

# Sharing in Suffering of Christ - Col 1\_24

by Phil Beach Jr.

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*Phil Beach Jr. explores the significance of sharing in the sufferings of Christ as essential to the believer's identity and mission in the church.*

**Duration:** 39:11

**Scripture:** John 15:13, Acts 20:24, Colossians 1:24

**Topics:** "Suffering", "Intimacy With God", "Suffering For Christ"

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## Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the significance of sharing in the sufferings of Christ as articulated in Colossians 1:24. He explains that Paul's rejoicing in his sufferings is not about a lack in Christ's afflictions but rather a deep connection to the life of Christ living through him. Beach encourages believers to understand that true Christian life involves selflessness and a willingness to endure suffering for the sake of the church, reflecting the love of Christ. He highlights that the church collectively should experience the sufferings of Christ, which signifies a life fully yielded to Him. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deeper intimacy with Christ, where one's own life is secondary to the life of Jesus within us.

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## Transcript

I want you to turn your Bibles to the book of Colossians. I borrowed your Bible for a moment, Norman, in order to read another translation. Thank you, Father.

Very thankful tonight because of the Lord's faithfulness. Colossians, let's begin reading in verse number 15. Tonight's short teaching, Lord help me, tonight's short teaching is one of those kind of teachings where there's much to read regarding what is written and few to and few words to explain because the continuity of these scriptures will, I believe, do the explaining for us.

And I'm just asking the Lord to impact this in such a way that's pleasing to Him as to stir us that we may desire more intensely to be a partaker of this high and holy calling and not to become discouraged when we do become a partaker. Let's begin in Colossians chapter 1, verse number 15. Now, this particular portion of scripture is in reference to Jesus Himself.

Verse 15 is in reference to Jesus Himself. In verses 8 through 14, Paul describes the marvelous blessings and benefits that we who believe in Jesus have received. Picking up in verse number 15 regarding Jesus who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.

For by Him were all things created. There's a scripture that proves the deity of Jesus Christ. He was not just a man born of a woman who was a great prophet and teacher, but He was God Himself.

For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, are held together by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. His very word is holding the universe together.

Christ's very word is not only holding the vast universe together, but it's holding together the little neutrons and electrons and protons that make up the atom. So God's word is not just upholding the great, but is upholding the little, which of course the great is made up of. So consequently, God is sustaining the universe by His word, by His very will to continue things to function as they are, they continue.

That's a great God we serve, isn't it? And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence. That is, in all things regarding to His church, He may be the central figure and by Him and through Him all things may happen in the church, seeing He is the head. Therefore, it is from Him that the church should be receiving orders, by Him the church should be receiving all that she does.

He is the head. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself. By Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.

Now verse 21 begins how He has affected us. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death to present you holy and unblameable and unprovable in His sight, unapprovable in His sight. If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I, Paul, am made a minister.

Now verse 24 is the verse that we want to look at tonight. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church. Now I'm just going to reread that verse in the New American Standard.

Verse number 24, Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions. Now at first glance, this scripture has created many problems in the hearts and minds of many different Christians. However, tonight by the help of God's grace, we desire to shed some light on this verse that will help us to understand exactly what Paul was referring to in this particular portion of scripture.

First, I want to give Norman back his Bible, and I would invite you, if you would please, to turn your Bibles to Acts chapter 20, verse number 24. And let's read this Acts chapter 20, verse number 24, and let's discover a little bit about Paul's heart. Now remember, we're trying to understand now scripturally what Paul was suggesting when he implied that he was rejoicing in his sufferings in order that he might fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ.

What could be lacking as to the afflictions of Christ? What could be lacking as to the sufferings of Christ as it relates to the church? Could Paul be suggesting, as I heard one so-called minister of the gospel say, could Paul be suggesting that Calvary was not enough and that he was filling up the lack? He was

continuing to suffer because there was a lack? Well, certainly that's not the truth. So we'll have to understand what Paul is saying here. Acts chapter 20, let's begin in verse number 17.

Acts chapter 20, verse number 17. Here Paul meets with the Ephesian elders, and this is Paul now speaking in a few moments, and from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said to them, ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I've been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations, which befell me by the lying in weight of the Jews, and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you.

But I've shown you and have taught you publicly from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save or accept that the Holy Ghost witnessed in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. Verse number 24, but none of these things move me.

Okay, Paul is suggesting here very strongly, now listen closely beloved, Paul is suggesting that the circumstances that were presently in his life and the future circumstances that the Holy Spirit was testifying of in every city that was going to confront Paul did not move him. Now I have talked to many Christians who have said, Phil, how do I get to the place to my Christian life when things happening to me no longer move me? Well, the very next statement that Paul makes is the answer to this profound question and also the secret to why Paul could make such an astounding statement. Don't you want to be able to make this statement tonight? And none of these things move me.

Here we go. Neither can I my life dear unto myself. Here it is.

Paul was brought by the Holy Spirit to a place of such selflessness that he no longer counted his own life dear unto himself. In other words, something became more important to Paul than his own agenda, his own life, his own desires, his own interests. Something became more important to Paul than the living of his life through his body.

Got it? Something became more important to Paul than the living out of his own life through his mortal body. What could have become more important to Paul than the living out of his own life in his body? I count neither can I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I've received of the Lord Jesus, listen, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Now, I would like to invite you to turn your Bibles to Acts chapter 9 and let's discover a little bit about what Paul considered more important than his own life.

Is it possible that Paul became so preoccupied, listen closely, with another's life that he lost sight and interest of fulfilling his own so that he might fulfill another's? Now, listen closely, Acts chapter 9, Acts chapter 9, beginning in verse number 1. And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest and desired of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. Oh, and he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Now, who was Paul looking for? Who was Paul after here? Who was Paul looking for in this verse? What was he on the road to Damascus for? He was looking for who? Christians.

But notice what Jesus said here. Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou, who? Me. Now, Jesus is talking here.

May I suggest tonight that Christ associates himself so closely with the church that he says to whosoever will lay a hand against the church, you're laying it against me. Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul rose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man, but they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.

And he was there, and he was three days without sight, and neither did he eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. And to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias.

And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. What a good response when the Lord calls us, huh? I also like what happened to Paul when he had an encounter with Jesus. He was blinded, which means for three days he could see nothing except the memory of seeing Jesus.

Oh, that God would blind us when we have an encounter with Christ insomuch that we can only see what Jesus had said to us. How quickly we forget the things that Christ does as we leave the altar and begin to walk in the world, and our eyes start seeing things, and slowly we forget, do we not? But the Lord will blind us if we ask Him to. And certainly that doesn't necessarily mean taking our sight away, but it means keeping our eyes upon Him.

And he said, Behold, I am here. Now, who else said something like that in the Bible? Remember when the Lord called Samuel while he was in bed, and he went to Eli and thought Eli was calling him, and Eli said, Listen, if you hear this voice again, say, Here I am, Lord, thy servant, heareth thee. So, this is a good response when the Lord speaks to you.

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus. For behold, he prayeth, and hath seen a vision, a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.

Now, Ananias said that he had done the evil to the saints, but Jesus said that he was doing evil to himself, to Jesus. And there he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. I wonder if that's really where he got his authority from.

What did Jesus say when he was looking at Pilate in the eyes? Pilate said, Don't you know I have power to release you, or power to bind you up? And Jesus looked at him and said, There be no power given to you, my friend, except it be granted by my Father in heaven. And there he had authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. Now, Jesus forewarned the church that he would give the devil this power to throw some of them into prison.

But if they were faithful unto death, Jesus promised them a crown. So, you see, there was something working here that superseded human decision. It was God who was allowing Satan to do this.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me. Now, listen, to bear whose name? My name, that is the name of the Lord, but for the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for what? For my name's sake.

Now, in response to Paul, but none of these things move me. What things? All the circumstances that were in his life. Why? Because I do not count my life dear unto myself.

Why? That I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. I suggest tonight that Paul's ability to say my life is not dear to me anymore is in direct response to God laying hold of Paul and showing Paul Jesus. The greater vision that we have of Jesus, the less our life will be dear unto us and the more we will desire another's life to be lived in us and through us.

Now, we're not done yet. We have a few more scriptures we want to go through. I want to invite you to turn your Bibles to John chapter 15, the book of John.

And then we're going to close tonight by rereading this verse in Colossians chapter 1, verse number 24, and possibly get a little gleaning of what Paul was actually saying. If you really get it, it'll make you cry. I promise.

If you really get it. But you'll have to pray and think about it and meditate on it and let God quicken. It's a very sad thought that Paul is saying here in verse 24.

Okay. John chapter 15, beginning in verse number 13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Huh. Very quickly.

And we're not going to stop there because I want to read on. But here Jesus was saying greater love hath no man than what? To lay down his life for his friends. And then Jesus said, you are my friends if you do whatever I command you.

You know, oftentimes we always look at that scripture and we say, well, see, Jesus was showing us how much of a friend he is because he laid his life down for us. But then Jesus was flipping the coin right around and saying, are you my friend? Then lay your life down for my sake. See, Jesus laid his life down for our sake, that in turn, we may lay our life down for his sake and exchange our life for his.

Now let's read on here. Ye are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends.

For all things which I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

These things I command you, that ye love one another. Now, very carefully, let's read on now. Jesus was talking about laying his life down for us, and then I believe if we meditate on the scriptures here, Jesus was not only showing them of the great love that he was gonna manifest by dying on the cross for them, but he was also showing them the cost that it was gonna be for them to share in his life.

And this is why he introduces suffering. Verse 18, if the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. So Jesus is setting a precedent right here.

If anybody hates you, it's not because of you, but me. Okay, it's not because of you, but me. Jesus is the central figure of hostility by the world, by the devil, by the flesh.

Jesus is the central figure of hostility. If you were of the world, the world would love his own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord.

If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that hath sent me.

Now let's turn our Bibles to 1 Peter. 1 Peter chapter four, 1 Peter chapter four, beginning in verse number 12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings.

Now whose sufferings are they? They're Christ's sufferings. When his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.

On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.

So here Peter introduces the thought of suffering. Now I'd like to go to Galatians chapter six, verse 17. This is Paul talking, and this is what he says, Galatians 6, 17, From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now there's many, many other scriptures that we could read, but for time's sake we're not going to read them. I just want to bring this to a close tonight by going back to Colossians chapter one. Colossians chapter one, verse number 24.

And in light of the scriptures that we just read, and also we know the scriptures in Galatians chapter two, verse 20. It is no longer I that liveth, but who? Christ that liveth in me. Does the Bible say that Jesus Christ in Hebrews chapter 13 is the same yesterday, today, and forever? As Pentecostals, we always have a tendency to use that scripture to prove that the gifts are for today.

And I suppose that's legitimate. And we prove that God's a miracle worker. Praise God if he did it in the past, he can do it today.

And I suppose there's credibility to that. But I have a feeling that there's a greater meaning to that scripture, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forevermore, that I would like to dovetail into verse 24 and then give you what I believe Paul was meaning in verse 24. May I suggest that when God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ, the life that he lived so affected the world and the devil that either a person responded to the truth, repented and turned from sin, and trusted in God as their savior, or they despised and hated and persecuted the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, if the Bible says Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore, I want to say too that the world is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore until God changes it. The devil's the same. Wickedness is the same.

And if Jesus Christ walked 2,000 years ago in the world, and the world hated him, and the world persecuted him, and he suffered because of who he was, I want to ask a question. Do you think if that same Jesus started living again in the world, the same thing would happen to him? Think the same thing would happen to Jesus again? Think the crowds would do the same thing, despise him and hate him and persecute him? Yes. But remember, it's got to be Jesus that's living the life because no one else reproves the world of sin except Jesus.

No one else can stir up the devil except Jesus. In light of these facts, let us just reread verse 24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind or that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.

It is my conviction that Paul here was saying, I'm going to just paraphrase it, use my own language, but I believe it's substantiated from the teaching of the scripture. Paul's saying this, I'm rejoicing in my sufferings, yet they're not my sufferings, they're Christ's sufferings. Because I have not counted my own life dear unto myself, for it is not I that liveth any longer.

Paul is not living in this body to fulfill the agenda of his own mind. But Paul has so yielded himself to Christ as to cause Paul's interests and desires to be placed on hold. And now it is the very life of the Son of God that is living in the apostle Paul.

It is the very love of God controlling and compelling Paul to speak, to teach. It is the very life of Jesus being lived through Paul. Now, if the life of Jesus is being lived through Paul, then the persecution and the suffering that Paul is experiencing in his physical body is not a result of himself, but it's the result of the life that is being lived in him, which is the life of the Son of God.

See, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. If he walked as a man and his life irritated people, if he begins to live through you, and me, his life will do the same thing. It will irritate sinful people that do not want God.

But now rejoice in my sufferings for you. Now, here's the part that will really make you sad and fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my body for his body's sake, which is the church. Here's what Paul's saying.

I, Paul, rejoice in that God is privileging me to experience because of the life that I am yielding to, the life of Christ. I'm experiencing the tremendous persecution and suffering that is the result of that life. But Paul said, I am filling up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my body for his body's sake.

Here's what Paul's saying, I believe. It was God's will, and it is God's will, and it shall be God's will until the day when Jesus Christ comes back. It is God's will for his body and not just one member.

Paul was one member. But it's his will for the whole body to share in the suffering of Christ. By virtue of yielding their life to Christ, so that it is not their life living, but Christ's life living in them.

And what Paul was saying is that at the time he wrote this letter, that was grievously lacking in the church. What was lacking? Paul was saying, listen, if it is his life that's living through the church, the church will be

suffering by virtue of that life. But if it's not his life that's living through the church, but our life and our interests and our ways, then his body, which is the church, is lacking the sufferings that it ought to be experiencing.

And here's why. Because it's his body and it's to be his life flowing through it. It's not to be his body and then our life flowing through it.

And our way flowing through it. And Paul actually saw that he was filling up the lack in his own body. And because of this, he counted the suffering dear.

And he loved the suffering, but he was grieved at the same time. Do you remember what was going on in the Corinthian church? There was a lot of trouble in the Corinthian church, but it wasn't because of the life of Jesus flowing through. Many times it was because of the life of the Corinthians that was flowing through.

So may I suggest that you possibly meditate upon this, reread the scriptures and consider what it means to suffer and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, which is the church. I know this is meaty and you got to think about it, but it's good to. Yes, brother.

Philippians 1, 29. There are many, many scriptures. Amen.

Philippians 1, 29, for unto you, it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. You know, I have underlined here the word given, and I must've looked it up sometime in a Greek dictionary. And I have here the word given means to have a favor bestowed upon you.

Bestowed upon someone. So what Paul's saying is for unto you, there has been given a gracious favor that's been bestowed. And what's the favor? Here's the favor.

Not only do you believe in Jesus, but you then are brought to the place where your whole life no longer means anything to you, but you become engrossed in his life in so much that his life begins to live through you, affecting everything that you are. And as his life lives through you, you will suffer by virtue of the life that's living through you. And that's what it is to share in his sufferings.

You know why it's such a great honor and privilege? Because it's a sign that it's not your life any longer that's living in you, but it's his. And that suggests union, intimacy, closeness, and what other place to be than so hid in Christ so that it's not me anymore, but him living in me. Now there's a goal to strive for by the power of God's spirit.

Anyone have any questions at all? Any thoughts?

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