

Colossians 1.24-25

Filling Up What Is Lacking In Christ's Afflictions?

One Main Point: *God's plan is for Christians to complete (fill up) the afflictions of Christ as we suffer to make the Gospel known in the world.*

Paul's Contentment in Suffering (v. 24a)

Paul's Suffering Was Planned By God (Acts 9.15-16)

Suffering is Part of the Christian Life (2 Tim 1.8, 2.3, 4.5; 1 Peter 4.12-13)

The Prosperity Gospel is False (Can't be preached in impoverished areas and it is Idolatry)

Everyone Suffers & Believing in the Prosperity does not prepare one for suffering when it arrives

Examples of Faithful Sufferers in the Bible: Moses, Job, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, the Apostles

All Christians Suffer For Christ When They Proclaim Christ

Suffering is not Punitive – But Mercy

Rejoicing in Suffering is Divine – Fulfills the Call of God

Suffering and Faithful Obedience Go Together!

Paul's Completion of Christ's Afflictions (v. 24b)

Filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions is **NOT** filling up some deficiency in the atoning work of Jesus on the Cross (Col 1.12-14, 19-20; Heb 1.3)

Jesus said "It is Finished!"

Most Popular/Convincing Interpretations of Verse 24:

1. Endures afflictions for the sake of Christ in order to glorify Jesus and advance the cause of the Kingdom
2. Typological Meaning: Paul sees his sufferings as being like those of Christ's
3. Eschatological (Last Days) View: Prescribed amount of afflictions refer to those trials and tribulations that immediately precede the end of the age

Jewish Tradition (Called "Messianic Woes") and the New Testament speak to this idea that the sufferings of believers contribute to a sum total that will be reached and then the end will come (*1 Enoch 47* [not in Bible]; Matt 24; Rev 6.9-11)

4. John Piper's View: What is lacking is the infinite value of Christ's afflictions known and trusted, the personal presentation of Christ Himself to the nations. Therefore Ministers complete (fill up) what is lacking by extending themselves to others. The afflictions of Christ are presented to the World through the afflictions of the Church. (1 Cor 16.17 and Phlp 2.30)
5. Believers experience afflictions in the place of Jesus that He would have otherwise endured if He were on the earth

Paul's Call as a Minister of the Gospel & His Cause/Reason for Suffering Service (v. 25)

Paul's Call was from God (Gal 1.15-16; *and others*)

Paul's Reason/Goal in Suffering Service = To Make The Word Fully Known In The World