

**Soaring Oaks Presbyterian Church: Adult Bible Study Questions for 12/24/2006  
Colossians 1:24-29**

**Start by reading the whole passage.**

**1. Reread Colossians 1:24.**

- (a) Why do you think Paul said, “I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake.”? If you find it hard to answer this question, consider this clue: In what way were the Colossians a blessing to Paul in contrast to his sorrow over his own people, the Jews? [Read Romans 9:1-3 concerning Jewish rejection of the gospel Paul preached.]**

**Paul’s “sufferings” refer to the many difficulties he accepted and endured for the sake of the gospel ministry to which he was called. These hardships were manifold. If you have never read of them, take a quick look at a summary Paul gives in 2 Corinthians 11:25-29. To the Colossians, Paul says these sufferings are “for your sake” as well, since salvation came to them as a result of Paul’s preaching in the region.**

**Back in Colossians 1:3-4, Paul says he is always giving thanks to God for them because they believed the word of God preached to them. The response of faith is treasured by those who devote time and effort to share the God’s true word with others. Paul speaks here of the joy that is his because Christ is glorified in these brothers from Colosse. Their faith and Paul’s joy are fruits of ministry, so Paul rejoices in suffering for it.**

- (b) The second part of verse 24 may sound strange to your ears. What could possibly be lacking in Christ’s perfect atoning sacrifice (his afflictions) for the church? Try to construct a Biblically sound answer before considering the following verses: Colossians 1:3-8; Romans 10:14-15; Ephesians 1:15-16]**

**I think Paul means something very simple here. Salvation has been won by Christ alone. All that remains for the Kingdom of God to come upon the elect is the preaching and the receiving. I prepare a present wrapped and postage paid, what remains is for the Post Office to carry it to the right place and for the person to open it. Paul is bringing the message to those to whom God is sending it. The elect will receive it because it is for them.**

- (c) What are you doing today toward “filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, the church”?**

**I help teach the Bible. I declare to others the validity of the Bible and peoples’ need to believe in Jesus. Evangelism increases the size of the church. Teaching the Bible helps strengthen the body and multiplies the number of those calling others to faith.**

2. Reread Colossians 1:25. Paul says he “became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known.” Read the following passages that show how Paul was called and received this stewardship to minister God’s word, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. [Acts 9:1-16; Acts 22:17-21; Galatians 1:11 – 2:3]

(a) What was new or especially encouraging to you in these passages?

**Acts 9:1-16:** God does not rebuke Ananias, who was wise to make sure he had heard God correctly. Also, I find it very encouraging and comforting to know how active God is in ensuring His word is preached to the nations far and wide, which included me.

**Acts 22:17-21:** Where doors are closed or hearts are hard, God often opens other doors and sends us to other hearts where our labors in and for him will be fruitful.

**Galatians 1:11 – 2:9:** The gospel Paul preached was affirmed by the Apostles who had been with Jesus (and by James, the brother of Jesus). Paul was not a maverick, he was mainstream. Because Paul listened to the same God the Apostles knew, they were all drawn together in the fellowship of faith and ministry in one accord. That is a wonderful pattern for us to follow as well.

(b) Was Paul’s path to faith in Jesus Christ the “normal” path in his day? What is the normal path the faith today? I suggest that the normal path today shares at least one element with Paul’s personal path. What do you think that might be?

Paul’s path the faith was wonderfully dramatic and unique to him in its details. But it was the same the path followed by every Christian in this way: whatever it took in our lives, God did. He confronted us with truth and gave us eyes to see and ears to hear, so we would be among those who live by faith.

3. Reread Colossians 1:26-27.

(a) Verse 26 can be the subject of much study as to how and why God kept hidden this glorious “mystery” of “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Whatever you may know of this subject, try to capture it in a few (3 to 4) short sentences to share on Sunday.

My attempt:

Natural man cannot believe God’s unbelievable word without God’s spiritual help. God “hid” the truth of the savior, his son, in plain sight, but faith is the only lens through truth is seen clearly. God’s word has been shrouded in mystery through the ages so human wits would fail to see what humble faith alone is fit to behold.

**Gal 3:22** But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe .

**(b) Verse 27 is treasured by many believers. Read Romans 8:9-11; 1 John 5:11-12; Galatians 2:20; and Colossians 1:11-22. What thanks to God do these words of his prompt in you this day?**

**Christ Jesus – Creator, King, and Redeemer – lives in me. Thank you for this guarantee of glory. Thank you for putting aside the debilitating doubt, the failings of fear, and showing me the very kindness that leads men to repentance.**

**4. Reread Colossians 1:28. Paul speaks of “warning everyone” and of being “mature in Christ”.**

**(a) How might you “warn” others in relation to the gospel? [Read also Hebrews 2:1-4.]**

**The gospel is to be believed, received in submission to it. This is a command of God, not a suggestion. We who believe are not doing God a favor; we are doing that for which we were made. There is no more dreadful deficiency among men than faithlessness, because its end is destruction and sorrow. Love will warn others against such folly and urge them to receive Christ for life and joy.**

**(b) Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and Hebrews 5:11 – 6:2. Christian maturity is the fruit of repentance (turning from evil and to the Lord), learning truth, and applying truth. What corporate practice does Paul rebuke as infantile in his first letter to the Corinthians? What spiritual teachings are described as “elementary” in the letter to the Hebrews? If these elementary teachings cover all or almost all of your understanding of the Christian life, what will you do to pursue “maturity?”**

**In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, Paul rebukes the body in Corinth for indulging in jealousy and strife among themselves. He describes them as “infants in Christ” not yet ready for solid spiritual food. I pray first for myself, then for our church, and then for saints everywhere that we will have no part in jealousies and strife. We should know the ministry of reconciliation within the body of Christ so God will be pleased to send us in his power to preach it wherever we go.**

**In Hebrews 5:11 – 6:2, Paul lists as “elementary” the following spiritual teachings:**

**(1) repentance from dead works, (2) faith toward God, (3) washings (baptisms), (4) laying on of hands (leadership), (5) the resurrection, and (6) eternal judgement.**

**Paul affirms these truths, but says they are foundational, beginnings not endings, for mature fruitfulness. The exciting thing about Paul’s teaching is that there is so much more to be discovered and lived in Christ. Let’s not miss out on these wonders even as we never forget the foundations on which faith stands.**

5. **Reread Colossians 1:29. This verse has humbled many Christians so that the Holy Spirit began to bear much fruit through them. What do you think is the key to this transformation? How do you see it in relation to your walk with God?**

**Of course, Paul puts the key plainly before us. The power to live and serve as a Christian is Christ's own power. We just studied the truth that Christ, our hope of glory, lives in us. He brings with him all that he is. God's power to accomplish his will is unlimited. How should we ever again consider God's calling too hard for us to carry out. It is Christ who supplies the energy and power for his people to do his will. This truth is transforming. If we do not embrace it by faith, God is not likely to do much through us within Soaring Oaks or Elk Grove, much less the world.**