

What is my purpose? - Daniel Bishop

²⁴ I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, ²⁵ of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, ²⁶ the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

COLOSSIANS Chapter 1 verses 24-29

- **I now rejoice in my sufferings for you:** Paul wrote this letter from a Roman jail. He was able to see that his sufferings worked something good for others. Paul was in prison which meant he had lots of time to pray and to write letters to the brethren. He was redeeming the time.
- **And fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ of which I became a minister:** Paul was a minister – that is, a servant of the body of Christ, the Church. He did not take this position of his own initiative, but **according to God's stewardship**. God put Paul into this position, he did not put himself there.
- Paul was originally called Saul. He afflicted the brethren and Church before the Lord Jesus met him on the road to Damascus. **Acts 9**
- **The word of God, the mystery which has been hidden:** In the Biblical sense, a mystery is not a riddle. It is a truth that can only be known by revelation, not intuition. It can be known now because **it has now been revealed to His saints**.

- **Hidden from ages and generations:** This reminds us that there are aspects to God's plan that were not clearly revealed in the Old Testament. The specific mystery Paul refers to here deals with God's plan for a universal Church, making one body out of Jew and Gentile.

- **The mystery is this:** God had designed to grant Gentiles the same privileges as Jews, thus making those who were not his people [the gentiles] his people. God utilised Salvation through the Jewish people, by Jesus, to bring salvation to every tribe, tongue, and nation under the dispensation of Grace. This is what Paul means by the "mystery".

Ephesians 3.1-6 clarifies this point beautifully:

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— ² if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, ³ how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, ⁴ by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), ⁵ which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: ⁶ that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

- Even though the gentiles being included was a surprise to the early Church, the Lord had a plan of salvation for the whole world, for whomever believes, including the gentiles. Glimpses of that plan can be seen in the Lord's workings through the Old Testament.

Exodus 12.48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land.

Isaiah 56.3-5 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. ⁴ For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; ⁵ Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

1 Kings 8.41-43 Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; ⁴² (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; ⁴³ Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.



- Glimpses of the mystery can be seen in the Old Testament but are fully revealed in the New Testament.
- **Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach. Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom.**
- Our **Hope of Glory** is Christ and it should be **Him we preach**: This was the focus of Paul's preaching. He didn't preach himself, or his opinions, or even lots and lots of entertaining stories. He preached **Jesus**. That is what we should be doing. This is also the Church's mandate.
- **Warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom**: Paul wanted the whole Gospel for the whole world. He wouldn't hold back. It was **for every man**, and he presented it in **all wisdom**. – **The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom**.
- The work of **warning** – or helping to impart understanding – was a passion for Paul in ministry (**Acts 20.31**). It is also the job of Church leaders (**1 Thessalonians 5.12**), and of the Church body in general (**Colossians 3.16**), providing that they are **able** to admonish others (**Romans 15.14**). As I said, this is also our mandate as the Church.
- Notice how Paul used the word **warning** and not 'ear tiggling'.
- **That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus**: The goal of Paul's ministry was to bring people to maturity in Christ, and not to dependence upon himself.
- **The aim of this epistle, and, indeed, of all Church work is**: Admonishing and teaching every man toward the realization of being Christ-like. We are to disciple, nurture, and bring along each other in Love.

In summary verses 24-29 show us: – **WHAT MY PURPOSE IS:**

1. **To spread the good news of the Gospel - Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.**
2. **The Gospel is for all peoples 'to the Jew first and to the Gentile'.
(for all peoples on earth, for whoever will believe)**

