

The Bible Companion Series

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST

**"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.
And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the
beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he
might have the preeminence."**

Colossians 1:17,18

A Study of the Letter to the Colossians

A Bible-Believing Study Guide

an AV 1611 Bible Companion

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Colossians Chapter One

The Life of the Minister of the Gospel – Part 1

(Colossians 1:23-29)

I. Introduction

- A. Paul now makes his letter a bit personal
- B. Strangely, Paul is suffering (persecution, prison, etc) for Christians he has never met
- C. And takes the time to explain what his calling is as a minister of the Gospel – because so many Christians do not actually know what “the ministry” is all about!

II. Lesson

A. The Meaning of Minister (Col 1:23)

- 1. Servant. Someone who serves, waits on people like a waiter, stewards, runs errands
- 2. Many people were called “ministers” in the Bible – not leaders very often
 - a. Epaphras was a faithful minister to this church (Col 1:7)
 - b. So was Tychicus (Eph 6:21)
 - c. And Timothy (1Thes 3:2)
 - d. A very high calling
- 3. Yes, a minister is a leader in a church, with authority (Heb 13:17)
- 4. But he is a servant first
- 5. All Christian leaders are self-sacrificing servants of all (Mt 20:21, 24-28)
 - a. It means ministering to everyone as if they are representing Christ (Mt 25:44,45) – be very careful who you are willing and NOT willing to serve!
 - b. It means doing whatever is necessary (taking up offerings for needy people, Rom 15:25)
 - c. It also means getting others to work alongside you – deacons (Acts 6)
- 6. This is why most people don’t sign up for “ministry” – because it is a life of giving, and meeting other people’s needs, both spiritual and physical
- 7. By the way, authorities in our life, even unsaved government officials are ministers of God, whether they know it or not (Rom 13:1-46)

B. Who Are Servants in a Church?

- 1. ALL believers are servants – whether they realise it or not
 - a. Every teenager ought to be busy serving everyone
 - b. All ages, all backgrounds, all levels of maturity, should be serving!
- 2. A great church is FULL of servants, NOT leaders!
- 3. The highest commendation for a Christian is “well done thou good and faithful SERVANT!”
- 4. Some take on roles of leadership
- 5. But NEVER before they have proved themselves as servants first
- 6. And must always STAY servants of all

C. The Making of the Minister (Col 1:25,29)

- 1. Salvation - Saved specifically to minister

- a. Saved to minister to all the other members (1Cor 12), and even to all other Christians
 - b. Christ's work in your life was NOT to set you free, but to enable you to minister (Lk 4:39) – to do as other people need
2. Personally called by God (Acts 26:16)
- a. Everyone is called to minister
 - b. All believers are to become assembled in a local church as the gifted member God saved them to be in the body – NOT to live and do as they please
3. A Minister is made according to the dispensation of God
- a. God dispenses all we need to do His will
 - b. It is His enablement to do His will (2Cor 3:6; Eph 3:7)
 - c. That includes TRAINING.
 - 1) God will provide training if you will take it!
 - 2) Provide it by godly men, your pastor, constantly learning and preparing to be a servant in the word of God
 - d. So, serve in the way and strength that the Lord grants you (1Pet 4:10,11). Don't try and be who you are not. Don't show off! Just serve!
4. Every "minister" is fashioned, and forged by Personal Suffering
- a. Most people do not understand suffering and hardships in other people's lives
 - b. Turn away from it, and look down on it as something wrong with them
 - c. Look at Job's "friends" and even his wife!
 - d. But out of such great suffering and hardship and failures is how great ministries are built
 - 1) George Mueller first learned to pray through great personal hardship and lack, and ended up meeting the needs of hundreds of hungry orphans every day for decades, by the very same means of prayer!
 - 2) William Carey suffered so much physically, and emotionally as he plunged into the millions in India with the Gospel. Much of his ministry he had to do alone! And yet India was never the same after Carey preached!
 - 3) Adoniram Judson lost his first wife, and 2 children, and then was imprisoned for 20 months in a damp, dark hole in the ground – but it was while in that hole, Judson translated the Bible into Burmese!
 - 4) All throughout history, Christian ministers of the Gospel have almost NEVER been protected from great heartache or sorrow – and that is okay!
5. Single Focus - Always serving the Lord Jesus (Acts 13:1,2) "ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col 3:23,24)
6. Approved by God's people (Acts 13:3,4) – will be constantly proving yourself
7. Supernaturally sustained (Col 1:29)

III. Concluding Questions

A. Why do so many Christians NOT know what it is like being a minister of the Gospel?

1. They don't often pay attention to the Scriptures about serving and servanthood

B. What does the word "Minister" mean?

1. Servant, waiter, lowly errand boy

C. Who are servants in a church?

1. ALL believers

D. What Makes a Minister of the Gospel?

1. Salvation
2. Calling
3. Dispensing from God – all that you will need to serve, God will provide
4. Suffering
5. Focus on serving Jesus
6. Approved by your Church
7. Supernaturally Sustained