

The Iron Men of Fellowship of Champions

Colossians 1:23-24

Lesson 10

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Opening Prayer

Colossians 1:23 (NOTES)

- “if indeed you continue in the faith” - It is them that persevere who are the revealed elect of God. It is not the virtues of endurance or perseverance that save. Rather, them that endure do so by God’s grace and power, and are thus, proved to be the elect. #Matt 24:9-13, Jude 1:24-25
 - Matt 24:9 [from the Olivet Discourse on the last days] “Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you [the Jews/Israel/144,000, a nation hated by the nations] will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 And at that time many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will rise up and mislead many people. 12 And because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will become cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end is the one who will be saved.

Discussion:

- Can we be assured of our endurance?
 - 1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.
- What assurance can we have that we will endure?
 - Jude 1:24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.
 - Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- In what other ways can we be assured of our salvation?
 - 1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.
 - John 15:18-19 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

- Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.
 - Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;
 - John 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.
- There are false believers sewn among the wheat. Tares who can give the outward appearance of being true believers. Some we may discern; others not. #Matt 13:24-30, 7:21-23
 - Matt 13:24 Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. 26 But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. 27 The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ 28 And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ The slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ 29 But he said, ‘No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’
 - Matt 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; leave Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”
 - “not moved away from the hope of the gospel” - That is to say, if you are not led astray by the Gnostics from your hope that the Gospel is the right course for your religious pursuit, though you are not yet firmly established and steadfast in it by faith. If you follow after the false philosophy of the Gnostics, you are not a true convert to Christ, and thus cannot be saved by your beliefs and practices. You may have heard the Gospel and responded superficially like the one on who the seed fell on rocky soil in the parable of the Sower. On the other hand, if you are a true convert, Christ will see to it that you are “firmly established and steadfast.”
 - Matt 13:20 [Parable of the Sower] The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it

with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

- Paul makes no judgement upon the salvation of any at Colossae. Apparently there are wheat and tares, true and false converts. He doesn't judge among them, but rather sets forth the criteria by which judgment will be passed.
 - Ro 14:4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.
- “the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister” Paul makes four points here:
 1. You have heard the gospel previously, and know it to be contrary to the false teaching of the Gnostics;
 2. It is the same gospel that has been preached around the world;
 3. He was "made a minister” of the Gospel (vs. 25). He was called by God Himself, the second person of the godhead. And Paul obeyed the call.
 4. This gospel is my vocation, my calling, my devotion, my ministry, and my reason for my very relationship with you, your pastor, the church, and God Himself. Obey this gospel. The Gospel is ultimately a call to obedience. It is not optional, and the consequences for rejecting it are the direst of all.
 - 2Th 1:6 For after all it is [only] just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 2Th 1:7 and [to give] relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 2Th 1:8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 2Th 1:9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 2Th 1:10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed.

Colossians 1:24 (NOTES)

- In these next few verses (pericope), Paul highlights two features of his ministry: suffering and preaching, with the aim of defining for the Gnostic heretics and their followers the object (Christ) and the end (salvation) of his ministry. #Col 1:24-29
- “I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake” - What does Paul mean here? Paul suffers for others. Who? How? Why?

Discussion:

- Suffering for whom? He suffers for the called, the elect, both the saved and the yet to be saved. The saved to not be led astray by the Gnostics. The unsaved elect to hear and respond in faith to the Gospel. And for the Church through the ages.
- Suffering how? He does not mean that he suffers in their stead, but rather in their interests.
 - He suffers great costs to get the Gospel to them, and to labor through prayer and teaching to move them to receive it.
 - Where is Paul at the writing of this letter? In a Roman prison awaiting trial. Why is he on trial? Preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, among whom are these Colossians. Not only the Colossians and the Gentiles, but the entire body of Christ, including us here today who have benefit greatly from Paul's ministry, especially through his epistles.
 - 2Co 11:23 Are they servants of Christ? — I am speaking as if insane — I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in [danger of] death. 2Co 11:24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine [lashes.]2Co 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent [adrift] at sea. 2Co 11:26 [I have been] on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from [my] countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, dangers among false brothers; 2Co 11:27 [I have been] in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 2Co 11:28 Apart from [such] external things, there is the daily pressure on me [of] concern for all the churches.
- Why is he joyous? In suffering for ministering the Gospel, Paul is joyous because:
 - He is fulfilling his ministry calling.
 - He is serving others for the cause of Christ.
 - He is pleasing to God, who considered him worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ and His Church.
 - Ac 5:41 So [the disciples] went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for [His] name.
 - He is in intimate fellowship with Christ through suffering as a part of His body.
 - "Php 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Php 3:8 More than that, I count also things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of also things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, Php 3:9 and may be found in Him,

not having a righteousness of my own derived from [the] Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which [comes] from God on the basis of faith, Php 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; Php 3:11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- He knows that he is storing up treasure and reward in heaven.
 - Heb 10:34 “For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better and lasting possession.”
 - Mt 5:12 “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in this same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
- “in my flesh I do my share ... in filling up **what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions**” - Paul in no way intends to suggest that Christ’s death was insufficient or lacking in any respect to salvation. Christ’s sacrifice was fully salvific. Col 2:11-15, Heb 7:26-27, 1Pe 3:18
 - Col 2:11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision performed without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, Col 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. Col 2:13 And when you were dead in your wrongdoings and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our wrongdoings, Col 2:14 having canceled the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Col 2:15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display [of them,] having triumphed over them through Him.
 - Heb 7:26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens; Heb 7:27 who has no daily need, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the [sins] of the people, because He did this once for all [time] when He offered up Himself.
 - 1Pe 3:18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all [time, the] just for [the] unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;
- “on behalf of His body, which is the Church” - Paul is standing on the believer’s union with Christ. So intimate is this union that Christ (the head) and believers (the body) make up a single unit. Christ suffers when the body suffers.

- Ac 9:4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul', why are you persecuting Me?'" Ac 9:5 And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' 'And He [said,] 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.'
- "filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" - Christ's suffering did not end at the cross. Paul is a member of the Body of Christ, and as such, when he suffers (like in his present imprisonment), Christ suffers - along with His body - those for whom He gave His life. Paul's sufferings for the sake of Christ (the things he endured for his ministry on behalf of Christ for the benefit of Christ's Body) are also suffered by Christ.
 - HCSB "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I am completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for His body, that is, the church."
- Jesus said, " ... In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33). There are sufferings ordained and allotted to Paul and the Body, that had then, and have still today, and are in the future yet to be fulfilled. There are still many more sufferings which Christ will endure through His Body the Church, until He returns for her. His suffering is not complete.

Application: Were there any new concepts you picked up today? Is there anything you have trouble accepting in these doctrines? Did anything stand out that may prompt you to do further study? Do you feel confident that you can explain the doctrines of deity and trinity to your family, other believers, nonbelievers?

Closing Benediction: Jude 1:24-25 *"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen."*

Closing Prayer

Small Groups

- Discuss current Scripture reading assignment.
- Prayer:
 - Anything praiseworthy.
 - Areas of accountability.
 - Other prayer requests.