

# Christ Is All: We Proclaim

by J. Glyn Owen

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*Paul's preaching is centered on proclaiming Christ as the hope of glory, and his goal is to present everyone perfect in Christ.*

**Duration:** 52:58

**Scripture:** Colossians 1:28

**Topics:** "Proclamation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the goal of presenting all men perfect in Christ. He emphasizes the importance of encouraging and uniting believers in love, so that they may have a complete understanding of the mystery of God, which is Christ. The speaker highlights the invincibility of a man of God armed with divine power and involved in God's work. He urges believers to strive towards knowing God in Christ better and better, and to rely on the supply of power from God to achieve this. The speaker also emphasizes the importance of using our gifts to encourage and support others on their journey towards glory.

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## Transcript

Would you kindly turn with me in your New Testaments to the letter written by Paul to the Colossians. The passage that was read for us by Alan was read really as a background to our text. It is not to be our text in itself, but it certainly serves as a very apposite, very appropriate background to the text that we are going to look at now.

I want to read then from Colossians chapter 1 beginning with verse 28 through to the third verse in chapter 2. And again, I'm going to be reading from the New International Version. We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not met me personally. My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. May the Spirit of God help us as we seek to expound this passage and to appreciate something of its content and apply its truths and tenets to ourselves.

We come to this passage armed with a mental picture of Paul rejoicing in the face of suffering. We were looking at that last Lord's Day in the preceding verses. He is rejoicing in the midst of his sufferings for the church.

He's rejoicing in his sufferings because he knows that the sufferings that God has permitted are good for him personally. But especially is he rejoicing in those sufferings because they are the means of bringing God's grace, the good news in all its fullness and in all its glory to men and women wherever he may go. He was pledged therefore to make known to the Gentiles to whom he was divinely commissioned to go.

He was pledged to make known to the Gentiles the riches of the message of Messiah. And as we were concluding our exposition of the preceding passage, last Lord's Day, we came to that climactic word. It can all be summed up in this way.

Christ the Messiah in you. And Christ the Messiah being in you is nothing less than the hope in you of glory in him. Christ in you the hope of glory.

Now to have said to the Gentiles in distant Colossae that Christ was among them, that Messiah was among them would have been wonderful. But the apostle's message goes well beyond that. He does not simply proclaim a Messiah among Gentiles as he is among Jews.

But Christ in you, tabernacling in your hearts, in your bodies which are the temple of the Holy Ghost, living in you and thereby becoming the hope of nothing short of the most amazing benefit that was held out to the ancient people in the Old Testament. The same hope is held out to us in the New Testament which is the hope of glory. Now beginning with verse 28, Paul makes our thoughts to converge almost exclusively on Christ whose personal work for and whose indwelling of his people he has already referred to.

Now this is how he brings it. Let me read my text again or the first part of it. We proclaim him.

I've talked about him. I've said this about him and that about him. Now says Paul, we proclaim him.

Actually I prefer the King James and the Revised Standard Version here. Him we proclaim and the him comes first. It is he that we proclaim.

That's how Paul wrote it. As if to say all eyes on him, away from your deified men, be they good, be they evil, away from your leaders, away from everybody, all eyes converge on one, him. He's the one we preach.

He's the one we announce. He and he alone is the one whom we proclaim. And then he goes on to say, to this end I labor, struggling with all his energy which so powerfully works in me.

Now you will notice immediately that the thought of perseverance continues here from the last chapter. I cannot omit this. It's so important.

Paul says that there are so many blessings for you in Christ. Go back to verses 23 and 24. Then he hangs it all upon an if.

If you continue in the faith and become grounded and settled in it and be not moved away from the gospel. In other words, what he's saying is perseverance in grace is part of Christian experience. If you really receive eternal life through Christ by the Spirit, if Christ is dwelling in you, then you have eternal life.

Not life for a month, nor life for a year, nor life for 10 years, nor life for the other side of the grave any more than for this side of the grave, but eternal life. That means this. If I have that life, I will keep on going on by the grace of the indwelling Christ.

And what we have here again is Paul showing us how he is persevering. Now that's not his subject. But indirectly he lets us see how he, the apostle, is going on persevering in the grace which is in Christ.

Directly he tells us how first of all the Colossians and how thereafter all the people of God may go on and on toward the maturity which he is referring to here. Now there are three things I want to speak to. Will you forgive me for sipping a little water this morning? I thought I was going to get through this winter without a cold, but I didn't.

Thank you. Now there are three things I want to refer to this morning. One, Paul's resolution, or if you like, Paul's perseverance.

Paul's resolution and the subject of his preaching. I'll refer to it and therefore we can be very brief here. We proclaim him.

Him we proclaim. Counseling and teaching everyone in all wisdom. Now you notice what he's doing.

First of all he specifies the one solitary subject of the proclamation. Him. Christ.

And then he says we use all the capacity that God has given to us in order to do that with all counseling and teaching. With all our capacity for counseling, and that means warning sometimes and wooing at other times, and enlarging your field of knowledge and your horizons. Using all the ability that God has given us to educate you and to add more and more to your knowledge and so forth.

We use everything that God has given us to do this one thing, to proclaim him. Now blessed is that man. Blessed is that parent.

Blessed is that Sunday school teacher. Blessed is that minister, that pastor who can honestly say he's doing that. Out of his Roman prison house comes this remarkable statement of Paul's undaunted and unqualified confidence in Jesus Christ that enabled him to say this.

Because confidence preceded consecration. A confidence that refused to be silent concerning our Lord under any circumstances whatsoever. Now the scene in Paul's life, the scene of Paul's preaching may change from public forum to a prison cell as it has here.

From Jerusalem to Athens to Rome. From Jew to Gentile, from Greek to Barbarian. But wherever he was he proclaimed the one and the same message, Christ the hope of glory.

Due to his understanding of the uniqueness of the person of our Lord, and the fullness of the work accomplished by him for our redemption, and its totality and adequacy, Christ preached one person, none other, Christ and Christ alone. In short, Christ and Christ alone was the sum total of his ministry. Now this planned, this deliberate exclusiveness is something which we may find somewhat challenging in our pluralistic society.

And in an atmosphere where we tend to see less and less distinction between truth and error, between right and wrong. In our world of moral indifferentism and spiritual indifferentism, this exclusive note seems to be representative either of a thoroughgoing ignorance or of a jaundiced mind. And people will charge us

Christians of that.

Your mind is jaundiced. You can't see the good in this religion or in that philosophy or whatever. Well, I suggest to you it takes a real jaundiced mind to approach the Apostle Paul and challenge him with being ignorant.

And the person who dares do that with the facts before him is a very daring person. For here was a gigantic mind and intellect. Here was a man whose heart nevertheless was as big as his intellect.

He was prepared to die for the good of men. Neither was he prejudiced. You read honestly the writings of the Apostle Paul and what you see here is a man emerging out of the prison house of prejudice, national prejudice, personal prejudices, family prejudices, social prejudices of all kinds into the liberty which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But the fact of the matter is this. He had come along that way into such a certain knowledge of the glories of the incarnate Christ that his life was now revolving entirely exclusively around proclaiming him in prison or in pulpit, in Jerusalem or in Rome or in Athens or anywhere else. To me said he to live as Christ, Paul's resolution and the subject of his preaching.

And the second main thing that we notice here is Paul's resolution and the specification of his purpose. Preaching was not the end. Preaching was a means to an end.

Proclaiming Christ was a means toward a goal. What was that goal? We see Paul very busy by word of mouth preaching, by delegated emissaries calling men around him like Silas and Timotheus and others and making them his emissaries. And when he leaves a place he leaves them behind and he tells them what to do and how to teach and how to set the churches are going and so forth.

Paul what's the matter with you? Why are you doing all this? Why are you in big business of this kind? I mean spiritual business. And by your letters. Why do you insist on writing letters from prison? What's it all for? What are you aiming at? Now I want you to notice two things.

Let me just read verses 28, the second part of 28 and 29 again. So that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy which so powerfully works in me.

Now may the spirit of God bring this home to us. I cannot do it. Paul's eye is what he would call the day of presentation.

Did you get it? So that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. The day of presentation. This subject of course was previously introduced way back in in verse 22.

Colossians 1 22 where it reads like this. But now he says he that is Christ has reconciled, I'm sorry God has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you wholly in his sight without blemish and free from accusation. Now what's the reference to? Well the reference is to quote one of the terms used by Mr. McLeod here and is commonly used.

The reference is clearly to an eschatological event. An event that is to come at the end time when our Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory to wrap up the affairs of the universe or if you like to consummate what he's already commenced. To bring to an end and to a close and to a climax what is already going on because he came into the world and has sent the Holy Spirit to take his place.

He's coming back sometime within the scheme of things away there in that eschatological future. Men and women will be able to present to the Lord Jesus Christ the fruit of their labors. You and I will be examined as to what we've done with our lives.

With the gifts God has given us. With everything that he has entrusted to us. Our material well-being.

Our physical strengths. Our talents as we speak of them and so forth. And we shall be given the opportunity of presenting to him the fruit of our labors.

And Paul was thrilled about it. Now you may not be as thrilled. I may not.

Paul was. Parents will present their children. Grandparents will present their children and their grandchildren in many cases.

Many of us were prayed for and brought in the kingdom by grandparents and great-grandparents that hardly saw us for longer than a day or two in the flesh. But they prayed for us and interceded for us and we are the fruit of their labors and they will be presented the day of presentation. You know what thrills me is this that our Lord Jesus seemed to look forward to this day too.

I know the apostles did. Paul refers to it quite often. In 2 Corinthians 11-2, Philipians 1-10-2-26, 1 Thessalonians 2-19-20, 1 John 2-28 and in other places.

You have the same excitement in the hearts of the apostles about this day of presentation. But what thrills me is that Jesus himself is understood by Paul at any rate as having had a yearning to see that day. You get that in Ephesians 5-25-27.

Let me read. Husband, says Paul, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word. What for? Ah, here it is.

To present her to himself as a radiant church, the concept of glory, a flashingly magnificent church, a radiant church without stain, no spots of sin or evil or wrinkle. You ladies, you're afraid of wrinkles. I don't know that we men are, but no wrinkle without stain or wrinkle or blemish, but holy and blameless.

So says Paul, even our Lord Jesus Christ has his heart set on that day when he will present to himself. He will receive the present from you, and then the present you give him, he will take to be his own, his bride. And he's looking forward to it.

Here then is something that every servant of God should bear in mind. There is to be a day when we shall have the opportunity of presenting the fruit of our labors to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. I trust none of us will be found that day discomfited like the man who had hidden his talent and hoped that the almighty God would have worked a miracle somehow or other in order to bring something about without his effort.

Let me just mention one thing in passing. You see, Paul is full of this, and I would have liked to deal with it as a subject. For example, in 2 Corinthians 11, I've referred to this in passing.

In verse 2, he says this to the Corinthians. Now you remember the Corinthians. They were rebellious, and they were not easy to grow up.

They were being very immature, some of them intellectually, all of them spiritually, many of them morally. They just were not growing up. And then Paul, in writing to them in 2 Corinthians 11, verse 2, says this.

You know, he says, I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. What a concept of ministry.

Here is Paul bringing the Corinthians to Christ. What image did he have in his mind? Well, here's one of them. He thought of every Corinthian individual, and of the Corinthian church in particular, as a girl won to the beloved bridegroom of our souls.

And he thought of winning the girl, and cleansing her from all the evils of the world, and all the spots and taints of sin, and presenting her at last to the Lord Jesus as his and his only. And he would keep the church, you see, pure for him. A girl told me not so long ago, in my own office here, it's the big battle of my life, to keep my body and my spirit pure.

To present myself at last to Jesus Christ. You know anything of that concern? To present yourself pure. Paul was concerned to present the church and every Christian image pure.

The point is, you see, Paul saw the whole of the present in the light of the future. Not until our whole life assumes such an intimate relationship to the will of God, and we have learned to see our present activity in the light of future realities, shall we be able to hold the affairs of this present life in perspective. This present life can only be properly understood against the backdrop of eternity.

Now you take eternity out of the picture, and you trivialize everything. But you remember the eternal things. You remember this day of presentation.

You remember that we must all stand before the beamer, the judgment seat of Christ. Just remember that. It'll make a world of difference to Monday morning.

It'll transform the whole of life. The day of presentation. But now notice, Paul adds to that.

He's thinking of in terms of reasons now for his behavior, for submitting to suffering and persevering in the proclamation of Christ. He's adding this to it. He refers to the day of perfection, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

Of course, there is perfection and perfection. The perfection of a newborn baby is one thing. Ah, don't let's minimize it.

If an expectant mother has had any doubt as to whether her baby will be whole, then you know what a thrill it is to look at those teeny little fingers and see that they're all there, and they're all shapely, and see the little ears and the little toes, and see that everything is there just as it ought to be. Don't let us minimize the perfection of the newborn babe. That's a marvelous miracle of God.

It should make us rejoice and worship. But there's a world of difference between the perfection of the newborn babe and the perfection of the athlete in top form. A Mr. Universe, whose biceps have all been employed, and he's got control of every muscle in his body, and he knows how to turn and how to stand.

He knows how to control everything within his body. Have you seen him? Take a good look at him. Not for his physical magnificence, primarily, but for some other reason, the spiritual that lies behind it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ expects us men and women to have control of ourselves, as a man like that has control of his muscles. Now, it is more than probable that what Paul has here in his thinking is the ultimate maturity of a man fully grown, a man grown up to become what God meant him to be when he made him,

and when he redeemed him. A man in whom the grace of God has matured to glory, and a man in whom all the gifts of God have become so mature that they've functioned, and he can say of them, as he said of his own son Jesus Christ, I am well pleased.

That's glory. Paul speaks, you remember, in the complimentary passage to Colossians 2, in Ephesians 4, he refers to growing up to the fullness of the stature of Christ. Now, that's what we have here.

The day of presentation, presenting men and women who are our converts, who are our spiritual children, whom God has put in our care to bring up from childhood to maturity, presenting them mature. Now, I want you to notice this. The sphere within which such perfection will be found is couched in the words, in Christ.

All the perfection of which Paul speaks is a perfection which is to be found and which is to be gained, which is to be acquired in Christ, not outside of Christ. And when we go on to verses 6 and 7 and 8 in chapter 2, he'll be saying the same thing. He'll be talking about settling down in Christ and letting your roots get into Christ.

You don't need to go outside of Christ. Christ is all. That's the point.

But now, I'm not going on there this morning, and I think I'll be stealing Mr. McLeod's passage if I were to try to do it. The sphere within which such perfection will be found is couched in these words, in Christ, in Christ. This is the great doctrine of the mystical union of Christ and his church, the head and the body.

That one tiny preposition, in with reference to Christ, has reference to the believer's peculiar relationship to our Lord Jesus. You see, the people of Jesus Christ don't belong to him like bricks. I don't know, I don't suppose we've got many bricks in these walls.

There are stones there. But one stone upon another, that's not the picture, even though that is used in the Bible of the relationship of Christian to another. We are bricks in the stone, in the wall, or stones in the wall.

That's found in 1 Peter 2. But yet, that's not the one that Paul has here. There's a more intimate picture of our relationship to Jesus Christ than that, than being bricks in the one wall of which he is the chief cornerstone. Neither is it simply a matter of being the disciples of one teacher, where he is in the center of us and we are gathered around him, or he is in a rostrum like this and we are in front of him.

That's not primarily the relationship. That's not the, certainly not the deepest, the most intimate relationship between Jesus Christ and his people. There is a different one.

Christ's redeemed people are in him like the fish are in the sea, like the bird is in the sky. He is our sphere. In him we live and move and have our being.

When the Holy Spirit took us out of the Adamic stem and brought us into Christ, that moment we began to live. We were born again. And now in Christ we live, in Christ we move, in Christ we have the beginning of our salvation, in Christ we have the end of our salvation, in Christ we have all.

That's the message. So you see, all the perfection of which the apostle has in mind here is a perfection that is first found in Christ and becomes ours in virtue of our relationship to Christ. He is our righteousness.

He is our wisdom. He is our sanctification. He is our redemption.

There's nothing else left for him to be. Hallelujah. He is everything.

Now I'll correct a possible false understanding of that in a moment, but he is, let us unequivocally say that, our perfection is not in what I do as separated from Christ for one moment. Our perfection is that which he imputes to us and imparts to us by his Spirit and by his indwelling. It is all his.

So that when we stand at last in the presence of the Father, we'll have to say, Father, it was all his. And because his, it was yours. It was all of grace.

And every mouth will be stopped from boasting in him. There'll not be a single boaster there save in him. So if you're a boaster, you better stop it now and learn the lesson.

The only object of boasting in the eternal city is the Father and the Son by the Spirit. Now I must say one other word here. The scope of the anticipated perfection.

That we may present everyone perfect in Christ. You see this little clique that had come into Colossae. They used this word perfection very much, but with them it was something different.

They pretended that they had a secret. You know, they are Christians in Colossae already, but we can make them better Christians if only they listen to what we've got to say. We've got a little prescription of our own.

Come and join us in our little corner. Come and join our little group. Come and study with us.

Come and pray with us. And we've got a prescription. We'll give you something that will help you to grow up.

And it'll be ours exclusively. There was an exclusiveness about it that severed them from the body of Christ. Even when they were right theologically.

They were not right theologically. But even if they were right theologically, there was something wrong here. They didn't come nearer to the body of Christ.

They went further away. They split. But now notice, you see, they would say, yes, yes, there's perfection coming, but only for our little group that have accepted our prescription and follow us.

We have many people like that in the world. I could take you around many churches in Belfast this morning that talk about perfection, but only for our little group. God have mercy on them and on us.

Listen to Paul's message, will you please? That I may present everyone perfect in Christ. Of course, he's talking about every believer. The least believer, the unloveliest believer, the most immature believer, the fellow that had a very bad start, the chap who came into this church as a homosexual and couldn't acknowledge his sin, and then at last did and began to struggle, and was afraid to sit to some of you good people in the congregation unless you knew who he was, but is struggling to victory.

I tell you, he will be made perfect in Christ as you and I will in Christ. That's the message. That's the message.

There is a perfection, you see, in Christ. Not because of your pedigree, not arising even because of your past habits, but it comes to you in virtue of being a man or a woman in Christ. And as Mary Magdalene

from the one side of the sexual order of things will be there, so I believe there will be some of these people there by the grace of God and the compassion of his servants.

But I must hurry. Now, for those of you who are really studying this book, and it's so encouraging to find there are, can I tell you that Paul returns in verses two and three of the second chapter to repeat the purpose of his resolute and painstaking service in these words. Well, you can see the words, I don't need to mention them, but I want you to notice now that Paul's eye there is differently placed.

What I've already been referring to is the ultimate, the goal, the reason why he's doing this ultimately, the presentation of all men perfect in Christ, nothing less. But now here's a more immediate goal. My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart.

Oh, can you hear the sympathy of this man coming through? Encouraged in heart, united in love so that they may have full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures and wisdom of knowledge. Now, I want you to notice three things there. I can't deal with them, but I must refer to them.

We've looked at the ultimate end in view. How are we going to get to the ultimate end? Well, now, Paul tells us three things. One, that they may be encouraged in heart.

You ask me, he says, why I'm writing letters in prison? Because there are Christians in Colossae that need to be encouraged in heart. You know, the word encouraged here means it comes from the Greek underlying the term parakletos, or the verb in this case. Paraklet means one who's come alongside someone to take his case, to plead for him, to stand with him, to strengthen him, to encourage him.

Paul says, I'm in prison, right enough, but there are saints in difficulty in Colossae. And I want those saints in Colossae that I've never seen with my eyes to know that I, as best I can, I'm standing with them. I'm a paraklete alongside of them.

And that's the way I'm going to bring them to glory. That's one thing I've got to do. Brothers and sisters, you know, we talk about gifts.

If only we took the Bible seriously, you and I would be very, very busy. If you want to do one basic thing to bring men and women, boys and girls, young men and maiden, during this terribly tempting epoch in church history, if you want to bring them to glory, encourage them. Be a paraklete.

Stand alongside them. Give them a little shove forward now and again. Give them a pat on the back occasionally.

Somehow or other, help them to go on. Don't be so critical. Give them a little shove every now and again and let them know that you're glad to see them on the way to Zion.

Be a paraklete with a small p. That's the first thing. It sounds so terribly simple, I tell you. Sounds simple, it may be, but it has the most far-reaching consequences.

The second thing is that they may be united in love. Now, it would seem that the concept here is of love knitting people together. There are different kinds of love, but even within the experience of agape love, you can have a kind of detachment.

Paul is speaking here about love knitting us together, that really there is a tear if we're apart. Do you know anything of that? Where it pains to be apart from the saints. If you're not present in the house of the Lord, if you're not present in prayer, if you don't see so and so, you feel as if you've been torn asunder.

Do you know anything of that? In order for the church at Colossae to meet the challenge of the heretics and to be brought forward towards this perfection that Paul has in mind, he says, they need to be knit together in love. They've got agape, but they need to be knit, come closer together. And then thirdly, in order that they may know all the mystery of God, namely, I'm glad he has that in, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge.

In other words, says Paul, after these other two things that I've mentioned, then the discipline is a discipline of coming to know God in Christ better and better, more and more, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, until he comes or calls. Have you got the picture? That's the way Paul would bring his people to that great day of presentation when they will be found perfect in Christ. Now then I'm summarizing this.

Paul, the last thing, Paul's resolution and the supply of power to achieve the end in view. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. Now this is a passage, this is a verse actually that may take people by surprise and well, it may.

It'll serve to show how very many false emphases there are abroad. Look at the struggle of the servant here. Paul is second to none in his stress upon the adequacy of God.

This is the man that speaks of being more than conquerors through him that loved us. And you look at the context in Romans 8 where he says that. Even so, he does not on that account minimize the reality of human struggle involved in suffering.

In Paul's mind, the availability and experience of God's power did not cancel the necessity, nor the grim reality of the human struggle to help one another and to sanctify our own lives and to grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. In verse 29 and in verse 1 of chapter 2, there are two words that he uses. Now one word, he has it in verse 29, the word I struggle.

I'm not, I don't quite, I think in the KJV it says I labor. That's right, I labor. I struggle.

It's the very word that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 4 and in 1 Thessalonians 2 of the way he was under pressure physically when he had to work for his living in order to be an evangelist or a teacher. You remember there were times when he wouldn't allow people to provide for him. He says I have every right to do that.

If I'm giving you my spiritual, my spiritual gifts and placing them at your disposal, I have a right that you should place your material gifts at my disposal. But if I allowed you to do that, he says, some of you would brag and some of you would be proud and some of you would do injustice to the gospel because of that. Therefore, he says, I don't want you to support me.

I'll go without your support. But then he says, oh, I had to labor. Copio is the word.

And it means real struggle. When after preaching, after teaching, after house to house visiting, at any time he could, he was tent making. But the point is, you see, the struggle was on.

The body was bearing and wearing out. And he uses that very word here about his spiritual ministry. Mr. McLeod's question to the boys, what does a minister do? I can understand some people.

In sheer ignorance, thinking that he only stands in the pulpit once or twice a week and opens his mouth and may tell you, my friends, if it is true that we are the servants of the Lord, there will be a striving. It has to be if we are really his servants and it's a very toiling effort. In verse 29, again, he uses the word translated striving.

And he has a noun coming from it in verse one of chapter two, agon. The word is the word contest. It always or generally comes from the games.

Literally you would translate that part in verse two in this way, how great a struggle I am having for you. Now I'm saying this, you see, because there are some Christians whose view of sanctification is that there is no struggle. And sanctification means that you've got out of every struggle and you just go with it and the Holy Spirit just carries you along and you do nothing at all.

Let go, let God. Listen, my friend, Paul blatantly, absolutely contradicts it here in one place, but in many other places too. He says, I'm struggling and I feel the struggle.

It's a burden I'm wearing out and I've got to do it and I mean to do it. God's power in Christ does not make it less necessary for Christ's body to suffer to do his will. But there is nevertheless a might, a strength for the struggle to this end.

I labor struggling now notice here it is. I can't stay with it with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. The point I want you to know is this, as Paul was struggling, not to save him from struggling, as Paul was struggling to do the will of God, so the mighty power of God came upon him.

And he said, that power is working mightily in me to do this very thing in the midst of my striving. I'm receiving power. I'm being charged.

I'm being made stronger than the strong. I can make 10,000 to fly. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

I am weak, yet I am strong. I'm cast down, but I stand up. Men and women, this is something of the invincibility of a man of God, armed in the power of God and involved in the work of God.

Do we know anything about it? And commensurate with a struggle going on simultaneously with a struggle is this, the release of the divine power so that in the midst of it, we are able to achieve. Keep our eyes on the goal. And as we keep our eyes on the goal, God is working his purposes out as year succeeds to year.

And in his own glorious time, the most immature babe in Christ will be brought into the fullness of the stature of his blessed law. Oh, that the spirit of God would help us this morning gathered here to have something of this spirit of dedication, something of this understanding where and how to expect the power of God in us. And may he lead us on in such a manner that those whom he is enabling us to minister to, be it a little group here or a little group there, be it those in the home or elsewhere or in the church, that we may be able under the anointing of the indwelling spirit, despite the striving and the struggling, which is enormous, that we may be enabled to carry on to the end of the road and thus please him, our Lord and our master.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, let your blessing rest upon your word. We are challenged that we are such superficial readers.

Those of us in the ministry have to acknowledge, oh Lord, that we so often gloss over these great utterances of holy writ. And we excuse ourselves oftentimes from the disciplines involved in fully and adequately expounding them. And perhaps your people share in our spirit.

Forgive us, we pray, but give us a new heart and a new mind that we may follow in the footmarks of the apostle who himself walked in the footsteps of his Lord. And teach us, if needs be, to spend and be spent, our joy to do the Father's will. And we ask it in the name of our Savior.

Amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4669.mp3>

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