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## Colossians 1:24-29

24. “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.

25. Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of the word of God*,

26. *that is*, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,

27. to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

29. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”

Paul here writes to the Christians in Colossae, many whom he had never met, that he rejoiced in his suffering for their sake. Paul expected to suffer for the Lord’s

church, saying, “I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.” This stands to reason, in that Jesus Himself purchased the church with His own blood, according to Acts 20:28. And the implication by Paul’s statement, is that all Christians will be called to do their share for Christ by sacrificing for His church.

If we are to be the body of Christ to this generation, we also will have to “fill up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” today. In Paul’s case, he had the ministry as an apostle and evangelist, in which he needed to fully carry out the preaching of the word of God. At one point he was stoned and left for dead at Lystra, by those who opposed his preaching. According to Acts 14, after he healed up and started the church in the neighboring town of Derbe, he went right back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to preach and strengthen the people in the church in those locations.

Each one of us, if we are a part of the body of Christ, has a stewardship or ministry to fulfill for our Lord. We must do our share, as Paul and every other faithful Christian has done, in behalf of Christ’s body, which is the church. Often times that means we must make sacrifices, as Jesus has need of us to do.

But we must remember that the part we play, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, is vital to the success of today’s church. Ezekiel, chapter 37 prophesies the church as a resurrected army. Using this example, a

modern army today requires approximately seven people behind the scenes to field each soldier on the front lines. The cooks, supply people, mechanics and communications personnel, as well as the janitors, medics, and chaplains all contribute to the overall effort. They together work for the common objective and victory. So it is with the Lord's church.

And like the apostle Paul of the first century church: we admonish and labor, to teach every man to fulfill his God-given purpose. That everyone in the church will do their part and so be complete in Christ. In so doing we will be ready for the coming day of the Lord.

And so we all should be able to say, even the least of us, with the apostle Paul, "And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."