



COLOSSIANS:
SATISFIED IN CHRIST
An interactive Bible study for
individuals, families,
and LIFE Groups

~Week Two~
"Moving toward Suffering"
Colossians 1:24-2:5

Welcome to UPC's study of the book of Colossians entitled "Satisfied in Christ." Whether you work through these lessons on your own, with a friend, or in your family or LIFE Group, we believe they will help you become better acquainted with "the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

A reminder... These weekly lessons are coordinated with the Sunday sermons at UPC. On Sunday morning you will hear a sermon on a selection from Colossians. That week's study guide will focus on the NEXT section in the book of Colossians. If you miss a sermon, you can always listen to it online at www.upc-orlando.com.

WARM UP

Think back to a time when you struggled to accomplish something really hard, and succeeded. Perhaps it was to complete a weight-loss program, or finish grad school, or survive puberty, or raise a child as a single parent. Describe the situation. When you wanted to quit, what kept you going?

RECALL – Colossians 1:15-23

Sunday's sermon focused on this rich description of Christ, the sovereign Savior. How amazing that the Creator and Sustainer of all things cared enough about us that he pursued us through the cross!

- a) Make a list of all the "he is" statements in verses 15-20.

- b) How does the supremacy of Christ comfort you?

- c) Based on Colossians 1:15-23, summarize the "gospel" in one sentence.

- d) How might you use Colossians 1:15-23 to talk to a Mormon or Jehovah's Witness (both of whom deny the full deity of Christ)?

- e) Share something you found particularly interesting or relevant in Sunday's sermon.

REFLECT – Colossians 1:24-2:5

In this passage, Paul tells the Colossians that his ministry is exhausting but exhilarating, demanding but delightful. As we read his words, we are challenged to evaluate our own view of life and ministry.

a) What does Paul say he rejoices in (1:24, 2:5)?

b) Colossians 1:24 contains a startling statement: "I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions." Paul was not a masochist. Also, he is not saying that there was anything inadequate or unfinished about the work of Christ on the cross. So, what do you think he means by this statement?

c) Underline or notice the following words: "suffered" (1:24), "afflictions" (1:24), "servant" (1:25), "labor" (1:29), "struggling" (1:29), and again "struggling" (2:1). What can you tell was Paul's view of life as a Christian? How does it compare or contrast with views common today?

A Word of Explanation

The word "mystery" appears several times in this week's passage (1:26, 1:27, 2:2). In Paul's day, that word had a different meaning from that of today. For us, a "mystery" is something baffling that requires an expert to figure out. For Paul, however, "mystery" was something previously hidden but now revealed to anyone who wanted to see it. "The mystery of God," in other words, was Paul's way of saying "the gospel." Paul chose the word "mystery" deliberately, because deceivers (2:4) had come into the Colossian church claiming that they, and they only, knew the secret to power and wisdom in the Christian life. Paul wanted the Colossians to know that the indwelling Christ ("Christ in you" – 1:27) is sufficient for wisdom and knowledge.

d) What movements or popular figures today claim to possess the "key" to the Christian life? What is dangerous about that? Share any personal experience you have had with a

person or movement that promised more than they could deliver.

RESPOND

a) The title of this week's lesson is "Moving toward Suffering." Suffering is something our flesh and our culture tell us to avoid at all costs. Paul, however, moved *toward* pain; he *chose* to put himself out for others. What do you think drove Paul to do what he did for people (see 1:29)?

b) What typically drives you to serve?

c) Paul says his purpose is that others "may be encouraged in heart" (2:2). In your circle of influence, who is somebody that needs encouragement? Write his or her name down along with something you will do this week to encourage that person. (If you are in a LIFE Group, be ready to tell your group what happened next week.)

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest: To give and not to count the cost; To fight and not to heed the wounds; To toil and not to seek for rest; To labor and not ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will.
(Ignatius of Loyola)