



*“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. (Col 1:24-29)

Paul asserts in today's text his standing as a minister of God. This would lead us to ponder the meaning of a minister of God. There are far too many characteristics to enumerate in this devotion; however, allow me to mention a few that seem to have been missed by the modern church. A minister is first of all a committed Christian whose living witness and testimony confirms the fact. As every other committed Christian, he will love the Word of God and consume it as his daily bread as often as the sun rises and sets. Such a man will not harbor any compromises with the world. He will not countenance any lifestyle, any teaching, and any tampering with the Scripture that is not clearly the Will of God as stated in His Infallibly-preserved Word. He will raise his children and conduct his family and business according to those same standards. He will not ask "What is the salary?" before accepting God's call to the ministry, or to a particular Church.

A minister of God is not called by the Church – he is called by God to the ministry. There are three particulars that apply to this calling; 1) That it comes forcefully and certainly from God; 2) That the called minister recognizes, and is driven by, that call; and 3) The Church must also recognize the Calling of God upon the minister (ordination). Paul was such a man. He was dramatically struck down by the brilliant Light of Christ on the way to Damascus to persecute the Church; but Christ turned his zeal for persecution to a zeal for preaching the Word of God and the salvation of souls.

The most important aspect of the role of a minister is to preach the whole

counsel of God with love and never compromise. Paul did this from the moment of his calling and enlightenment. The minister of God must preach the truth of the Gospel without consideration of how it will be received. Does this mean he doesn't care HOW it is received? Not at all, but it does mean that his job is to sow the Seed of Truth on all soils and leave the germination in the heart of the earth of those soils to the efficacious working of the Holy Ghost. If none will accept, that is not the blame of the minister. The word of God is a two-edged sword – it will cut both ways to either convict of sin, or to condemn of sin! The minister will tirelessly labor for the Church. The believers, too, will labor tirelessly for the same.

Paul is addressing the Preeminence of Christ here as the Head of the Church, and the Church as His Body. But he is also describing the needs of the Church as satisfied in its ministers and laity. *“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.”* Contrary to the sense of the world, a minister will willingly suffer for the Church and, amazingly to the world, he will rejoice in that suffering. Every Christian will, according to the perceptions of the world, suffer for their faith. Bearing a cross daily is no picnic. It is a path of self denial, and of blessing to others about us. The bow-tied dandies such as Joel Osteen will awaken to a hot acknowledgement of their error at the time appointed by God. Our Lord suffered horrifying afflictions in His flesh for the Church; can the Church do no less in suffering for those others of its members? The *“Via Dolorosa”* is the way of all who bear their crosses daily.

*“25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God.”* Paul was made a minister, not by a whimsical and changeable god, but by an unchanging and immutable God who disposes according to His Will of Ancient Time. Another salient purpose of the minister is to FULFILL the Word of God and reveal its mysteries to those who will hear it with comprehension. The limits of ministry are laid down by God, and not limited by man. When certain influential members of the laity approach the minister to soften his preaching and avoid certain issues of the Word that is a signal to the minister to double-down on his preaching of those points. The Word of God is not designed to flatter us, or to make us feel good about ourselves; it is, in fact, just the opposite. It is intended to expose our sinful depravity and to serve as a mirror to our souls. We view in our own hearts the same murderous adultery as that which we read of in King David; of the depravity of Judas that lurks in every heart that is lost to faith; and of the cowardice that pervaded the heart of Peter, and ours, when separated from Christ that awful night in Gethsemane. Until we look into that Mirror of God's Word, we cannot know what wretched creatures we truly are, and how much we need the grace of God through Christ to cover our sins.

The reality of the mysteries in God existed from Eternity Past. They existed in the Garden at Eden when Adam chose to disregard the Tree of Life (Jesus Christ) for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Satan). These mysteries existed with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ruth, Moses, etc. But Jesus Christ fully revealed them to those who would believe. He is the fulfillment of those mysteries. *“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* *“Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”* (1 Peter 1:12) Once we have seen Christ crucified, we can understand the importance of that first

Passover in Egypt. The shadows and types of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the express image of god in Christ!

Who do the ministers of God preach? The foundation being the most important part of any building, what foundation is laid for the Church and the preaching of the Word? That foundation is Jesus Christ! Any sermon that does not center on Christ is one devoid of the seal of the Holy Spirit. We must preach ALL of Christ; Christ to ALL; and Christ ALWAYS! *“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”* Men do not always receive warnings well. They like to believe that all is well even if the bridge is out around the mountain pass. Perfection does not come without faith and dedication in Christ. In fact, we are never perfect in and of ourselves. We are accounted perfect in righteousness by the imputed righteousness of the only righteous One who ever set foot upon this sin-filled globe. Every man and woman who receives Christ into their hearts as Sovereign, having His Will as the Ruler, and not self – these are perfect in Christ. They are Christians because they bear His nature and image.

Who says that a Christian, once saved, may simply relax and ride the wave? That is as false as a diamond made of flour. We are not saved by good works, but we certainly are saved UNTO good works.

*“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”* If you love the Lord, and your fellow man, I believe you will find that the most challenging of labors on His behalf become a joy and with little effort. How is this possible? Because the yoke of the Lord is light and easy to be borne. In fact, our good works are not truly ours, but His. He is the One who works in our members to bring us to perfection in His Will and Way.

In order to own Christ as your Lord and Savior, you must first make yourself His by surrendering that old sinful will for His perfect will. Do you belong to Christ? If so, all that pertains to you belongs to Christ – your labors, your possessions, your family, your thoughts, your time, etc. Does Christ possess YOUR heart this moment? If so, He possesses your treasure as well for *“where the heart is, there is your treasure also.”* My opinion? No, not at all. It is the Words of our Savior: *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* (Matt 6:21)