

Yes...My kid and Brian's kid are engaged – Walked into Brian's office...'Oh Shut up'

Office vs Opportunity | Elder = Office | Deacon = Office | Apostle = Office | Minister = Opportunity
Minister misused title | Minister = Servant | **Value of your service is determined by what you serve**

The value of your service is determined by what you serve | **Papaya**

Rom. 15:16 'a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God'
All have opportunity be ministers of Jesus Christ for gospel | **Today...collectively...ministers...Value**
(Col. 1:24-27) 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.

Airplanes are great – First started...expected to crash – Now we expect smooth sailing | **Christianity**

We have the opportunity...serve something great - Opportunities come w/ obstacles

Big Idea – Minister Through the Trouble with the Triumph in View

Our journey is not always smooth - Trouble comes at us and it comes in many forms:

Struggle with sin | Opposition others | Trials & tragedies from the brokenness of the world

○ **Isn't unique to 21st century...Told to expect trouble...Doesn't make it easier** | **Dentist**

Last week...learned that perseverance is an evidence of salvation – Not just 'surviving till heaven'

- He's called us to be ministers, servants, of his gospel. **And this calling serves two functions:**
 - The gospel spreads and grows, both in us and from us
 - How God strengthens us to endure our present trouble

So as gospel ministers, how do we carry out our sacred role in this troubled world?

1. **As Gospel Ministers We: Rejoice for our Suffering Has Purpose**

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake | Rejoicing in suffering is incredibly counterintuitive

- We understand rejoicing in our salvation - We rejoice when God blesses us, that's easy to see
- **Why would we rejoice in suffering? Because it has purpose** | **Paul = Roman Jail** | **Joy = Constant**

Look at why: he's suffering for the sake of those he ministered to

We rejoice because our sufferings draw us and others closer to Christ | **Think of 4 reasons**

- a. **Suffering brings us repentance** | **Heb 12:5-11 'Ones He loves'** | **Choose to sin...choose to suffer**
- b. **Suffering strengthens our witness** | **1 Corinthians 1:3-4** | **Life experience relates to lives**
- c. **Suffering draws us closer to God** | **Jas. 4:8-10 'Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you'**
- d. **Suffering reminds us of our home** | **Heb 13:14 'No lasting city...city to come'** | **Not original design**

Struggling to make sense of your suffering? Think more about trust and purpose

In the midst of Paul's suffering, the Colossians are being ministered to...in that he rejoices

But it's not just about the effect on others. Look at how he continues:

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,

What? What it's not – Not saying his suffering is somehow necessary for Christ's work to be complete

- 'Afflictions' not work on cross – That work is done – **The opposition against the work continues**
Afflictions endured by those who follow Jesus are not yet done | Joy | **Why?**

- The world hated Christ but their hatred did not deter him from His purpose – GOSPEL
- The world will hate us...but their hatred does not deter us from His purpose – Share the Gospel
From Acts until Jesus returns, affliction...feature of...God's church – Last 2 Centuries USA Exception

- **How long will this exception continue and what will it look like when it doesn't? I have no idea**

But affliction, suffering, is a reality...then in this reality, we realize two things:

- a. When the church suffers, Christ feels it – Head feels pain – Don't suffer apart, but with Christ
- b. Suffering need not deter us from our purpose! Christ suffered...His purpose was accomplished
No amount of animosity, hatred, persecution, or affliction, can defeat the church | **Victorious**
of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you | **Our Role:**

- **Servants - We live in service of a purpose greater than ourselves**

- **Stewards: We are not masters, and we are not owners – Faithful with what God gives us**

This frees us from anxiety, and allows us to pursue the work in front of us! And what's the work:

2. **As Gospel Ministers We: Retell the Truth That's Been Made Known**

to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.

Normally stewardship = Possessions & Resources | Context...stewards of the message of the gospel

Our job is to make known the word which was fully made known to us | **One Time a Mystery**

- Old Testament doesn't contain the full story: it points to the conclusion, but it doesn't reveal it
 - The mystery was revealed through Christ – **RUBIX CUBE – All the sides come into proper color**
- The other characteristic of mystery: It's unintelligible to outsider...clear to those it's been told

That's our experience as Christians – none of us figured out Christ on our own

He revealed himself to us, maybe through another person, maybe in the midst of a trial

And our job as Gospel ministers is to reveal it to those around us | **Light-bright** | **Oh...Here you go...**

We need to constantly remember and recognize this value:

3. **As Gospel Ministers We: Recognize the Value of Our Hope**

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.

Look at who God makes his mystery made known to: the Gentiles – This means everyone

- Religions of the day were seen as limited to the "inside crowd"
 - Whether that was a family clan or a culture or geography - Not so with Christ's mystery

And what do those who know Christ know? - We know how rich we are

We're sitting on spiritual wealth that makes everything in this world seem worthless by comparison

⇒ **These riches will outlast any other wealth we could build:**

- You build up *money*? It gets stolen – spent – or inflated away
- You build up a *network* of people? They may fade or betray
- You build up *reputation*? It can get ruined in a moment – Can bury you with pride

Even if you don't lose these things in this life, they go away when you do

⇒ **The riches we have are greater because they're different:**

- *Christ in you*: your wealth given and secured by the one who created everything
- *The hope of glory*: Christ in you guarantees that your spiritual wealth will last

Hope is a funny thing - Worth is determined by its object (temporary hopes vs hope in Christ)

So, what does all this mean? **We have a job to do as ministers**

To retell the truth, we've been told

To steward the spiritual wealth of Christ, secure in the hope of Christ

And we do so despite persecution, affliction, tragedy, and trial

Concluding illustration: Amazing view from the top of the mountain

You'd give anything for someone else to see it.

You're willing to fight the altitude and weather and bugs, because you know what it's worth...

We have the opportunity to help people see the view from the top...may cost us

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