

# Colossians – The Glory of Jesus

## Study 3 - The glory of Jesus disclosed – 1:9-23

### Text:

*<sup>24</sup> I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church. <sup>25</sup> God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you. <sup>26</sup> This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God's people. <sup>27</sup> For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.*

*<sup>28</sup> So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. <sup>29</sup> That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.*

*<sup>2</sup> I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never met me personally. <sup>2</sup> I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. <sup>3</sup> In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

*<sup>4</sup> I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments. <sup>5</sup> For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong.*

### Background

Paul has no problem in talking very openly and honestly about his call and ministry to make known the gospel of Christ, and the cost of that call. He tells them frankly how hard he works and all he suffers, but not to complain or to manipulate. He just wants them to know how strongly he desires them to understand and embrace the fullness of the gospel through which they can flourish and grow to maturity (that is what the word 'perfect' means in 1:28). He sees all his sufferings as somehow sharing in the suffering of Christ. Some translations can even make it sound as though he thinks he is adding something that was lacking in Jesus's suffering. But he does not mean he, or anyone, can add to what Christ achieved on the cross in terms of our redemption. It is rather about the very real experience and practice of dying to self as he makes the gospel and the churches his priority, above his own comfort or reputation. This is participating in the pattern of death and resurrection that is the model for all discipleship and leadership. But all his suffering for the sake of the gospel is worth it because in this gospel a secret that has been hidden is finally disclosed – this secret, or mystery, is Christ - Christ living in us and us living in Christ. And this union with Christ is the basis of the hope that his glory will be revealed in us and through us. People will see Jesus in us! This is the message that he preaches and teaches, and builds on, no matter what agony it causes him. He just longs to see them grow so that God's glory will be disclosed to the world through them!

**To Think About:**

- In 2:1 the NLT has translated a word very accurately – it is a Greek word for striving from which we get our word agony. I imagine Paul agonising in prayer as he longs for the church to really grasp the gospel, the glory of their calling and for it to grow more Christlike.
- In 2:3, Paul states very clearly that the secret plan is ‘Christ himself’, and then adds *‘in him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’*. Jesus is like a treasure trove in which is placed everything we need to know for the spiritual life – let’s go digging deeper and deeper into that treasure.

**To Discuss:**

1. How much do we long to see people respond to the gospel and for the church to grow to maturity? How can we deepen that longing?
2. What is your understanding of this secret or mystery of the gospel – a mystery that is now disclosed?
3. What other verse, phrase or word captures your heart and imagination as you read this passage?

**To Do:**

- In prayer, talk with the Holy Spirit about anything you might need to do to deepen your longing for people to be transformed by the gospel
- Pray for church leaders, missionaries and/or anyone who God puts on your heart who you know are working hard, or striving, to see the church come to maturity across the world