's no real service, Christlike service, unless it is humble, selfless service. And that's suggested in this term that Paul chose to describe himself, a "minister" or a "deacon." He doesn't mean he had the office of deacon in any particular church. But he uses that word to describe his ministry.

Literally, "deacon" means 'through dust.' "*Diakonos*" is 'deacon'. "*Diakonia*" is 'service'. It was really two words. *Dia*, "through", *konia*, "dust". It's a picture of someone getting down in the dirt to serve others, 'through the dust'. That was Paul: A humble, selfless servant of God and of the church; and of the Gentiles—especially pagan people. He went to them with the Good News. And for them he sacrificed.

He went across the empire "preaching", he says, "the Word of God.": And he preached the whole counsel of God.

He reminded the elders of the church of Ephesus of that in Acts 20:27. Meeting at Miletus, it was the last time they would see each other, and Paul gave them a run down of his life and ministry with them. And in verse 27 he said, "...I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose (*counsel*), of God." Well, that's really the task of the ministry, or being a servant of the church—to preach the whole purpose, the whole counsel of God with all of the truths and doctrines of scripture—And it's a 'service'.

It's significant that he says he didn't "shrink" from doing that. And I think he put that there because he knew what challenges a preacher or a teacher faces in what we do, (and I can sympathize with that). There are things that most don't want to hear. There are things that this world doesn't want to hear—but that are clearly taught in the Word of God. It may be a doctrinal issue. It may be a moral issue. And so the temptation to the teacher or the preacher is to 'lighten' or avoid that issue. Paul said, 'I didn't do that. I didn't shrink from anything. I gave you all of the truth and the doctrines of the Word of God.' That's important. That's the ministry.

Now that's the general sweep of his ministry, but Paul had something more specific in mind here. He had something specific in mind here, which he states in verse 26—It is "**the mystery**." What is that? Just the word piques our curiosity. Is it something mysterious? No, it's not that. It refers to truth previously concealed and now revealed.

Paul even states that here in verse 26, that it has “...been hidden from the past ages and generations but has now been manifested to His saints.” Paul indicated what it is in verse 24 where he spoke of the close connection between our “sufferings” and Christ’s “afflictions.” The “mystery” is specifically for us; specifically for saints.

Verse 27, “...to whom God willed 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.” Well that’s it: The “mystery” is “Christ in you.” It’s not ‘Christ’. It’s not ‘salvation for the Gentiles.’ That was all prophesied from the very beginning; in Genesis 3:15 we have the promise of the Messiah, the promise of a deliverer to come—the promise of Christ. And in chapter 12 verse 3 there’s the promise that Gentiles would be included in the blessings of Abraham. And we have that message all through the Prophets.

The “mystery” is not the church. A “mystery”, again, is a truth never before revealed—And remember, Christ had already spoken of His church. He spoke of it in Matthew 16:18, when He said, “I will build my church” and again in Matthew 18:17 when He spoke of the discipline that must come when a person, a believer, is sinful—It must be made known to the church, He said, if that person is unrepentant.

The “mystery” is that Christ is “in” believing Gentiles in the same way and to the same degree that He is “in” believing Jews. The two are one people. Gentile and Jewish believers are equal in Christ; and equal in the blessings of salvation. Gentiles, Paul says, are not second-class citizens. You are equal with your Jewish brothers and sisters. That’s how Paul explained “the mystery” in Ephesians 3:4-6, ‘that the Gentiles are fellow members of the body, (fellow members, equal members of the body), and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel—equal heirs with them.’

Now that was an amazing thing, because he’s saying, ‘You, who were considered ‘*dogs*’ by the Jews, are now equal with them in God’s saving plan and purpose.’ Here the emphasis is that Christ is in all of us—every believer. He dwells in us through the Holy Spirit, so that these two ideas seem to blend: Christ in us—the Holy Spirit in us. They seem almost identical.

But the emphasis here is on Christ, because that's the emphasis of this book of Colossians. He is all sufficient for every need we have. And since we have His life in us, which ... go back to that statement that Paul made in Philippians 3:10, “His resurrection life,” (there's no more powerful life than that, the greatest power there is, power of life over death is in us, “resurrection life”). What Paul is saying, ‘since we have that in us, every one of us as a believer in Jesus Christ, we are well equipped for every challenge that we may face in our life for He is with us.’

That is “riches”, Paul says. We are rich with power and knowledge that the world does not have or know. It can't know this. This blessing is to His saints—not to the world. Our “riches” are different from what the world works for. We haven't been promised prosperity: We haven't been promised riches—That's what the world seeks. (And sometimes we certainly do, as well). But that's not what we've been promised. Paul, in fact, told the young churches on his first missionary journey, the young churches in Asia, in Acts 14:22, “...through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” That's the reality. That's life for the church in this world at this present time: “...through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” Our riches enable us to do that: To suffer for the faith; labor for the Lord; labor for others; experience material loss—and “rejoice”, just as Helen Roseveare did; as well as countless others have done—countless Christians down through the ages. Now that's alien to the world. That's something the world can't figure out.

But what the world can know though, is what it sees in us as we go through tribulations. And hopefully, by God's grace, it sees Christ in us. It sees something different in us from the world around us. They will see that; but only by God's grace. The Christian life is a life of grace. So we can expect that.

I've said it before, I say it again, because it's clearly stated in this passage: The Christian life is a supernatural life. We don't live life in our own strength. When we do that we don't live well. When we live well, when we live properly, we live life in His strength. And because we do, we can be obedient because He gives what He

commands. Remember Augustus' prayer: "**Command what You will but give what You command.**" And He does that. And we're to trust Him. He's faithful. He never calls us out on any mission, on any road, and certainly not this 'road to glory' without giving what He requires of us.

And that was Paul's experience. He had a painful problem, you know, a crippling illness. He doesn't explain it, but he does call it a name. He gives it a description in the sense of a "thorn in the flesh" (2Cor 12:7). We don't know what that 'thorn in the flesh' was. He also says it was a "...messenger of Satan..." sent to torment him. That's how Paul describes it. He prayed repeatedly that God would remove it—God didn't. Sometimes He doesn't take those things away. But He does it for a reason. And really He does answer Paul's prayer, because finally He spoke to Paul, (and in speaking to Paul, He spoke to us—all of us), He said, "My grace is sufficient for you..." (2Cor 12:9). And it was. And it is for us—We are not alone—The Lord is with us always. Our trials are His trials. Our suffering is His "afflictions". He endures them with us, and He sustains us in them. And He gives us "hope". This "mystery" of Christ in you is, Paul says, "the hope of glory". And there, too, are "riches" —riches yet to be known; riches yet to be experienced.

Hope is future—And it is necessary for continuing on in the Christian life. No one can live well—no one can live earnestly and bravely, without hope. But Paul says we have hope. We have "hope of glory". That's our future—And it is certain!

Now when Paul speaks of hope, he's not speaking about a 'wish' of something which might take place: Or, 'We hope it does, but we don't know for certain.'... No, this is a certainty. It's just a future reality that we are yet to experience. Hope, for us, is a certainty.

What that means is: The hardships of life will end. —And what will replace them is blessing. Paul calls it "glory" and it's inexpressible because it's incomprehensible. He doesn't go into the details of it, but that's our hope— "Glory" that is beyond our comprehension. But then again, that indicates its greatness—if Paul could explain it fully, it would be limited; this is unlimited "glory" that is beyond our comprehension. And this, too, is incentive to be a faithful minister to serve God and to serve one another

because glory is coming. Or rather we are coming to glory. —We're on that “Road to Glory.” It is certain. And whatever we suffer, or whatever we lose in this life; this brief, brief life: Whatever we lose in this life will be more than made up for us—rewarded by the Lord.

Paul spoke of that in II Corinthians 4:17-18, "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory, far beyond all comparison." (vs17). He's not saying, 'The light afflictions are doing this'. What he's saying is, 'Every affliction that you suffer in this life for the Lord is light weight compared to what you're going to receive in its place.' "...while we look not at things which are seen, but at things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (vs18). That's what we're going to have: 'Eternal Things.'

You cannot sacrifice any good thing or suffer any hard thing that God won't more than make up for in the world to come. But of course, that requires faith in the promise. Faith is looking at those things that are not seen and are eternal. We trust God's Word for them. We believe Him. That's the life that we're called to live. It's a life of faith, not a life of sight. We trust in God's Word. And in trusting in His Word we believe that He is good for His Word—that He keeps His promises.

This guarantee that He is good for His Word, this promise that we will possess this glory to come, is guaranteed because Christ is in us. His spiritual life "in" us now is the assurance that the same life, that spiritual life in us, will become our physical life in the resurrection to come—physical and spiritual together in a glorified state, a glorified body.

That hope, together with Paul's love for the saints and his desire to see them grow to maturity to God's glory, motivated Paul in his ministry. So 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." That's the ministry—That's the complete ministry. That's what we are to be doing here, seeking to make us, (every man, man and woman), complete and mature. It's not just about being born—it's about growing up. It's not just about the gospel and coming to faith—That's just the beginning;

for there is a maturing process that goes on. And Paul speaks of that, wanting to help the saved to 'work out' their salvation so that they become mature saints. That's the goal of the ministry. And that's the goal here at Believers Chapel. That's why we teach the Word of God, because this is what will cause us to mature and grow.

And that happens through the message—the faithful preaching of the message. And that's what Paul spoke of. He talked to the Corinthians about his ministry. He said that, "...we preach Christ crucified..." (1 Cor 1:23). If Christ is not the center of the message; if the cross is not the center of it all; if the gospel of a crucified Savior whose work of atonement saves the sinner through faith and grace—if that is not preached, then there is no ministry. The ministry here is, as Paul told the Corinthians, "Christ crucified"; Christ, very God of very God, and very man of very man; the God-man who died to save sinners.

Now that's the heart of it. But that's not all there is to know. It's really just the beginning. In chapter two of Colossians, in verse three Paul says that 'in Him', (that is, 'in Christ'), "...are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge..."—And this is for all of us, (again, every man, man and woman)—everyone in the church. It's for us, these "...hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge...". And this project, this ministry of bringing us to maturity is Paul's ministry to the church. It's not for some elite group of intellectuals, as these heretics who had come to Colossae were saying. It's for all of us—all 'in Christ'—We have been given a fortune, 'now!' Paul is saying. And we're to go get it. We're to mine it. We're to dig for it.

Mining that treasure is an activity for our lifetime. There is no end to it. We cannot study God's Word and come to the end of it. You cannot read through your Bible a few times and say, "Well, I've done that. I've finished all of that." No!!—We cannot study the Word of God enough. There's no end to the study of it or plumbing the full depth of it. We cannot study Christ enough. And if we study Christ, we study the Godhead, we study the Trinity. And if we study the Trinity, if we study God, we study His work, we study His creation.

And we know ourselves by knowing Him. John Calvin began the Institutes of the Christian Religion, (and I guess we call it his 'magnum opus'), with the opening statement: "Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: The knowledge of God, and of ourselves."

We will never know ourselves, and we will never understand people, we'll never understand human nature, we'll never understand this world if we don't know our Creator and Redeemer. There's no more important study than that.

Now there are many important studies in this world, not to take away from any of that, but this is the most important study for a person's life—the study of God, because it's the study of ourselves. We learn about ourselves by learning about Him. But again, this is the task of a lifetime. We are thirsty souls who have been given living water to drink, (Jn 7:38). But it's an ocean of living water. Who can drink up the Atlantic and Pacific of God's truth? It's like a feast of gourmet food set on an endless table and we will never reach the end of it; we will never be full; we will never be satisfied. Well, it will satisfy us—but satisfy us in such a way that we want more. Each bite makes us hungry for more. It's true. The whole counsel of God is that good!

Now if you doubt that ... and I suspect some of us are doubting that: 'Well, I know it's important to know the Word of God. But like a great banquet?... like a feast?'... Yes!! If you don't believe me, put it to the test. That's what David said in Psalm 34:8. He said, "O, taste and see that the Lord is good." Try it. Ask Him to give you an appetite for His Word; for doctrine; for the knowledge of Scripture—And He will do that. That is a prayer that He will answer.

Paul's ministry was to teach it. And that is essential for any real ministry, teaching God's Word and applying it, exhorting us to move on in the faith, and also confronting failure when it's necessary. Paul did all of that. He was concerned about God's people. He sacrificed his time for them. That's the ministry. It's not easy. It's hard. But it's necessary if saints are to grow and become mature; if they're to become "complete in Christ" (vs28), which is the goal of the ministry.

He speaks of the difficulty of it in the last verse, verse 29. "For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me." He labored; he struggled. That's the idea of "striving". It has the sense of agonizing in a footrace or in a wrestling contest. But Paul kept at it, kept at it to the very end.

Now again, I don't think Paul's purpose here was to encourage us to work, but rather to encourage us with the reason that he labored so hard. It was to give "the mystery" and help the saints become mature. But when we understand "the mystery" that Christ is in us; that He is there with us in the most difficult of times and circumstances, and that He has, as the commentator John Eadie called, "sympathetic sorrows", that's incentive to work and to serve.

The main thought, I think, of Paul's statements here in this passage can be put this way: Paul's joy at bringing the "mystery" to the Gentiles through great labor and even suffering shows the greatness of the "mystery" —the value of it. And that "mystery", if we take it in, if we understand it, makes us desire to labor earnestly. After all, it's the "Road to Glory". And we're not alone on that road. He's with us, leading us, and more—The Savior who commands and gives what He commands. Paul said, "...I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me." (vs29). It's a supernatural life.

Paul worked hard. He knew that 'Night was Coming' when he could no longer work. But he did his work, ultimately, by the power of God, by the life of Christ in him, which worked mightily—as it does in you, as it does in all of us. That is grace. And when we understand grace; what Christ has done, is presently doing; what He will yet do for us and what eternity holds for us, **then** we will want to labor and strive for Him and His people.

The Christian life requires discipline; requires saying 'no' to things we may enjoy. Living a life that's somewhat strict: Giving up foolish things; giving up, well, 'good things' for things that are better and more important. Life is urgent. Life is short. Saints are to be serious. — All of that is true. But nothing motivates the Christian more than God's grace: Realizing that we were born into this world guilty, "...alienated, and

hostile...” (vs21), and hopeless—just like these Colossians and those Ephesians were. But we have been saved, saved out of that and given hope.

We're on “Glory Road” — But not for long. Life is short. That road is short. Moses said it. No matter how long you live, (and he lived to be 120), no matter, “...For soon it is gone and we fly away.” (Ps 90:10). That will be a great day. We fly to realms of light. We fly to realms of beauty, peace, and joy—where suffering and sorrow are forgotten forever. Words fail us when we try to describe what Paul is speaking of here when he says “...the hope of glory” (vs29). We don't have the words to explain it. We live by faith. But the fact that we can't explain it, as I said, indicates the greatness of it.

Still, while that's our hope, and that is where we're headed, and that is what we're going to enter into; we still want to enter having lived well and labored hard. So may God give us grace and help us to know that His power works within us so that we might work—and even suffer, if that be His will, but do so with joy and gladness.

If you are here today without Christ, you're not on “Glory Road”. You are on a different path—one that leads to destruction, forever. “Night Cometh” — And for unbelievers it is eternal darkness. But know this, the sacrifice has been made so that sinners may escape the wrath to come and be saved forever—and have a hope that will not disappoint but give eternal life, glory, and joy. And it's in Christ. And it's received through faith—And faith alone. If you have not believed in Him, then trust in Him; receive His life and His ministry; receive all that He's done through faith. Trust in Him.

May God help you to do that and help all of us to know we are on that ‘Glory Road’; and that we have a glorious future before us. And that we have the power within us to enable us to serve the Lord now with the time we have. May God help us to do that.

Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Father, we do thank you for the apostle Paul and the labors of the apostle in bringing the Word of God to the Gentiles. And specifically, as he explains here, “the mystery” —the great truth that You are in Gentile believers just as You are in the Jewish believers—that we are one people. And we are indwelt with the Son of God through the Spirit of God. We are connected to You. We have life within us that is supernatural, and we have opportunities to serve You...May we do that. We can't do it in our own strength, but You don't call us to do that. We do it in that great power which works mightily within us, as it did in the apostle Paul.

May we avail ourselves of that and live to Your glory and to the benefit of one another.

We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)