

*Welcome to Church – video*

When I watched this video I got a little choked up. It made me think about how important the church is to our world. Not the brick and mortar building, but the body of Christ engaging our world in His name. A church alive. It also reminded me the church is more than a social institution – it is a gathering of people on a Gospel mission. If we lose our missional purpose, we will lose our way. It that's happened. All those schools mentioned, have lost their way. They've been culturalized and secularized.

A few weeks ago we began a study in Colossians to unmask cultural Christianity and to help us see the call of God upon our lives through the eyes of Scripture.

**What is cultural Christianity?** It's a religious experience that has wandered from a faith of surrendered commitment to a belief system identified by comfort, convenience, and compromise. It's a faith turned tepid due to a greater concern for self than for the mission of God. It's a faith that's been dumbed-down and relegated to personal preference instead of a faith that's being revolutionized in sold out submission.

So far in our study, Paul has tried to help us to see that what we're facing in our current church age isn't unlike what was happening in the city of Colossae in his day. Whereas he was seeking to thrive for Christ in a pre-Christian culture, we're trying to thrive in a post-Christian culture. And many of the challenges he faced is what we're facing in our culture.

## Just last week – **Houston Mayor Subpoenas Pastors**

**Folks, it isn't going to get easier to be Christian!** As a natural result of heightened persecution and alternative influences, many people are being drawn away from the faith. Some might say there's a pruning and purging going on w/in the faith. But I don't think it is that easy. I think we've drifted so far from Jesus intent for the church that we've lost our way. For far too many people, we've seen the church as a cruise ship to board and enjoy instead of as a battleship to engage in a spiritual war. **We've bought into the notion that church is for me and about me instead of about Christ and His mission of reaching the world.**

**Satan has done a masterful job of luring us away from God's mission into a life of good intentions.** Now this doesn't mean the church is impotent and all Christians have fallen away. There is a remnant that's alive and thriving. There is a revolution and revival among us being authored by the H.S. – God is NOT dead.

And so long as He's alive, His bride can thrive – even in a post-Christian culture. But make no mistake, for the kingdom of God to thrive in you, Christ must be more than present, he must be pre-eminent.

In all His people Christ is present. In some He is prominent; but only in a few is He pre-eminent. *F.B. Meyers*

If Christ is to be pre-eminent in our lives He is going to have to be pre-eminent in our church – and His mission must be central to our existence. This is exactly what Paul shares w/ the Colossian church. In Colossians 1:24-2:1, Paul reminds the Colossians of God's intent for the church and their momentous calling.

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

## I Our PRIVILEGE

**1** *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.*

## II Our PURPOSE

**2** *He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone w/ all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.*

A Church Alive is Worth the Drive

10/19/14

Masquerade – Colossians 1:24-2:7

Sunday AM

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*we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone w/ all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend w/ all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. 3 My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I tell you this so no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. For though I am absent from you in body, I am present w/ you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.*

## **I Our PRIVILEGE**

*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.*

## **II Our PURPOSE**

*He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone w/ all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.*

***Our purpose is to present everyone fully mature in Christ.***

**proclaim** (*kataggello*) to continually publicly declare a completed truth. This is an official proclamation of what has occurred – as in to state a factual event.

Paul says – b/c of the reality of the work of Christ on the cross to atone for the sins of man and b/c of His work w/in us unto salvation, we can't help but to continually (over and over) herald this truth to others. We do this in two ways:

## A **ADMONISHING** Truth

**admonishing** (*noutheteo*) to warn by encouragement; to give counsel of impending judgment. It requires confrontation for the sake of turning people who have gone astray to a right direction.

## B **TEACHING** Truth

**teaching** – to impart the positive truth (of God's Word). It is laying a foundation of truth that will serve as *a lamp unto a believer's feet and light unto their path.*

## III Our **PRIORITY**

**3** *My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I tell you this so no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.*



A ENCOURAGED in Heart

B UNITED in Love

C SOUND in Doctrine

C STEADFAST in Truth

Here is our mission and commission. To present every person fully mature in Christ is a massive call – but it is why we exist as a church and why God hasn't beamed us up at the point of our salvation. **HOW ARE WE DOING?**

Are we making disciples? What is a disciple? Let's go back to week 1. **(Insert Graphic 1)** Is a disciple a person who lives under his power performing religious activity or someone who lives under God's power producing the fruit of the H.S.? **So what has happened?**

I think one of the things we've done in our ambition to reach the world, we have taken matters into our own hands and have accidentally turned from God's strategy to our own strategy. We've inverted the mission. **(Insert Graphic 2)**

The result is we've turned the church into an organization instead of letting it remain an organism. **(Insert Graphic 3)**