

Identification

Colossians 1:24 - 2:7 Dedicated to the Task

Introduction

How many of you had to memorize and present the Gettysburg Address in school? As I was studying this section from Colossians this speech came to mind.

[photo] Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Ingression

In a way this passage is Paul's Gettysburg Address. He communicates the same truths and realities in the lives of believers. He challenges his readers to be dedicated to the unfinished work, to have increased devotion to the cause, to be highly resolved that nothing is done in vain, and to live in the freedom provided by the One who died for them, for us. Open your Bibles to Colossians 1:24

Inspiration

Review concept of Systemic Christianity.

Review author, audience, and problems being addressed: Gnosticism and legalism creeping in.

Ingression

Someone joyfully paid a price for you and I to become mature and to walk in the entirety of the gospel of Jesus. For what purpose? In this passage we are going to look at four ways in which we are to have Systemic Christianity so as to combat deception from things that sound reasonable or spiritual.

1:24-27 To fully fill up, to complete the word of God, specifically the now made-plain mystery Christ living in you, the expectant hope of future glory.

- (PC) 1:24 I now **rejoice** / in my **sufferings** for you, Why would anyone rejoice? Because of the known outcome. Baby, settlers. Because of the known outcome. Jesus' brought new nature and new life. Church planters/pastors bring out fully devoted followers; disciples. What I have wanted to see since my aha moment: the Spirit of God working through the Word of God in the lives of the people of God.
- (PC) and I fill up / in my flesh / what is lacking in the **afflictions** of Christ, / for the sake of His body, Doesn't mean that what Jesus did was somehow incomplete or not enough to accomplish what He did. It means, if there was anything missing, Paul is taking it on Himself, in a kindred manner. Jesus certainly went through tribulation in His Ministry.
 - (SC) which is the church,
 - (SC) 1:25 of which I became a **minister** / according to the **stewardship** Paul is a servant of the church, Jesus' body. The best bosses are the ones who meet your needs so you can do your job well. Paul had been given the management of God's household by God for their sakes. This is his ministering.
 - from God
 - given to me for you,
 - to **fulfill** Paul is talking about filling up, completing in them the word. Not to be the fulfillment of something.
 - the word of God,
 - 1:26 the **mystery** Her through 1:29 is an addressing of gnostic issues. You want the secret knowledge? You want some hidden truth revealed? Let me drop some on you!
 - which has been **hidden**
 - from **ages**
 - and from **generation**, Paul is emphasizing this for the gnostics sakes, but there truth in that this was prophesied since Gen. 3:15 but not fully revealed until it happened.
 - (SC) but now has been **revealed** / to His saints. An unveiling would be for all to see. This is made apparent of clear to those who are saints.

1:27-29 That you may be setup, put on display as mature in Him.

- (SC) 1:27 To them / God willed
 - to make known
 - what
 - are the riches
 - of the glory of the mystery
 - among the gentiles;
 - (SC) which is Christ
 - in you, (relator)
 - the **hope of glory**. (specifier) Jesus is the mystery that has been made apparent. Not just Jesus, but Jesus in us. Specifically the produces the hope of glory, the certainty of eternity.

- (SC) 1:28 Him / we / **preach**, Jesus and the gospel, the means by which God was going to work and save, is no longer hidden, but plain. Jesus in us and the hope that it produces should be openly and plainly declared. How is that going for you?
 - **warning** every man
 - and **teaching** every man in all **wisdom** The substance of their plainly and openly declaring Jesus is warning against dangers, teaching for progress, all that is wise. Again, anti-gnostic.
 - (SC) that we may **present** every man **perfect** in Christ Jesus. While only Jesus can present us as complete in Him to the Father, Paul and his companions that to present all disciples as mature in Jesus.
 - (SC) 1:29 To this end I also **labor**, To be worn out with work. Remember what Paul called himself? A servant, a house manager.
 - **striving** What is wearing Paul out in labor? His striving, his not giving up in the fight, the wrestle.
 - **according** to His **working**
 - which **works**
 - in me
 - **mightily**. If we work according to our own working, it won't work and it won't be powerful. Our laboring and striving must come down from His energy in the process of being used, doing the job in us.

2:1-5 That you, with others, might be encouraged by being knit together in love, and that you would experience all the benefits of being able to comprehend all that it means to have Christ in you.

- (PC) 2:1 For I want you to **know** Not so much by experience. "I want you to get this.
 - what a great **conflict** I have Related to striving, a fight, a race, etc. Who or what is the conflict with? The possibility that the thing won't happen.
 - for you and for and for those in Laodicea,
 - and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,
 - (SC) 2:2 that their hearts may be **encouraged**, being knit together
 - in **love** To be brought along side one another, resulting in encouragement. Agape love being the thread that knits them together. What was this area valley for producing? Black and dyed wool.
 - and *attaining* to (toward) **all riches**
 - of the **full assurance**
 - of **understanding**,
 - to the **knowledge**
 - of the mystery of God, both the Father and of Christ, Paul's goal, his finish line for all of these people is that their hearts be encouraged, that they be knit together with love, and that they may experience the riches that come from being completely certain that they have the ability to comprehend and connect concepts,

specifically recognition of this now made-plain mystery of Christ.

People will pay for access to the hidden, special knowledge. Having this separated one from everyone else. Paul is battling this “I’m in the know” activity and mindset among these churches and is trying to persuade them that they should all be one in this because they all have it, in fact it makes them all one.

- (SC) 2:3 in Whom are **hidden**
 - all the **treasures**
 - of wisdom
 - and knowledge. You guys want to go digging for the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge? You will only find it by digging into the Lord.
- (PC) 2:4 Now this I say
 - (SC) lest anyone **should deceive** you with **persuasive words**. Rarely are people deceived by things that sound unreasonable. The trick is getting someone to a place mentally where the proposition doesn’t sound unreasonable.

Paul states this to bolster what he just said. People will come saying the opposite in such a way that undoes them. He tells them in advance to watch out. A warning.

- (SC to next PC) 2:5 For though I am absent in the flesh,
 - (PC) yet I am with you in spirit,
 - **rejoicing**
 - to see (and **seeing**) If Paul were there to physically see these things he would be rejoicing. He’s rejoicing to “see” them as he is there in spirit.
 - your *good order*
 - and the **steadfastness**
 - of your faith in Christ. Despite the influences of gnostic gentiles and legalistic Jews, Paul is thrilled to know that they are not out of control and that their faith is solid.

2:6-7 That, as a result of the warnings and teachings from the word, you would be deeply rooted and built up high in Jesus, and be an example of an establishment in the faith.

- (SC to next PC) 2:6 As you therefore have **received** Christ Jesus / the Lord, Epaphrus brought the gospel to them and they received it. Have you?
 - (PC) so **walk** (live) / in Him, Walk in His tracks. Walk in the dust of the rabbi so that you are covered in it.

Perhaps Paul us using a figure of speech, painting the picture of a runner taking a baton?

- 2:7 **rooted**
- and **built up** in Him Both passive, having been (by the teaching). rooted - a tree with deep roots is rooted. built up - to build upon. In Jesus.
- and **established** in the faith, They have been made firm in the faith, with no weakness.

- (SC) as / you have been **taught**, / **abounding** in it It is the teaching of the word that has rooted and built them up in Him, and established them in the faith.
- with **thanksgiving**. In this case the leftovers are manifested with thanksgiving. When you recall the simplicity of it all, where it all comes from and who it is all about, thanksgiving is what comes out.

Imploration

Paul's rejoicing, suffering, labor, striving, are all around people knowing the now plainly revealed truth of Jesus in them, which results in the hope of glory. It seems that people were looking to other ways and means to get the answers to life's difficulties, which resulted in disunity and despair. Is that you? Is that us?

Systemic christianity involves an appreciation for what our past and present disciples have gone through/are going through, especially it's fruitfulness, which should inspire our being united together in Jesus' love, digging for the hidden treasures of truth in Jesus, and continually walking in Jesus as Jesus is in us.

How? Like Paul it takes labor, and striving, coming down from His working which works in your powerfully. That's the only way.