



Sermon Study - Conversation Guide

April 7, 2024

“The Hope of Glory”

Colossians 1:24-29

This guide is a discipleship tool for personal reflection, family conversations, for home groups, and for Table Talk on Sundays @10:40 am and 12:15 pm on the Lowell Patio

Coastal Community Church
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Today we're reading the end of chapter 1 of Colossians, which is a letter a man named Paul wrote to the ancient Roman church community in the city of Colossae. We're picking up where Andy left off on Easter Sunday.

1:24 *Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.*

At first glance, it might seem like Paul was making the statement that there's still something lacking in Christ's sacrifice on the cross. But that's not what he means. Not at all. What Paul was saying was quite the opposite. To understand what he means by this statement, we must understand God's nature, especially when it comes to the Trinity.

The Trinity is God in three persons, fully One as God, fully Three in their individuality. The Trinity operates as the perfect family unit, complete in the way they always vulnerably give themselves away to each other without holding anything back, as well as completely receive and accept each other in such a way, that to us, they think, speak and act as one.

That has been their eternal dance. God is and has always been completely loving in His relationship within Himself. He also created us for the same purpose – for a loving relationship with Him and with one another. That blows my mind. *We're invited to join the dance!*

Paul points out that God invites us to receive His infinite and sacrificial love, and then invites us to join Him in loving others. Does God need us? No. But God wants us to say "yes" to the invitation of being loved by Him and loving others, not only for our benefit, but theirs as well.

What happens when you forgive instead of condemn people? It freaks out those still living in this world of death because they can't understand it. What do people do with things that they don't understand? They lash out. In those moments, we experience the afflictions of Jesus.

Though God is always giving us His love and power, sometimes we run out and feel empty inside. He's not ashamed of us when this happens. He knows we need time to slow down on a regular basis and He invites us to rest in His Presence. But we have to choose. When we close ourselves off from receiving all of who God is to us, we become a feedback loop of death. Over time, that closed circle in us becomes a downward spiral of shame, anxiety, worry, fear, hate and negativity without the power of God's love and life to break through to our hearts.

Thankfully, God never gives up on us, which Paul reveals by reminding the Colossians of his own story...

1:25 *I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people.*

Paul shows us how God “commissioned” him into the dance of love. There was a time when he hated those who followed Jesus. Convinced they were wrong; he was determined to wipe them out. On his way to do that, he was blinded by God. This forced him to reflect in prayer for days. God sent a man named Ananias to pray for him. His eyes were opened, both physically and spiritually. Afterward, he was determined to share the mystery of God’s love, no matter what he endured. What kept him going?

1:27 *To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

To understand the hope of glory, we must first define what **glory** means. The Hebrew word for glory is *kabod* and it most commonly refers to the reality of God’s Presence revealed to us, right where we are. What does it look like when God shows up in His glory, right in the midst of all the brokenness of our lives? Paul describes the evidence of God’s Presence in a letter to another group of people using nine words: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

When we’re empty of love and filled with hate, God approaches us in His limitless love, offering to fill us up again. When we run out of patience, kindness and gentleness, and have nothing but harsh and bitter words, God patiently and gently offers to fill us up. We can only give what we receive. If we open ourselves up to all God is giving us through Christ, we continue to expand and overflow with His glory, as Paul shares.

1:28 *He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.*

In light of all this, here’s a prayer I use. I hope it helps. *“Heavenly Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit... I give myself fully to You for this day – emotionally, mentally, physically, relationally, socially, sexually, financially, and spiritually. You have access to all of me. And I choose to clothe myself in all Your glory, Your love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”*

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES: Tips for great conversation

- We aren't here to teach/fix each other, but to share our experiences.
- Show respect by listening to one another, asking clarifying questions.
- If you're quick to share, allow space and time for others to speak up.
- If you're slow to speak, your experience is valuable so please share.

INTRO

Invite everyone to introduce themselves and then read the Bible verses.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of the message and Scripture was most encouraging, and which part is most challenging?
2. What did You notice about God, and what did you notice about yourself as well as other people?

GOSPEL EXCHANGE (REDEMPTIVE WORK)

Jesus asks us to give Him our burdens (Matthew 11:28-29), whatever they may be (a lie we have believed about God or ourselves, our hurt or negative emotions, or even our concerns for loved ones), so He can carry them for us, giving us His peace (His completeness) in exchange.

What do you want to exchange with Jesus today?

What is the burden? "Lord Jesus, I give you my..."

What's His gift? "Lord Jesus, I receive your..."

ACTION QUESTIONS

1. What is one step of obedience you can take this week, based on what you've discovered today? (*NOTE – Consider prayerfully asking God to answer this question for you, taking 30-45 seconds to listen in silence, writing what you heard. If nothing comes clear, keep praying this week.*)
2. During the coming week, who can you share what you learned today? (*NOTE – Consider repeating the same step with this question as the previous question.*)