**The Mystery of God**

**Introduction:**

Many in the church at Colosse were being confronted with those who said Jesus wasn’t truly God, that He was not sufficient to save them, that they needed some “secret knowledge,” known to only a few, to reach heaven. In our text, Paul reflects this latter teaching and scripture that the “mystery” has been fully revealed in the gospel.

**Text:** Colossians 1:24 **–** 2:3

**Body:**

1. **The Mystery Is No Longer a Mystery** Colossians 1:24-27 “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” NKJV
2. Read Colossians 1:23. “if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.” NKJV Paul was a minister of the gospel because he boldly proclaimed that gospel. He was in prison in Rome during writing this letter to the church at Colosse. But he was thankful that he was allowed to suffer for the sake of the church, as a member of it, a Christian. (I Peter 4:16) “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.” NKJV He was also a minister of the church, a work given Paul by God, a responsibility as a steward. (I Corinthians 9:16) “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” NKJV
3. Mystery: It is called this because it was in times past hidden or not revealed. (Ephesians 3:1-8) “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles – if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,” NKJV The unsearchable riches of Christ: The redemption all can have through Christ. [Jew and Gentile] God wanted Gentiles to know the marvelous blessings of the gospel age. (I Corinthians 2:6-10) “However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” NKJV What great hope this provides us today, a glorious hope based on Jesus Christ.
4. **Preaching Christ** Colossians 1:28-29 “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” NKJV
5. Preaching Christ and preaching the gospel are the same. (I Corinthians 15:1-4) “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,” NKJV We, as Paul did, should labor diligently to proclaim the message. (I Corinthians 1:18) “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” NKJV
6. Warning and teaching are both essential. “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. . .” (II Corinthians 5:11) We are to “warn those who are unruly,” those who are not submitting to the Lord. (I Thessalonians 5:14) “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.” We have a responsibility to warn those who are not faithful; we cannot shirk this for any reason. Our teaching should have as its goal to present every man perfect in Christ, whole, mature. First, teach those outside Christ to be immersed for the forgiveness of sins and become a part of the body of Christ, the church. (Ephesians 5:25-27) “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,” NKJV Then teach Christians to mature in faith, grow in the “Christian graces,” faith, virtue, knowledge, and go on unto perfection. (II Peter 1:5-10) “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;” NKJV This work should be a part of every Christian’s spiritual service, in one way or another.
7. **The Treasures One Finds in Christ** Colossians 2:1-3 “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understand, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” NKJV Paul was greatly concerned for Christians at Colosse as well as for all Christians. He did not want them to believe they needed someone besides Christ or that they couldn’t come to an understanding of the mystery. He desired encouragement and comfort on their behalf as well as a close bond of unity between the Christians. A unity based on love is one of the highest order. (Philippians 2:1-3) “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” NKJV He further desired on their part an assurance of understanding. They could know and understand the mystery he just wrote about – that redemption has been granted to the Gentiles. These words were spoken by the apostle Peter to those in Jerusalem after he told them that Cornelius and his household received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 11:17-18) “If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.’ ” NKJV Paul now emphasized that all real treasures are found in Christ, such as forgiveness and redemption, sanctification, encouragement and comfort, strength, joy, and ultimately heaven. (Ephesians 1:3) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,” (Ephesians 1:7) “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” NKJV (I Corinthians 1:2) “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:” NKJV (Philippians 2:1) “Therefore if there is any consolation In Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, (Philippians 4:13) “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:4) “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Revelation 14:13) “Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write; Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’ ” NKJV

**Invitation:**

We are a very privileged people to live in the gospel age and enjoy treasures in Christ. Will you accept His invitation today?

Bobby Stafford January 1, 2017 [Evening] Colossians: Lesson 5 Colossians 1:24 – 2:1-3