



Colossians 1:28-29

Our Goal in Life and Ministry

The world knows nothing about the greatest most revolutionary mystery that has ever taken place in history. The popular television programs, the news documentaries and commentaries, sitcoms, movies never mention it. It is never taught in the great universities. Secular wisdom, new age movements, secret societies and world religions are not aware of it. You find it only in the good news of Jesus Christ.

The most basic thing about Christianity is that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Himself indwells the Christian believer. Jesus uttered the most astounding words to His disciples the night before He went to the cross. "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home in Him."

This is the mystery that was hidden and kept secret since the foundation of the world, but now made known by the revelation of God to His saints. This truth cannot be known by man's natural abilities, but is a secret hidden in the counsel of God and revealed only to His chosen servants.

What is this secret that has been divinely revealed? It is Christ in all His glorious riches actually dwelling through His Spirit in the lives of all believers, whether they are Jewish or non-Jewish. Christ in you is the hope of glory. The risen, ascended, glorified Christ now dwells in our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit.

After a person is born again spiritually the process of sanctification process begins which will accomplish God's eternal purpose for each believer. It is a process that is completed when we stand face to face before the Lord God. All progress in the Christian life takes place only as we come to the understanding and put into practice the great mystery of Christ in you, the hope of glory."

This is the way the apostle Paul lived his life and the way he taught others to live the Christian life. He said Jesus energized his life with a powerful new spiritual life. Is this not what people are searching for in our day? When Jesus Christ takes up residence in your life there is a powerful new source of power pulsating in you. He brings new desires, new principles, new motives, and new goals to your life. His living presence is in your life and He leads and fills your life with Himself. Jesus Christ went to the cross and died for our sins, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven and now through His Spirit has taken up residence in us. He lives that He might live in you. This is the greatest, most astounding truth taught in the Bible. The Holy Spirit labors to bring every believer to that understanding and reality in his Christian life. When we avail ourselves to Him our lives are changed and we never ever

When we avail ourselves to Him our lives are changed and we never ever want to go back to the old life.

We manifest the glory of God only as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit takes up residence within us. It is His transforming presence that changes our lives and is displayed before a watching world. His presence within us will manifest the glory of God, and nothing else.

One day Jesus will come and that transformation will be gloriously complete (John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). What we experience now is only temporary. Then we will bring honor and glory to the Son of God for all eternity.

THE MATURITY OF CHRIST IN YOU

When a person repents of his sins and believes on Christ as His Savior there is nothing between him and God (Rom. 8:1). It is important that the believer not allow anything or anyone to stand between him and his Savior (1 Tim. 2:5-6). Jesus is the complete and final and perfect revelation of God to man.

Jesus Christ needs no help. He *alone* is all the sinner needs. He alone is the treasure and wisdom of God. There is no one or anything that can add one thing to the completed work of Jesus Christ. He is all sufficient to save us and keep us saved.

With our spiritual birth a process of growth begins with the opening of our heart to the Lord Jesus and receiving Him as our Savior. It is a process that progresses toward a specific goal which is to present you holy in His sight, without blemish or accusation. The evidence that this is happening is if you continue in faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope presented in the gospel. It is this progress that is the evidence. It is not how you start the Christian life; it is how you finish the race that counts. The evidence that there was never any true faith in Christ, and never born again, is seen in individuals going back to the way they once were. The continuance in the faith is the evidence of spiritual life. The true believer will persevere. One wag said, "If your faith fizzles before you finish, it is because it was faulty from the first. "

Am I saying that we must have perfect faith? No. There is no one who has perfect faith. Our faith wobbles and grows dim at times. It has its up and downs. However, true living faith in Christ never ceases. The new imparted life we have received at our spiritual birth continues to grow and we mature in the likeness of Christ. It is the perseverance that is the proof of reality.

Paul declares his goal in the ministry.

This is the same goal the Holy Spirit has in His ministry in Paul's life. He writes, "that we may present every man complete in Christ" (v. 28).

The Holy Spirit's goal in Paul's life was to present him "complete in Christ" at the second coming. Only then

The Holy Spirit's goal in Paul's life was to present him "complete in Christ" at the second coming. Only then will the Spirit have brought to an end, finished, completed, and perfected His work in Paul. This was also Paul's goal in the ministry. It was his passion (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 14:20).

The goal of my ministry is to do likewise. I strive to be mentally, spiritually, physically and emotionally prepared to provide my congregation with the spiritual atmosphere and opportunity to become "complete in Christ."

The word "present" is almost equivalent to "make," or "render." The idea is that we may make everyone complete in Christ, or "bring him into God's presence." What an incredible responsibility we have to be a servant of God. God have mercy on us if we take it lightly. Paul's goal is that every believer stands before God spiritually complete and mature. What a privilege pastors will have to present you to God the Father complete in Christ.

When will this incredible event take place? Probably Paul has in mind the *Parousia*, the appearing of Christ. No where does the apostle Paul advocate any claim to instantaneous and absolute perfection in the present earthly life.

It is important that we not forget the responsibility we have for one another in the body of Christ. We are to build one another up in the faith. Have you ever reflected on how many prayers, tears, how much heartache and disappointment others have gone through for you to come to Christ? Have you ever considered how much others have endured and labored to see you conformed to the character and likeness of Christ? The apostle told the church at Colossae, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake" (v. 24). Why? Paul says so that I may proclaim the mystery of "Christ in you" and present every one of you perfect in Christ. That was Paul's goal and that is God's goal for every believer. No one is an island unto himself in the Christian life.

Perfect

The word "complete" (*teleios*) means having reached its end, finished, complete, and perfect. The idea Paul has in mind is fully-grown or mature individual in union with Christ. Paul pictures a spiritually mature member of Christ's body. That which is complete has been brought to an end by completing or perfecting. The Christ-actualized person wants to be all that God fully intended him or her to be in Christ.

Paul has in mind a full grown man as opposed to young boy. He is mature mentally and spiritually.

The only way to reach this maturity is by union with Christ. Paul is stressing that mature believers realize that it is Christ's life in them that is the source of power, change and victory. This is the only way to overcome temptation. Christ is actually living in us now. The "perfect," or mature believer is growing in that understanding.

The Amplified Bible brings out the full idea: "that we may present every person mature —full grown, fully initiated, complete and perfect —in Christ, the Anointed One. Absolute moral completeness in every man is Paul's goal. He seeks the final perfection of every man whom he teaches."

When Jesus Christ comes into your life you want to see and experience more and more of Him than ever before. Our longing to see Jesus and be with Him is a sure sign that we are in Christ and He is in us.

He who longs for Jesus to abide with him and be with him for all eternity has been born spiritually. It is Christ in me, the hope of glory. Such a person never outgrows Christ. Once we have such an intimate love experience with Him we grow to need and desire Him more and more. When you feed on Christ you hunger

experience with Him we grow to need and desire Him more and more. When you feed on Christ you hunger and thirst still more and more for Him. It is an ever-growing experience. This unquenchable desire for more and more of Christ is a heavenly hunger. It is a spiritual growth that longs for a fuller supply. The person who has little of Christ can do with a little of Christ. However, he who has much of Christ desires more and more of Christ every day.

The end result of Christ in you is a person just like Jesus Christ. We have a perfect model who lived the perfect example for us. God's purpose for each of us is to present every man perfect in Christ. "

Complete in Christ

Christ dwells within us for the purpose of presenting us complete to the Father. It begins the moment we put our faith in Jesus Christ and are born spiritually. The new birth begins a process that continues throughout the Christian's life on this earth. The process will be completed with the imminent, visible, personal return of Jesus Christ for His church (1:22). Paul wrote, "He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach. The change takes place in us.

This is the goal God has for every Christian. Three times Paul repeats "Every man" in v. 28. No believer is excluded. All the truth of God is for all the people of God. We present each believer before the face of God in a condition of complete spiritual maturity. There are no exceptions. There are no heights in Christian achievement which are not within the reach of all believers by the power of God's grace. There are no select few in the body of Christ. We are in Christ, and Christ is in us. God gives His fullest wisdom and power to everyone because it is Christ in you. This eternal position is true of all believers and it never changes.

Lightfoot reminds us, "In Christ, every believer is *teleios, fully initiated*, for he has been admitted as an *eye-witness* of its most profound, most awful secrets. "

In prison Rutherford cried out to have his heart enlarged till it was as big as heaven, that he might hold all Christ within it; and then he felt that even this was too narrow a space for the boundless love of Jesus, since the heavens itself cannot contain Him, so he cried out for a heaven as large as seven heavens. With that persecuted Puritan saint we, too, can cry for more of Christ if we have Him. May God enlarge our hearts and create within us a hunger for more of Him. Oh to be like Jesus! I am famished for more of Jesus. That I may know Him was the passion of the apostle Paul. Yet, being full, we long for more and more of Him. Not your gifts and your provisions, but You, O Lord is the desire of our hearts.

The growing believer longs for Christ alone. We rejoice in Christ and nothing less than Christ will do. Christ alone can satisfy the justices of God. Nothing but Christ can satisfy the human heart. That is a mystery. It is because nothing but Christ can satisfy the righteousness of a holy God.

And when you come to die, what else will do but Christ? A deathbed without Christ is an eternal torment. None but Christ, none but Christ! This is our plea.

The quality of our ministry will be judged by the quality and maturity of those whom we present to Christ at His coming. That goal will test the effectiveness of my preaching and teaching. It will be the test of the results of our Sunday School classes and youth ministries.

THE MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHING THE MATURITY OF CHRIST IN YOU

Christ in me means in the midst of the spiritual conflicts there is the inner working of the Spirit of Christ. Human endeavor can never accomplish God's eternal purposes, however, Christ in you and me can and will.

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Christ in you energizes the present, and gives prospect to the future. Christ in you is the only teacher you can fully trust with your eternal destiny. Christ in you as our great High Priest is the one perfect mediator who brings you into the holy presence of the LORD God. It is Christ in you who bears you to the throne of grace. Christ in you as King of kings is the one who rules over every dimension of your life. All of life is ordered and governed by the master teacher, priest and king who resides in you.

My responsibility

Paul describes his responsibility: Him we proclaim warning *every man*, and teaching *every man* in all wisdom, that we may present *every man* mature in Christ (v. 28, *emphasis added*).

We proclaim Christ

In v. 28 Paul declares, We proclaim (*kataggelo*) Him. Paul preached the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, not a philosophy about Christ, or some egocentric tangent. We are constantly announcing the deep secrets of God in Christ. It is evangelistic in its thrust. Only the Word of God has the power and authority to bring us to God and change our lives.

We proclaim Christ. We preach Christ. It is a Christ-centered ministry that accomplishes God's eternal purposes. Unashamedly I preach Christ (Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 1:22-25, 30-31). In Him alone is there eternal life. Only as we present the Word of God in its fullness do we fathom its great riches. It will always point to Jesus Christ.

The message Paul declares is that Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). In Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (1:19). In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:3). In Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (2:9). Paul's message is the highest Christology. Jesus is the perfect portrait of God. Paul preached Christ!

The apostle tells us to take a long hard look at Jesus Christ and you see what God is like in His perfect being. In Jesus, the invisible God becomes visible to men. He is the perfect revelation and representation of God. In Jesus Christ we see God. We can look at Him and say that is what God is like. In Christ we see the whole of God. Jesus Christ is unique and is alone the full and unique revelation of God. That is why Christ is our only hope of a right relationship with God for now and eternity.

Admonish every man

The idea of admonish (*noutheteo*) is to train by word of mouth. It is to admonish, exhort, warn against error, instruct in the Christian life, stimulate and encourage.

It is our responsibility as ministers of the Word of God to train by words of encouragement and to give reproof when it is required. It is the idea that when needed the reproof will be earnest and severe enough to bring about maturity. It calls for personal responsibility on the part of the giver and receiver. We must warn Christians of the error of the new age movements and the secret mystery cults.

I am convinced more than ever in my life that everything that we face in the Christian life is leading us to that ultimate goal of maturity in Christ (Rom. 8:27-30; 1 John 3:2; 2 Cor. 3:18). Everything that comes into our lives is filtered through God's gracious hands. And I am convinced that everything that stands in the way in our personal lives that keep us from reaching that goal must be removed when at all possible.

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We need to remind ourselves often that it is a process. Be patient. It takes a lifetime to be perfect in Christ.

Teaching every man with all wisdom

We are teaching (*didasko*) every man with all wisdom meaning we inform and give instruction to every person in the saving truth of Jesus Christ. And we must go on to instruct them in the faith. It is astounding the number of unorthodox teachings making inroads into the mainline denominational churches today. We must urge church leaders to teach the historic doctrines of Biblical Christianity.

When individuals put their faith in Christ they do not instantly achieve all their potential in Christ. Spiritual growth must take place, and it takes place over time. We will be presented mature or perfect in Christ at the final judgment. But it is a long journey till then. The Gnostic false teachers at Colossae taught the perfection was only for a select few super-Christians. The apostle Paul declared there are no spiritual elite in the body of Christ. He sees the day when every believer will be spiritually perfect. One day we will all be complete or full-grown and mature in Christ. This must ever be the goal of our teaching ministry. We work at our position becoming our practice.

I labor

The apostle Paul says, "I labor" which is a strong word implying toil, labor unto weariness, striving to the point of weariness or exhaustion. Paul is a hard worker in the ministry. He toils unto the point of weariness and exhaustion. He also strives taxing all his energies against hostile foes as a wrestler does in the Grecian games.

Since Paul's goal was a spiritual goal he must use spiritual methods to accomplish it.

Let's look at every task we do as an opportunity to serve Christ. We proclaim Christ as the only way of salvation and eternal life. But Christ is also our sanctification. We live the Christian life by grace through faith in Christ every day of our lives. If we don't we have never learned how to live.

Where do you find the power for such an impossible task?

God's responsibility

God provides the supernatural power for such an undertaking. Paul tells us he is striving according to His power (v. 29b). It is the idea of a wrestler contending in the arena for the Olympic championship. He is preparing for a wrestling contest. In the ministry of God's Word we are contending, struggling according to the power of God working in us.

Paul is energized by the supernatural power of Christ in him. He is motivated and energized by the Holy Spirit. A. T. Robertson says Paul has "energy energized in dynamite."

It is absolutely futile to try to do God's work in our own carnal fleshly strength. If what we do for Christ is to have lasting value it must be done in God's supernatural power working mightily in us.

His power which mightily works within me (v. 29c). It is a super-human victory. We are energized by God's power. It is energy energized by His energy. He is the Energizer! He works. It is His energy working within us. It is His vitality as opposed to spiritual deadness. It is His activity as opposed to idle laziness. It is

within us. It is His vitality as opposed to spiritual deadness. It is His activity as opposed to idle laziness. It is His efficiency as opposed to useless activity. God mightily works within me. Please remember, it is Christ in you !”

The powerful play on words is more literally, “work, agonizing according to the divine energy which He powerfully energizes in me. ”

The word power (*energeia*), energy, working, operation, refers to Christ working in Paul. He energizes according to the manifestation of His power within us. It is His mighty strength empowering us. The word is used only of superhuman power. Here it is the mighty working energy of Christ within the believer.

As Paul spent himself in the service of God he kept on continually receiving God’s strength in return. That is the only way to minister. It is ministering from the overflow. The Amplified Bible reads, “For this I labor [unto weariness], striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me. ”

How does He do it? Cf. Zech. 4:6; Eph. 3:7, 20-21; Phil. 4:13, 19. It is Christ in you. There is no other way. God is working to present us holy, without blemish, free from accusation, just as the Lord Jesus is. Day by day the Holy Spirit is working to conform us to the image of God’s Son. He is in the process of blessing many sons to glory. The only way is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ”

When we are under the control of the Holy Spirit our thinking, conduct and behavior will be different than what it was before He was in control. When we are under His control He produces a new kind of life. The Spirit of God can then conform us to Jesus Christ in our daily walk. We are transformed by the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Christ, who fills and controls us. God’s method for His children is to have His children so under the control of the Spirit of God that the life of Christ is shown forth by the Spirit’s indwelling.

Are we left to try to live this kind of life all on our own? No. God has promised to give us His grace, His power, His strength to enable us to live His kind of life. But God can only reproduce Christ in the child of God as we allow Him to control us by the Holy Spirit. This is where we have a choice. We can allow ourselves to be controlled by the carnal flesh, or by the Holy Spirit. As we allow the Spirit to be in control, we produce spiritual fruit that is just like Christ. We take on the sweet fragrance of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control.

SOME ABIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Our world needs Christo-centric men and women. Let the world see who it is that lives in you. Open your mouth and let Christ speak through you. Let Christ in you weep through your eyes as He sees the world without hope weighed down in sin. Let Christ in you smile through your face. Let Christ in you work through your hands and walk with your feet, and be tender with your heart. Let Christ in you seek sinners and share His redemptive message. Let Christ in you comfort saints until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

Think what this world would be like with Christ living, and settling down and making Himself permanently at home in your heart. His sympathy, His love, His compassion, His purity, His power, His infinite resources living and working in us!

The result of such a life would be seen in Galatians 5:22-23. Would you like to see Christ in this community? Take a long hard look at a Spirit-filled Christian!

What are the implications of these great truths for us when temptation comes? What will be the difference when the pressures of circumstances, changes in life and chances come into your life? What will be the difference when persecution comes in waves over your life? What will be the difference when illness and death comes your way?

The only hope of glory is Christ in you. ”

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

Title: Colossians 1:28-29 Our Goal in Life and Ministry
Series: Colossians 1:27 Christ in You, the Hope of Glory

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