

*Sunday School Lesson, June 2, 2024*  
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**Lesson—Hope Amidst Suffering<sup>1</sup>**

**Text—Colossians 1:24-29; 2:1-3**

**I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, we will...

1. Comprehend Paul's message to the Colossians about hope and Christ transforming their lives.
2. Internalize a vibrant and transforming hope.
3. Express hope in Christ by sharing the gospel with others in Word and in deed.

**Why This Lesson Matters:** Physical or emotional suffering may cloud the heart and diminish hope for a brighter tomorrow. Paul rejoiced in suffering for the faith as he shared with the Gentiles the mystery of the gospel of Christ, the hope of glory.

**Key Verse—(Colossians 2:2-3)** *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.(KJV)*

**Song of Praise and Worship:** “When I See Jesus” by Douglas Miller

**II. Points to be Emphasized**

- a. *Whatever suffering Paul was enduring he rejoiced in it because he understood it as having a positive outcome for those whom he wrote to.*
- b. *For Paul, suffering is never endured without hope. In this case, it is an element of his servitude, through which Christ, “the hope of glory,” is revealed in those to whom he ministered.*
- c. *Paul's hope is universal.*
- d. *This hope of Paul's is also communal. Paul indicates that his sufferings were for “the sake of his body,” that is, the church.*

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<sup>1</sup> Outline Content courtesy of the Sunday School Publishing Board Teacher Manual, which should be purchased at [www.sspbnb.com](http://www.sspbnb.com)

### **III. Historical/Biblical Background and Lesson Context**

The letter to the Colossians is considered to be one of the prison epistles that Paul wrote during his imprisonment in Rome. The Book of Colossians is named for the city of Colossae, a city in Phrygia in the Roman province of Asia Minor. The letter was written about 60 - 62 AD. This dating puts the letter near the end of Paul's active missionary work, but even from prison, his enthusiasm and strength for doing his work had not faded.

One of Paul's disciples, Epaphras, is credited with having planted the church at Colossae. The church at Colossae was dealing with issues of idolatry, astrology, and astrological worship, amongst other things. So Paul wrote to correct a dangerous unorthodoxy that crept into the family of faith due to the culture of the area.

Colosse was a small town in Asia Minor located a few miles South of Laodicea, a city that Paul also mentions in this letter. Today, this area is known as Turkey, yet at the time of the writing of the letter it was Asia Minor.

### **IV. Prominent Character(s) in the Lesson**

**Epaphras**: founder of the church in Colossae; also a friend and co-worker of Paul  
**Paul**: the author of this letter, who possibly wrote it from the prison in Rome.

### **V. Key Terms in the Lesson (KJV)**

**Glory** (v. 1:27)—*Greek: doxa*: praise-honor; renown, the unspoken manifestation of God; splendor.

**Minister** (1:25)—*Greek: diakonos*: one who performs any service; an administrator; “servant”

**Mystery** (1:26)—*Greek: musterion*: a secret doctrine; The counsels of God, once hidden but now revealed in the gospel or some fact thereof; particular truths or details of the Christian revelation.

**Preach** (1:28)—*Greek: katagello*: to announce, make known, declare openly; Lord; Celebrate; Proclaim.

**Suffering(s)** (1:24)—*Greek: pathema*: that / those which befall(s) one; a passion: affliction(s); an enduring(s).

**Tribulations** (1:24)—*Greek: thlipsis*: persecutions; distresses; interpressures that cause someone to feel confined; “afflictions”

**Understanding** (2:20)—*Greek: sunesis*: a putting together in the mind; cognition; practical discernment; intellect.

### **VI. Topical Outline of the Lesson**

1. Introduction
2. Suffering for Hope's Sake (Colossians 1:24-27)
3. Suffering for Hope's Inclusiveness (vv. 1:28-29; 2:1-3)

**Food for thought and question for consideration: (What have we learned Charlie Brown?)** In the times that you have been most despondent, did you know that you can rely on the victory in Christ to have hope in the midst of whatever you were going through? Know NOW, that the same hope exists for current and potentially future days of despair!!!