

Servants of the church

As a teacher is so are His disciples. Christ lived a life of servanthood and expects the same from His followers. We remember when He washed His disciples' feet that He told them that He had set an example that they should do the same. He said that He hadn't come to be served but to serve. If Jesus was a servant of all people we are to follow in His footsteps in servanthood.

Colossians 1: 24 – 29

1) A suffering servant

- Paul rejoices in what was suffered for the church
- He was referring to his sufferings when taking the Gospel to the Gentiles. However the deeper meaning is that Christ suffered on behalf of the church.
- Isaiah refers to Him as the suffering servant who would be a substitutionary sacrifice
- In Ephesians 5: 25 we see that Christ gave Himself for the church.
 - He suffered so that we would receive forgiveness.
 - He suffered that we would be a redeemed people living in relationship with God.
- Isaiah speaks about Jesus as the suffering servant who would suffer for the sins of His people in Isaiah 53
- Peter looks back at Jesus being the suffering servant who suffered leaving us an example to follow in 1 Peter 2: 21.
- So what can we add to Christ's sufferings?
- What did Christ lack that Paul said that he filled up in his flesh what was still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions?
- Christ's sufferings were complete and nothing could be added to them as far as salvation is concerned. However what was lacking was that all people needed to hear about His work on the cross and believe is before it can be affective in their lives.

Romans 10: 14 – 15 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
- God has commissioned us to be servants of the church.
 - Paul was a commissioned preacher of the word but we've all been commissioned according to what God has gifted us to do.

2) The message to the church

- The message for the church was a mystery that had been kept hidden but is now revealed in to the church.
- The mystery that was revealed is rich and glorious
- The message to the church, the mystery revealed, is no less than Christ Himself.
- 1 Corinthians 1: 23 – 24 Paul said: We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- Christ is the very centrality of the church and our message.
- We don't preach philosophy or legalism but a person. The person who is God incarnate – God who had become flesh.
- In Him we find salvation, life and hope.
- He doesn't give us these things apart from Himself as He said that apart from Him we can do nothing.

- He is the head of the church and included in the mystery is to bring all things together under His headship (Ephesians 1: 9 – 10)
- It is then imperative that as we preach Christ we preach the Lordship and unity that are found in Him.
- If the church isn't united then we haven't fully submitted to the Lordship of Christ who brings all things together under Himself.
- Bringing the church to all what it should be takes sacrificial servanthood and a focus on who Jesus is and what we are and have in Him.

3) Labouring towards maturity

- The labour towards maturity is an energetic action.
- God doesn't want His church to be passive but to be passionate about the world coming to faith in Him through Jesus – He is the one who we proclaim!
- However we ought to be equally passionate about serving in the church to see the church come to maturity in Christ.
- Admonishing – warning every person
- Teaching everyone
- With all wisdom
- The aim is to present everyone fully mature in Christ.
 - Salvation alone isn't God's will. His will is that the church grow into maturity in Him.
 - Christian maturity can be summed in this: Christ-likeness.
- We work towards this strenuously – until it exhausts us
- We contend for it – we struggle against all odds to see it happen.
- But we don't do it in our own strength but with His energy that powerfully works in and through us.
- We are dependent on Him for His church to come to full maturity
- We are co-workers with Him as we serve Him sacrificially as suffering servants.