

COLOSSIANS 1:24—2:5

THE CHASE: OUR DESIRE FOR ENOUGH & JESUS' PURSUIT OF US

SCRIPTURE & SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE — MARCH 22

OPEN

1. Thanksgiving is a theme that runs through Paul's letter to the Colossians (1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:16; 4:2)—which he writes from prison. What can give you thanks for in the midst of your own "prison"?

In this week's passage, Paul expresses the nature of gospel ministry as cross-shaped (or, cruciform) and his desire that the Colossian believers would be knit together in love and know that wisdom is found in Christ. READ COLOSSIANS 1:24—2:5.

DISCUSS

2. Paul had not meet these believers in person before, though he did know their pastor, Epaphras). In verses 24-29 he essentially gives them his "job description." How would you summarize Paul's work? And what's his attitude and posture to ministry?
3. Surprisingly (at least, to us), Paul describes his own sufferings as an extension of Christ's suffering. How should we understand the connection Paul makes? Reflect on what we find in the following passages: Acts 9:15-16, 1 Corinthians 4:9-13, 2 Corinthians 11:23-30, 12:7-10; and Galatians 4:17-20.
4. Scripture speaks to the reality of suffering in various ways, but here, Paul is referring to suffering that comes through ministry—in proclaiming the gospel to those who don't know Jesus and in building up believers.
 - a. How have you experienced people minister the gospel to you in ways that burdened them?
 - b. How have you experienced burden as you've ministered the gospel to others?
 - c. How do you sense the Spirit leading you to "struggle" on behalf of others in the midst of our current situation?
5. Alongside this theme of suffering, Paul mentions wisdom and knowledge (as he did in 1:9-10). These are powerful concepts in a time like this! What do you feel is being revealed about wisdom and knowledge in the midst of our current crisis? Who do you regard as wise right now—and why?
6. Much of what Paul briefly expresses in this passage parallels what he expands upon in the opening chapters of 1 Corinthians. Read and reflect on what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. How does the gospel express the wisdom of God? How does the gospel provide you with the wisdom you need right now to navigate life right now?
7. Fittingly for our current circumstances, this passage ends with Paul writing, "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" (2:5). How can we—as a group—encourage and provide for you in this season?

PRAY

We want to invite you to slowly through the Lord's Prayer together—which believers have prayed together across the globe for centuries. Leaders, consider reading each phrase and then leaving space for group members to offer their own words of praise, thanksgiving, and petition in response.