

**Sunday 24th July 2022 So that...
Colossians 1:24 - 2:5**

Intro:

Paul's letter to the people in Colossae
Written from prison, probably in Ephesus
To a young group of believers that he had not actually met in person

In these verses Paul expresses his overarching purpose in life: to encourage, teach, nurture people in to a full and mature faith in His Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

His teachings sometimes involve truthful reprimand, sometimes challenging teaching and sometimes loving encouragement.

I think these verses sound like the later, words of encouragement to keep growing and believing in the wonder and completeness of Christ. In vs 25 Paul is telling this young church a little about himself; how he became a servant of the church in order to make the word of God fully known amongst the Gentiles

And in these verses he is telling them that the huge mystery of God, that has been unseen and hidden for so many years, has been finally revealed in the life of Jesus

Paul wants everyone to grasp the incredible truth that Jesus is all they need, all they need for life and hope and wisdom and knowledge.

In vs 27 Paul explains the mystery in this way... "Christ in you, the hope of glory"

Another translation puts it this way

God decided to make known to them His blessing to the nations; the glorious riches of this. Mystery in the indwelling of the Anointed in you! The very hope of glory.' (The Voice)

For centuries people had only had the commandments and the Law to follow and seek God's forgiveness through the offering of sacrifices.

Now Paul is telling them that they have the hope of glory through Christ who is living in each of them.

What a turn around.

There is a song by Graham Kendrick that has the chorus

Rejoice! Rejoice!!

Christ is in you

The hope of glory

In our hearts

He lives! He lives!

His breath is in you

Arise a mighty army

We arise

What an amazing truth to grasp.

So that:

3 times in this passage Paul writes so that...

The first time is just after he has written about our hope of glory Vs 28. It is he whom we proclaim warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, SO THAT we may present everyone mature in Christ

Vs 2. I want your hearts to be encouraged and united in love, SO THAT they may have all the riches of assured understanding

Vs 4. I am saying this SO THAT no one may deceive you with plausible arguments.

Paul wants the believers in Colossae to grasp what Christ has done for them and to receive that truth deep in to their hearts so that they know in their knower that Christ is their hope, Christ is their salvation,

Christ is their everything and then not to be deceived and lead astray by other teaching or discussion

Paul understood that Jesus Christ was the final part in God's unrevealed plan, He was (and is) the treasure that we are all seeking whether we realise it or not, His life in each of us enables us to ward off danger, and He is the one in whom we can find the way. Jesus Christ is the centre of all things, the key to life and the universe, He is the image of the invisible God. And it is He who gives us our ultimate hope.

All that Paul does and says is SO THAT others may come to know of the love of Christ and grow in to a deep and mature faith in Christ. This was his calling as he explained earlier... to make God fully known.

Paul was intentional about all that he did and said. It wasn't a case of I'll just travel around and see who I meet and share a little of my faith and see what happens
No.. with Paul it was a case of I will consciously tell people the truth of Jesus SO THAT they come to believe.

I wonder how intentional we are about our lives. We may not have the specific calling of Paul but as Christians we all have a calling to live lives worthy of our calling. Do we think about that very often.

A few questions for you...

I sit in the garden SO THAT
I can enjoy the birds that visit
I can put my feet up and have a doze

I can get a tan

I go to work SO THAT
I can put food on the table for my family
I can get out of the house for a few hours each day
I can save for a good pension

I go to church each Sunday SO THAT
I can worship with others
I feel better about the start of the new week
I can receive Holy Communion

There are no RIGHT answers... only the ones that are true for you
But I wonder how much we think about what we do and why?

How about these questions...

I put my faith in Jesus SO THAT

I wonder what our answer would be to that?
Maybe that is something for us to think about this coming week

We may not have the same calling as Paul but we are all called and sometime we need to think afresh about what that means and how we choose to live that out.

Paul was clear that he did what he did SO THAT people would come to faith in Christ, the hope of glory and for them to then mature in their faith.

Please spend some time thinking this week about why you do what you do and especially why you have put your faith in Jesus SO THAT...