

Colossians -March Class

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Date: 12 December 2012

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- [0 : 00] Well, I want to welcome you all to our March class for our monthly exposition of one of Paul's epistles. And we are currently in Colossians dealing with some leftover items in chapter 1.
- And if memory serves me correctly, I think not the last time because there were just a couple of us here. But I think the time before, I left you with a kind of an assignment and sticks in my mind that we were talking about verse 23 of chapter 1, which is a problematic verse, particularly as regards the subject of the security of the believer.
- And if memory serves me correctly, I think I raised that question and asked you to give it some thought and that we would talk about it next time. But I didn't want to go into it in our last session because there were so few of us here.
- And I wanted more people to gain the advantage of whatever conclusion we reach regarding this verse 23 in particular. So let's have a word of prayer and we'll begin.
- We're grateful, Father, for what you provided us in your word. And we're grateful for how everything is connected so that there are no contradictions in the scriptures, only misunderstandings on our part.
- [1 : 16] So we pray for a clarification of the truth that is before us and for an understanding so that we can personally appropriate it to our own lives. Thank you for each one here this morning and for that truth that is before us in Christ's name.
- Amen. Thank you again for being here today. And the subject that we are dealing with has to do with the passage in chapter 1.
- So I'll just begin reading with verse 19. But the verse that we want to settle on, at least for a few moments, is verse 23. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.
- And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself. By him I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.
- And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unremorable in his sight.
- [2 : 34] If, if ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I, Paul, am made a minister.
- We'll stop right there. A couple of things. I have at least one thing I want to touch on before we get to our target verse. It has to do with the universality of reconciliation, which Paul sets forth in verse 20, when he says that Christ has reconciled all things unto himself.
- And then he goes on to clarify what consists of all those all things. By him I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And I think that is simply another way of saying there is nothing that Christ has not reconciled unto himself.

And he did that in his death, burial, and resurrection. This is a difficult concept for people to absorb, but it's a very, very important one. And it has to do with the efficaciousness, or the totality, or the effectiveness, or the efficiency of whatever you want to call it, of the death of Christ, which we believe to be as adequate and as complete and as full as was the fall that occurred under Adam's rebellion and disobedience to God.

So this means that, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

[4 : 21] And I take that very literally, and I think that simply means everyone who ever lived or ever will live has been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. And all that does is provide the basis for God extending grace to anyone who believes on Jesus Christ because he paid the price.

So we've got universal redemption or universal reconciliation. We do not have universal salvation. Some equate those terms, and I think that is a huge mistake.

And we've made the point before, but all universal reconciliation means is that because of the death of Christ, there is no one who is rendered unsavable.

This means that everyone is savable. It does not mean that everyone is saved or that everyone is personally reconciled to God.

There is a distinction between a corporate reconciliation and a personal reconciliation. And in that, Christ died to reconcile the world.

[5 : 34] He died to undo the damage that Adam did in the fall. So what we are saying is the extent of Christ's payment for sin was the equivalent of the damage and the harm done through the fall of Adam.

It was equal to that. Christ left nothing undone or unpaid for in the redemption that he provided. That is corporate redemption.

And we have a corporate fall. In Adam, all fell. And Paul says in writing to the Romans, and also in 1 Corinthians, For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

I think it is playing fast and loose with the scriptures to say the first all means one thing, and the second all means something else. As in Adam all die, and I think that's corporate.

That's across the whole spectrum, not only of humanity, but of all creation. Vegetation fell in it. The animal kingdom fell in it.

[6 : 48] Everything fell in it. Because Adam was the federal head of the human race. And when he fell, when he relinquished his jurisdiction and his headship, everything under him collapsed.

And as a result, we've got a fallen world. And as you read Genesis 3, you see that the earth is cursed. And all of these curses God pronounced upon the earth are those things that are remedied in the death of Christ.

And yet, whereas the fall was corporate, redemption is corporate, we do not see the application of redemption across the board.

And I take that to be parallel to the fact that when Adam died, he died in two ways. He died spiritually and he died physically. He died spiritually when he ate.

And he died physically 930 years later. So when Christ died on that cross, all of humanity and all of the world was reconciled to God.

[7 : 52] That means the way of access was open to God because of the finished work of Christ. But it is only partially applied. It is applied spiritually in the same way that Adam fell spiritually, but it is not applied physically.

This enables your spirit, your human spirit, to be regenerated, to be saved. But your body isn't. Your body is yet unredeemed.

And will not be redeemed until Romans chapter 8, because the whole creation groans and travails in pain, waiting to it for the adoption, for the disclosure of the sons of glory, for the adoption or the redemption of the body.

And the body has not been redeemed. But 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that when this corruptible, meaning this present body, puts on incorruption, and this mortal, meaning this body that is able to die, puts on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying, death is swallowed up in victory.

So this thing is only halfway complete. Whereas the price Christ paid for redemption is total. And he will never have to die again.

[9 : 05] The price was paid in full. But the benefit of that has not been fully applied. And that is why we die physically, but we are regenerated spiritually.

So any questions about that before we move on? It's a very important point. All right? All right? He talks about the extent of reconciliation.

And he says, whether they are things in earth or things in heaven. And you, addressing the Colossian believers, and you see a parallel here, by the way, if you're familiar with Ephesians chapter 2, you will recall that some of the same concepts that Paul deals with in Ephesians are treated here in Colossians as well.

And the reason, I think, is simply because the Spirit of God recognized that both of those audiences had similar needs. And you, that were sometime alienated, separated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death.

And some of these other translations, 20th century New Testament says, by the sacrifice of Christ's earthly body in death. New English Bible says, by Christ's death in his body of flesh and blood.

[10 : 31] And he did that to present you holy and unblameable and unprovable in his sight. The word holy, of course, comes from the Greek word hagios.

We've looked at it in the past. And it simply means separated. Separated. We are, therefore, saints. And it is the same word related to the term saints.

The separated ones. And unblameable and unprovable in his sight. That means there is no basis. The Greek word for this, unblameable, means there is no basis for hauling you in.

Or bringing you in. As a law officer would arrest someone and bring them in for accounting or to give an account for their actions.

And I take it that what this is talking about is to present you holy and unblameable and unprovable in his sight. And this, in one regard, has to do with the position that we have in Christ.

[11 : 37] And it is the same as Christ's. This holiness and unblameable and unprovable in his sight has a condition attached to it.

There is a big if there. And in the Greek, and I don't want to throw around a lot of Greek, but it's important to note this because it doesn't come through in the English. This is what the Greek linguists call a first class conditional clause.

And it is stated with the assumption that a thing that is stated is true or that it is a given. Some translations render it since because it is predicated upon a past act.

And it is too bad that it isn't rendered that way in any of the options that are listed here. But the use of the word if in the Greek, it's immaterial, but actually it's a with the indicative mood.

And it means if such is the case, and it is. It is the presumption of the reality of the statement. And that's why I think sense is a good way to render it.

[12 : 56] You'll find the same expression in Colossians 3 and verse 1 where Paul, we don't have that here on the text, but Paul says, If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ dwells at the right hand of God.

And there is a with the indicative of first class conditional clause in Colossians 3.1. And Paul isn't saying, if you are risen with Christ, as if to imply, maybe you are, maybe you aren't.

But if, that's not the point at all. It is, if you are risen with Christ, and you are, therefore seek those things that are above.

And there again is a case where sense would be a much better translation because it expresses the reality of a thing. So, that may well be rendered this way here.

Since you continue in the faith, grounded and settled. And the presupposition is, one is a true believer. And if you are a true believer, this interpretation would say, if you are a true believer, you will, there is no doubt, you will continue.

[14 : 14] This is called the perseverance of the saints. And this is the take that our Calvinist friends place upon this. They are simply saying, predicated upon the idea of the tulip and the unconditional election.

If you are elect, then what is true of the last letter in the tulip, which is a P, that refers to the perseverance of the saints, you will persevere.

And the reason you will persevere is because you have to persevere. God has made it to be so. And you have no choice in the matter any more than you had a choice in the matter of election.

But, of course, there are many Christians who simply do not buy that kind of reasoning. And they would tend to reject that. So, let's go on and read the rest of the condition.

Verse 23, if, that is, you are presented holy, unblameable, unreprouvable in his sight, if, and if that is a condition, if you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard.

[15 : 21] And the alternate interpretation, or at least one of the alternate interpretations, would say, salvation always comes with a condition.

Just as you believe in order to be saved, you can engage in unbelief and consequently be lost. Through bad behavior or wrong belief, you can forfeit your salvation.

So that, whereas, once you were saved, you are no longer saved. And this particular passage is used as a proof text for that. And having presented these two concepts as perhaps the most popular, I will reserve a third because you may have some input on this and I'd like to know your thoughts.

Anybody got any ideas how you would address this? Anyone? The silence is deafening.

Mike? Billy Graham had a friend, I believe it was Billy Graham, who decided that he didn't want anything to do with God anymore.

[16 : 30] Yeah. Charles Templeton. Yes. He chose to reject that belief. So it seems safe to me to say, even with this explanation, that with his free will he chose to not be saved.

Yeah. Or he chose at least to repudiate what everybody thought was his salvation and what he thought was his salvation at one time. So this is a very interesting case study and in many ways a very sad one too because, and I'll just give you a little bit of background on this, it was Lee Strobel who came from a background of atheism, if not atheism, at least a deep agnosticism against everything spiritual.

And Lee Strobel was the legal editor and wrote columns on legality and law and stuff like that for, I think it was either the Chicago Tribune or the Chicago Sun-Times, I don't know which, for a number of years.

And of course he has a law background, a legal background. And he was the one who introduced us to this man, Charles Templeton.

And he went on to say in the video that we showed at the men's class on a Thursday morning, probably a couple of years ago, that Charles Templeton and Billy Graham were great personal friends.

[18 : 09] And before Billy Graham was discovered to be the evangelist that he came to be, they would hold evangelistic services together.

And this was before 1947 or 48 when Billy Graham got national recognition with this huge crusade in Los Angeles that really launched his career.

This even predated that. And he and Chuck Templeton would hold evangelistic services in different churches and different venues throughout the country, but with decidedly smaller crowds.

And they would usually take turns preaching. Billy would preach one night and Charles Templeton would preach the next night. And these evangelistic meetings very ordinarily went on for maybe two weeks.

And it was the general consensus of just about everyone that Chuck Templeton was the better preacher. than Billy Graham. And that might be hard for us to believe today, but that's the way it was perceived then.

[19 : 12] And they were having considerable success in their evangelistic endeavors. A number of people were coming to faith in Christ. And Chuck Templeton and Billy Graham were just good, close, personal friends and colleagues.

And one day, the story goes, as Lee Strobel unfolded it, Chuck Templeton picked up a copy, the current issue of Life magazine.

And on the cover was the picture of an emaciated, starving little child in Africa with the typical expressive distended belly that always accompanies starvation.

And as he stared at that picture, he said, right then and there, he reassessed his whole belief system and came to the conclusion that there must not be a God in order to allow something like this to take place.

This poor, distraught child, as innocent as could be, suffering the consequences of starvation. How could there possibly be a merciful, loving God who could allow this kind of thing to go on?

[20 : 32] And that's all it took for Chuck Templeton to walk away from his faith. And despite the pleas and the entreaties of Billy Graham to convince his friend otherwise, he was unsuccessful in doing so.

And Templeton gave up all of his meetings, all of his interest in spiritual things, his calendar, preaching, etc. Eventually took some kind of a secular job and moved to Canada.

But as the story goes on, they remained good friends, often corresponding and talking on the telephone, even through the years. And it was said that Billy never stopped praying for his friend Chuck Templeton and always wanted him to come back to his faith.

And as far as we know, he never did. And Lee Strobel, who was telling the story, and by the way, it is in his series that he wrote on evidence for God, evidence for faith, and evidence for Christ.

The story is recounted in those books, or at least one of them. And Strobel said that he had opportunity to contact Charles Templeton and called him in Canada and asked him if it would be possible for him to come and interview him.

[21 : 53] And Templeton invited him to his home and told him to come on up. And he did. And when he got there, he said he discovered that Templeton was in one of the stages of Alzheimer's.

And, of course, that affected his thinking, his memory, etc. And he did make one statement that was, in a way, very, very sad.

And I shall never forget it, because this is not an exact quote of it, but it's very close. Where Templeton told Lee Strobel, after all these years, Yes, he says, I still retain my belief in atheism.

I do not believe that there is a God, but I must confess, I do miss Jesus. Isn't that something?

You don't know to what degree that was affected by his Alzheimer's or his memory or his rethinking. Who knows what?

[23 : 01] But I think here is a perfect example of someone, and I don't know to this day, I don't have any way of knowing, whether he truly was a believer and just went astray, or whether he had a gift for gab and a way of expressing himself and dealing with biblical texts, etc.

And was just able to put across some things that he himself really didn't understand or believe. I don't know. We have to leave that with God. But I do know that there are numbers of Christians, and I'm sorry to say that many of them are in our pulpits today who really do not have a sufficient apologetic background to be able to deal with these issues.

And we have talked a little bit about this before, and we've talked about Randy Alcorn's book on if God, if there is a God who exists, then how do you account for all the suffering in this world?

And Randy Alcorn pointed out, and I couldn't agree with him more, that this is perhaps the largest sticking point that exists in people coming to grips with the reality of God.

They just cannot equate the existence of a benevolent, all-powerful, merciful, loving God with the presence of evil and pain and heartache and suffering and disease and injustice and everything that is wrapped up in this world.

[24 : 37] They just cannot coordinate those. And in my estimation, what it boils down to is if they concede that there is a God, He's doing a pretty lousy job of running the universe because He allows all this stuff to go on.

And yet, if you take into consideration the totality of Scripture testimony, it becomes quite apparent that God is not to blame for the condition the world is in today.

That man is to blame with the volition that God gave man. And it is we who have messed things up. It isn't God.

And it is Jesus Christ who came to undo the works of the devil and phase one of that has been accomplished. So, we cannot charge God foolishly and say, why are you allowing these things to go on?

We've got to remember Genesis chapter 3 and in effect, God says, listen, I told your first parents that in the day that they eat, they will surely die.

[25 : 47] And this death that they are going to die is going to result in a whole lot of things that you're not going to like. But that went with the territory. And that's exactly what we bought into.

So, what we see that is wrong with the world today is not God's doing, it's man's doing. And once we understand that, we can put the blame where it belongs. Mike? Is it also a possibility that this man that we're speaking of, in spite of his learning and his ability to speak, didn't understand?

And therefore, it appeared that he was rejecting, but in fact, his own, his own intellect got in the way.

That is an excellent observation. And that is entirely possible because I'm convinced of one thing, that man's intellect can be great and really significant on a comparative basis.

His intellect can be great and really significant, but there is one thing that is more powerful and that is greater than man's intellect, and that is his spiritual blindness.

[27 : 00] That is very compelling. And you can take the most illumined individual that you can find of an Einsteinian category and spiritual truth is capable of going right over his head and he can grasp everything else that you can almost think of, you know, I mean, great philosophical concepts great mathematical formulas and so on and still be utterly devoid when it comes to understanding spiritual truth because that is spiritually illumined.

And 1 Corinthians 2 makes that very clear and talks about what we are able to know and we are able to know it by revelation. But this revelation is not given to those who don't want it.

It is not provided for those who don't want it. And for those who do, God will not leave them in the dark. He will get the information to them that they need. So all of this is tied in with this particular issue here.

Now some people, of course, would say, well, Chuck Templeton really was a believer but he walked away from God and therefore he forfeited and lost his salvation. He isn't saved anymore. And that would be a pretty popular opinion particularly among Christians if you do not understand the concept of grace.

Because grace is that which God imparts only to the undeserving. And you have to know that you are undeserving. Because grace is the kind of thing that if you think you have it coming you can't have it.

[28 : 40] You are not a recipient of it. Grace is required to be bestowed only upon those who know they are unworthy. And I don't know where Chuck Templeton fits into this but by now he knows.

I don't know where he is. I know he passed away not too long ago and whatever his state is he now knows better than he did then. So any other thoughts before I pose another possibility regarding this?

Yes, Marvis? I just had a thought because of the sin of Adam and what God and Adam and Eve had no clue what they did you know the consequences of that you know before is it not possible or true that actually we all deserve to look like that little kid in Ethiopia or wherever it was.

We all that's what we have earned and what we deserve the grace of what we have and how much God gives us that's where we're really confused because we think we did it we think it's because of our work and our good deeds and how nice we are that we have this home and this family when really it's only God's grace and actually when you said something about grace I was thinking that we don't really even understand grace even those of us who think we understand grace don't really understand the depths of God's grace oh I'm sure yeah I'm sure this is true and what you said just reminds me of a verse in the gospels I don't know if it's Matthew or Luke but our Lord says God makes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust and theologians call that common grace whereby all our partakers even the heathen even the atheist etc they are still recipients to some degree of the grace of God absolutely and this this fall that took place this act of disobedience you know stop and think about it it was a very simple thing to do very simple prohibition nothing complicated about it of all the trees you may freely eat but of this tree don't eat and their disobedience while it was an incredibly profound act in one way extending to extending to the separation of all creation from the creator it was still a very simple act and to partake of that fruit was not a difficult thing to do it was a very easy thing to do and yet the remedy for that is a very easy thing to do also it is simply believe just believe and all Adam and Eve did was exercise unbelief in what

God told them God said don't eat of it in the day that you do you'll surely die well we know the story about Satan and the serpent and when he presented his argument well the reason God doesn't want you to eat of that is because he knows that if you do you'll become like him knowing good from evil and God doesn't want any competition so Eve is confronted with a decision and either way she goes it's going to be a simple matter of belief does she believe God or does she believe the serpent so simple as that and you know something it has not changed to this day it is still a simple matter of belief when you believe you are exercising trust confidence reliance dependence upon another and when she chose to believe the serpent she simply thought she was getting a better deal and the serpent convinced her and she believed she believed the serpent she disbelieved

[33 : 19] God and Adam that's a different story because Adam was not deceived Adam ate of that fruit with his eyes wide open he knew what he was doing but Adam was confronted with a choice the choice was do I go with the woman or do I go with the creator and I think this is in part what Paul meant when he talked about in Romans 1 about man who worships and serves the creature more than the creator and that's exactly what Eve did you know and that's exactly what people do today nothing has changed there are multitudes of people who are far more impressed and believing of what other people tell them than they are with what God has said so nothing has changed in that regard we have our so-called human experts that we place great reliance and trust upon and in reality there is no such thing as a human expert there is only one expert and that's the creator any other thoughts

I'm afraid we're not going to get to what was our target for today but anyway we'll just stay right here in verse 23 the if you continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven whereof I Paul am made a minister now what do you think about this passage as regards verse 22 to present you holy that is separate and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight now no question about it this has overtones of positional truth and the unblameable holy means there's nothing that can be laid to your account and unreprouvable in his sight where do you think this presentation is going to take place or how and what will be the subject of it to present you holy and unblameable when and where might this presentation take place any thoughts the award throne okay any other thoughts okay getting into heaven

I guess it's like yeah she's unblameable so she can enter you know okay okay well I think Marie has hit on it and so help me we did not discuss this we did not discuss this before this morning began but I did tell her that we were going to focus on it and that I thought I recalled giving you a kind of an assignment about that and I think this is and I think the context supports it this is talking about the believers time of evaluation it is not a time of punishment for sin because Christ has already paid for that but it is a time of personal reckoning and Paul said in Romans 14 that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that is the judgment of discernment the judgment of distinction the judgment of evaluation so that we will give an account for the deeds done in the body whether they be good or whether they be evil and

I think that also ties in with Paul's expression in 1 Corinthians when he talks about the award thrown there and that our works will be evaluated on the basis of their worthiness whether they will be gold silver and precious stone or whether they will be wood hay and stubble and for those believers who are going to have largely wood hay and stubble to give an account for they're not going to be dismissed from heaven but they're certainly going to be impacted as far as rewards are concerned and I have no idea what these rewards are going to consist of or how they are going to be determined I just know there are going to be rewards and there are going to be loss of rewards but Paul makes that clear in 1 Corinthians 3 when he talks about those who will suffer loss yet they themselves will be saved so as by fire and the idea is the wood hay and stubble are going to be consumed burned up those things are highly flammable but the gold silver and precious stone will of course endure and that's the level of our works whether they are done in the flesh or whether they are done in the spirit so

I think what this text is saying and what it connects with with the other text that we've been mentioning is that our our being presented wholly unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight will be our continuation in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven and if there are those who are not grounded and settled and let me ask you do you think there are any believers who are not grounded and settled they are the same people of whom Paul spoke earlier in this chapter I don't know if it's earlier or later but it's maybe it's Ephesians I don't know but anyway it talks about Ephesians not being as children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine that's another way of saying ungrounded and unsettled there is no stability there it takes nothing to jar them or shake them in their faith because they are shallow type individuals they have not put down deep enough roots or understanding to have staying power in their faith and they are blown over by every kind of adversity that comes along they're always ready to chuck it always ready to go on to something else always ready to forget it well it doesn't work for me that kind of thing these are people who are ungrounded and unsettled and they are going to be demonstrated as such in their being in this category other thoughts about this anybody yeah

[40 : 38] John is it possible that this Charles Templeton was presented holy and unblameable unreprouvable in God's sight but then talked about the judgment seat of Christ his whole life is going to be wood hay and stubble and he won't have any rewards from that point on and he will have to see that in the judgment seat of Christ as a wasted life well I think that's entirely possible that is entirely possible I cannot assign that to him but we can only say that and I take great comfort in this God reads the heart God knows the intentions of all of us

God knows what is really there and he is the only one because he thoroughly knows that who is able to fully take into consideration all of the ingredients all of the components that made up our life he knows exactly what you were subjected to he knows exactly what you had to endure he knows exactly what you are responses to those kind of situations this is why God is the only rightful judge you know that verse where Paul says vengeance is mine I will repay saith the Lord the reason that is so important is because the payback that an individual is going to receive for their works can only be equitable and just from someone who knows all of the issues and all of the facts this is why we are not permitted to take vengeance ourselves or to take what we view as the law into our own hands is because there are always ingredients involved that we don't know and we don't understand and if you keep that in mind it will deliver you from a judgmental spirit because we sometimes can be so quick to judge people based on what we see or think but we need to remind ourselves we always have an incomplete picture everybody's got a story and we never really fully know another person's story but very often that doesn't keep us from rushing to judgment as if we did know and we're very eager sometimes to come down on somebody with a spirit of judgment or condemnation or blame when we need to be very very careful about that because well

Christ said that we are to judge with a righteous judgment and that sometimes that means giving a lot of people the benefit of the doubt you know and all of that comes into play other comments or questions yeah Mike so if all of the the hate hay and stubble are burned up that what that means is you realize because it's been pointed out to you at the judgment seat that what you valued what you thought you were doing is not acceptable but nevertheless we accept you here yeah yeah absolutely and I think that is borne out also in in Philippians 3 where Paul talks about his credentials and he says he was born a

Hebrew the Hebrews the tribe of Benjamin and circumcised the eighth day and he listed this long litany of what every Jew would regard as positive benefits and he says I looked upon all of those things now as dung as rubbish as garbage because those were the things that impressed people but none of it impressed God and he says I trade all of those things in for the righteousness of Christ not having a righteousness of my own but the righteousness which is through faith in Christ so there is another comparison absolutely and it ties in with what we're talking about very definitely other thoughts yes I I had I had I had a note along with what Mike was saying that if we continue in the faith then we won't have a lot of dross that we'll have to burn up wood and still but our life will be yeah yeah absolutely this the dross is accumulated by acts of the flesh that's what builds up the dross factor and works of the flesh are those worthless things like like we just enumerated that Paul listed as these are real wonderful things on somebody's resume to have all of those things but he says they're nothing

Paul saying they're dross they are dross the things that men value so highly God does not value at all and just the opposite is often the case so that's another another facet of the same thing they are but dross other thoughts anybody and this be not moved away from the hope or from the confidence of the gospel in the gospel which you have heard and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven whereof I Paul am made a minister I think that this expression is simply a plan in an obvious hyperbole that is given in the same way that we use hyperbole all the time and Paul isn't saying in a literal sense that every single creature who lives under heaven has heard the gospel isn't saying that he is saying it in the sense of an affected or an obvious hyperbole like we use all the time which is very common to

[47 : 27] Greek and Hebrew and you use it when you say something like well we had a big party last night oh really well who was there everybody everybody was there well we know everybody wasn't there but we know what we mean by that and Paul where have I Paul and made a minister who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh only have a couple of minutes left but I want to touch on this because it's a very important concept when Paul talks about filling up or completing 20th century says supplement the afflictions endured by Christ he is not suggesting in that the price that Christ paid on the cross is somehow lacking or inadequate or that there is more to be paid in order to accomplish our redemption

I suspect that some might give that interpretation to it but we know that when our Lord said it is finished he didn't leave anything undone it was finished so when Paul is talking here about filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh all he is saying is this is that Jesus Christ continues to this day to the day in which Paul lived to the day in which we live today Christ continues to suffer he is not suffering in the sense that he is expiating or atoning for sin or paying for sin but he is suffering in that his people are suffering and anywhere God's people are suffering he is suffering we are in his body he is the head and we are the body of

Christ the body continues to suffer and Christ continues to suffer because of human sin this has nothing to do with the payment that he made on the cross because the suffering that he is experiencing now has nothing to do with the atonement it has to do with the consequences of living in a fallen world that has not yet had full application of the reconciling and redemptive work of Christ so there is still evil in the world and there is still suffering in the world there is still heartache in the world there is still disappointment and to the extent that a believer is enduring or experiencing any of those things Christ continues to suffer do you see the concept okay Marvis what I always took it to mean that it wasn't Christ suffering it was the sufferings of

Paul and what he said was that there were sufferings that he knew he was going to have to go through and said for the body's sake and Paul meant for the church that that was the job that God had given him and he was willing to do that to the end so that and I guess it comes from so that we would understand more how you know the information regarding the Jew and Gentile and rightly dividing and all of that so I had taken it differently because I think you're right on and I think what you were saying might even be called the primary application of that and I would tie that in with Acts chapter 9 when on the road to Damascus when Christ appeared to Paul and then later when he's in the house and he hasn't eaten or drank for three days and the

Lord calls Ananias to go and lay hands on Saul of Tarsus and Ananias doesn't want to do it because he says I've heard many things about this guy and the Lord says you go your way as I told you and I will show him what great things he must suffer to bear my name before the Jew and the Gentile so this is a very first hand application as you've suggested and I guess I'm just extending it to the whole body of Christ because Paul is talking here I think from a personal standpoint and he's saying the suffering that I am experiencing is like a continuation of Christ's suffering not in any regard to pay for salvation or redemption or anything like that but suffering is a predictable part of the territory that Saul of Tarsus was getting into and he goes on to explain that by saying in my flesh fill up that which is behind the afflictions of

[52 : 51] Christ in my flesh for his body's sake and that's you and me that's his body's sake which is the church whereof I there's personalizing again I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God even the mystery and that's a really rich full subject coming up in verse 26 that we'll have to reserve for next time but primarily I couldn't agree more Paul is talking about his own personal suffering being called as an apostle I would extrapolate that however to include the suffering of all believers I believe well just grab a name out Dietrich Bonhoeffer I think he suffered as a member of the body of Christ you see when one member suffers the whole body suffers when one rejoices the whole body rejoices so there's a lot of rejoicing and suffering going on in the body of

Christ simply by virtue of living in a fallen world so any other thoughts before we dismiss I want to I'm trying to I'm trying to resolve to finish everything that I'm supposed to on time and I don't mind telling you it's difficult so we've got a minute left anybody with other thoughts okay again I want to thank you for being here good Lord willing and the creep don't rise we'll plan to meet again next it'll be April and I mentioned put a blurb in the bulletin about questioning the continuation of the class and I didn't know there were so few here last week that I thought maybe some people didn't get the word and weren't here but I have I have I have no want so as long as there is a demand I'm happy to do what I can to fulfill that demand but

I don't want to put and provided as coming from your spirit we trust you will sanctify it to our inner man so that we can grow and be steadfast and stabilized more and more in this wonderful faith you've given us in and through our Lord Jesus Christ in his name we pray amen we all have a blessed day