15.11.26 am: Gospel Ministry

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Date: 15 November 2026

Preacher: Stuart King

[0:00] It's good to be together. Welcome especially to anyone visiting with us. It's great to have you with us.! David, our minister, is currently in Calanish, so very much value your prayers for him.

It would be wrong, it would be remiss of me not to embarrass one of his children in his absence because it is Anna's 21st birthday. So if you're able to stay back for tea and coffee, you can embarrass her by going up and wishing her a happy birthday.
I think you came here just before you were nine, I think you said. So many people here will have seen her grow up, so take the time to go and embarrass her now that David can't.
So please stay back for tea and coffee afterwards if you're able. I'll not go through all the intimations in any significant detail just for the interest of time, but there's a creche afterwards, not afterwards, during the service through in the room behind here.
If you just go through that door and to the left, if you want to use that. There'll be a Sunday school after the second singing, so anyone primary and up to S4 are able to go along to that.
[1:07] There'll be an informal prayer meeting at half five this evening, just before the evening service, which will be taken at six o'clock by David, by the minister. I'll be in Kinloch, so again, we very much value your prayers as I share God's word with the people in Kinloch.

After the evening service will be youth fellowship, so anyone S1 to S6, please do come along, about half seven till about half eight, and we're continuing our mini-study and different encounters with Jesus. So please be encouraged to come along to that. There'll be an online prayer meeting this Wednesday, and everyone's invited to join. This is to join the Free Church Moderator, Reverend Callum Ian McLeod, at 12.30pm. I think that's the National Day of Prayer on Wednesday, so please be encouraged. There'll be further details in the church email. Hopefully you've been able to have access to that. If you've not, grab myself or one of the elders at the end, and we'll be able to get a hold of that link for you. In terms of Friday clubs, they're all as normal.
The only change is Routed's not on. It's the Big YF up in Stornoway, so we've got the minibus ready to go. I think the minibus is already full, so if anyone else wants to come that hasn't already said they'll come, we'll organise cars. So just reach out to myself or to Joyce, and we'll be able to sort that for the Big YF up in Stornoway, and hopefully it'll be as well attended as it was last time. I think we had 106 young people at the last Big YF up in Stornoway, so hopefully we'll be able to have another number there. Take wee note for your diary for Saturday, 21st of November at 6.30pm. There's the Congregational Thanksgiving meal that we've had for the last few years, so please be encouraged. Team two are on duty, and there's a sign-up sheet at the door for food, so if you're able to contribute any food, please do just fill it in at the door. It'll be there for the next couple of Sundays, or is this coming Saturday? Sorry, so sign up today, and we look forward to trying out your food. Services next Sunday will be taken by David, God willing.
Another thing to note, not this week, but a week on Thursday will be the prayer meeting. It's not going to be on Wednesday. It's going to be on the Thursday of that week. I think David's got a meeting up in Stornoway that he needs to attend to, so 26th, for your diaries, 26th of November will be the prayer meeting, and it'll be a Thanksgiving prayer meeting held then, not on the Wednesday. And then the last thing, I thought this was going to be shorter, but I've got almost a full A4 anyway, but the last thing just to note is Harris Voluntary Service. They're doing a harvest collection for the Harris Food Bank. So kind of normal items, long life items, pastas, tins. If you're able to contribute anything, please do so. And I'm just going to throw Marion under the bus. Ask Marion if you've got any questions. Pardon? There'll be a table out there to be able to contribute things, so please be encouraged to do so. And now we will sing. We'll begin our public worship by singing to God's praise from Psalm 130. Psalm 130 from, obviously, the Scottish Psalter.

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And we'll sing the whole of the psalm. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear unto my supplications voice. And we'll stand to sing to God's praise. I couldn't remember the last line there, it's just changed. Please stand to sing to God's praise.
[4:30] Lord, from the depths to thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear. Unto my supplications voice, give unto the earth. Lord, who shall stand in the whole Lord? Choose my iniquity, but yet with thee forgiveness is. That fear thou mayest be. I wait for all my soul doth wait. My hope is in His word.

more than they lack for morning wash. My soul waits for the Lord. I see more than they lack to wash. more than they lack to wash. My soul waits for the Lord. I see more than they lack to wash. The morning light to wash. The morning light to wash.
I love to watch the morning light to see.
Let Israel open the Lord, for with him there she's be.
And plentiful redemption is ever found with him.
[7:04] And from all his iniquities he ever shall redeem.

Let's come together in prayer. Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. that we can offer, there is nothing required of us, all we bring to the table is our sinful hearts and we pray that we would each this day recognise the sin that's in our lives, that we would turn from that sin, that we would seek to repent of the sins in our lives, that we would not be living a life in darkness, not caring about how we conduct ourselves or what it is that we do, both in thought and in deed, but that we would be reminded each and every day of our sinful hearts and that we would daily put to death that which is earthly in us, that our desires would be set on things that are above, not on things that are here on earth, that the material things that we have, the possessions, the financial means that we have, these are not the things that would be our priorities, these would be things that are gracious gifts to us but they would not be our priorities, but our priority would be to know you, to come to know you each and every day as we spend time in our own devotional time, as we spend time on our knees in prayer, that we would desire each and every time we open your word to see your face, to see Christ crucified on each and every page and we pray and give thanks Lord, that we find ourselves here, able to hear your word, able to sing praises as we've done and as we pray, we pray for those silent prayers, those prayers of the heart, for those that are not audibly hurt Lord, we again remind ourselves this day that we come before a loving God, a God that is near to us, not one that's distant, not one that's far off from us but one that desires for us to come in prayer, to come in thankfulness for many prayers that have already been answered in our lives, so we thank you Lord that we indeed know that we come to a God who hears our prayers and answers our prayers and as the psalmist said, we pray that our own views would be that we love the Lord because our voice in prayers he did hear, so we give you thanks Lord that you hear our prayers, we pray for those who are maybe unable to be with us this day, those who have, are maybe housebound at this moment, those who are maybe in hospital, those who are unable to be with us, we especially bring them before you and ask that you would be with them, that you would comfort them, that you would lay your healing hands upon them as the great physician, we ask Lord that they would be comforted knowing that although maybe absent from us in the building here, that they are very much in our prayers and we pray Lord that you would go before them and that you would comfort them, we pray for those who are maybe waking up this morning with no thought of coming into your house, no thought of you, no thought of your word, no thought of prayer, no thought of the sin that stains their own lives, we pray Lord that you would make yourself known to them especially, that you would reveal to them your peace and your light and that they would indeed bend the knee and they would cry out for mercy for the sin in their own lives, we bring before you the young ones as well, we give you thanks for those in attendance today, we pray for the Sunday school, we give you thanks for creche provision and for the youth clubs that meet on a Friday, we especially think of the big YF this week and ask Lord that you would grant us journeying mercies as we take a minibus north from Harris and we give you thanks for the willingness and the desire from the young ones to go and to spend time together with others, spend time in fellowship and to hear a word of testimony, we pray for Callum Murdo as he prepares to share testimony with the young people and ask that you would equip him and give him the words to say and we pray for the years ahead for these young ones Lord, we give thanks that they're able to

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make these connections and these bonds whilst in school and here but we think of those who have maybe left our shores whether
[12:22] through study or for work and we ask Lord that you would continue to be with them, that you would grant them a desire to join that fellowship with their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ Lord and for those that maybe don't know you, we ask that you would grant them opportunities to go and to hear your word to be discipled by other Christians on the mainland or wherever they are Lord, we ask that you would equip those to be able to be a blessing to others and we especially thank Lord this day of David as he shares your word in Calanish, we think of all the other congregations on our island here, we give you thanks for them and for the pulpit supply that goes on Lord, we are with many vacancies and we pray that you would continue to provide pulpit supply but you would ultimately be providing shepherds to shepherd the flock in each of those congregations, that you would lay it upon the hearts of men to go into these places, to share the word, to faithfully and diligently bring the word before the congregation there and to pastor the flock, to love them, to care for them and to ultimately point them to the cross Lord. So we pray for our denomination, we pray for our presbytery, we pray for all the congregations here, we pray for the other congregations even in our own village here Lord, we give you thanks for them as they preach Christ crucified, we give you thanks that we indeed have a saviour that is crucified and and has risen again, we give you thanks for that salvation plan which is the golden thread that runs through your word, we pray that we would not neglect your word, that we would not neglect to turn to it each and every day and that we'd be asked and prayerfully asked to be shaped by it as we seek to be more Christ-like in our day-to-day Lord. So be with us just now Lord, forgive us for all of our sins in Christ's precious name we pray, Amen.

Okay boys and girls if you're able to come to the front I've got something to very quickly show you and possibly share with you, depends how good you are. Welcome. Okay, has anyone ever seen a bag of these before?
Oh Olivia's face just lit up. Has anyone ever seen a bag of these before? What are these? Huh? Anyone know? Johnny? Celebrations. What are celebrations?
Chocolates. Let me test you if you're telling the truth. That's a good shout. So celebrations, what's your favourite one Seanie? A bounty. A bounty? I'll try one of them, thanks for that.
That's a good shout. Mmm, you're right. That is lovely. If only you could try that, that's amazing. Anyone else got a favourite? Fraser, what's your favourite?
[15:12] A chocolate. Or a... Malteser? Yeah. Yeah, that's mine too, thanks. I'll take a wee bite of that one as well. That's a lovely choice. Thank you for this.

I'm probably not even going to finish them because I've kind of got a job to do here. So, they are lovely. Can you taste it as well? Do you enjoy them? You're not able to taste it?
Why can't you taste it? There's a big bag here. What do I need to do for you to be able to taste them? Anyone? What do I need to do? Olivia.
I need to share them. There's no use me eating them all by myself, is there? Well, it would be good, but it wouldn't be a wise idea. They're delicious, they're lovely, but it's not right if I just keep them all to myself.
It's something I have to share. Maybe, if I've got a couple more answers, maybe a wee bounty there for Seanie. Maybe you can take them through to Sunday school. I don't know who's on, but maybe they'll share it with you.
[16:10] Maybe one or two. Or cut them up. You can all get a wee bit each. But once you think about it, it's not a good idea for me just to sit and eat these in front of you. I can see, Sean, everything just fell inside of you when I took a bite of that bounty.

That's not what we're here to do. And it's the same when we think about the Bible. With the older ones, we're going to be looking at a man named Paul. And last week, we looked at who Christ was in Colossians.
He was writing a letter to the church in Colossae. And we looked at who Christ was, and he was talking about how Christ is supreme over everything. Over everything in our lives. And today, we're going to look a little bit about what it means to actually share the gospel.
And to actually be involved in gospel ministry. That's basically meaning sharing God's word with people. Like these chocolates, I can sit and tell you how amazing that bounty is, Seanie.
And it was good. I can tell you how amazing it was, that Malteser. Such a wasted bite. It's such a waste, isn't it? That I don't even get to finish that. I can tell you how good it is. But until I share it with

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you, none of you are going to know what that's like.
[17:13] You're not going to know what it tastes like. And that's what Paul was doing. He had amazing news. When you think about the word that we read, hopefully we're reading every day. But especially every week as we come together, we're learning about Jesus.

And it's something that we should be sharing. It's not good for me to sit and eat these chocolates on my own. And it's not good for us to have God's word. What you learn in Sunday school, what you learn at Jam, Connect, Rooted and YF for the older ones, it's not good for you just to learn that. And then just keep it yourselves. We want to try and share it with people around us. Why do we want to share, or sorry, who is it that we should share with other people? It's a bit of an easy question.
But who from the Bible should we be pointing people to, Olivia? Jesus. Yeah, we should be pointing people to Jesus. And all the stories that we hear of in Sunday school, whatever the story is in the Bible, it will all point to Jesus.
And that's what I want you guys to be doing. I want you to think about this week. Is there somebody, maybe even somebody in your own home, maybe somebody in your family, there may be somebody in your class, that needs to know about Jesus.
[18:19] That's what Paul is doing. He's writing letters to people and he's continually reminding them about who Jesus is. He wants people to know who Jesus is. He wants them to understand how much Jesus loves them.

It's like this chocolate. If I was to sit and say, guys, it's just so good. What's the best thing for me to share how good this is? It's by giving you one of the chocolates. And that's the same when we're dealing with God's word.
It could be a friend at school. It could be someone in your family. It could be somebody that, maybe one of your teachers even, you need to be able to share who Jesus is with. And one of the important things is, for you to taste just a snicker, for example, I don't know if anyone's getting any nut allergies.
I'll leave that to Cammie at Sunday school. Just leave you a bomb there. So these chocolates, if I was to give you a taste of this Malteser, that gives you one taste.
That's all you need to be able to taste Maltesers. You don't need to eat the whole pack to know exactly what a Malteser tastes like. And it's the same with God's word. When we have Jesus, that's all we need. We don't need anything more than him.
[19:20] When you're sharing with, or when the Sunday school people are sharing with you, and when you're then sharing with people in your family or in school, you don't need to tell them, guys, this is who Jesus is.

He loves you, but you also need to do this, this, this, this, this, and this. I don't sit and say, try this Malteser, Fraser, but also, to enjoy the Malteser, you have to eat this, and you have to drink the water, and you have to go and do this.
No, you just have to have this thing on its own. And it's the same with Jesus. That's all people need. Some people might turn around to you and say, yeah, do you know, I do believe in Jesus, but I don't think I pray enough, or I maybe don't come to church enough, and maybe I've done some bad things, and there's no way Jesus will accept me.
None of that matters. It's Jesus that matters. Everything that he did when he died on the cross is the most important thing. So when you're sharing it with people, whatever you do in Sunday school today, even if it's at tea and coffee, I want you to go and just tell anyone what you learned, what it was you learned, and how it points to Jesus.
And when you eat some of these chocolates, I'll maybe take out the bounties and Maltesers, and when you eat this chocolate, I want you to think about that tasting.
[20:29] It's a psalm in the Bible that says, oh, taste and see that God is good. You have to taste it, and it's the same when we're thinking about what Paul teaches us in this letter to the church in Colossae. Jesus is enough.

Jesus is all we need in our lives. We don't need anything else. We don't need to go and have an amazing career or a massive bank balance in order to get to heaven. We just need to know Jesus, trust in him, because he's done all the work for us.
So you will get this bag. I'll hand it over to somebody to take after the singing, and maybe a bounty can go specifically to Shawnee for answering a question, and Fraser for the Malteser. We'll say a

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wee word of prayer, so close your eyes just now, and then we'll sing afterwards.
Gracious God, we again give you thanks that we're able to speak to the young ones here. We give you thanks for their questions that they answer, that they are keen to hear and keen to learn about your son, Lord.
We thank you that you indeed sent your son to die on the cross, and there's nothing else required of us. There's nothing else we need. Just like trying one of those chocolates, we don't need anything else in order to taste and see that that chocolate is good, and it's the same.
[21:36] When we look to you, there's nothing else that's required of us. We have to just turn to you, trust in the sending of your son, him who knew no sin, who died for us, and that we would remember to maybe point other people to it, that we would share it.

We wouldn't just keep this gospel message for ourselves, but that we would share it with others around us. We would share it with those in our family. We would share it with even strangers that we come across. We would always be seeking to point people towards the cross, Lord.
So be with the young ones as they go to Sunday school. Be with the Sunday school teachers as they share your word with them, and we ask that you would bless them, and that they would go out to be a blessing as well to all those that they encounter, Lord.
So go before us just now. Forgive us for all of our sins. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, just before you go to Sunday school, we'll sing Mission Praise 975, which is before the throne of God above.
I have a strong, a perfect plea, a great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. We'll sing the whole of this hymn, and we'll stand to sing to God's praise. I have a great high priest whose name is love, who ever lives and pleads for me.
[22:57] I have a strong, a perfect plea, a great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me.

I give his written on his heart, I know I'm fine with any sounds.
No tongue can make me fancy part, no tongue can make me fancy part. When Satan tempts me to despair, and tells me of the guilt within, a word I look and see in it, who made an end to all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior cried, my sinful soul is crowned to thee, or God will justice satisfy, to live on him and pardon me, to live on him and pardon me.
O, when there the risen land, my perfect swan is such a stress, the great unchangeable I am, the king of glory and of grace.
[24:30] On the earth and self I cannot die, my soul is purchased with its blood, my life is dead with Christ all mine, with Christ my Savior and my God, with Christ my Savior and my God.

Come on.
Come on. Just as young ones are heading out to Sunday school, if we can turn again this week to the letter of Paul to the Colossians.
The letter of Paul to Colossians. It said last week, for those that weren't with us, we looked at, we kind of focused on Christ and who he is and the supremacy of Christ. But we'll read the same verses that we considered last week.
So we looked at really verses 15 through 23. And today we're going to look at verses 24 through to the end of verse 5 of chapter 2. But we'll read from verse 15 just as a reminder to us.
[25:42] And the title in the ESV that I have here is the preeminence of Christ at the start here, before we move into Paul's ministry to the church. So we'll read from verse 15 of Colossians 1.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him.
And he is before all things and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And through him to reconcile himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.
And you who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds. He is now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.
[26:46] If indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

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Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake. And in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body. That is the church of which I became a minister, according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you.
To make the word of God fully known. The mystery hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you.
The hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.
For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
[28:13] I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Amen. And may the Lord bless that reading of his word to us. Just before we come back to that passage, we'll sing again this time in Gaelic. First two stanzas of Psalm 32.
And I'll just read the first two verses in English. So, blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he hath done whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile nor fraud is found therein.
So we'll sing the first two stanzas in Gaelic and we'll remain seated to sing to God's praise. The man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he hath done with his son. The man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he hath done with his son.
The man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he hath done with his son. The man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he hath done with his son. In this voice of word. ...
[29:24] ... ...

... ... Is all there so much like it is If you want to keep it If you want to keep it Don't believe it's even other than they see it.
Don't believe it's even other than they see it. For all your youths can stand there For all your youths can stand there Altyaz■ M.K.
To us we come and lead us to our race. To us we come and lead us to our peace.
oh yeah yeah yeah If you could just turn back in your Bibles to the passage that we read in Colossians, if you have it open.
[32:11] If you do have your Bible with you, it would be handy maybe just to keep it open as we navigate through this passage. Similar to last week, we'll be looking at specific sections. So last week we looked at verses 15 through 23.

And for our time just now, I want us to look really from verses 24 of chapter 1 through to the end of verse 5 in chapter 2. So last time we looked at, we started really by looking at one of the most powerful descriptions that we see of Jesus in the Bible.
And it's found in that 15 to 23. I'm not going to go through it in any significant detail again. But what we see in there, or what Paul tells us in this letter, is that Jesus Christ is everything.
We see that he rules over creation. We see that everything exists because of him and for him. He's also in charge of the new creation, which was our second point, being the risen Lord and head of the church.
And he's central to our salvation, which was our kind of final point, since he brought us back to God by dying on the cross. That opportunity for us to receive salvation took place at Calvary.
[33:23] His main point really in those short verses was very straightforward. It was that Christ is enough. Christ is supreme and he should be the first thing, first priority in our lives.

And again, going back to the context of who this letter was for, it was for the church in Colossae. And the people of Colossae were being tempted to seek spiritual completeness elsewhere, to look elsewhere, to look beyond Jesus.
But Paul urged them to focus again on Jesus and on Jesus alone, to see his greatness, to see his majesty, and to see how he meets every one of our needs.

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There's nothing outwith his control. There's nothing that we need to do. He has done it all for us. And just as we closed last week, we ended really just by noticing that when the world, which it does today, continues to offer us up distractions, it offers up rival promises and things that we can focus on and false hopes.
The true answer is simply to put our trust and everything into Christ and Christ alone, which really leads us to the question of our message today. If Christ is in charge of all things, which we know he is, how should that shape our lives?
[34:33] What should that make us do on a day-to-day? What does it mean for us to belong to him? What does it mean to share him with others, just as we spoke with the young ones, about sharing that gospel message?

So as Paul really moves through the next part of the first part of his letter, we then move to Colossians verse 24 onwards. He shifts away from Christ's supremacy and he moves on to the mission of Christ's followers.
And he shows us that the gospel isn't just something that we accept and that we enjoy, like a chocolate. It's something that's to be shared. It's something that's to be served. It's something that's to be lived out in our lives.
And Paul talks about enduring suffering for the gospel, working hard for spiritual growth of others and guarding believers against anything that pulls him away from Christ.
It's anything Christ plus he tries to get them to avoid. And in short, the Christ who is above everything, as we looked at last week, is also the one his people are meant to proclaim.
[35:36] That's who we're meant to share with others. And today we'll look at what that really means in day-to-day life. We're thinking about some of the greatest challenges that the Christian life has.

And I know this is not new to any of you, but often the Christian life is difficult when we see our tendency is to want the blessings of the gospel. But we don't always want the suffering that comes with it.
We don't want to have to fulfill the mission of the gospel, which is to share it. We may be rejoicing our sins being forgiven. We're glad of that hope of eternal life that the word tells us of.
We're grateful for God's mercy and his grace. As long as it doesn't cost us anything, as long as we leave it there, it doesn't cost me anything. As long as it's not something that's uncomfortable, something that's maybe exhausting, something that's maybe tiring, something that's maybe sacrificial.
Our excitement can often wane when these things start to come up. We like having comfort. We like convenience. We like to be served. We often like to just be spectators. Yet, throughout scripture, we don't find that God presents the Christian life as simply a matter of enjoying blessings and enjoying what blessing comes from the word.
[36:47] Those who receive Christ are expected to be participants in his mission. And that applies to us as well today. It's not a matter of then earning salvation. It's not that you have to do these things in order to be saved.

It's not a matter of adding to Christ's work on the cross. It's a matter of joining him in advancing his gospel. And in Colossians, especially in this first chapter and moving into chapter 2, he moves from one of those greatest descriptions of who Christ is to one of the greatest descriptions of what gospel ministry is.
Paul shows us what it means to live for a saviour who is supreme over all things. And the result is a vision of discipleship that's costly, it's purposeful, it's sacrificial, but it is deeply, deeply joyful.
As I said earlier, we often want the comfort without the commitment. Or we want that spiritual growth without that spiritual effort. But the passage that we're going to look at here reminds us that God's people are called to participate in Christ's mission.
So that others can know and can grow in him. So really just three points we're going to look at. And it kind of comes under just really the heading of gospel ministry.
[38:02] There's three things that gospel ministry is. And the first thing is that it embraces costly service. We see that gospel ministry will embrace that costly service. We see then that gospel ministry pursues mature disciples.

And then at the end we'll see that gospel ministry places Christ at the centre. So we'll start off just with the fact that gospel ministry embraces costly service.

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Just look with me at verses 24 through 27. Paul starts, of chapter 1, sorry. Paul starts here probably with some surprising words. He says, Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake.
And in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's affliction. For the sake of his body that is the church. I can maybe come across initially as a bit of a challenging verse.
Especially when we see there where Paul writes what is lacking in Christ's affliction. What is Paul referring to when he talks about what is lacking in Christ's affliction? Surely there's nothing lacking in Christ's death.
[39:06] That's abundantly clear throughout scripture that that's not the case. Christ's sacrifice was complete. His work on the cross was sufficient. And his declaration on the cross where he says it is finished was true.

Paul's not saying here that Christ's suffering for sin is somehow incomplete. And something else needs to be done. Zwingli, one of the reformers said, This term what is lacking is referring to the remaining sufferings that Christians are to endure in order to become like Christ.
So what Paul is saying here that there is still suffering that's experienced by those who proclaim the gospel in the world. The risen Christ is so identified with his church that the afflictions that his people endure are a part of the ongoing cost of taking the gospel to all nations.
Paul is suffering because he's serving Christ. He's imprisoned because he's proclaiming Christ. And he's enduring hardship because he's advancing Christ's mission.
But remarkably, just look at those first few words. He says, I rejoice. Now I rejoice. Not because suffering is enjoyable. He's not enjoying going through the suffering. But because his suffering has a purpose.
[40:24] His suffering is the advancement of this gospel which has transformed his own life. And his desire is to see that as advanced. His suffering is for the service of God's people.

The suffering that he's going through is in order to honour Christ. Which is why he continues there. He says, He doesn't see himself as the owner.
He sees himself as a servant. It wasn't his ministry that he was carrying out. It wasn't his church that he was serving. It wasn't his gospel that he was seeking to advance. It was all gods.
That supreme God that he referred to in the earlier passages. He was entrusted with that stewardship. And then he describes his task to make the word of God fully known.
That's really the heartbeat of Christian ministry. To make God's word known. It's not about entertaining people. It's not about impressing people. It's not about building personal platforms.
[41:30] It's about making God's word fully known. You can see some churches, especially there's a few documentaries on Netflix about the kind of prosperity gospel out in America. And you would go in and you would think you're at a concert.

There's lights. There's people swinging from the ceilings. There's people just trying to entertain. Trying to entertain people rather than just sharing the word and faithfully preaching it. Paul then goes on to say, The mystery that is hidden for ages and generations but is now revealed to his saints.
The mystery in scripture isn't something that's unknowable. It's something that was previously hidden but is now revealed. And that mystery is God's plan to save people from every nation through Jesus Christ.
And it comes at that climax in verse 27. Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. The God, what we see here is God dwelling with redeemed sinners.
The hope of heaven is ultimately the presence of Christ himself. Every single believer, every believer here, every believer at the time when this letter was written, has a calling.
[42:39] Not every Christian is called to be a minister. Not every Christian is even called to be a missionary in foreign lands. But every single Christian is called to participate in Christ's mission.

We are stewards of the gospel. This word that we have before us, we are stewards of it. We are recipients of grace and we're now instruments of grace. We're reconciled who are now ambassadors of reconciliation.
And we see the wonderful union with Christ. We see the Christ in you. It's one of the most profound truths in Christianity. The believer's relationship with Christ isn't just an external one.
It's not a distant one where we know of Christ afar off. Christ dwells with his people through the Holy Spirit. His presence sustains us and his power strengthens us.

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And his life ultimately transforms us. Maybe there's some of us here today that are experiencing hardship. Maybe going through a really difficult time at the moment.
[43:42] Many Christians think that if things are difficult, then maybe something's wrong. Maybe I've done something wrong and I'm being taught a lesson here. Sometimes difficulty is an indication that we're actually faithfully following Christ.

Often our faithfulness involves sacrifice. Our obedience involves a cost. We'll automatically assume that if things are difficult that God has abandoned you. Sometimes difficulty is an indication that God is actually using you.
It's easy for us to get discouraged. It's easy when we may be in ministry. Results possibly seem low. Maybe people aren't changing. Maybe there's not enough conversions that we maybe think of. Maybe the efforts that we're putting in maybe seem unnoticed. Whatever area of ministry that might be. Paul reminds us that ministry is stewardship. The measure of success is first and foremost faithfulness.
Not visible outcomes. Faithfully sharing the word. Pointing people to Christ. It's not a matter of whether we receive applause. It's not a matter of whether we receive somebody putting a lovely letter into the J.T.
[44:48] saying how great a holiday club was. It's a matter of whether we're faithfully making Christ known. The gospel was never intended to terminate on us.

When I'm getting the train through from Glasgow to Edinburgh. When I'm down at ETS. Often when I'm dozing in between reading my Greek. It tells you here that the train is just about to arrive at Edinburgh Waverley.
And the train terminates here. It's the end of the line. It's the end. There's no more further destinations to go in the train. We are not the destination for the gospel.
We are not the final goal of the gospel. Think of a reservoir. We are not reservoirs holding up the gospel here. We are the channels that then send it on beyond ourselves.
The grace that we receive should then flow out towards others. Every single believer has someone in their life. I don't know who it is. I don't know who it is in your own life.
[45:46] Every single one of us have someone in our lives that needs to hear about Jesus Christ. And what he has done for them. So that's us really just initially seeing that the gospel ministry that's required of us.

Embraces costly service. It should be something that we seek out. In our day to day. Which moves us on kind of kindly to our next point. The second point which is gospel ministry pursues mature disciples.
We see this in verses 28 and 29. Just at the end there of this first chapter. Him we proclaim warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom.
That we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil. Struggling with all his energy. That he powerfully works within me. Me. Paul has described the message that we're sharing.
And he's now describing the purpose. And those words there at the beginning of verse 28. Him we proclaim. It's very simple ministry that Paul is pointing to here.
[46:50] It's not just inspiration. It's not about inspiring people. It's not about self-improvement and helping other people to grow in and of themselves. It's him that we proclaim. Him we proclaim. Christ.

Christian preaching. Christian preaching. Christian preaching. It's fundamentally Christ centred. Just at the sign behind us. That's who we need to be seeing when we're preaching the gospel. Whether that's from a pulpit. Whether that's in the office at the school.
Whether that is in the classroom on the playground. It's Christ that we should be pointing people to. The goal isn't just to communicate information to people. The goal is to present Christ.
Then Paul explains how we proclaim this. He says warning everyone and teaching with all wisdom. Both of these things are necessary. There's a warning against danger.
And then there's teaching which provides direction. If you have a warning without the teaching. You basically just get fear. You're just warning people without ever actually teaching them where they can go.
[47:49] But then if you have teaching without the warning. You get complacency. People don't understand the dangers before them. They then become complacent. There needs to be both that teaching and warning.

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And the warning for us is that each and every one of us here. At some point will enter into eternity. And there are two destinations. There's an eternal life. And an eternal death.
That's the warning that's before us. But the teaching is what does the gospel tell us? Where is the hope? And it's found in Christ. We need to have both of those things in our ministries.
We need to have that warning and that teaching. And the ultimate goal, as Paul tells us here, is that we may present everyone mature in Christ. It's one of the clearest purposes that we see here of ministry in the New Testament.
Paul wasn't simply desiring to have a number of crowds. He wasn't concerned about getting lots of people in. He wasn't concerned about popularity. He wasn't concerned about the influence that he was going to have.
[48:47] And he was going to be an influencer, as we see in our day and age today. He wanted people to become mature in Christ. That's the goal of the gospel. It isn't just conversion.

It's transformation. It's creating disciples. It's growing in holiness. And notice what Paul says here in verse 29. He says, For this I toil, struggling with all energy, that he powerfully works within me.
Just notice that athletic language there. We're seeing toil. We're seeing struggling. We're seeing energy. And we're seeing that word powerfully. There's nothing passive about this.
There's nothing we just do passively at a distance. Christian ministry requires effort. But notice that balance. Paul says he's working hard. But he's working with the strength of Christ.
He's not doing it in and of his own strength. The power's not his own. And God's purpose for believers is that they would become mature in Christ. That conversion, that moment where you're assured of your faith, that's not the finishing line.
[49:52] In many ways, that's the starting line. God's intention is then to shape believers into the image of his son. And we see the proper balance between that divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

Paul is laboring intensely. He's not passive. He's not complacent. But he is still totally dependent on Christ's power. And that Christian growth that we ought to see in ourselves involves effort.
But it's empowered by grace. Grace doesn't eliminate the need for effort. We can't just sit back on our laurels and just hope that the grace will go before us.
But that grace is what enables us to then work with effort. Even if we look at our intimation sheet, you could spend the first 15 minutes of our services reading what's being done here. It's not done in the strength of those who volunteer and give of their time.
It's all done in the strength of Christ. Maybe for new believers. Maybe somebody's just come to faith recently. Maybe a word of encouragement.
[50:54] Don't be discouraged if you feel that you're not growing fast or you're not growing quickly. That's spiritual maturity. It's a lifelong process. We're told, again in God's word, that the Christian life's not a sprint.

We're not just quickly trying to get somewhere in 100 metres. It's a marathon. We're told it's a marathon. God is patient with his people. So we ought to trust his ongoing work. But here's maybe the uncomfortable question for all of us today.
Who are you helping? If you're a Christian today, who are you helping to become mature in Christ today? Who are you going alongside to build up? Paul spent his life helping other people grow spiritually.
Every mature believer should be investing in others. It's disciples that make disciples. And even for us as a church, we can't ultimately measure success by attendances or by the number of chairs that we put out or by the balance sheet that we look at at an AGM when we think of our finances or even the fact that we do have a large intimation sheet or the use of our building.
The question is, are people becoming more like Christ through what we do in the church here? Are believers growing in holiness? Are disciples being equipped to then make disciples of others?
[52:11] Something that we should all be praying into. And that we look at this gospel ministry and we see that it should be a desire to pursue mature disciples. Which really just takes us on to our final point, which I want to maybe spend a little bit more time on.

And that's that gospel ministry places Christ at the centre. Look at verses 1 to 5 of chapter 2. Paul says, For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance, of understanding and knowledge of God's mystery,

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which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments, for though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.
Paul probably didn't know many of these believers personally, but he loved them deeply, and you can see that in the way he writes to them. His concern for them is spiritual.
It's not personal. It's not picking out names and being concerned with individuals. His concern for them is spiritual. His struggle wasn't about a physical presence.
[53:32] It was about persistent prayer, pastoral concern, and labouring for the gospel. Notice two of the priorities we see there in verse 2. He says, I want that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love.

We're seeing there's an encouragement that he desires, and also a unity as well. And a healthy church needs both. If you have truth without love, it can often become harsh, if you're just throwing truth at people, not in a loving way.
If you have love without the truth, then it becomes very shallow, and there's nothing for people to latch on to. Paul wants believers here to be united in truth and strengthened in love.
Just remember the context here. We're looking at a church here who were surrounded by false teachers. There were people claiming superior wisdom elsewhere, or you need Christ plus this. You need special knowledge.
You need to have a higher spirituality. And Paul's response to them is to totally point everything towards Christ, and to Christ alone. He says even in that passage there, all treasures are in him.
[54:44] Not some treasures, not most treasures, but all treasures are found in him. There's nothing essential outside of Christ. There's nothing that you need to add to Christ.

There's nothing, absolutely nothing that surpasses Christ. And why is Paul emphasising this truth to the church? He recognises that those false teachings can often look, they rarely look obviously false.
He says in verse four, say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. He recognises that it's plausible. It may be something that sounds reasonable. Maybe there's something that sounds attractive.
It's maybe something that sounds plausible. And that's why believers need to be rooted in Christ. Everything that we're met with in the world, you see that catchphrase that a lot of young people do, what would Jesus do?
And that should always be our thought. This is something in the world is teaching us something. What does Jesus say? What does Christ say? We should be rooted in him, and that'll help us to be able to identify where there are false teachers and rail against them.
[55:55] Paul concludes there, for though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

It's all about Christ when you read, as Paul starts this letter to the church in Colossae. Strong faith is a faith that's fixed on Christ. Again, he's just reminding us again here of the sufficiency of Christ. There's nothing else needed. Everything that's needed for salvation is found in him. Everything that's needed for spiritual growth, even in the church here in Tarbert, is found in him. Everything that's needed for wisdom is found in him.
The church will never outgrow Christ. The church grows into Christ. False teaching always diminishes Christ in some way or another. That's its whole aim.
But faithful teaching always magnifies Christ. And Paul's example here is perfect. Everything that he says is grounded in who Christ is. We live in a culture that is just filled with competing voices.
[56:57] All you need to do is go onto your social media and you'll have one person saying something, somebody saying another, and both are probably wrong. The truth is sometimes often in the middle. Maybe that's social media influence.

It may be cultural narratives. It may be political ideologies. The question isn't whether we have these voices in our world here. The question is whether or not we evaluate them through the lens of Christ.
Are you looking at what you hear in the world and is Christ at the centre of your thinking? You all hear that phrase of maybe we look at something with tinted glasses on, where there's maybe a bias in our mind.

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And it's probably more prevalent if you look at the world of football. You could go to a football game. There might be a penalty given. One side will say it's a definite penalty.
It's as clear as day. And the other side will say absolutely not. It's a dive. And they will never, ever be able to agree. And that's because they've both got their own biases. They've got their own tinted coloured glasses on.
[57:57] But we must view everything that we see in the world through the lens of Christ. For believers who want wisdom, our culture tells us to look everywhere else for answers.

But Paul tells us first to look to Christ. The deepest wisdom isn't ultimately found in human achievement. It's found in knowing Christ.
It's found by being devoted to Christ. People who know Christ and know him deeply are better equipped to recognise these teachings that distort him. So in this passage we see, as well as the verses earlier in chapter 1 that we considered last week, we see the heartbeat of gospel ministry. Paul suffers for Christ. Paul proclaims Christ. Paul labours for maturity in Christ. Paul protects faith in Christ.
Everything he does is pointing to Christ. So notice what he doesn't say again. He doesn't say, proclaim yourself. Show everyone who you are. He doesn't say, go out and build your own reputation.
[59:06] He doesn't say, pursue your comforts. He says, him we proclaim. Him we proclaim. Those three words sum up Christian ministry and should sum up everything that we do.

Whether it's serving teas, whether it is youth work, whether it is road to recovery, him we proclaim in all these things. These three things, these three words sum up preaching.
These three words sum up discipleship. If we're working alongside others and we're seeking to see others grow, these three words, him we proclaim, sum up the mission of the church. The supreme Christ of Colossians that we read of here in this letter is the same Christ that's proclaimed in these verses when we look at the ministry that's given to us.
The church does a lot of things. There's a lot of ministries. There's a lot of responsibilities. But ultimately, there's one message and that is the message of Christ and it's him we proclaim.
What about maybe those, just as we come to a close, maybe those among us or listening online that are maybe not yet believers that don't identify themselves with this Christian ministry. Maybe there's people present today that have heard the gospel.
[60:21] You've never come to know Christ personally as your saviour. You've maybe been brought up in the church. You maybe even admire Jesus, the person of who Jesus is, but you've never quite put your trust in him.

The hope that Paul is speaking of here, it's not found in being religious. It's not found in following a number of laws. It's not found in trying harder to be good or trying harder to be like a Christian, trying to be a better person.
No, the hope is found only in Christ and in Christ alone. That one that we looked at last week, the one who is supreme over all things is the very one who came to save sinners on earth at the cross. He died on the cross to pay that penalty for your sins and was raised from the dead so that you, through him in faith, might have the forgiveness of your sins and have life with him forever.
You don't have to look elsewhere for what Christ alone can do. You don't have to add anything to his finished work on the cross. Your hope is not found in the things of this world.
[61:27] It's not found in the comfort of your homes, not found in the comfort of your bank balances or your jobs or your career. It's not in the things of this world. It's not in your own goodness, nor in your ability to be made right with God.

Your hope is found in Christ alone. And the invitation, again, as last week tells us, it's to come to him, to turn away from the sin, to trust in his finished work on the cross, everything that was done when he said, it is finished, to trust in what was done at the cross and find rest in him.
In Christ, you'll find forgiveness for your past, you'll find grace for the present, and you'll find a hope for an eternal life with him. So today, just as we close, I want us to embrace whatever sacrifice is necessary to make him known.
And let's pray that our lives, our ministry, the work of the church here, even if you're visiting with us from the church that you've come from, and our personal witness would be one that echoes the convictions that we read of from Paul there.

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Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may be present, we may present everyone mature in Christ.
[62:43] Him we proclaim. Amen. And may the Lord bless just these very brief reflections on this part of his word. We'll say a word of prayer. Amen. Amen. Eternal and ever-blessed Father, Lord, we give you thanks for this letter that we're able to read through and we've been able to navigate over last week and this week.

We thank you that as Paul writes this letter to the church in Colossae, he rightly starts the letter by pointing to the supremacy of Christ, allowing us, even in 2026, and the people in Colossae to rightly view Christ, to rightly view him as being all we need, being all sufficient in everything that we require.
We don't have a list of rules we need to follow. We ought not be religious, but we ought to be Christ-centered. And we also recognize, even as we think today, that that gospel ministry indeed does embrace suffering and it does embrace difficulty.
There's a costly service to be embraced. But we give thanks that that's not, again, found in anything that we bring to the table, but it's found in Christ and in Christ alone, Lord. So we pray that as we go away, we think of the people in our own lives.
Who are the people, who are the Lazaruses that are at our gate as we see in the rich man and Lazarus? Who are the people before us that we could be turning to?
[64:07] Who are the people that we should be serving? Who are the people that we should be pointing to the cross? As we shared with the young ones, it's all well and good to enjoy the gospel ourselves, but we need to recognize that the destination of the gospel is not for us, but it's to be passed on and we have to be sharing it with all those around us, Lord.

So we pray that you would convict us, convict us of those areas where we don't share the gospel, for those opportunities that we don't take, that maybe present themselves each and every day in the most mundane of circumstances, be that in the shop, just walking out and about, Lord.
We pray that you would grant us a courage and a boldness to share the gospel, to continually point people to Christ and to remember that everything is found in him.
As the world continues to speak, as the world continues to blur people's views and to colour things in a way that is not beneficial, we pray, Lord, that we would be able to cut away all that nonsense and be able to remind ourselves that we should be looking through everything with a Christ-like lens in all that we do, Lord.
So be with us just now. Forgive us for all of our sins. In Christ's precious name we pray. Amen. Amen. We'll conclude our time this morning by singing to God's praise in Mission Praise 506.
[65:23] 506. How great thou art. O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works thy hand hath made, I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, the power throughout the universe displayed, then sings my soul, my Saviour, God to thee, how great thou art, how great thou art.

So we'll sing the whole of this hymn and we'll stand to sing to God's praise as we close. O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works the hearts thy hand hath made, I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, the earth, the earth, the earth, the universe displayed, and sings my soul, my Saviour, God to thee, how great thou art, how great thou art, how great thou art, how great thou art.
when through the woods, and forest■ I wonder, and hear the birds sing swiftly in the trees, where I have died, from lofty mountain branches, and hear the truth and feel the gentle breeze.
Let sings my song, my Saviour God to thee, a river heart, a river heart, let sings my song, my Saviour God to thee, a river heart, a river heart.
And when I fear that God is Son, God's Spirit, sent in to die, I scarce will take it in.
[68:23] That on the cross, my burden can be willing, He met and died to take away my sin.

Let sings my song, my Saviour God to thee, a river heart, a river heart.
Let sings my song, my Saviour God to thee, a river heart, a river heart.
When Christ shall come, with shelter of and the nation, and take me home, for joy shall fill my heart.
Where shall I come, in humble adoration, and hear the truth and feel the love of and the nation, and sing my song, my Saviour God to thee, a river heart, a river heart.
[69:54] Let sings my song, my Saviour God to thee, and sing my song, my Saviour God to thee, how great thou heart, how great thou heart.

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Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time, and now and forever.
Amen.

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