

## PAUL'S MINISTRY, PT. 2; 1:25 (Ed O'Leary)

### INTRODUCTION.

IN OUR SERIES ON COLOSSIANS, ~ WE ARE CURRENTLY MAKING OUR WAY ~ THROUGH Paul's account ~ of his apostolic ministry to the church.

▶▶ In his account of his apostolic ministry to the church, ~ Paul sets forth ~~~ his ministry of suffering on believers' behalf, ~ 1:24, ~ ~ 11

▷▷ the character of his ministry, ~ 1:25-29, ~ ~ & his ministry of encouragement, ~ 2:1-5.

▶▶ Last time ~ focused on his ministry of suffering.

▶▶ Today, ~ we'll begin to focus ~ on the character of his ministry. ⇨⇨ Focus: ~ ~ Verse 25.

▷▷ I became its ~ [i.e., ~ the church's] ~ servant, ~ ~ according to the commission of God ~ that was given to me for you, ~ ~ to make the word of God fully known.

▷▷ This can be split into three parts.

↳↳ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ Paul says that ~ he was called by God ~ to serve the church as an apostle, ~ vs. 25a, ~ 11

→→ I became its ~ servant, ~ ~ according to the commission of God.

↳↳ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ he identifies the people he primarily served ~ in his capacity as an apostle, ~ verse 25b, ~ 11

→→ that was given to me for you. ⇨⇨ I.e., ~ the Gentiles.

↳↳ And 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ he states the purpose ~ of his calling, ~ vs. 25c, ⇨⇨ to make the word of God fully known. ⇨⇨ Ok, ~ let's unpack this. 11 1/14

VERSE 25a.

PAUL SAYS THAT ~ HE WAS CALLED BY GOD ~ TO SERVE THE CHURCH AS AN APOSTLE.

▶▶ When he was little, ~ Paul did not say, ~ "When I grow up ~ I want to be an apostle."

▶▶ Paul did not choose a career as an apostle.

▶▶ He was not seeking it.

▷▷ On way to persecute the church ~ when Jesus met him on the way to Damascus.

▷▷ Not to go to Damascus Theo. Seminary.

▷▷ Acts 9:1-2. ~ But Saul, ~ still breathing threats and murder ~ against the disciples of the Lord, ~ went to the high priest ~ ¶¶

↳↳<sup>2</sup> and asked him ~ for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, ~ so that ~ if he found any belonging to the Way, ~ men or women, ~ he might bring them bound ~ to Jerusalem.

▷▷ And the rest, ~ as they say, ~ history. ⇔⇔ **Converted and became an apostle.**

▶▶ Paul's apostleship ~ was not given ~ by religious leaders or institution, ~ or by family.

▷▷ No human had commissioned Paul.

▷▷ No human authority had called him. ⇔⇔ **Not apostles . . . .**

▶▶ Instead, ~ Jesus himself ~ had appointed Paul ~ to be an apostle. ¶¶ 2/14

▶▶ In Gal. 1:1a (CSB), ~ Paul wrote, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul, ~ an apostle ~ not from men ~ or by man, ~ but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead.

▶▶ In 1 Tim. 1:1, ~ Paul said, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul, ~ an apostle of Christ Jesus ~ by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope.

▷▷ I.e., ~ Paul had been appointed to the office of apostle ~ by God's command.

▷▷ Paul's use ~ of the word "command" ~ does not suggest ~ that God tugged him into the office against his own will.

▷▷ It stresses ~ the divine source ~ of his appointment.

▶▶ And at the beginning of Colossians, ~ he notes ~ that he was chosen ~ by the will of God ~ to be an apostle of Jesus.

AND ~ AS AN APOSTLE, ~ PAUL, ~ OF COURSE, ~ HAD APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.

▶▶ Now, ~ it's important to understand, ~ as the apostles knew full well, ~ that their authority was a delegated authority.

▷▷ I.e., ~ they had no authority in and of themselves.

▶▶ Simply put, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the apostles were special messengers ~ chosen and sent by Jesus ~ ¶¶

↳↳ bearing His authority ~ and speaking and writing His message. ¶¶ 3/14

▶▶ So everything they wrote ~ are actually Jesus' messages to the church ~ and are therefore ~ binding on all believers.

▶▶ And that means ~ that what Paul wrote here in Colossians ~ is actually Jesus' message to the church ~ and binding on all believers.

▶▶ What Paul wrote ~ is not just his opinion ~ or just his ideas that he thought he would share.

▶▶ Colossians ~ is the word of God ~ and not the word of Paul ~ and not something optional for believers to follow ~ only if we feel like it.

NOW, ~ THE OVERARCHING THEME OF THIS LETTER ~ MAY GIVE US SOME INSIGHT ~ into why Paul mentioned his divine call to be an apostle.

▶▶ Recall, ~ Paul was refuting false teaching.

▶▶ Someone might have been asking ~~ where did Paul get the authority ~ to condemn these teachers?

▷▷ Where did Paul get the authority ~ to declare what they are teaching ~ to be heresy?

▶▶ Well, ~ he got his authority ~ from God himself. ~~ Jesus appointed him.

▶▶ And the gospel Paul preached ~ came from Jesus, ~ as spelled out ~ in [Gal. 1:11-12](#) (CSB).

▷▷<sup>11</sup> For I want you to know, ~ brothers and sisters, ~ that the gospel ~ preached by me ~ is not of human origin.

↳↳<sup>12</sup> For I did not receive it ~ from a human source ~ and I was not taught it, ~~ but it came ~ by a revelation of Jesus Christ.

→→ I.e., ~ I received it ~ by direct revelation ~ from Jesus Christ. 📖 4/14

▶▶ Therefore, ~ what Paul taught ~ was authoritative.

▶▶ And as such, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul's teaching ~ would be the standard ~ ¶¶

↳↳ which would be imposed on the teaching that the false teachers were bringing to Colossae.

AND FOR US, ~ WHAT PAUL AND THE OTHER BIBLICAL AUTHORS WROTE, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ is the standard ~ by which all teaching and preaching ~ is to be evaluated.

▶▶ This is what the Bereans did. ~~ Acts 17:11-12.

▷▷<sup>10</sup> The brothers ~ immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, ~~ ¶¶

↳↳ and when they arrived ~~ they went into the Jewish synagogue. ~~ ¶¶

→→<sup>11</sup> Now these Jews ~ were more noble ~ [i.e., ~ more open-minded] ~ than those in Thessalonica; ~~ ¶¶

↳↳ they received the word with all eagerness, ~~ examining the Scriptures daily ~ to see if these things were so.

▶▶ I.e., ~ they searched the Scriptures day after day ~ to see ~ if Paul and Silas ~ were teaching the truth.

▶▶ As I see it, ~ the Bereans ~ recognized, ~ acknowledged, ~ and applied ~ two principles.

▷▷<sup>1st</sup>, ~ Scripture is the truth.

▷▷ And <sup>2nd</sup>, ~ Scripture is the measuring rod ~ by which all Bible teaching/preaching ~ is to be evaluated. ¶¶ 5/14

▶▶ My . . . , ~ ¶¶

▷▷ we need ~ to recognize, ~ acknowledge, ~ and apply ~ these same two principles.

▶▶ Any teaching, ~ sermon, ~ book, ~ any teaching ~ that does not line up with Scripture, ~ is false ~ and must be rejected.

▶▶ John ~ gives reason for this testing. ~ 1 Jn. 4:1.

▷▷ Beloved, ~ do not believe every spirit, ~ but test the spirits ~ to see ~ whether they are from God, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ for many false prophets ~ have gone out into the world.

(VERSE 25a) PAUL WAS CALLED BY GOD ~ TO SERVE THE CHURCH AS AN APOSTLE.

▶▶ As such, ~ he evangelized sinners, ~ established local churches, ~ trained their leaders, ~ prayed for them, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ visited them, ~ sent associates to them, ~ and wrote epistles to them.

▶▶ Paul ~ required no direct financial assistance for these labors. ⇔⇔ E.g., ~ 2 Thess. 3:7-9

▷▷<sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, ~ because we were not idle when we were with you,

↳↳<sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, ~ but with toil and labor we worked night and day, ~ that we might not be a burden to any of you.

→→<sup>9</sup> It was not because we do not have that right, ~ but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

▶▶ He did everything he could ~ to seek believers' spiritual welfare.

▷▷ As noted last week, ~ he told the believers in Corinth, ~ But I ~ will spend ~ and be expended ~ most gladly for your lives. ¶¶ 6/14

## OK, ~ TO NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FOREST FOR THE TREES.

▶▶ Today, ~ we have begun to focus ~ on the character ~ of Paul's apostolic ministry to the church, ~ by looking at [verse 25](#).

▷▷ This, ~ as noted, ~ can be split into three parts.

↳↳ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ Paul says that ~ he was called by God ~ to serve the church as an apostle, ~ [vs. 25a](#), ~ ¶¶

→→ I became its ~ servant, ~ according to the commission of God. ⇔⇔ Looked.

↳↳ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ and this is what we'll focus on now, ~ he identifies the people he primarily served ~ in his capacity as an apostle, ~ [verse 25b](#), ~ ¶¶

→→ that was given to me for you. ⇔⇔ I.e., ~ the Gentiles.

↳↳ And 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ he states the purpose ~ of his calling, ~ [vs. 25c](#), ⇔⇔ to make the word of God fully known.

## IN VERSE 25b, ~ PAUL IDENTIFIES ~ THE PEOPLE HE PRIMARILY SERVED ~ IN HIS capacity as an apostle.

I BECAME ITS ~ [I.E., ~ THE CHURCH'S] ~ SERVANT, ~ ACCORDING TO THE commission of God ~ that was given to me for you.

▶▶ I.e., ~ the Gentiles.

▶▶ It is likely ~ that Paul sees the Colossians as representatives of the Gentiles as a whole, ~ since he had not been personally involved with them.

▶▶ Although Paul preached to Jews, ~ his primary ministry ~ was to the Gentiles. ¶¶ 7/13

▶▶ Paul's conversion and Ananias . . . .

▷▷ But the Lord said to Ananias, ~ "Go! ~ This man is my chosen instrument ~ to proclaim my name ~ to the Gentiles and their kings ~ and to the people of Israel. (Acts 9:15, NIV)

▶▶ And numerous times in his letters ~ Paul mentions ~ that this was his primary ministry.

▷▷ E.g., ~ in Romans 11, ~ he refers to himself ~ as "an apostle to the Gentiles." (11:13)

▷▷ Later in Romans, ~ Paul notes ~ that God gave him the privilege of being a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles.

↳↳ 15:15-18; ⇔⇔ "grace" = privilege.

▷▷ And then in Gal. 2:8.

↳↳ for he who worked through Peter ~ for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised ~ worked also through me ~ for mine to the Gentiles.

ONE MORE TIME TO NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FOREST FOR THE TREES.

▶▶ Today, ~ 11

▷▷ we have begun to focus ~ on the character ~ of Paul's apostolic ministry to the church, ~ by looking at verse 25.

▷▷ Paul said that ~ he was called by God ~ to serve the church as an apostle.

▷▷ He then identified that his primary ministry ~ was to the Gentiles.

▷▷ He then states the purpose of his calling by God to serve the church as an apostle.

↳↳ And to that ~ we now turn. 11 8/14



## THE PURPOSE OF HIS CALLING, ~ VERSE 25c.

I BECAME ITS ~ [I.E., ~ THE CHURCH'S] ~ SERVANT, ~ ACCORDING TO THE commission of God ~ that was given to me for you.

▶▶ And here's the purpose: ~ to make the word of God fully known.

▶▶ The Greek verb for ~ "fully known," ~ here means: ~ 77

▷▷ to relate fully the content of a message, ~ 'to proclaim, ~ to tell fully, ~ to proclaim completely.

▶▶ TPID, ~ the purpose of Paul's apostleship ~ was that ~ he was to proclaim ~ the whole counsel of God.

▷▷ I.e., ~ the full body of God's truth as revealed by him.

▷▷ The full revelation of which ~ was written down in Scripture.

▶▶ This proclamation ~ of the whole counsel of God ~ included ~ proclamation to unbelievers ~ in Paul's evangelism work, ~ 77

▷▷ and ~ proclamation to believers ~ in his work of instruction, ~ encouragement, ~ and exhortation.

AND PAUL DID ~ INDEED ~ PROCLAIM THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.

▶▶ In his farewell address to the Ephesian elders, ~ he said, ~ 77

▷▷<sup>26</sup> Therefore ~ I testify to you this day ~ that I am innocent of the blood of all, ~ 77

↳↳<sup>27</sup> for I did not shrink ~ from declaring to you ~ the whole counsel of God. 77 9/14

▷▷ Here Paul seems to draw ~ from the "watchman" analogy of Ezek. 3:16-21 and 33:1-9.

▷▷ Watchman . . . . .

▷▷ And here's what God says to Ezekiel, ~ recorded in Ezek. 33:7-9. CSB ⇨⇨ Hmwk.

↪↪<sup>7</sup> "As for you, ~ son of man, ~ I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel.  
~~ When you hear a word from my mouth, ~ give them a warning from me. ~~ ¶¶

→→<sup>8</sup> If I say to the wicked, ~ 'Wicked one, ~~ you will surely die,' ~~ but you do not  
speak out to warn him about his way, ~ that wicked person ~ will die for his iniquity,  
~ yet ~ I will hold you ~ responsible for his blood. ~~ ¶¶

↪↪<sup>9</sup> But ~ if you warn a wicked person to turn from his way ~~ and he doesn't  
turn from it, ~ he will die for his iniquity, ~~ but ~ you will have rescued  
yourself.

↪↪ Not condemned. ⇨⇨ Chastised. ⇨⇨ Loss of rewards. ⇨⇨ Held accountable.

▶▶ (Acts 20:27) ⇨⇨ Paul ~ had a clear conscience ~ because he had not hesitated ~ to  
declare to people ~ all that God wanted them to know.

▷▷ He would not be held accountable ~ for anyone within earshot of his preaching that  
rejected the message. ⇨⇨ Because he was a faithful watchman.

## PAUL PROCLAIMED ~ THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.

▶▶ Paul had not been deterred by fear, ~ or by the desire for popularity.

▶▶ Paul ~ knew and adhered to the truth ~ that we are called to be faithful ~ not popular.

▶▶ Paul had not been deterred ~ by the fear of offending someone. ¶¶ 10/14

▶▶ Or by the fact ~ that the doctrines of the word of God ~ are unpopular with people.

▶▶ Persecution ~ could not deter Paul from proclaiming the whole counsel of God.

▶▶ Nothing and no one ~ kept Paul from declaring the whole counsel of God.

FOR I DID NOT SHRINK FROM DECLARING TO YOU THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD, ~  
Paul told the Ephesian elders.

▶▶ "shrink" ~ means ~ to disguise any important truth; ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to withdraw it from public view; ~ ~ to decline publishing it from fear or an apprehension of the consequences.

▶▶ Paul had not disguised any biblical truth.

▶▶ He had not ~ withdrawn or kept it from open view, ~ by any anxiety about the effect which it might have on people's minds.

▶▶ Paul did not avoid any subject ~ no matter how hard the teaching.

▶▶ In brief, ~ no matter what the reason, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he refused to water down, ~ hide, ~ or compromise any part of God's message to us.

THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD, ~ THE FULL BODY OF GOD'S TRUTH, ~ is to be proclaimed  
~ by those whom God has called to preach and teach his word.

▶▶ We are watchmen.

▶▶ Now, ~ I don't think this means ~ that every verse in every book has to be preached or taught through. ¶¶ 11/14

▶▶I believe it means ~ that the full body of God's truth, ~ ¶¶

▷▷i.e., ~ every doctrine, ~ and every aspect of every doctrine, ~ which are taught and illustrated from Gen. to Rev., ~ ¶¶

↪↪are to be proclaimed ~ honestly and fully.

▷▷E.g., ~ Romans.

↪↪Summary of the whole Bible . . . .

BY WAY OF EXHORTATION MY . . . ., ~ ¶¶

▶▶beware ~ of any preacher/teacher who waters down the truth, ~ who hides it, ~ who disguises it, ~ who compromises it.

▶▶Beware ~ of those who are more interested in popularity, ~ crowds, ~ or money ~ than in faithfully proclaiming the full counsel of God.

▶▶Simply put, ~ beware of any preacher/teacher who does not proclaim the whole counsel of God.

RELATED TO THIS, ~ BEWARE ~ OF THOSE WHO DELIBERATELY DISTORT THE TRUTH.

▶▶And this ties in with our study of Colossians, ~ since Paul was battling false teachers.

▶▶In Acts 20:29-31, ~ Paul warned the Ephesians elders, ~ <sup>29</sup> I know ~ that after my departure ~ fierce wolves ~ will come in among you, ~ not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup> ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷and from among your own selves ~ will arise men ~ speaking twisted things, ~ to draw away the disciples after them. ~ ~ ¶¶

↪↪<sup>31</sup> Therefore ~ be alert, ~ remembering ~ that for three years ~ I did not cease ~ night or day ~ to admonish every one with tears. ¶¶ 12/14

▶▶ And Peter writes, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ But false prophets ~ also arose among the people, ~ just as there will be false teachers among you, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ who will ~ secretly ~ bring in destructive heresies, ~ even denying the Master who bought them. ~ 2 Pet. 2:1a.

(ACTS 20:27) FOR I DID NOT SHRINK ~ FROM DECLARING TO YOU ~ THE WHOLE counsel of God, ~ Paul told the Ephesian elders.

▶▶ Why proclaim the full body of God's truth ~ honestly and fully?

▷▷ Because it's exactly that.

↳↳ God's body of truth.

▷▷ Because this body of truth ~ is not ours, ~ but God's.

▷▷ And we have no right ~ to change it, ~ to disguise it, ~ or to withhold it.

▶▶ And why proclaim the whole counsel of God ~ honestly and fully?

▷▷ It is commanded by God.

▷▷ We see this from the ministries of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, ~ which applies ~ to all who are called to preach and teach ~ God's word.

▷▷ Jer. 26:2 ~ NIV ~ This is what the Lord says: ~ Stand in the courtyard of the Lord's house ~ and speak ~ to all the people of the towns of Judah ~ who come to worship in the house of the Lord. ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Tell them everything I command you; ~ do not omit a word. ¶¶ 13/14

▷▷ And God said this to Ezekiel.

↳↳ Ezek. 2:7, ~ Speak my words to them ~ whether they listen ~ or refuse to listen, ~ for they are rebellious.

▶▶ For those ~ whom God has called to preach and teach his word, ~ it is our solemn duty ~ to proclaim ~ the whole ~ counsel of God.

▶▶ And since Scripture is God's body of truth, ~ it is incumbent upon us, ~ his people, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to listen to it with respect, ~ to read and study it, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and to obey the whole counsel of God.

LET'S PRAY . . . . 14/14