

HOPE FOR EVERY MAN

TEXT: COLOSSIANS 1:24-29

■ Psychologist William Marston asked 3,000 people, “What have you to live for?” He was shocked to discover that 94% were simply enduring the present while they waited for the future...waited for something to happen...waited for “next year”...waited for a “better time”...waited for “someone to die”...waited “for tomorrow,” unable to see that all anyone ever has is today, because yesterday is gone and tomorrow exists only in hope.”
(Hewett, 291-292)

It is evident, not only through surveys but also through our daily lives, that every day people are seeking to escape the realities of their every day life. Some pass the time by dreaming of a better day, some by deadening the pain of reality by alcohol or drugs, still others give up on today and tomorrow and commit suicide. Many have never found something to really live for.

But if salvation through Jesus Christ means anything, it means hope for mankind and hope for tomorrow. This is the hope that we have to offer a world which is lost and wandering aimlessly. It was this same hope that Paul had a passion to proclaim, no matter what the cost. Notice the *means* by which Paul makes known the hope of Jesus Christ to every man.

I. NOTICE THE MEANS BY WHICH GOD IS GLORIFIED (vv. 24-27).

A. God is glorified through Paul’s **suffering** (v. 24).

As Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had known the fourth Man in the fire, likewise Paul knew that Christ would be with him and be glorified through his suffering!

B. God is glorified through Paul's **faithfulness** (v. 25).

C. God is glorified through Paul's **preaching** of the gospel (vv. 26-27).

■ George Whitefield said, "Other men may preach the gospel better than I, but no man can preach a better gospel."

II. NOTICE THE MEANS BY WHICH PAUL ACCOMPLISHES HIS GOAL (vv. 28-29).

A. Paul **warns** every man (v. 28a).

His message was meant to convince men of the goodness of God.

C. Paul **prepares** every man to meet Christ (v. 28c).

His message was meant to convey God's love to every man.

■ William Barclay writes, "The fact is that the only thing in this world which is for every man is Christ. It is not every man who can be a thinker. There are gifts which are not granted to every man. Not every man can master every craft, or even every game. There are those who are colorblind and to whom the loveliness of art means nothing. There are those who are tone-deaf and to whom the glory of music does not exist. Not every man can be a writer, or a student, or a preacher, or a singer or a speaker. Even human love at its highest is not granted to all men. The one thing which is for every man is Jesus Christ. There are gifts a man will never possess; there are privileges a man will never enjoy; there are heights of this world's attainment which a man will never scale; but to every man there is the open good news of the gospel, and the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, and the transforming power which can bring holiness into life." (Barclay, 152-3)

We have one message to proclaim: the Gospel--the Good News. There is hope for everyone!

CONCLUSION

■ The story is told of a small dog which had been struck by a car and was lying by the side of the road. A doctor, driving by, noticed that the dog was still alive, stopped his car, picked up the dog, and took him home with him. There he discovered that the dog had been stunned, had suffered a few minor cuts and abrasions, but was otherwise all right. He revived the dog, cleaned up the wounds and was carrying the animal from the house to the garage when suddenly it jumped from his arms and scampered off. “What an ungrateful little dog,” the doctor said to himself. He thought no more about the incident until the next evening when he heard a scratching at the door. When he opened it, there was the little dog he had treated with another hurt dog. (Hewett, 178)

There are times when it would seem that our efforts go unappreciated or ignored. There are times when others reject us. There are times when we endure heartache and trouble just to be faithful to Christ and share His message of good news. However, if we will be faithful to the task and use whatever *means* we have to share the hope of Jesus Christ, one day we will see the fruits of our labor.

Are you committed to sharing that hope today?

References

- Barclay, William. (1969). *Colossians*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press.
Hewett, James S. (Ed.). (1986). *Illustrations unlimited*. Wheaton, ILL: Tyndale.

