

Paul sees his own sufferings as part of Jesus' afflictions. He is drawing on this ancient Jewish belief that the great suffering we pass through leads us into the age to come. Jesus has already brought us to the Kingdom of God in our lives, but there is still a struggle in tension with the "present age." There is still suffering to be undergone. This is not an *addition* to Jesus' suffering; rather, it is how we live in light of what Jesus did—growing into maturity in Christ in all circumstances.

How can difficulties lead to greater trust in Jesus? What have been the greatest times of growth in your own life?

We are called to "go" into the world to make disciples; that means "as you go," **as you live your life**. Every bit of our life is now mission and stewardship of this Gospel message. We are saved from sin and sent into mission as agents of reconciliation wherever we go.

Think about your individual and collective reach (as a community). What spaces/people do you encounter where you can be an agent of reconciliation?

Paul is preaching a "mystery," something that people today still think is mysterious, but it is not. God has revealed His saving purpose extended to all people. We get to be those who proclaim it. The phrase "**to make the word of God fully known**" literally reads, "that I might complete the Word of God." The idea is to lay out the Word of God fully through our very lives.

How can we grow in our practice of making the word of God fully known today?

How do we begin to grow in maturity? **Colossians 1:28**

1. **Him we proclaim** – By a constant focus and understanding of Jesus, His cross, and His resurrection.
2. **warning everyone** – By our many actions we say, "I will not sit under God's Lordship, I will be my own lord." The reason we have not died is God is extending mercy.
3. **and teaching everyone with all wisdom** – We mature by growing in our understanding of the nature and character of God. Understanding how He works and what He asks of us is the source of wisdom.

We desire to take growth in Christ seriously—for our sake and for our impact on the world.

How is God leading you to grow in Him?

The revealed mystery is that Jesus took our sin seriously and it cost Him His life; let us be those who take seriously the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the mystery revealed—CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory.

Does your life currently demonstrate a pursuit of Jesus?

A framework of everyday rhythms for reaching a non-believer: B.L.E.S.S.

- ♦ **Begin in prayer:** Pray for people in your life by name.
- ♦ **Listen:** Get to know their heart, story, needs, goals, and disappointments.
- ♦ **Eat:** Invite and engage at your table (coffee shops, sports event, etc.).
- ♦ **Serve:** In tangible ways based on their actual needs.
- ♦ **Share:** the Good News of the Gospel in contextualized ways so it truly is good news to them (after relationship has been established).