

All That Matters
Lesson 4—Rich
Colossians 1:24-2:3

I. The Value of Suffering (v. 24)

A. “Filling up what is lacking”?

At Calvary, Jesus made a full and complete payment for our sin. We can't add anything to that, because nothing needs to be added. Any suffering that Paul or we experience in no way adds merit to Christ's sacrificial death that paid for our sins.

Christ's offering is full and lacking in nothing—except one thing — a personal presentation of Christ *from us* to those who do not know Him.

B. “Rejoice in my Sufferings”?

“God designed our brains to run on joy like a car runs on fuel...As we go throughout the day, our brains are scanning our surroundings, looking for people who are happy to be with us” (Wilder, J. & Hendricks, M. (2020). *The Other Half of Church: Christian Community, Brain Science, and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation*, pp. 53-54).

To our brains, joy means “someone is glad to be with me.”

Our joy is replenished by each other and it is also refilled when we are in the presence of God. “In Your presence is fullness of joy” (Psalm 16:11).

Joy is not just an emotion, it is a “supra-emotion” because it can go to the top of and connect with the six big emotions that are related to suffering: sadness, anxiety, despair, shame, anger, and disgust. (To read more, see *The Other Half of Church*, p. 60).

Jesus refused to relinquish joy when He was on the cross, “who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Hebrews 12:2).

When a child of God goes through suffering, we draw the presence of God.

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4).

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you” (Isaiah 43:2).

“The promise is not that God will remove us from the experience of suffering. No, the promise is that God will be with us, walking beside us in it.” (Keller, T. (2013). *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering*, p. 227)

II. The Value of Serving (v. 25)

A "steward" is someone charged with care until the master returns for His property.

The word "stewardship" means "individual assignment."

III. The Value of Hope (vv. 26-27)

"Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The Story of God's presence:

- **Eden.**

From the beginning, it was God's holy intention to dwell among His people.

- **The Tabernacle.**

"And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel" (Exodus 19:6).

"When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain" (Exodus 19:13b).

"So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently" (Exodus 19:16-18).

"Then they said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die'" (Exodus 20:19).

"So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was" (Exodus 20:21).

"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34-35).

- **The Temple.**

“It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord” (1 Kings 8:10-11).

- **The New Testament.**

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:23).

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7).

“And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...” (Acts 2:2-4a).

IV. The Value of Transformation (vv. 28-29)

“Spiritual maturity is seen in the disciple who effortlessly does what Jesus would do in his or her place.” ~ Dallas Willard
(<https://www.soulshpherd.org/dallas-willards-definitions/>).



The word transformation is an Old French word from the 14th century that means "change the form of".

V. The Value of Community (2:1-3)

God created us for community. We are wired for relationships.

Spiritual growth and transformation will not happen in isolation. It occurs in relationship, in our relationship with God and with others.

It is hard for us to grasp the significance of this community identity, because we live in a radically individualistic culture. We bring this worldview with us into the church so that it shapes our understanding of the gospel. So we have a loose connection with Christians on Sunday, but then largely we go back to living our everyday lives on our own. No wonder we struggle to thrive. Our faith is animated on Sunday mornings as we sing God's praise and hear His Word. But it limps along during the week when we live apart from the body of Christ." (Timmis, S. & Chester, T. (2012). *Everyday Church*, pp. 53-54.)

In community, we learn to rejoice in suffering, we practice serving, we remind each other of the hope we have, we experience transformation, and we discover that "In Christ, we are rich. We have everything we need."