



ADVANCING  
THE  
GOSPEL

**Colossians 1:24-2:5**

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# Introduction

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- Paul reminds the Colossians that believers will suffer for the sake of Christ and believers are to proclaim Christ to a lost world.
- This is how the Gospel moves forward.
- Paul makes it clear that this Gospel is for the entire world, not just for a select few.
- The Gospel goes forward only by the power of God at work in His people.

# Colossians 1:24-25

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# Suffering

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- Paul writes to the Colossians that suffering accompanies the Christian life because it is suffering that bought redemption for the Christian life.
- But in suffering there is rejoicing. Paul rejoices in his suffering for the sake of the Colossians (verse 24) because Paul understands that suffering is part of the Christian life.
- To add to this, Paul can rejoice because it is in suffering that one follows in the footsteps of Jesus.

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# Suffering

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- What does Paul mean when he says he is filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions? Was the suffering of Jesus not enough? Did Jesus not accomplish fully what needed to be done to save sinners?
- Paul absolutely believed that Christ's sacrifice was enough. In fact, Colossians is clear that Paul did not look at Jesus' work on the Cross as inadequate (Colossians 1:14, 20; 2:13–15).
- Paul is putting into practice what Jesus modeled in His suffering. This is how believers participate in the sufferings of Christ.

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# Suffering

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- In verse 25, Paul confirms that God called him to serve Christ's body and pour out his life for the sake of the Church.
- The idea that Paul's suffering fills what is lacking connects to ancient Jewish literature. Such literature "speaks of 'messianic woes,' tribulations to be endured by God's people in the last days immediately before the coming of the Messiah."
- This means that after Christ's Resurrection, more suffering was to be experienced by God's people as they await Christ's return.

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# Suffering

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- This suffering is so that the outside world comes to see and know the Gospel, as Paul mentions in verse 25.
- The idea is that not only the Gospel would be preached, but that it would take root and bear fruit in the lives of Christians.
- Paul wants the Gospel proclaimed so that others would accept the Gospel in faith.
- As the Church serves Christ, the Church suffers for Christ.

# Colossians 1:26-27

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# The Mystery

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- These verses confirm why Paul was called by God in Acts 9: to bring the message of the Gospel to the Gentiles.
- Paul uses the word mystery to describe this news.
- Paul writes that this mystery has been kept hidden for ages, but it is now revealed in Jesus.
- Paul says this has been God's plan all along.

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# The Mystery

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- Jesus was born into a Jewish family.
- But His mission was to break down the dividing wall of cultures and nationalities to show that through Him, anyone could become a member in the family of God.
- God knew that one day He would send a Redeemer.
- But the identity of this Redeemer was hidden until Jesus was born into this world.

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# The Mystery

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- Now, the Gentiles are in Christ, and Christ is in them. God's family now includes more than just the Jews. The glory and hope of God crosses all societal, cultural and racial boundaries.
- Paul stresses in Colossians that Christ came to redeem all people, regardless of ancestral heritage. Christ is their hope, the Redeemer made known. Paul explains that the riches of God are great among the Gentiles.
- Paul writes in Ephesians 3:6 that the Gentiles are now fellow heirs. Gentiles and Jews are now on level ground.

# Colossians 1:28-2:5

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# Mature in Christ

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- In verse 28, Paul is repetitious with his use of “everyone.”
- Paul is making a clear point: “There is no part of Christian teaching that is to be reserved for a spiritual elite. All the truth of God is for all the people of God.”
- Paul builds on the mystery he just explained in verses 26–27; the reality that God’s hope is for the world, not just for Israel.

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# Mature in Christ

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- In verse 28, Paul uses the word *teleios* (“perfect” or “mature”).
- Paul isn’t saying it is his job to attain perfection for Christians or that perfection is possible before Christ’s ultimate return. In fact, “the word *teleois* doesn’t signal sinless perfection as much as Christian maturation.”
- The *Expositor’s Commentary* continues, “Paul wanted the apostolic privilege and pleasure of presenting to Christ mature believers, not spiritual babes.”
- This is the joy of true discipleship: planting the Word in the life of another and watching God grow them into spiritual maturity.

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# Mature in Christ

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- Paul knows how easy it is for Christians to be enticed by the surrounding culture. For this reason, he stresses the importance of warning other believers and teaching them well.
- He wants the Colossians to know how to live and stay true to their calling.
- In line with Paul's aim throughout his letters, he desires the people of God to continue living out what they believe.
- If they've come to believe the Gospel, then they must follow that belief and live out the truths and calling of the Gospel.

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# Mature in Christ

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- Paul is clear that Christ is at work in him.
- The words Paul uses “energy” and “works” come from the same Greek root (*energeia / energeō*) which often refers to the power of God (Galatians 2:8; Ephesians 1:11, 19–20; 3:7, 20; Philippians 2:13; 3:21; Colossians 2:12).
- Paul’s point in verse 29: He would be useless and ineffective if it weren’t for the power of God working through him.
- Paul did not expect Christ to do everything for him, but he also knew that he could do nothing apart from Christ.

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# Mature in Christ

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- In the first five verses of chapter 2, Paul's aim is simple: seek to know and love Christ above all things, for Christ is all you need.
- Though Paul is not with them, as he writes in verse 5, he wants them to treasure Christ above everything.
- N.T. Wright observes, "Everything we might want to ask about God and his purposes can and must now be answered – this is the force of the verse – with reference to the crucified and risen Jesus, the Messiah."
- Christ is all you need.

# Historical Anniversaries

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# Tiananmen Square

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June 4, 1989

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# Tiananmen Square

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- The square consists of 109 acres in the heart of Beijing, China.
- The name means “Gate of Heavenly Peace.”
- It was first constructed during the Ming Dynasty in 1420 as the entrance to the Imperial City and the Forbidden City.
- For weeks in 1989, pro-democracy protests led to demonstrations by more than a million people in the square.
- They were motivated by hearing students read America’s Declaration of Independence out loud on television.

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# Tiananmen Square

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- Around 1 am on June 4, the military moved in, leading to hundred of deaths and thousands of arrests.
- Many more would be executed for their part in the demonstrations.
- Censorship of this event has been so thorough that Chinese people aren't even able to send a text message that contains one of the numbers eight, nine, six, and four.
- This campaign of silence has been going on for 30 years, and is even more sophisticated because of the latest technology.

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# Tiananmen Square

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- One author talks about showing a picture of “tank man” to students on four Beijing campuses. Only 15 out of 100 could identify the picture.
- Others wondered if the picture was from Korea or Kosovo.
- One young woman asked what it was about. She didn’t even know what June 4th meant.



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# Church in China

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- Nina Shea and Bob Fu estimates that there could be well over 100 million Chinese Christians.
- They project that China could have nearly 250 million Christians by 2030.
- By contrast, my POV guest (June 6) Gordon Chang estimates that the Chinese Communist Party has about 80 million members.
- The government has closed tens of thousands of churches, even those registered by the state.

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# Church in China

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- More than million Christians have been threatened or persecuted.
- President Xi Jinping has put into place regulations that ban minors from entering churches and forbid Sunday schools and Bible camps.
- Christian symbols are replaced with pictures of Xi Jinping.
- The Chinese government is using smartphones, video surveillance, social media, and other technology to monitor its citizens.
- It rewards or punishes them through a social credit system.

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# Church in China

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- Everyone is supposed to have a Xi Jinping app on his or her smartphone. You are required to study Xi on your smartphone for a half hour each day.
- Facial recognition technology was placed in a church, so the pastor disbanded the church.
- Pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44), and pray for those who are being persecuted (Hebrews 13:3).
- Pray for persecuted Chinese believers to be protected and sustained by God (Psalm 46:1).

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# Church in China

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- Pray for them “to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16).
- Pray to “boldly proclaim the mystery of the Gospel” (Ephesians 6:19).
- Isaiah 54:17 - “No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed.”
- Hebrews 13:6 - “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear, what can man do to me?”

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# D-Day

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June 6, 1944

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# D-Day

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- The invasion, code-named “Operation Overlord” had an attack force of more than 150,000 soldiers from the U.S., Great Britain, and Canada, along with 50,000 vehicles, 11,000 planes and 6,000 ships and 4,000 landing craft.
- On the first day, the Allies suffered an estimated 10,000 casualties with 2,500 dead.
- Today there are 27 war cemeteries that contain the graves of more than 110,000 dead from both sides of the battle for Normandy.

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# D-Day

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- The D-Day invasion nearly turned out to be a massive disaster.
- Many of D-Day's first waves landed in the wrong places along a 50-mile stretch of Normandy's coast.
- Some units were unable to communicate with each other for hours.
- Thousands of airborne soldiers who parachuted into the darkness of Normandy's countryside hours earlier were blown off course in high winds.
- Some drowned when they dropped into low-lying fields that had been flooded by the Germans.

# D-Day Prayer



**D-Day Prayer**

by President Franklin D. Roosevelt from the White House - June 6, 1944

Each night, when I speak with you about the fate of France, I think on that moment that struggle of the Allied Soldiers and our Marines, crossing the Channel in another and greater operation. It has come to pass with historic finality.

And so, in this program hour, I ask you to join with me in prayer:

**F**ight! God our name, guide of our Nation, the God who set upon a mighty redoubt, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion, and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity.

Grant them strength and courage, give strength to their arms, steadfastness to their hearts, steadfastness to their faith.

They will need the blessing. Their road will be long and hard. If the enemy is strong, the way will be long and hard. Success may not come with rushing speed, but we shall return again and again, and we know that in the great, and in the right, our cause, we shall triumph.

**T**hey will be very tired, be high and be low, be successful—need the victory to come. The darkness will be over the sea and land. Their hands will be shaken with the violence of war.

For these men are lonely drawn from the bosom of peace. They fight not for the love of conquest. They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate. They fight to be just. They fight to be juster, wiser, and nobler, and good and kind among all the people. They pray for the end of battle, for their return to the homes of home.

**S**ave our veterans. Extract their pain, and restore them, the brave veterans, into the nation.

**A**nd for our at home—fathers, mothers, children, wives, sisters and brothers of brave men overseas—whose thoughts and prayers are ever with them—help us, Almighty God, in redoubtable our action in renewed faith in Thee in this hour of great sacrifice.

When people have urged that I call the Marines a single day of special prayer, that because the road is long and the death is great, I ask that our people devote themselves to a commendation of prayer. So we rise to each new day, and again when each day is spent, by words of prayer to our God, seeking His help in our efforts.

**G**ive us strength, too—strength in our daily tasks, to redouble the contribution we make to the physical and the material support of our armed forces.

And let our hearts be brave, to meet over the long road, to bear sorrow that may come, to impart our courage and our love wherever they may be.

And, O Lord, give us faith. Give us faith in Thee, faith in our cause, faith in each other, faith in our united destiny. Let not the heroism of our fight ever be doubted. Let not the impact of our present efforts, of temporal success or of fleeting moment—let not these detract us in our unimpaired purpose.

**W**ith the blessing, we shall prevail over the untold forces of our enemy. Help us to conquer the agencies of greed and racial antagonism. Grant us in the naming of our country, and with our sister nations here a world unity that will span a new year—a year memorable in the achievement of unending men. And a year that will be all our life in freedom, respect the just demands of that human good. They will be done. Almighty God. Amen.

Christina - 1944 - from  
F.D.R.

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# Six-Day War

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June 5-10, 1967

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# Six-Day War

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- Egypt mobilized its armed forces in the Sinai and forced UN peace-keeping troops to leave. It also formed a coalition with Jordan and Syria.
- The plan was for those troops to attack Israel from the south, the east, and the north.
- Israel responded against overwhelming odds and won a decisive victory in just six days.
- My POV guest David Rubin (former mayor of Shiloh) explained how that battle war rewrote the map of the Middle East.

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# Battle of Midway

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June 4-7, 1942

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# Battle of Midway

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- The Battle of Midway was just as decisive in the Pacific theater as the Normandy landings were in Europe.
- After the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese went from victory to victory in the Pacific (Guam, Wake, the Philippines).
- The Japanese then decided to attack Midway and destroy the rest of the American Pacific fleet.
- Fortunately, American Naval Intelligence broke enough of the Japanese code to discover their plans.

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# Battle of Midway

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- Admiral Chester Nimitz sent three carriers to lie in wait east of the island.
- When the American attacked the Japanese invasion, most of the torpedo bombers were obliterated (36 of the 42 were shot down). But they were successful in diverting the Japanese defenses.
- In less than 10 minutes, they sank three Japanese carriers. A fourth carrier sank later in the battle.
- Japan lost 5,000 men, four carriers, one heavy cruiser, and 322 planes. This changed the direction of the war.

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# Conclusion

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- Why did America win at Midway?
- The odds were heavily on the side of the Japanese.
- Was it luck or fortuitous circumstances? Or was it God's providence?
- God blessed America in World War II because we were a God-honoring nation.
- Would we receive the same blessing today?
- God's blessings are a sign of His favor; their absence is a sign of His disfavor.