

# Calvary's Cavalry

## OUR NORMAL HAS NEVER CHANGED

We live, and function in Godliness; at least we are supposed to. Now, as a Christian you may say, duh; I get that, and you might. That does not mean we are doing that. Therein lies the true concern for the Christian as we evaluate not just what, but how and when we do the things we do each and every day.

Our call is to be redeemed in our actions, by first being redeemed in our minds (Romans 12:1–2). We can only do this because we have already been redeemed in our souls (2 Corinthians 5:17), by the work of Christ. In light of this work, we are not called to live differently than the unredeemed pagan (2 Corinthians 5:20–21). We are called to focus ourselves (in total) upon Christ and those who have gone before (Hebrews 12:1–2), and to teach and admonish one another with the reality of Christ's work and His future Kingdom that is coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).

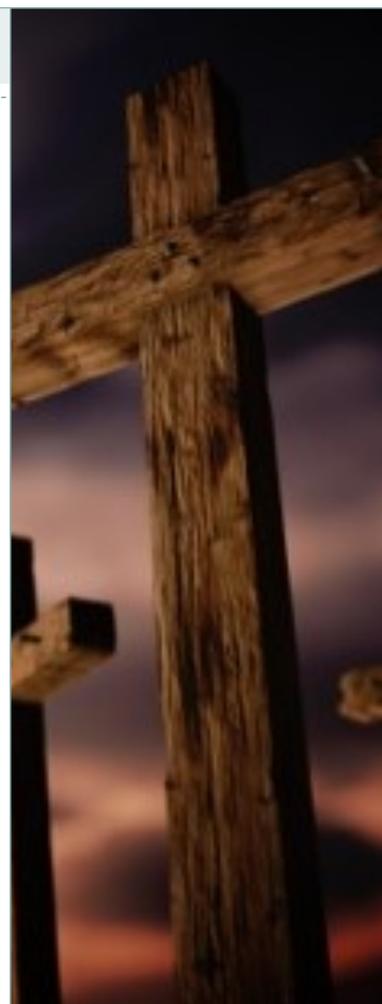
Meaning, if we are evaluating what is normal, our starting point should always be one of service to and worship of God (Deuteronomy 6:4–9). Whether we: stay home, go out, obey the government, protest, disobey the government (yes the Apostles did this—read Acts), whether we attend services in person, or worship through a live stream; our reasons should be grounded in our faithful desire to be the people of God in obedience to His calling (1 Peter 2:9–12).

If that has not been the case for you, then I have the best news ever; for that too Christ died. As believers, all of our transgressions have been dealt with by Christ (Colossians 2:13–14); and we are now free in Him (Luke 4:18–19) to obey God and serve our Redeemer (Matthew 11:28–29). That should not, can not, and never should change for the believer for any reason on Earth or in Heaven above.

Our normal is the total surrender of ourselves to God and our total service to Him in everything (not somethings) that we do (1 Corinthians 10:31–33). We will fall short of our goals (Romans 7:21–25), but as Christians we never stop striving for the Godliness that Christ has promised to deliver to us in eternity (Colossians 3:1–4). That is (or at least should be) the “normal” that we operate under, each and every day (Luke 9:23–27).

Now the world is trying to decipher what they are to do, how they are to do it, and why they even need to do it. As Christians, this is our time to shine. We know what they are to do, and we are put in the midst of their struggle (and ours) so that we may point them to the gracious Savior who can redeem their suffering and trial by His power and mercy (1 Peter 4:12–19).

We have a hope and a Savior (1 Corinthians 15:19) and we need to live like it; because that is the “normal” that God provides to His children.



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### OUR HOPE

For All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work



## THE BIRTH OF SACRALISM THE FALL OF ROME & THE CHURCH

Why was Rome such a big deal in the first place? The short answer is the work of God through what is historically known as the *Pax Romana*. It is the work of God because He is the one who chose to work during that time (Galatians 4:4–5), and He is the one who ordained and ordered the history of people for it to be so at that time (Daniel 2:36–49). The *Pax Romana*, literally Roman Peace is time of history of around 200 years composed of mostly “good” emperors and was marked by peace and stability within the Empire.

It was during this time the Apostolic work flourished, in spite of the occasional spikes of persecution from various governmental entities. It was this time of relative peace and security that allowed Paul to travel freely on his missionary journeys. It was the Roman system of roads and trade routes

that allowed cities, otherwise disparate, to be united in a common culture (Hellenism), language (Greek), and authority (Rome). Even without legal status within the Roman Empire, Christianity fared well within her, because of the general security the empire provided to the cities and citizens contained within it. This is not to say that the Roman Empire was good or moral; but simply to say that she served the Kingdom purposes of God very well (Proverbs 21:1).

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*.....For almost 1,000 years, the average person would: be born, live, die, and be buried within a 7 mile circle. This has major impacts upon life both secular and sacred.....*

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That status for Christians changed in the 4th century, as the “conversion” (I use quotes because his status as a true believer is not exactly certain) of Constantine. It was his *Edict of Milan* in 313 that granted Christians religious toleration within the empire. This enabled the still developing Church to live and worship within the empire without fear of persecution from local officials or even the emperor himself.

With the *Edict of Thessalonica* (380), Nicene Christianity was declared the official state religion of Rome by Emperor Theodosius. This decree stood on the shoulders of the apologetic work of many Christians who had labored in both a legal (4th century) and quasi-legal (1st–3rd centuries) system. This time of legality and peace would however be short lived within the Roman Empire.

Before we dive into that, we need to see turn that has already occurred within the Church. Legalization of the Christian faith did not give rise to her growth and faithfulness, it was the result of that work in the preceding centuries. The Church battled and overcame numerous heresies during the early centuries in spite of her lack of State recognition. Gnostics, Nicolaitans, Marcionism, Valentinians, Ebionites, Adoptionism, Docetism, Sabellianism, Monophysitism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Patripassionism, Manichaeism; were all written against, and defended against before the Church was legal.

Likewise, many great theologians and writers: defended, clarified, and taught orthodox Christian doctrine during her clandestine days. Men such as Polycarp, Papias, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Hegesippus, Clement, Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, Polycrates, Origen; did the hard work of building a church based upon the writings of the Apostles (defined as the *Rule of Faith*) and passing on the teachings of Christ to the next generation. This work was done through a system of churches (some house, some other), all throughout the Roman Empire (and beyond), not because it was easy and simple; but because it was the command of their Savior (Matthew 28:19–20) and beyond the scope and power of the Empire to tell them no.

That work actually becomes harder, when the governing authorities attempt to make it easier. With state approval comes state guidance and assistance and even more damaging; dependence. The merging of Christianity with the governmental system is known as sacralism; and it was present within the church quickly was Christianity was declared the official religion.

### Implication of the Fall of Rome

- Education lagged
- Safety was diminished
- Church was localized
- Doctrine was corrupted
- Society was fragmented

### Fallout of Rome's demise

- Monasticism
- Professional clergy
- Deemphasized laity
- Schism within the Church

With the multiple sackings of Rome during the 5th century (410 & 455), the underlying security of the Church was threatened. With the final loss of the throne in 476 to Odoacer; the Roman Empire was no more and the Middle Ages are traditionally thought to have begun.

Without the security of the Empire to protect citizens and uphold peace, many of the metropolitan places began to contract. Technology was lost, lifespans shortened, and life—in general—became more difficult. For almost 1,000 years, the average person would: be born, live, die, and be buried within a 7 mile circle. This has major impacts upon life both secular and sacred.

In order to maintain authority and control, you begin to see the rise of the Papacy in Rome. The final vestiges of the Roman Empire would be revived like a bad zombie film over the next several centuries, as Popes and kings alike sought to be aligned with the nostalgia of the great ruling force. With the centralization of power, came the localization of the church. Gone were the vast travel routes and cities of ancient Hellenistic society; here were the local parishes and churches.

Education was diminished to the point that during the Middle Ages, even clergy in some areas were illiterate. This need for higher (Earthly) authority gave rise to many strange doctrines.

Relics, mythology, iconography, purgatory, prayers to saints, Mariology; all come out of this time where the church is not being the Church. The loss of the earthly security of Rome and her power, meant the church should have relied upon what birthed her; the eternal power and security of Christ.

Instead, we see during this time the sacral system entrenched all the more. A system that would not be broken until the 16th century; and even then, only partially. This merging of the Church and the State sowed the ground that would later produce the fruit of corruption, greed, and debauchery of the highest order within the structure of the Church that is still be confronted in numerous denominations.

The Empire of Rome was never going to be eternal, it couldn't. Only God's Kingdom will reign forever (Daniel 7:13–14). The reason we need to know of the fallout from the loss of the great civilizations of old is because we are living in one now. We are, and always will be to some extent, children of our world. It is impossible to avoid being stained by the world in which we live and work day in and day out. The job of the Christian is the recognize the stain, and then recognize the One who blots it out (Psalm 51:1–9).

Only by doing this, day in and day out, will we be prepared to face the coming upheaval that will confront our world; and it will happen (Matthew 24:6–8). Our goal as Christians, is to live expectant lives, focused upon Christ and His coming Kingdom (Colossians 3:1–4); never trusting in the motivations of this world (1 John 2:15–17), but being transformed by Christ by longing for the world that is to come (Philippians 3:7–11).

## Bibliology Basics

- 66 Books
- 40+ Authors
- 1500+ years of writing
- 3 languages & continents
- Inspired by God
- Inerrant in composition
- Infallible in teaching
- Sufficient in practice
- Solitary rule of faith

## PRACTICAL THEOLOGY 101—SUFFICIENT

Since we have a word from God (2 Peter 1:16–21), and we know how that Word has come to us; we can build our lives around it. Here is what I mean.

Our Bible is written by men, yes; but it is inspired by God. Because Scripture carries the weight of God behind it; by nature, it is incapable of teaching what is untrue (inerrant) and it is impossible for it to be proven false (infallible). Therefore that Scripture is sufficient for the purpose for which it is intended.

That last sentence is the rub of modern Evangelical thought, the sufficiency of Scripture. Before we settle upon the idea of a sufficient Scripture, we must define the purpose for which Scripture was given. Ultimately, the testimony of the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) is the testimony to Christ (John 5:39). The reason this testimony is given is so that humanity will have an objective standard by which they can judge themselves against God (John 20:30–31). The reason we have this judgment is so that we will be found guilty and turn in repentance and faith to the Savior God has graciously provided (Galatians 3:19–29).

Scripture: can, will, and does accomplish this.

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*.....The original lie of sin was to question God's word and nothing has changed since; therefore, we must be diligent to ground everything we say and do in this life on the unshifting, objective ground of God, and we can only evaluate that by knowing His Word.....*

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Therefore, we call the Bible a sufficient revelation from God. It accomplishes the revealing, saving, and preserving work that God intends it to; and since God never forgets or leaves anything out, Scripture is all that is needed for faith and practice in the Christian life (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

This is the difficult part of the modern Evangelical; we do not preach movies, we do not lean into music, we do not trust our minds or our emotions. Instead, we go to the object source of information about ourselves, our world, and the cure for what is wrong with both of them. And we evaluate these things in light of God's Word, and God's Word ALONE. This was the rallying cry of the Reformation, the rule of faith is the Bible, as inspired and preserved by God.

Our goal in this world is to be ever growing as disciples (Colossians 2:6–7); by leaning into the Holy Spirit who re-trains our minds as we dwell on His Word (Romans 12:1–2). We cannot do this apart from Scripture, and we must not endeavor to do it with any other means as our cornerstone. If we do: our methods will be askew, and our lives and faith will go off the rails (as has been seen in EVERY denomination that has abandoned Scripture as the ultimate standard). The original lie of sin was to question God's word (Genesis 3:1), and nothing has changed since (Ecclesiastes 1:9); therefore, we must be diligent to ground everything we say and do in this life on the unshifting, objective ground of God (Luke 6:46–49), and we can only evaluate that by knowing His Word.

While the skeptic may say we have other forms of learning, and they are right; we have nothing outside of Scripture that points us to the ultimate truth of God and His saving work. The Bible will not teach us nuclear physics, or open heart surgery, or how to build an ark from the Bible. But you can learn what the Bible intends to teach you: who God is, what He has done, who you are, what you need, and how these things go together.

Next month we will look at the idea of applicable.



## RECOVERY ROOM WITH DARRELL

Hello, it's Darrell again; this month I would like to talk about the word nobody in recovery likes to say: relapse.

The definition of relapse, in the world of addiction, means that we “fell of the wagon”. But I'm here to tell you everyone falls in one way or another. Sin is sin whether it is addiction, lying stealing, or whatever. Than God we have a Savior that we can come to ask for forgiveness.

1 John gives us an example in chapter 1, verses 8–9: if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Falling is not failure, staying down is. When we fall, we get up, come to Jesus, repent, and ask for forgiveness; and march on and keep fighting.

Than you Lord for your garace and mercy and forgiveness. Your love endure forever, amen.

See you next month.

Addiction = Dependence = Craving = Need = Habit = Weakness = Slavery

Salvation = Release = Life = Freedom = Joy = Completeness

1 John 1:8–10

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

### The Problem

Psalm 51:1–4

*Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup> Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.*

### The Cure

2 Corinthians 5:20–21

*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

### The Promise

John 10:27–30

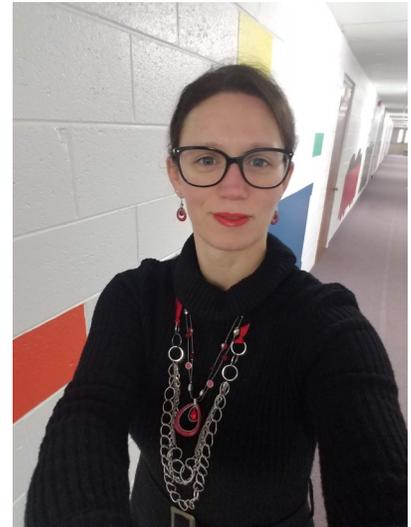
*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one.”*

## KAT'S KORNER

One of my many favorite hymns is "God Give Us Christian Homes". It is a prayer to God asking for His will be done within the home. Growing up, this song was sung every Mother's Day. It is a simple example of what a Biblical Home looks like.

Now Mother's Day is a day of focus as well as reflection of our Mother's. It is a day to focus on our own mothers and all that they mean to us and have been there for us. We also reflect on our grandmothers and aunts and other women who have been in our lives as mothers.

When I think of my upbringing, I am blessed to have had three Christian homes. My Grandma and my Nanny lived only seven miles away from me. I spent half the week at Nanny's and the other half at Grandma's during the school year as well as the summer and the evenings and weekends at home with my mama. Grandma, Nanny, and Mama were Sunday school teachers and Vacation Bible School teachers.



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*.....the legacy they have left behind is one the Lord is using today to strengthen those who saw their lives as a beautiful, sacrificial life as an example of Christian living.....*

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They all cooked for funerals and church events, sang in the choir and helped with church ministries as they felt lead to help and be involved in. They have read their bibles 'til they are falling apart and taught their children and grandchildren and now great-grandchildren even, what the Bible says about life. About how we are to live and love one another, and how we are to serve the Lord through loving and honoring their husbands and keeping their homes. My mama and Grandma and Nanny are not a perfect wife and mother, just as I am not a perfect wife and mother, but they showed me how to strive to serve the Lord and how to forgive and ask forgiveness when failure, that is sin, has incurred.

I also remember the Godly women that God has put in my life as further examples of how the live for Him. Up and down the Bynum Road and the Galatia Road there are homes that represent women who have raised their families to love and serve the Lord by loving others and teaching their families God's way. Some of those women as well as their husbands are now with the Lord, but the legacy they have left behind is one the Lord is using today to strengthen those who saw their lives as a beautiful, sacrificial life as an example of Christian living.

I thank the Lord for them as well as my Mama, Grandma, and Nanny. I pray that I can continue to lead my children and family as I have been lead.

*God give us Christian homes!  
Homes where the Bible is loved and taught,  
Homes where the Master's will is sought,  
Homes crowned with beauty Your love has wrought;  
God give us Christian homes;  
God give us Christian homes!*

*God give us Christian homes!  
Homes where the father is true and strong,  
Homes that are free from the blight of wrong,  
Homes that are joyous with love and song;  
God give us Christian homes;  
God give us Christian homes!*

*God give us Christian homes!  
Homes where the mother, in caring quest,  
Strives to show others Your way is best,  
Homes where the Lord is an honored guest;  
God give us Christian homes;  
God give us Christian homes!*

*God give us Christian homes!  
Homes where the children are led to know  
Christ in His beauty who loves them so,  
Homes where the altar fires burn and glow;  
God give us Christian homes;  
God give us Christian homes!*

## CAREFUL COVENANTS



I must admit that at the onset of the Coronavirus, I was not too concerned. After all, many were saying that the Flu was far more deadly because it killed approximately eighty thousand people last year in the United States. However, the effects of the Coronavirus seems to have gripped the world in fear. This fear is quite substantial; many have taken to the stores buying everything in sight, leaving the shelves bare. Tragically, I have read articles just this week about a church that was vandalized and burned to the ground for continuing to meet each week. I have had a great deal of struggle during these times.

By the grace of God, I have been able to continue working; the layoffs did not personally affect me, but my son's company Old Chicago closed its doors, leaving him unemployed. Making things even more complicated, our family has learned that my Father's cancer returned and that he would need multiple surgeries to remove tumors from his body. Not being able to be with him and my mother at the hospital has been difficult. Though it all, I have managed to stay prayerfully optimistic. I have determined that no matter what may come, that God's grace will see my family through these tuff times.

Interestingly, this pandemic has also caused many to believe that we are living in the last days. Rumors of mandatory vaccinations and being chipped have led to many speculations about the mark of the beast. Indeed, the Church has seen its fair share of predictions about the end of the world.

However, one thing is sure; Christ will return the same way he left (Acts 1:11), which means that believers need to be walking by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Because while we remain present in the body, we must be about our Father in heavens business. When embroiled in war, in pestilence, when death encompasses you, Christians need to maintain their focus on the Great Commission, which mandates all believers to make disciples. I believe that this is the best way to ensure that we do not become overwhelmed with fear. The real question to be answered during the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 is when Christ returns, "*Will he find faith on earth?*" (Luke 18:8)

Will He find the Church making disciples and spreading the good news of Messiah? While I recognize that people have fallen on tough times, both financially and spiritually. Believers need to remember that through it all that God is still in control and will never forsake us, while the Coronavirus has caused a great deal of fear, hardship, and even death. It is also time when the people of God will find that they are divinely called to be witnesses to a lost and dying world. So while many are struggling with finances and with meeting for worship, it is not a time to allow fear to take control. It is a time to draw near to God in faith, trusting that we serve a great God who is mighty to Save!

### OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

- The Covenant with Creation
- Noahic Covenant
- Abrahamic Covenant
- Mosaic Covenant
- Davidic Covenant
- New Covenant

## FUN WITH LEARNING—PARENTS ZONE

### FAMOUS CATECHISMS

- Martin Luther's Small (1529)
- Geneva (1541)
- Book of Common Prayer (1549)
- Heidelberg (1563)
- Westminster (1647)

Catechism is not just a dirty word that Roman Catholics use to scare children. It is a valid method of teaching that we use in other areas of life. Based partially on the Socratic method (question & answer), the fundamental goal of a catechism is to communicate timeless, Biblical truth in such a manner that it “sticks” into a child’s mind (Proverbs 22:6).

The goal of this section is not to make you feel like a bad parent if you have not done this. It isn’t even to make you feel guilty if you do not use it. The goal of this section is to give you another tool in the toolbox to combat the secularization of your brain, my brain, and our children’s brains.

The more we recognize the need for discipleship in our homes, the more we will want solid tools that aid us in that task. Each month we’ll give you some new questions, and blank the answers to last months as a way to test. If this works for your family, awesome, if it does not; find something that does. Then tell us about it so we can include it for other families.

### Last Month's Questions

Run through them & see how you did.....  
Even if you don't get them all correct—Celebrate the things you have learned

Question 11: Can you see God?  
Answer:

Question 12: Does God know all things?  
Answer:

Question 13: Can God do all things?  
Answer:

Question 14: Where do you learn how to love & obey God?  
Answer:

Question 15: Who wrote the Bible?  
Answer:

Question 16: Who were our first parents?  
Answer:

Question 17: How did God create man?  
Answer:

Question 18: Of what were our first parents made?  
Answer:

Question 19: What else did God give Adam and Eve?  
Answer:

Question 20: Do you have a soul as well as a body?  
Answer:

### This Month's Questions

Question 21: How do you know your soul will last forever?  
Answer: Because the Holy Bible tells me so.

Question 22: in what condition did God make Adam & Eve?  
Answer: He made them holy & happy.

Question 23: what covenant did God make with Adam?  
Answer: The covenant of works

Question 24: What is a covenant?  
Answer: A relationship that God establishes with us.

Question 25: In this covenant, what did God require Adam to do?  
Answer: Obey God perfectly.

Question 26: What did God promise in this covenant?  
Answer: Life.

Question 27: What did God threaten in this covenant?  
Answer: Death

Question 28: Did Adam keep the covenant?  
Answer: No, he sinned against God.

Question 29: What is sin?  
Answer: Ignoring or transgressing God's law.

Question 30: What is meant by ignoring?  
Answer: Not being or doing what God requires.

FUN WITH FUN—KIDS ZONE

Not Paul's Letters

N K T S E M A J V H V I M E D  
Q H R H N J I H E D R O A K R  
R Q O A I D U B X E O X T U D  
C Z X J M R R D T L D N T L X  
E V X N D E D E E I Z O H J S  
U C H V W N P J F Z R I E V H  
V O I S M T O I O O R T W H X  
J A C T S G S C B H H A N Z H  
Q K N R W F T L E U N L Y K H  
F C I B F V I I Y S M E Z Q G  
Y F I R S T J O H N Q V Z P Y  
T M Y R T J Y C I C J E B Y A  
R E T E P D N O C E S R R E N  
V A G N R F S E I F T D S W A  
Z I O G M P Q Q T U O V S N P

JAMES

LUKE

JOHN

MARK

JUDE

FIRST PETER

ACTS

MATTHEW

HEBREWS

SECOND JOHN

THIRD JOHN

REVELATION

FIRST JOHN

SECOND PETER

# WALKING THROUGH THE WORD BIBLE STUDY

## COLOSSIANS 1:24–29

### AUTHORSHIP & DATE

- Written by Paul
- Between 60–62 A.D.
- Prison Epistle

### COLOSSAE

- In modern day Turkey
- Founded by Epaphras
- Encountering Gnosticism
- Not visited by Paul

Our walk through Colossians continues as we now get into the meat of Paul's letter to the church. In light of the work of Christ, as described in the previous section, how are they (and we) to live and function? How did Paul function, and what did he do in what was obviously a hostile world? I'm glad you asked.

Paul starts out with a declaration of joy in the face of suffering. This is not a unique doctrine to Paul; it is the consistent call of the entire New Testament as Christians are called to stand, in joy as God produces in them through the pressures of the world (James 1:2–4); thereby proving their salvation and faith (1 Peter 1:6–7). Paul stands in line with these calls, because they rightly, and truly, point us to the internal reality of our security in Christ (Romans 8:37–39). How do I know that I am saved, and will persevere to the end; standing firm for the faith? The answer, because I did; the Holy Spirit strengthen me as I was promised (Luke 12:11–12), and I know that God has changed me because I have proven it.



Paul continues in verse 24, by remind of something else that is not unique to this letter, the idea of completing Christ's afflictions. I say it is not unique because Paul has elsewhere, already utilized this description (Galatians 6:17 & 1 Thessalonians 4:9–10); we must therefore understand it rightly. Our first step is to ensure we do not add to the text a meaning that is clearly condemned elsewhere; we are not saved by our afflictions and struggles. Rather we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9). And faith is the only possible means by which we may be saved (Galatians 2:16), and that has always been the plan of God (Romans 4:9–12). What Paul is explaining here, and to the Galatians, and to the Thessalonians; is the idea we discussed above: the proving of our salvation. Christ's work is sufficient to save us, but it is not going to prove our salvation or our sanctification; the world and her misery must do that work for us. Paul can rejoice both for himself and the churches, because as he suffers; he is comforted. Likewise, as the churches (and we) suffer, we share in that great comfort from God that strengthened and carried along Paul (2 Corinthians 1:5–7). It is this persevering work, by God and the people of God, that builds the church.

Paul therefore continues by reminding the Colossians that he was in fact called and commissioned by God (Acts 9:15–16), so that he would accomplish actual work (Galatians 1:22–24). That work praises God and builds the church, by building and strengthening the people of the church. This was Paul's first and foremost charge, and should be the continuing march of every believer as we continue in the work of making disciples (Matthew 28:19–20). That is the reason for the church, the reason for the call, the reason for the gifting of the Spirit, the reason for our living and dying and ministering: day by day, year by year, age by age.

This is the work that God has promised, that the entire creation longed to see completed (1 Peter 1:10–12). And it is the place that we stand, as the people of God, partaking of this great mystery; as God builds, and upholds His Church (Ephesians 5:25–32). This is something that too many modern Christians have lost; a sense of connection to history and the past. We rightly cast off the oppressive magisterial system of the Catholic Church in the 16th century, but have in the 20th century, wrongly cast off the wisdom and guidance of most of those who have gone before.

That is why this journal contains a short section on the history of the church; because we need the guidance of those brilliant, undistracted men who for centuries have persistently sought to honor God in their teaching and living. God has graciously given us a rich, glorious heritage, and we neglect it to our shame and our destruction. There are not really new ideas (Ecclesiastes 1:9), just fancier, shinier, crazier; bows and packaging into which they are jammed. Satan is not that clever, we are just that arrogant to assume we know all, see all, and understand all; and it is to the detriment of ourselves and the glorious church of God that we forget our history.

The sentence continues in verse 27, as Paul points to the glory and majesty of the work of God. God has in His wisdom, upheld both His justice and His mercy (Romans 3:21–26); something no human being would have or could have ever accomplished. This upholding, stands in line with what God has promised He would do (Hosea 2:21–23), and is a testimony to His greatness.

We as the newly minted people of God (1 Peter 2:9–10), revel in the fulfillment of millennia of promises and hope. Christ is the fulfillment of the salvation God promised in the Garden (Genesis 3:15), and the end of the line of the hope of humanity for a redemption from their sin.

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*.....Satan is not that clever, we are just that arrogant to assume we know all, see all, and understand all; and it is to the detriment of ourselves and the glorious church of God that we forget our history.....*

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Therefore, we (as Paul did) must proclaim Christ to the world. This is a duh statement, but one we need to constantly be told; there is only a change of action when there is first a change of mind and desire. And there is only a change of mind and desire when the Holy Spirit redeems a soul. And the Holy Spirit does this work when we proclaim the truth of God's Gospel (Romans 10:17). That Gospel message is centered and built upon the only One who could redeem us before the Father (John 14:6), because He is the only One with the power to save His people from their sins (Acts 4:12).

And again, this is the fulfillment that God has been promising and pointing to since the beginning (John 3:14–15). There are no surprises at the coming of Christ; only glorious praise of God and fulfillment of His promises.

It is because of that fulfillment that we can be sanctified by God. We have: a Savior, a history, and a goal (Hebrews 12:1–2); and we must strive each and every day to build up ourselves and those around us into Godliness. This is the call of Christ upon our hearts and minds (1 Thessalonians 4:7–8), and the final destination of all of those who believe in Him (1 Peter 1:13–16).

So Paul concludes where he must, a keeping the faith and following in action that which he proclaims in speech and letter (2 Timothy 4:1–5). That is Paul's (and ours) only hope of possessing a clear conscience; faithfully following the command and call of God (Acts 20:25–27).

It is the only hope, because again; that Gospel is the only hope. We have no real power to accomplish anything (2 Corinthians 12:7–10); but God is infinitely powerful and capable of bringing to completion the people He has redeemed (Philippians 1:6); and our hope should be daily living and walking in a manner that our travels move us in that direction (Philippians 3:12–16).

## OUTLINE

- Paul's greeting (1:1–2)
- Thanksgiving (1:3–8)
- Prayer for the Church (1:9–14)
- Exaltation of Christ (1:15–23)
- Sacrifice for Christ (1:24–29)
- Unity with Believers (2:1–5)
- Grounding in Christ (2:6–15)
- Freedom in Christ (2:16–23)
- Sanctification by Focus (3:1–4)
- Sanctification in Living (3:5–11)
- Born-again Living (3:12–17)
- Relationships (3:18–4:1)
- Testimonial Living (4:2–6)
- Commendations & Greetings (4:7–18)

## PRACTICAL THEOLOGY MINISTRIES

A ministry of Calvary Baptist Church in Rockford, IL; we are a teaching ministry with the goal of making Biblical Theology make sense to the everyday Christian.

We are Pastors and laymen, formally educated in theology and trained in the school of life. We have had success and failure, joy and heart-break, faith and doubt. And through all these things we have had a secure salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

## MANAGING MAY

If you have not figured out by now, there is no managing this life. One of the great blessings that will occur for the people of God as they emerge from The Pandemic of 2020™, will be the realization of the sovereignty of God. It is not we, who rule and reign over the creation; but God Himself.

The great fallacy of modern, Western Civilization has been the idea of corralling life in the same manner we have seemingly corralled everything else. We live under the false assumption that we have taken total dominion over the creation and have therefore placed ourselves and our ideas upon God's throne.

This virus has shaken that idea to the core. Experts disagree, common sense took a vacation, and our way of life was basically demolished in a few weeks. How fragile we truly are!

And therein lies the greatest news of all. We are very fragile, but God is not. We are very weak, but God is not. We have not exercised dominion over creation, but God has. That is where we need to rest. As we see life return around us, recognize that our "new normal" should be one that praises and serves God and His Kingdom; never our own.

### Practical Theology Ministries

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