

A The effects of reconciliation

❖ From evildoers to saints (Col. 1:21-22)

- The issue is simple. We lived doing evil and, therefore, we were condemned to eternal death. (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:8).
- By ourselves we were incapable of changing this situation, or of paying for our salvation (Psalm 49:7-8).
- But God had a great plan prepared for us:
 - (1) He died on the cross to pay the price for our sin (Rom. 5:8)
 - (2) Through faith, repentance, and baptism, we are freed from our sin and are without blemish and blameless before God [justification] (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:22)
 - (3) Through the work of the Holy Spirit our lives are gradually transformed and we become holy before God [sanctification] (Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:17)

❖ Grounded and steadfast (Col. 1:23)

- We have already been justified, we are being sanctified, but the journey is not yet over. We run the risk of straying and not reaching the goal. That is why Paul advises us on three things (Col. 1:23a):
 - (1) Continue in the faith: To be persistent, as Peter was when, after being released from prison, he knocked on the door until it was opened to him (Acts 12:11-16)
 - (2) Grounded: Our faith must be solid, founded on the truths we have learned in the Bible
 - (3) Steadfast: We must be unwavering, never ceasing to trust in “the hope of the gospel”

B Hope

❖ Bringing hope (Col. 1:24-25)

- As we saw, God's plan for our salvation is based on the death of Jesus and includes our justification and sanctification. But something important was missing: somehow, we need to come to know this plan in order to accept it. We need someone to reveal it to us.
- This is where “God’s administration” [God’s way of ordering circumstances, thoughts, people, etc.] comes in, of which Paul was a minister (Col. 1:25).
- Paul rejoiced in being part of this plan, even though it involved afflictions (Col. 1:24). From his arrest in Rome until his death, he wrote at least seven of the fourteen epistles preserved in the New Testament.
- Paul was an important part of God's plan, and he rejoiced in it. We too can be part of this plan by leading others to the knowledge of Christ. That is our joy!

❖ The mystery of God (Col. 1:26-27)

- Paul speaks of a mystery that has been revealed to the church after the resurrection of Christ (Col. 1:26). Until then, there had only been glimpses of it. But what is this mystery? “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).
 - (1) It was devised before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20)
 - (2) It was partially communicated to the angels (1 Peter 1:12)
 - (3) A first glimpse was given of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:15)
 - (4) It was revealed to the prophets (1 Peter 1:10-11)
 - (5) Jesus first revealed it to the Jews (Mt. 15:24)
 - (6) Then it was fully revealed to all men (Col. 1:27)
- There are still stages to unfold in this mystery. Now we live in the hope of being glorified. What a change! What a mystery! Sinful people are justified, sanctified, and glorified by the redeeming blood of Jesus. This mystery will continue to be a subject of study for all eternity.

C The power of the gospel

❖ Announcing the gospel (Col. 1:28-29)

- How did Paul preach the gospel? The focus of his preaching was Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23). Once people had accepted Jesus, he admonished and taught them until they were perfect (Colossians 1:28-29). How did he do this?
 - (1) He explained to them Christian doctrine and practice (2 Thessalonians 2:15)
 - (2) He warned them of the consequences of rejecting the gospel (Heb. 10:25-29)
 - (3) He warned them about the dangers of false teachers (Acts 20:29-30)
- Wait a minute... make them perfect? And not just a few... “every man”! (Col. 1:28b).
- The Greek word translated “mature” (*teleios*) means perfect and without defect. Through the process of Christian growth, we become keenly aware of the depth of God’s law and that its requirements. Our goal, therefore, is to be perfect in Christ Jesus.