How Jesus Redefines Ministry July 17, 2022

*Colossians 1:24-2:5 Series: Jesus: Underestimated*

Half-heartedness and mediocrity don't inspire anybody to do anything. – Adrian Rogers

Intro: Why people do the hard thing

1. There’s joy in doing the hard thing for others
2. Even chains can be meaningful when you endure them for others

v. 24 *I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake*

v. 24 *in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body*

Colossians 4:3 *I am in prison*

Colossians 4:18 *Remember my chains.*

1. When you suffer well, you minister to other people

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 *And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.*

1. When you lean into suffering for Jesus’ sake, you find yourself

Matthew 16:25 *For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

* How do you think Paul was able to rejoice in his sufferings?
* How would Paul’s impact have been different if he had lived a comfortable life?
* What did Jesus mean when He said, “whoever loses his life for my sake will find it”?
1. There’s joy in doing the hard thing for the gospel
2. We’ve been commissioned to make Christ known

v. 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*

1. Suffering is part of the calling of Jesus’ servants

Acts 9:16 *For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.*

2 Timothy 1:11-*12 I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.*

John 15:19 *If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

1. What God has revealed in Christ is better than anyone could have imagined

v. 26 *the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints*

v. 27 *the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

* Why did Jesus want to show Paul how much he had to suffer for the sake of His name? Was He just being cruel and vindictive?
* Paul uses the phrase “great riches” to refer to the mystery of “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” What’s so great about this? How can you find strength in this truth?
1. There’s joy in doing the hard thing for people’s maturity
2. Are you willing to serve as long as it’s convenient?

v. 29 *For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.*

v. 1 *I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you*

1. Christian ministry is always about people not just tasks

v. 2 *that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding*

v. 28 *Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*

1. There’s treasure to be discovered in Christ

vv. 2-3 *the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*

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

v. 5 *I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.*

* According to v. 29, Paul “toiled” and “struggled,” but it was “with all [Christ’s] energy.” What does that mean? How do you do that?
* In what sense is ministry always more than just the task?
* What are some ways that God might be calling us as individuals and as a congregation to do the hard thing for the gospel and people’s maturity in this next phase of the life of our church?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Colossians 2:6-15

Notes