

Colossians 1:24-29

24 Christ died for the sins of those who would believe... the church. Christ suffered and died for his bride. When we suffer in reaching new believers, grounding the believers, and keeping them from error, we are sharing in His suffering for the church. This is a high and holy privilege. The suffering on the cross saved us from sin but the suffering of the saints establishes and grows the church. Philippians 3:8-10

Persecute the church and you persecute Christ. (Acts 9:4) Jesus continues to suffer in His body, the church.

25 (Ephesians 3:2) Paul is declaring that God had given him the role of servant in God's administration to complete God's Word. The MSG puts it like this:²⁵ *When I became a servant in this church, I experienced this suffering as a sheer gift, God's way of helping me serve you, laying out the whole truth.*

26 The Word he is completing or making full is about the mystery of the Gentiles coming into the Kingdom. He wasn't the only one that understood it, other saints did as well. Acts 11:4-18

27 The prophets predicted it but the Jews of the first century were so reluctant to reach out to the Gentiles it took a revelation to Peter and the divine insights and God given command to Paul (Rabbi Shaul) to break out of the mold and fulfill what had been predicted. Acts 9:15-16

It is not the keeping of the Law but the life of Christ in us that qualifies us for heaven. That is what they realized when the Holy Spirit filled a new Gentile believer. The Gentiles had not kept the Law, but when they believed Jesus made His home in them. John 14:23

28 Everyone with all wisdom - the Gnostics thought only a select few could attain such great heights, but the wonder of the Gospel is its simplicity and yet depth and riches you can explore for eternity. The goal is to present every man mature in Christ, not just saved, but transformed and living a life that pleases God. (Philippians 1:9-11) A fruitful life in God's eyes does not come from someone that participates in programs, as good as they may be, but rather one whose transformed life affects everything they do and all that they meet.

29 Truly it is God that empowers the minister and evangelist. We are so utterly incapable on our own. Still, we must give it our all as He empowers.

Questions

- 1 How can we fill up what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ?
- 2 How did Paul perceive his role?
- 3 What was the mystery he was to proclaim?
- 4 What is the goal?