

Christ: The Focus of Genuine Gospel Ministry

Colossians 1:24-29

Genuine gospel ministry suffers and struggles for the Church as it seeks to make known the gospel mystery and proclaims Christ with the aim to present the Church complete in Him.

Introduction

Genuine Gospel Ministry ***Suffers*** for the Church as It Seeks to *Make Known the Mystery of the Gospel* (24-27)

Genuine Gospel Ministry ***Strives*** (*Struggles*) for the Church as It Seeks to *Present the Church Complete in Christ* (28-29)

The Subject of Genuine Gospel Ministry: Christ

The Means of Genuine Gospel Ministry: Admonishing and Teaching

The Aim of Genuine Gospel Ministry: Complete in Christ

Conclusion

Questions for discussion/Reflection on Colossians 1:24-29

1. Why was it so important that the Colossian believers listen to Paul's teaching?
2. Why do you think it is so easy to "proclaim" something other than Christ and His gospel? What are you tempted to "proclaim" other than Christ?
3. Do you think people in our society prefer teaching that is non-authoritative? If so, why do you think this is the case? How about you?
4. In your own words, why is Christ and His gospel the "Big Deal?" Why is it dangerous to teach moralism or conservative politics?
5. What does it mean to be "complete in Christ" (verse 28)? Is this the goal of your teaching? Is this the goal of your life? Why or why not?

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Colossians 1:24-29

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Colossians 1:24-29

- **Well, good morning.**
 - Pastor Dan and his family have been enjoying some well-deserved time away this week and so let's **keep them** in our prayers.
 - We can also be praying for:

Pray

Introduction

- The text we'll be looking at this morning is Colossians 1:24-29 (mainly verse 28) and can be found on page **1178** of the bible in front of you if you would like to turn there.
 - And as you are turning there, let me share with you some excerpts from, what some have called, "***the most popular sermon***" on Youtube, which is saying something:
- When you get up in the morning and look in the mirror, instead of complaining, you should be saying, I am **fearfully and wonderfully** made, I am attractive, I am getting younger. You talk like that and God will renew your youth...
- ...Here's the principle: what follows the ***I am***, will always come looking for you. When you say, I am so ***clumsy***, clumsiness comes looking for you. I am so ***old***, wrinkles come looking for you. I am so ***overweight***, calories come looking for you. It's just like you're inviting them. Whatever you follow the ***I am*** with, you're handing it an invitation, opening the door, giving it permission to be in your life...
- Get up in the morning and invite ***good things*** into your life. *I am blessed, I am strong, I am talented, I am disciplined, I am focused, I am prosperous. When you talk like that, talent gets summoned by Almighty God, and go find that person. Health, strength, abundance, discipline* starts heading your way...
- But how many people, when they wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, the first thing they say, ***I am so old, I am so wrinkled, I am so worn out?*** You are inviting oldness, you're inviting fatigue. Do us all a favor, stop inviting that. When you get up in the morning, look in the mirror, instead of complaining, you should be saying, ***I am fearfully and wonderfully made, I am attractive, I am getting younger. You talk like that, and God will renew your youth...*** (Joel Olstein, "The Power of I Am" – or "The Sermon That Changed Oprah's Life")..."
- **We live in the information age.**
 - The internet is filled with all kinds of ***information***, and all kinds of ***teaching***.
 - *How can we discern whether or not someone is teaching the truth, when everyone professes to be teaching the truth, but they are all saying different things?*
 - *How can we tell the counterfeit from the real? Who or what can we trust?*

Need

- **Well, that is the subject of our text; churches need discernment.**
 - And we don't gain discernment from ***TikTok or Instagram***; we gain it from reading and studying God's Word.
 - We need to be able to identify ***who*** is preaching the truth and ***who*** isn't.
 - We need to ensure that ***our lives, our ministries and those we support*** are genuine gospel ministries.
- Our text this morning shows us how **Christ and His Gospel** must be our focus.

Main Point

- I believe we could state the **main point** of our text this way: **Genuine gospel ministry suffers and struggles for the Church as it seeks to make known the gospel mystery and proclaims Christ with the aim to present the Church complete in Him...**
- I believe the **Holy Spirit** gave us this text to help **God's people** understand what true gospel ministries look like –
 - to help us know **what to be**, and to help us know **who to support/trust**.
- **Genuine gospel ministries have Christ as their motivation, Christ as their goal, and Christ as their standard.**
 - And so, genuine gospel ministries **sacrifice** like Christ.
 - True gospel ministries pick up where Christ left off and so continue to **suffer and struggle** for God's chosen people – **the Church**.
- **And this is Paul.**
 - He is a **true minister** of the gospel; chosen by God.
 - And he is sincerely for these Colossian believers.
 - **How do we know?** Well, he suffers the sufferings of Christ **for them**; he struggles **for them**...

Context

- **You see, some people were telling the Colossian believers that their gospel was insufficient (ch 2); that their ministries weren't real ministries; that their spirituality was lacking.**
 - They were being **lied** to.
 - Just like this man whose sermon I just read is **lying**.
 - And so, Paul writes this letter to encourage these believers in their Christian growth and he knows they aren't going to grow if they listen **to liars** – if they listen **to garbage** like I just read...
- **They need to listen to Paul.**
 - He is telling them **the truth**. He is **for them**.
 - He is working for **their joy**.
 - And so, **why should they trust Paul**...?
 - Because he suffers and struggles **for them**.
 - He has their **best interests** in mind...
 - **And**, because, as we'll focus on this morning – **he proclaims Christ to them**...

Read

- **So, Paul writes in Colossians 1:24, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. 25 Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, 26 that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”**

Preview

- **The gospel message is one that is delivered with suffering if it is truly Christ's message.**
 - But it is also a message that is **saturated** with Christ's person and work...
 - And so as we look at our text this morning, we're going to see three characteristics of **Genuine Gospel Ministry**.

- There are more, but we'll just have time to consider these three:
- **First, the Subject of Genuine Gospel Ministry is Christ; Second, the Means of Genuine Gospel Ministry is Admonishing and Teaching; and then Third, the Aim of Genuine Gospel Ministry is Complete in Christ...**

Genuine Gospel Ministry Strives (Struggles) for the Church as It Seeks to Present the Church Complete in Christ (28-29)

Explanation

- So, **first**, let's look at the **Subject of Genuine Gospel Ministry**, which is **Christ**.
 - And again, we'll be focusing in on verse 28, "We proclaim Him (or "Him we proclaim" in the ESV), admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ..."
- **"Him we proclaim."** That is, **"Christ...we proclaim."**
 - The word for "proclaim" here can also be translated as "preach."
 - **Christ we preach!**
 - "Christ We Preach!" is perhaps the best summary of the gospel message.
 - And all true or genuine gospel ministries **Preach Christ!**
- **Why? Well, because of what we learn earlier in Colossians 1:15-20.**
 - That text is glorious!
 - *Why should we preach Christ? Why is He our message?*
 - Because He is the **head of all creation**, He is the head of all **new creation**, and He **alone** is the reason that we enjoy a **right standing** with our creator God.
 - He is the one who took our **sin penalty** – died in **our place**.
 - He is **the reason** we exist. He is our **life**. He is our **goal**.
 - **Who else or what else could we proclaim? Who else or what else should we preach?**
- **"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 to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him..."**
- **Did you notice the focus of the sermon I read earlier? It wasn't Christ.**
 - It didn't talk about **His glory**. It didn't talk about **His person**. It didn't talk about **the Cross** – *it didn't talk about the Gospel!*
 - **Nothing** in that man's sermon came close to resembling **the glory** I just read...
- **It was about you.**
 - The summary of **that man's gospel**, based on his preaching – was: **You We Proclaim**.
 - It's all about **you and your effort**. That is **society's** mantra. That is the **world's** mantra.
 - That is Satan's Message: **You We Proclaim**.
 - And it's not only *laughable*, but also **blasphemous and evil to the core...**

Application

- **Yet, I am so surprised at how easily we get duped by that message, and messages like it.**
 - Now, the messages are not always as **blatantly satanic**.
 - The title of the sermon is not always so revealing, **but many times it is...**
- **Here are the titles of some other popular sermons.**
 - "It Takes a Village." "The Butterfly Effect." "The Art of Neighboring."

- And I could go on.
- Now, not all of them are as **equally bad** and titles don't tell the whole story.
- But I listened to enough snippets of **these sermons** to know that **Jesus Christ** wasn't the focus – the **gospel** wasn't the focus – **but you...**
- **Let's talk about how to make you a better dad.**
 - Let's talk about how to make **your** marriage rock.
 - Let's talk about how **you** can impact the world.
 - Let's encourage each other to make a **big splash** in our communities...
- **Other ministries are a little subtler.**
 - We could look at the **most popular** Christian book titles.
 - **Books preach, right?** They **proclaim** something.
 - And the most popular Christian books on amazon typically don't have **Christ** as their focus.
 - The gospel isn't what motivates, but **you and your goals and your desires**.
 - The number one Christian book on Amazon for some time was **Girl, Stop Apologizing**.
 - The goal of the book is to get women to live to their **full potential**.
 - Another top 10 seller is **the Five Love Languages**.
 - The stated goal of that book is to help couples experience **deeper levels of intimacy...**
 - And the problem is that people see these books as **uniquely** "Christian."
 - But the goal of these books is not to **proclaim Christ** and **lift high His name**.
 - It's not to proclaim the **gospel and its fruits at all**.
 - It's all about **you**. Your **success**. Your **happiness**. Your **money**. Your **effort**.
- **But Christ we proclaim...**

Application

- **How can we safely navigate our souls through this current information overload?**
 - *How can we be sure that ministries we want to support are legitimate?*
 - *How can we know which preachers to listen to, who to read, which **podcasts** are safe?*
 - Well, **who** do they proclaim...?
- **And then, we need to make sure our own lives and ministries proclaim Christ.**
 - We need to make sure that when we talk about **Christian things** and when we teach and when we disciple and encourage, that it's **Christ** we proclaim...
- **One of my first counseling cases was a middle-aged widower w/6 kids (identity changed).**
 - He had lost control of his home and needed help in getting organized and disciplined.
 - The church got involved in some practical ways and some good things happened.
- **But I was counseling him and he needed to grow in self-control.**
 - And so, after several sessions, probably somewhere around 4 or 5, I **exhorted** him to grow in **discipline and self-control** and we talked about several things.
 - But when he left this particular time, I can remember asking myself, "What did I just tell him that Stephen Covey and his *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* couldn't have told him?"
 - And the answer was **"nothing"** – *I didn't give Him Christ, but worldly wisdom.*
- **And so, I repented, and ever since, I have sought to proclaim Christ whenever I counsel.**
 - (And when I say "**Christ**" here, I'm talking about **Christ and His gospel** – His person and His work – the two really can't be separated).
 - If you think that this warning is **beneath your knowledge of the Scripture**, then think of the **advice** you give your kids from time to time.
 - Think of the **financial goal conversations** you have with your spouse.
 - Think of the **podcasts** you listen to, Christian or non-Christian.
 - Think of how you **decide** to spend your *time*.
 - Think of the **conversations** you have with your friends and family members.

- Is it *Christ* you proclaim? Is *His gospel of Sovereign Grace* the drum you beat?
- The **Subject of Genuine Gospel Ministry** is *Christ*...

The Means of Genuine Gospel Ministry Preaching: Admonishing and Teaching

Explanation

- Second, The Means of Genuine Gospel Ministry is: Teaching and Admonishing, “We proclaim Him (or Christ we proclaim)...admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom...”
- Paul’s ministry is legitimate and the Colossian believers should listen to Paul because his message is Christ.
 - And that message *resonates* with true believers.
 - And that message is *proclaimed* by the means of *teaching and admonishing*.
 - Those *two* things.
- First of all, genuine gospel ministry involves teaching. “Didasko” in the Greek.
 - It means to “tell someone what to do” or “to provide instruction in a formal or informal setting.”
 - The *goal* of teaching is a *transfer of information*.
 - The *subject* of Paul’s message is *Christ*.
 - And he conveys this message *by teaching*.
 - He presents the information of 1)Who God is; 2)Who Man is; 3)Who Christ is; 4)What Man’s Response Should Be to Christ.
 - That is the message *Paul proclaims* – that is the *message of Christ*.
- Paul’s teaching is authoritative.
 - The message Paul conveys is *the truth*. It is *reliable and authentic*.
 - It can be *trusted*...
- And then, secondly, Paul’s message is conveyed via “admonishment.”
 - The word here is “*noutheteo*.”
 - The counseling organization I belonged to was originally called the *National Association of Nouthetic Counseling*.
 - The word means “to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct...”
- And English really doesn’t have a word that captures the heart of this concept well, which is why the founder transliterated this word as “nouthetic.”
 - Jay Adams writes, “Nouthetic confrontation always implies a problem, and presupposes an obstacle that must be overcome; something is wrong in the life of the one who is confronted. Didasko (teaching) does not imply any problem. Didasko simply suggests the communication of data (teaching); making information known, clear, understandable and memorable...Didasko says nothing about “need.” Nouthesis (admonishment) specifically presupposes the need for a change in the person confronted...the idea of something wrong, some sin, some obstruction, some problem, some difficulty, some need that has to be acknowledged and dealt with, is central...it is training by word – by word of encouragement, when this is sufficient, but also by that of remonstrance, of reproof, of blame, where these may be required...nouthesis (admonishment) has in view the purpose or motive behind (the admonishing) activity. The thought is always that the verbal correction is intended to benefit the (person) (45).”
- And this teaching and admonishing is both *public and private*.
 - Publicly, we call it *teaching/preaching*, privately, we call it *counsel/fellowship* (all of us).
 - But *good preaching* is both *teaching and admonishing*, and so is *good counseling*.
- Genuine gospel ministry, then, is not Rogarian.
 - That is, it is not simply listening and reflecting, or telling people what they want to hear.

- It's not *'take it or leave it.'*
- Genuine gospel preaching **conveys truth**.
- It **presents facts** about Jesus Christ and what pleases Him. It is **directive**.
- It is **not** full of **suggestions**.
- It is **"believe this, do this, stop this"** and not full of **"maybe, or you might."**
- It **warns and admonishes and corrects and encourages**.
- It has **change** as its goal. The **status quo** will not do...
- **Charlatans don't love their people enough to tell them the truth – to be directive.**
 - They've bought into the lie that there is **no truth**.
 - And even if there was truth, they would not want to force that truth on someone else – hence, proof positive, they don't **love** their people...
- **We can tell whether or not a ministry is genuine based on the subject of its message, but also by the way that message is proclaimed.**
 - There are **no shoulds or coulds or maybes** when it comes to Christ.
 - Jesus **is** the image of the invisible God.
 - He **is** before all things. *He is God in the flesh.*
 - **Jesus** is the **one, true and living God**, and there is no other.
 - There is salvation in **no other** Name! He **is** the head of the body, the church.
 - It was **His death** that reconciled you. These things are **non-negotiable**.
 - They are not up for debate.
 - Genuine gospel ministry, therefore, is **authoritative**. It is concerned with **facts**.
 - It doesn't focus on **opinions or movies or psychological hypothesis**.
- **And it's also concerned to move you from a wrong view to a right view.**
 - It's concerned to **align the listener** with **the truth**.
 - It is seeking **change**.
 - It is seeking **encouragement** to remain steadfast **in the truth** – in Christ; in His gospel.
 - It is not **blaise**. It is **passionate**. It is **sincere**. It is **genuine**...
- **And it teaches and admonishes "everyone."**
 - It is not a **special knowledge** reserved for a **special class** of elite intellectuals.
 - The message of Christ and His gospel is for **"everyone..."**
- **And it is proclaimed with "all wisdom."**
 - One definition of **biblical wisdom** is **"the capacity for rational thought, inference or discrimination (and the application of it)."**
 - True gospel teaching aims at **real life** – it is **applicable to the nitty gritty of life**.
 - Again, this helps us see that it is **seeking change**.
 - It is not merely **conveying** information...

Application

- **And so, when you are looking for this in a preacher, or in a counselor, or in a book – it's pretty easy to spot.**
 - Just keeps these **two concepts** in mind.
 - Is it **teaching the true gospel**; is it **admonishing the truth** with all wisdom.
 - Avoid those teachers that fail to **teach and admonish**...
- **But again, we need to ask ourselves, is my message Christ, and do I proclaim Him rightly. *How do I counsel? How do I talk to my children, my wife, my co-workers about this message?***
 - Do I say, "Well, **for me**...Christ is..." Or do I say, "Christ is."
 - Make sure your ministry involves **teaching and admonishing**.
 - *Make sure it **cares** about the truth, that it has **convictions** regarding Christ and His glory...*
- **You see, there is a sense of urgency in this text.**

- Paul didn't preach the gospel to Epaphras the first time like some kind of ***fatalist***.
- He didn't proclaim **God, Man, Christ, Response** and then lackadaisically say, "OK, take it or leave it."
- True gospel preaching carries with it a ***sense of urgency***.
- Its subject is ***ALL*** important.
- You must deal with Christ ***now***.
- You must obey ***now***. You can't put this off – tomorrow is not guaranteed.
- What is being proclaimed is ***too important*** to be placed on the back burner.
- The glory of Christ ***demand***s this sense of urgency.
- In the sermon excerpt I read to you earlier, there was ***no sense of urgency*** because the message ***wasn't Christ*** and so it ***wasn't authoritative***.
 - ***Life and death*** did not hang in the balance.
 - ***Heaven and hell*** were not two possible ends.
 - And there was no ***sense of urgency*** because the preacher doesn't ***really care*** about his audience.
 - He cares about ***himself***. He cares that his audience ***like*** him.
 - He doesn't care that ***they repent and turn from their sin and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and savior***.
 - He doesn't care about their ***eternal destiny***.
 - He doesn't care that they live in such a way as ***to please King Jesus – their Savior***.
 - And I would suggest to you that he doesn't care...because ***he, himself, doesn't believe or know the truth...***
- But Paul can do ***no other!*** He ***must proclaim Christ, because Christ is the Messiah!***
 - He must proclaim Christ, because Christ is ***the goal of all creation and even the new creation***.
 - ***Christ is glorious and so Christ must be exalted!***
 - And so, Paul's preaching is full of ***teaching and admonishment***.
 - He cares because ***the message (the doctrine) is true***.
 - He cares because ***heaven and hell*** do hang in the balance.
 - He cares because he knows that ***true joy*** can only be found when a person ***centers their life on Christ (on the true gospel-who Christ is and what He has done)...***
- Ministries need to be ***evaluated*** on this basis.
 - ***Is there a sense of urgency when they proclaim their message? Do they care?***
 - ***What is their focus?***
 - The focus of many ***ministries***, if you listen to their teaching, is ***earthly***.
 - It has a ***'this life only'*** focus, and so, of course, there is ***gravitas...***
- And how about you?
 - ***Is your teaching, which for most of you is the private ministry of the word...but is your teaching/counsel urgent?***
 - ***Does it involve admonishing and teaching the truth?***
- The Means of Genuine Gospel Ministry is ***Teaching and Admonishing...******it cares...it is urgent...***

~~The Aim of Genuine Gospel Ministry Preaching: Complete in Christ~~ Explanation

- And then ***third***, Paul explains to us the ***goal*** of his ministry.
 - And so, we learn here that the ***Aim of Genuine Gospel Ministry Preaching is Complete in Christ***.
 - "We proclaim Him (or Christ we proclaim), admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom...so that we may present every man ***complete*** (or ***mature***) in Christ..."
- In Greek, the particle is this ***strong purpose clause marker***, and so the NASB highlights this well.

- “So that” or “**in order that**” we might present everyone mature/complete in Christ.
- **Paul’s message is urgent because it has a specific and important goal – to present everyone mature in Christ.**
 - Paul is encouraging these believers in the ***genuineness*** of his ministry.
 - He’s encouraging them that they can ***trust*** what he is saying.
 - He’s encouraging them to ***trust him*** when he says that ***Christ is the big deal***.
 - He’s encouraging them to trust him when he says that they are ***not on the wrong track – Christ is enough***.
 - The gospel they heard from him is ***sufficient for life and godliness!***
 - ***Christ is all Paul cares to know; Christ is all Paul cares to preach...***
 - And so, it is no surprise, that ***Christ*** is the **goal** of Paul’s preaching.
 - He teaches and admonishes ***everyone*** with the specific ***goal to conform them*** to the image of ***Christ...!***
- **The idea here is similar to what Paul said earlier in verse 22.**
 - God reconciled these believers through Christ’s death “**in order to present (them) holy and blameless...**”
 - But ***there*** the focus was reconciliation with God – to be acceptable in God’s sight and in the courts of heaven.
 - But ***here***, Paul’s focus seems to be more on a very ***practical level...***
- **In *Ephesians 4:11*, Paul says something similar, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...”**
- **Paul’s goal was not simply to proclaim the gospel, but to “make the gospel fully known” as in verse 25, which entails *genuine salvation*.**
 - A “fully known” gospel results in ***new creations*** in Christ.
 - And so here, Paul’s goal is ***Christ in you***.
 - His goal is way beyond a mere ***profession of faith***.
 - His goal is true conversion: **discipleship!**
 - His goal is that people be presented, or rendered or made, “**complete**” in Christ...
- **The word for “mature” or “complete” is the word “telion,” from which we get our word *telos* – or end (*end goal or aim*).**
 - And that phrase “***in Christ***,” locates the ***sphere*** that we are talking about.
 - To be “in Christ” is to ***reference*** your life around him.
 - It’s to ***know*** that He is the ***goal of your life*** – to live ***like*** Him and ***for*** Him.
 - It is to know that your life is ***His*** now and that He is your ***reason*** for being.
 - ***Douglas Moo*** says, to be mature or complete in this way of living “**connotes the quality of being so wholehearted in one’s devotion to the Lord that one can be said to be blameless in conduct. Schweizer puts it well; to be teleios is the ‘complete and undivided way in which a person, with all one’s positive and negative attributes, is oriented ... toward Christ.’**”
- **And so, obviously, if Paul preaches Christ, and Christ is the head of all creation and new creation, then Paul’s goal or aim for every person is to move them to a place where Christ is in the heart what He is in reality – King!**
 - ***Lord. Master. Preeminent...!***
- **And this goal is for their joy.**
 - They were made/created ***to orient*** their lives ***in and around and to Jesus Christ***.
 - And so, obviously, any ***competing philosophies*** would not work toward this goal; would not work toward ***this joy...***
- **Genuine gospel ministry urgently persuades toward this end.**

- If it is legitimate, it will **teach and admonish and plead with and exhort and encourage** its hearers to make **much of Christ** and to focus their hearts **increasingly on Him**...
- **This is the goal, this is the end, for the believer's joy and Christ's exaltation.**
 - Christ is ***the reality***.
 - The goal isn't to make ***much of you*** and to center ***your world on you***.
 - That is ***deformed***. That is ***anti-gospel***.
 - That focus creates all kinds of ***psychological disorders***. ***It is Satanic***.
 - And, now we know why: it seeks to ***rob Christ*** of His rightful ***glory and results in destruction and distortion because it fights against reality*** – it **obscures** the gospel.
 - ***Christ's person and His work is the center of all!***
 - He ***alone*** is the goal of all things, but ***Satan*** would seek to take the focus ***off of Christ***.
 - ***And one way to do this is to put the focus on you (on man)...***

Illustration

- **The preacher I quoted earlier goes on to say this, “And if you’re going to fulfill your destiny, you’ve got to shake off the negative voices, shake off the thoughts that are telling you, I am unable, I am unqualified.”**
 - It's all about ***you***.
 - ***Satan's goal*** is to present every man, to render every man, complete or mature ***in himself, in sin – in sinful man***.
 - ***If he can point you to yourself, and encourage you to find the answers within, then the gospel is unnecessary – and Christ is robbed of His rightful glory...***

Application

- **But genuine gospel preaching seeks to render every person complete in Christ.**
 - It seeks to ***orient*** and ***conform*** its listeners ***to Christ***...
 - ***To His glory and your joy***.
 - And never gets ***tired*** of that message, because it knows ***how hard the world*** opposes that message and how ***utterly important*** that message is to life and godliness...
- **Pilots have in their cockpit an instrument called a vertical gyro stabilizer.**
 - It's an ***artificial horizon***.
 - And its purpose is to help you know ***up from down*** if you fly into the clouds and can't see the ***actual*** horizon.
 - You can look at this ***gauge*** and it will tell you if your wings are level and if you are in a dive or a climb...
- **But this instrument needs “caged” as aviators say.**
 - When you run through your preflight check list, you are on the ground.
 - But this ***gyro*** is not oriented rightly. It's typically ***showing a bank***.
 - So, before you take off, you are to pull this little nob on the instrument panel and the gyro will swirl around and then it will ***lock in***.
 - The bank and pitch (the horizon) ***now*** match straight and level – they now match ***reality (the actual horizon)***.
 - The gyro is ***oriented*** correctly.
 - ***And so now***, if you fly into the clouds and get vertigo, it can be ***trusted*** to represent reality...
- **Brothers and sisters, we need our gyros caged on a regular basis, and this can only come from Genuine Gospel Ministry.**
 - It can't come from the ***artificial stuff***...
- **If we are to be rendered mature in Christ, then we must be reminded to orient our lives on Christ.**
 - He is the ***goal*** of all things; He is ***the goal of our lives***...

- To be rendered complete in Christ will not come about by allowing our hearts/minds to be focused or consumed by worldly wisdom and self-help manuals.
 - It comes about from having *a pinpoint focus on Christ (His person and His work).*
 - Our ministries, our books, our teaching, our lives, then, must have *this focus.*
- True Gospel Ministry is *goal oriented*; the Aim of Genuine Gospel Ministry is Complete in Christ...

Conclusion

- Brothers and sisters, this text should be our guide.
 - It should help us *filter* our *input* and our *output.*
 - Genuine Gospel Ministry is *consumed* with Christ.
 - Christ is its *subject.* It *teaches* Christ and admonishes *toward Christ.* *Christ is its goal.*
 - It is *urgent.* It knows its task is *all important and time sensitive.*
 - It desires to render *everyone complete* in Christ.
 - It wants to move everyone to the place where their lives are *oriented* in Christ and to Christ.
- If the ministry doesn't do this – then it isn't a Genuine Gospel Ministry
 - If the *counseling* doesn't do this, then it isn't *Genuine Gospel Counseling.*
 - If the so-called *Christian book* doesn't do this, then it isn't a Genuine Gospel Book...
- *Brothers and sisters, let's never settle for anything less.*
 - Let's not tolerate anything less.
 - Let's *encourage one another in Christ* and ensure our message here at UBC, corporate and private, *continues to be Christ.*
 - Let's ensure we *continue to teach and admonish* Christ.
 - And let's be sure we never forget the goal: *Christ/Maturity in Christ...*
- Let's teach our kids *Christ; not moralism.*
 - Let's proclaim Christ; not *conservative politics.*
 - Let's always teach Christ; not *five steps to a better you.*
 - Let's proclaim Christ; not *anecdotal worldly wisdom...*
- Only Christ matures to manhood.
 - Let's love each other well and so ensure *we preach Christ.*
 - Only *He* is the image of the invisible God.
 - Only *He* is the one, true and living God.
 - Only *He* created all things.
 - Only *He* is the goal of all things.
 - Only *He* is the head of the church.
 - Only *He has made peace by the blood of His cross...*
- And so, *only Christ* we *proclaim...*

Pray