Christ Alone: **Colossians** – **wk 3 – Eternal Impact**

**Colossae is being blown around by different beliefs and ideas. There was confusion. Would they survive? Are they rooted?**

**Colossians 2:6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, (salvation) so walk in him, (live it out) 7 rooted (not seen) and built up (what is seen) in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.**

**The 1st half is about the roots system = what we believe**

**The 2nd half is about the fruit system = how it affects our life**

**Background Check - Paul an apostle (in prison) writing to a struggling church at the request of their pastor who came to visit Paul in Rome.**

**After telling them how much he is thankful and praying for them – he lays out one of the clearest descriptions of Jesus as God almighty in the flesh. Incredibly important message.**

**Today Paul reveals a peak behind the scenes of ministry.**

**When you think of ministry what do you think of? Church, pastor, missionary, evangelist. The biblical definition much larger... Gk word for “ministry” – simply means – to serve**

**MINISTRY - A Different Perspective**

**If you are a Christian, you have a ministry**

**- Some are called to be equipping ministers**

**(Eph 4:11-12)They are given to the body as a gift to train and equip you**

**- All Christians are called to be ministers.**

**1 Peter 4:10-11, Ephesians 4:11-12. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.**

**Every Christian is given a skill or spiritual gift for the service of the kingdom of God in the local church and to the world.**

**Every job – every classroom – every location God has placed you in is a ministry. You are a missionary, a minster - to them.**

**PAUL'S MINISTRY: A Peek Behind the Curtain**

**Today as we read Paul’s experiences in ministry – let’s read it through the lens of our life – and our eternal impact.**

**Colossians 1:23 …continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, (life changing news of Jesus – last week) which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. ("a servant" - same word – diakonos (dee-ak'-on-os).**

**Then he gives us a glimpse behind the curtain of the ministry.**

**24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, (writing from a Roman jail) and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions (What I have been thru does not compares to Jesus) for the sake of his body, that is, the church,**

**He had suffered greatly in ministry - but lacks compared to Jesus**

**Even though our sin is paid for we are still in a fallen world. Salvation has come but is not fully delivered. We are not in heaven yet. We still experience pain – suffering – trials until that day.**

**Acts 14:22 Paul encouraging disciples he tells them, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," (Jesus has won, salvation is here, but we will face trials on the way to the kingdom)**

**Col 1:25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, (from God, to me, for you) to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

**What is this mystery? Christ in you, the hope of glory is for the world! The Messiah, Jesus, has come not just for Jewish people, but for Gentiles. This was offensive to Jewish people.**

**28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.**

**2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

**4 I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. (I tell you this, so you won’t let others delude and water down the gospel) 5 For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. (I may not be there; I care about you and want you to grow up.)**

**Let’s use Paul’s ministry perspective to teach us how we can make a difference in the areas God has placed us in.**

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE - Takes . . . Making an eternal impact**

**1. The right PERSPECTIVE - Paul’s perspective, it’s not about yourself**

**We will always struggle to make an eternal difference as long as we are keeping score, seeking recognition, or basing serving on how we feel – Paul says, ministry is not about you.**

**Notice - 24 I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake… for the sake of his body, that is, the church… (it's for your sake that I’m willing to endure suffering) And - 25 of which I became a minister (a servant) for you… 2:1 how great a struggle I have for you… (He says everything I do is for your benefit not mine)**

**Realize this: Serving and suffering are part of the deal.**

**They are both ingredients to life impacting living.**

**Many want the title without the struggle and the position absent the mission – they want the applause and attention.**

**Paul reminds us - that serving God and caring for others means - some people will not always like you - some might even try to hurt you.**

**Jesus - Matt 20:20-28. If you want to be great, you must become a servant.**

**Let’s face it – most of us don’t mind being a servant as long as we are not treated like one.**

**Jesus - Matt 5:11-12 – suffering will follow those who serve God – but our reward is in heaven – just like those before us.**

**Paul - 1 Corinthians 9:12-27 - Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.**

**Some think - I just have not got anything out of it, or recognition, or appreciation – (nothing wrong w/ appreciation or recognition – a good leader gives it) But - serving is not about getting back what you put in.**

**\*\* This is not about permitting spiritual abuse \*\* (Alex Lang essay)**

**Some even get angry with God when life falls apart after you have giving so much of yourself - suffering and serving part of the deal. Paul had the right perspective - this is bigger than us.**

**2. The right MESSAGE – it’s about the Gospel.**

**Colossians 1:25 …I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,**

**I didn't put my life on the line to give you goose bumps – a few tips, or a self-help sermon pat on the back. This is about making the Word of God fully known!**

**The message: God is holy / we are sinners / Jesus (God in flesh) died for our sins / in Jesus you can be relation w/ God & new life**

**\*\*\*\*Deity, Death, Resurrection of Jesus for the Forgiveness of sin.**

**Paul stayed on message – It can get so easy to get off message:**

**Trying to clean people up before Jesus… Trying to clean culture up… Trying to clean up the world’s problems w/out Jesus.**

**Or the flip side – water it down so as to get as many people in as possible. Changing / redefining sin and repentance to keep people.**

**Col 2:4 I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.**

**Paul's culture and world was far worse than ours (pagan, sexual immorality, genocide, child murder) Paul stayed on message – Jesus almighty – and our need to turn to him.**

**Love is not the message (it’s a fruit). We are sent with words of life - keep the main thing the main thing. The word of God in its fullness.**

**3. The right METHODS – It’s about warning and teaching.**

**Col 1:28 Him we proclaim, (the message- then 2 crucial ingredients) warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom… (wisdom = tact)**

**Two sides of a coin that are vital to spiritual maturity**

**\* Warning - Admonish – it’s confrontational**

**\* Teaching - walking in loving instruction - encouragement**

**We often prefer one over the other: Just keep it happy, always encourage - don’t want to offend = loving but immature people.**

**But on the flip side: Some only want to confront and denounce things, that alone can lead to = judgmental unloving followers.**

**There are times to be upset and confront - Jesus did so often. And it was usually towards the hypocrites.**

**2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God (every follower of Jesus) may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

**Word of God - teaches – rebukes – corrects – trains – equips.**

**4. The right GOAL – It’s about spiritual maturity**

**Col 1:28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, (for this the end) that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil… (this is why I do it – to help you grow up!)**

**V28 - A great life verse: I live to proclaim, train & walk with you – so that one day before Jesus, I can present you - mature.**

**We are to have the guts to say the hard things - the wisdom to say it helpfully and hope filled - and not quit until they get it.**

**Our ministry goal) = maturity - requires walking alongside people. The blow in, blow up, and blow out – approach is not.**

**Two things that confuse the Goal: #1 Trying to fix peoples problems focusing on fixing people’s morality / or fixing their living conditions**

**Both are important - but when they become the goal we miss the eternal difference - fixing people’s problems is not our goal**

**Mark 8:36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? (And yet that is the approach we often take)**

**The goal is to have mature followers of Christ.**

**2nd thing that confuses the Goal #2 Confusing a decision for a disciple**

**When our goal is to get people “saved” – say a prayer – walk forward - we miss the goal - The goal is maturity. Salvation is the launch!**

**Matt 28:19-20 – go make disciples… teaching them to obey everything…**

**Matthew 13:1-23 - 4 soils - soils = 1 out of 4 make it.**

**Sometimes you won’t know who truly has Jesus for a while.**

**Our goal is not to present converts – but to present followers.**

**Our goal is not the numbers but the spiritual fruit of a changed life.**

**Col 2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea (just down the road) and for all who have not seen me face to face, 2 (my goal for you all is this…) that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

**In this – Paul describes what maturity looks like this:**

**\*\* Endurance – “that their hearts may be encouraged” (stand strong in trials)**

**You don't give up - your heart stays strong regardless of what happens in your life. You don’t run when you hit a wall – you press in = maturity.**

**Mature people don’t quit Jesus when life gets hard.**

**\*\* Love – “being knit together in love” (stand strong in love for others)**

**Your love is an active – love frees us to serve other (Gal. 5:13)**

**- This is reference especially with those of the faith. A mature Christians loves other Christians and loves to be around them.**

**They are mature enough to know and bear with others faults and weaknesses and not judge Jesus by their actions.**

**Mature people don’t quit church when offended.**

**\*\* Assurance of salvation – 2 “the riches of full assurance of understanding”**

**(Stand strong in faith) Confidence in your salvation w/ God.**

**The Bible speaks often of HS confidence and knowing that we are His and that God is good. We can be convinced and know.**

**Maturity people don’t keep getting saved every week.**

**Hebrews 6:1Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of… (6 things - repentance, salvation, spiritual gifts, baptism, eternal judgment, and the resurrection)**

**He writes - you need to grow mature beyond the fundamentals.**

**1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.**

**\*\* Understanding – Rich in - not knowledge but heart transformation**

**2:2 …full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (stand strong in the word)**

**By the HS a mature person is growing in their faith and understanding of Jesus. Growing closer, understanding more.**

**2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace (God’s gift of salvation) and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (Grow in understanding Jesus) To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.**

**You read, you study, you’re hungry for more of Jesus.**

**Mature people are people who: Endurance, Love, Grasp Christ.**

**You might wonder – I don’t know if I can do this… one last ingredient**

**5. The right POWER SOURCE**

**Colossians 1:29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. (NLT - depending on Christ’s mighty power that works in me.)**

**This can only be done by God's power, which is the HS in us!**

**I can serve – labor – sweat – struggle – then go home and rest - because what happens is not up to me. That is freedom. God wants us to work really hard - and then take nap. (Alex Lang pt 2)**

**We can labor, but it is the power of God at work to change a life not us. No matter how hard we try and work and labor – it is Jesus who works.**

**Philippians 2:13** **For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (It is God working in and thru you)**

**1 Cor 3:6-7 - I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.**

**1 Cor 12:3 - "No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit"**

**We are to clear the path - sew the seed - feed and water it - and trust God**

**Proverbs 21:30 There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord. 31 The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord.**

**Stop stressing about that person (children, friends, people you love) Just prepare the horse (your part) – the rest is the LORD’s!**

**In all this – I want to ask two questions:**

* **Do you have assurance of your salvation? You can right now.**
* **Are struggling to mature? The HS in a believer is your source.**