



Pointers and questions on Paul's letter to the
COLOSSIANS

Session 3

1:21-27

The Gospel: Worth Suffering For

Summary

- 1:21-22** Christ's great work of reconciliation on the cross extended to the Colossian believers, who are now part of his plan to have a holy people.
- 1:23** Their emergence as a holy people assumes their willingness to continue actively pursuing the Christian life and rejecting every temptation to drift from the faith. This is what the gospel message is all about—and it applies universally.
- 1:24** The preaching of the gospel to a hostile society inevitably attracts persecution. Paul—like the Lord he serves—has had his share of it, but he considers it well worth while for the sake of the benefits that the church enjoys as a result.
- 1:25-27** Paul brings the message of God's 'open secret', namely, that God is drawing to himself a people from all nations who can know him through Christ and look forward confidently to the enjoyment of his 'glory'.

Questions to get you thinking

1. Talk about the 'two-way traffic' between our thinking and our actions described in v21. What is the connection between the two? Can you give examples of how it works?
2. 'Alienated...reconciled' (v21-22). What difference has it made to your life having moved from the first category to the second?
3. What does the language in the second half of v22 remind you of? Think back to the Old Testament. If you're baffled, have a look at Exodus 12:1-5 (especially v5) and 1 Peter 1:19. Then link it with Romans 12:1. How does this challenge you?
4. Christ will hold on to you and not let you go. But what, according to v23a, is your own responsibility regarding your Christian walk?
5. Look at v23b. The world population in Paul's day was a tiny fraction of what it is today. Could we today honestly say the same as he did about the extent of the proclamation of the gospel?
6. In the light of v24, would you say that suffering was normal for Christians? Are there other parts of Scripture that back up that view? If so, how does that square with the message of health and prosperity preached by some big preachers today?
7. What exactly is the 'mystery' mentioned in v26-27?
8. On what grounds can we expect to see 'the hope of glory' (v27) realised? Is it something that figures much in your everyday thinking?

