

Series: There is Nothing Greater Than Walking with Jesus

Lesson 4: “Jesus Provides Our Strength and Our Hope”

*Announcements, encouragement to invite people and opening prayer.



Connect: an opportunity for people to immediately interact and connect with each other; icebreaker/attention getters. **Icebreaker:** When you have burned the candle at both ends, pushed yourself until you are exhausted, what happens? How do you get recharged and replenish your strength?

Transition: Paul has worked harder, pushing himself closer to the limit than anyone we have ever known. He and Silas were severely beaten by a mob and then thrown into prison in Philippi. He was stoned so severely in Lystra that the crowd left him lying unconscious thinking he was dead. That was just the tip of the iceberg in his suffering. How in the world could Paul go from riches to rags, from health and wealth, to suffering and hardships? It's because Paul had a serious fitness program. He worked out his spirit diligently.

Bottom Line: Working out Spiritually in Christ creates living dynamic faith! It takes us from “Do I have to?” (Reluctantly) and moves us to “I really, really have to!!! I can’t wait to!!! I can’t believe I get to!!!” (On fire with excitement) That is faith that gives us hope and strength beyond our abilities. There is nothing more powerful, nothing greater than walking with Jesus.

LESSON PLAN

Read Colossians 1:24-29

1. What causes Paul to rejoice?

This letter was written during Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome, where he spent 2 years under house arrest. How could Paul be some joyful? It could be that it was house arrest rather than a dungeon. It could also be that Paul is off the road and writing letters directed by the Holy Spirit to build up the churches and give Christians directions for growing spiritually stronger.

Question: What kinds of suffering do we endure for preaching the gospel, sharing our faith in Christ with others?



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Have you ever thought that something that puts you at home, like recovery from an illness, a knee surgery, etc. could provide a time to write, to gather thoughts to correct your walk or to build studies for others that you have not had the time to pursue? Seizing every opportunity for Christ can make a painful situation an incredible time of growth.

Question: Why do you think it is so hard for many American Christians to be willing to be bold enough in our faith to cause action either for or against us?

A preacher visiting Ozark Christian College once said, “If you have a wonderful life with no conflict, you better worry, because if the devil isn’t pushing against you, you are probably doing exactly what he wants!”

Question: Should it surprise us when sharing our faith offends people?

Read Matthew 5:10-12.

We are blessed when we are insulted or persecuted for sharing the name of Christ. There is a reward for bold faith that never lets up.

2. Jesus’ afflictions were not lacking. Obviously, Paul is talking about his own affliction that is still lacking and he is okay with having more. The gospel has not reached the ends of the earth. Paul is saying, “For the sake of the church, bring it on!” Why does the growth of the church require suffering?

Remember, even Satan does not know the year, day, hour or moment of Jesus. He knows it will be instantaneous, like a thief in the night without warning. Therefore, his work never lets up knowing his moment of glory and honor from man, his earthly rule could be less than a second from coming to a horrendous and complete end. He has a short and uncertain time to wreak havoc on mankind.

Question: What could you do to be more aggressive in sharing your faith knowing that when Jesus returns, everything is decided, everyone has made their choice?

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3. Paul mentions that Jesus' body is the church. That is why his life's obsession has become planting churches and building up the churches that have been planted. How is the church the complete body of Jesus?

Question: How do churches lose the focus and intensity that Paul displayed?

4. Paul says he has become ‘it’s’ servant. Why is “it’s”?

Question: In what ways are you called to be a committed servant to the church of Christ? How well are you doing? What could you do better?

Paul is called to present the Word of God in its fullness. The Holy Spirit is using Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James, Jude, Peter and Paul to bring the Holy Scripture to completion in writing and teaching the complete Word of God. Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament and some believe it may have been Paul who wrote Hebrews. It is uncertain who wrote it, but it is the most Jewish book in the New Testament and Paul was a Pharisee of Pharisees before becoming Jesus' disciple and Apostle. Paul was called by Christ Jesus to play a major role, the largest role in the completion of the Word of God.

5. What does Paul call the Word of God?

Question: How does this passage refute the idea that God and Jesus appeared at later times to ask more people to write other testaments of Christ?

People like Joseph Smith in the late 1820's claimed God appeared to him and needed him to complete the Word of God. In the late 500's Mohammed claimed the angel Gabriel



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appeared to him and needed him to complete the Word of God that came through a series of vision and revelations. So, Joseph Smith and Mohammed are disputing the Apostle Paul. They are presenting that the Apostles did not bring the Word of God to completion.

Read Galatians 1:1-24

6. In what ways does this sound an alarm about the additions to Scripture after the Apostles died and the 27 letters of the New Testament were added to the 39 letters of the Old Testament to make the Word of God complete in all its fullness?

There is no room for new revelation through man from God. Hebrews 1:1 tells us that God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets with signs and wonders and in various ways. But in these LAST DAYS, the final phase, God has spoken to us through Jesus who is heir of all things. Jesus handpicked those He would teach and call to be His witnesses and to complete God’s Word to man. There are no new apostles. Jesus never presented a future plan or future prophets who would add to the writings the Holy Spirit was promised to give to the Apostles.)

7. Going back to Colossians, what does Paul say this mystery is, the glorious riches from God?

Question: How should this mystery affect your self-image if you are a Christian?

8. What is the goal of the Apostles’ teaching and admonishing everyone with God’s wisdom?

Question: I don’t know of any perfect people. So, what is Paul saying here?



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When we are walking in a personal intimate relationship with Christ, we are continually being made perfect by His Word and His Spirit. It's a process. We may not be perfect, but we are surrendered to being and living in the process that will be completed in heaven. Therefore, in the eyes of God, we have the formula within our lives for being perfect. That is all God asks of us. He knows our human weakness. The question is, “Am I walking, living that holy process?

9. How does Paul say he is able to keep up this pace and endure all the suffering involved?

Question: What lesson could you learn about spiritual energy from Paul?

Final Question: What is the one idea that stands out to you most from this lesson?