

:00 (24) Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions --- for the sake of His Body, that is, the Church --- of which 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, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to His saints.

(27) To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

(28) Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me.

(1) For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery --- which is Christ --- in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

(4) I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Think on these things:

- 1) Paul accepts his position of suffering as a missionary for God’s Church as normal and God-honoring. He is a minister according to the stewardship given to him. Quickly look at these scriptures and describe Paul’s evangelism approach to any city he entered. To what specific ministry did God call him? See Acts 9:15-16; 13:13-15, 44-46; 17:1-2; 19:8-10; and Romans 15:15-17.

Evangelistic Approach - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Paul’s Calling (stewardship) - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 2) According to vs.25b, 28b, and 2:5b what could we grasp as key purposes of Christian ministers in their churches? Consider also 2 Timothy 3:14-16 and Hebrews 5:11-6:3.

V.25b \_\_\_\_\_

V.28b \_\_\_\_\_

2:5b \_\_\_\_\_

3) Now let's take up the issue of God's "mysteries." Job asked, "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty" (Job 11:7)? Moses stated, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our children forever..." (Deuteronomy 29:29a). As God told the Israelites they were incapable of taking the Promised Land all at once (Exodus 23:30 and Deuteronomy 7:22), He used a similar approach to His plan for the world → He revealed things about Himself and mankind across time and to different generations. (We refer to this as Progressive Revelation.) Prophecies given to prophets were not fully understood at the time God revealed them (1 Peter 1:12), often because they applied to people and events future. Can you name some things in the Bible that remain mysterious and unknown to you? Consider these verses in your response: Mark 13:32; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 and 13:12; and 1 John 3:2.

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4) What "mystery" is revealed in these verses?

Ephesians 3:4-6 \_\_\_\_\_

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Ephesians 5:29-32 \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 1:27 \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 2:2-3 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 1:17-20 \_\_\_\_\_

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5) Finally, in speaking about God's mysteries being revealed, Paul expresses a concern about believers being deceived and deluded (2:4). What does he identify as the cause of what might trip up people of faith? Based on your faith walk, what counsel might you give to us to avoid tripping on this?

Cause - \_\_\_\_\_

My counsel - \_\_\_\_\_

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People and situations I want to pray for this week: