

INTRODUCTION.

WE ARE PRESENTLY LOOKING CAREFULLY AT ~ THE CHARACTER OF PAUL'S APOSTOLIC ministry ~ ¶¶

▶▶ within the larger topic ~ of Paul's account ~ ¶¶

▷▷ of his apostolic ministry to the church, ~ which takes up ~ Col. 1:24 - 2:5.

▶▶ What Paul says ~ about the character of his ministry ~ is found ~ in 1:25-29.

▶▶ Having looked at ~ verses 25-27, ~~ ¶¶

▷▷ today ~ we'll focus on ~ verses 28-29, ~ finishing ~ our look at the character ~ of Paul's ministry.

COLOSSIANS 1:28-29.

²⁸ HIM ~ WE PROCLAIM, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ warning everyone ~ and teaching everyone with all wisdom, ~~ that we ~ may present everyone ~ mature in Christ. ~~ ¶¶

▷▷²⁹ For this ~ I toil, ~ struggling ~ with all his energy ~ that he ~ powerfully works within me.

▶▶ In these two verses, ~ Paul describes ~ ¶¶

▷▷ his apostolic ministry to the church ~ as ~ a ministry ~ of proclamation. ¶¶ 1/15

AND PAUL'S MINISTRY OF PROCLAMATION ~ WAS COMPRISED ~ OF FIVE FEATURES.

▶▶ I'll give them to you in brief ~ and then we'll unpack each one.

▶▶ 1st, ~ Jesus is the center ~ of the proclamation. ⇨⇨ Bulk of our time.

▶▶ 2nd, ~ The proclamation included ~ warning everyone.

▶▶ 3rd, ~ the proclamation also included ~ teaching everyone.

▶▶ 4th, ~ the goal of the proclamation ~ was ~ to present everyone ~ mature in Christ.

▶▶ And 5th, ~ the proclamation ~ involved ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul willingly ~ exerting himself ~ toward presenting ~ everyone mature in Christ.

THE FIRST FEATURE.

JESUS ~ WAS THE CENTER ~ OF THE PROCLAMATION.

▶▶ Him ~ [i.e., ~ Jesus] ~ we ~ [i.e., ~ Paul & his coworkers] ~ proclaim.

▶▶ Again, ~ bulk of our time ~ on this feature ~ of Paul's ministry ~ of proclamation.

WORD FOR ~ "PROCLAIM" ~ REFERS ~ TO REPORTING ~ OR ANNOUNCING ~ SOMETHING publicly.

▶▶ In NT, ~ the word ~ usually refers ~ to proclaiming the news ~ about Jesus & his work.

▷▷ Which, ~ of course, ~ summarized ~ means ~ the gospel. ¶¶ 2/15

▶▶ So, ~ when Paul says ~ **Him we proclaim**, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he is referring ~ to publicly announcing ~ the news, ~ the good news, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ about ~ the Person ~ and work ~ of Jesus.

▷▷ Or, ~ simply put, ~ Paul ~ and his coworkers ~ were proclaiming ~ the gospel.

PRONOUN ~ "WE" ~ IN THE GREEK TEXT ~ IS ~ EMPHATIC.

▶▶ Paul ~ was sharply ~ distinguishing himself and his coworkers ~ from the false teachers.

▶▶ Paul ~ was emphatically ~ making the point ~ that he ~ and his coworkers ~ ¶¶

▷▷ were proclaiming ~ the true gospel, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ as opposed ~ to the false teachers ~ who were plaguing the church.

WE PROCLAIM ~ THE TRUE MESSAGE ~ ABOUT THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS, ~ Paul writes.

▶▶ Jesus ~ was the center of Paul's ministry of proclamation.

▶▶ Jesus ~ is ~ the center ~ of the gospel.

WE CAN DRAW OUT ~ AT LEAST ~ 3 ~ IMPLICATIONS ~ FROM THIS TRUTH.

1st, ~ THE CENTER ~ OF A TRUE TEACHER'S TEACHING ~ IS ~ JESUS.

▶▶ Perhaps this ~ is the ~ #1 way ~ of distinguishing true and false teachers. ¶¶ 3/15

▶▶ A genuine teacher ~ will constantly ~ 77

▷▷ bring us ~ to Jesus, ~ point us ~ to Jesus, ~ talk about ~ Jesus, ~ 77

↪↪ and glorify ~ Jesus ~ in their teaching.

▶▶ A genuine teacher ~ will continue ~ 77

▷▷ to proclaim ~ the good news ~ about the Person and work of Jesus.

▶▶ When you listen to Bible teaching and preaching, ~ 77

▷▷ listen carefully ~ to what ~ they say ~ and believe ~ about Jesus.

▷▷ Is Jesus ~ the center ~ of their teaching?

▷▷ Are they continually proclaiming ~ the true message ~ about the Person and work of Jesus?

▷▷ Are they constantly ~ bringing you to Jesus?

▷▷ Are they consistently ~ pointing to, ~ talking about, ~ and glorifying ~ Jesus?

THE 2nd IMPLICATION ~ FROM JESUS BEING THE CENTER ~ OF PAUL'S MINISTRY OF proclamation.

▶▶ Everything we do here ~ as a church, ~ NHCC ~ must be centered ~ on Jesus.

▷▷ Not on my agenda. ↪↪ Not on your agenda. ↪↪ Not on programs.

▷▷ Not ~ on ~ anything or anyone ~ else ~ other than Jesus. 77 4/15

▶▶ We must not compromise ~ in order ~ to draw a crowd ~ or ~ 77

▷▷ in order ~ to gain acceptance in the community around us.

▶▶ As a church body, ~ every decision we make, ~ everything we do ~ 77

▷▷ must ~ be made and done ~ in the light ~ of the centrality of Jesus, ~ 77

▷▷ in order ~ that he will be glorified ~ 77

↪↪ and ~ that we remain ~ a Christ-centered church.

▶▶ We cannot ~ be effective as a church ~ if our ministry ~ is not ~ centered ~ on Jesus.

AND THE 3rd IMPLICATION ~ FROM JESUS BEING THE CENTER ~ OF PAUL'S MINISTRY
of proclamation.

▶▶ The teaching and preaching in our church ~ cannot be effective spiritually, ~ unless ~ they are centered on Jesus.

▶▶ Telling stories, ~ giving self-help talks, ~ or giving pep-talks ~ 77

▷▷ might itch peoples' ears, ~ but that's all they do.

▷▷ They ~ are of no spiritual value ~ whatsoever.

▶▶ Only ~ when preaching and teaching ~ centers ~ on the Person and work of Jesus ~ 77

▷▷ can they be spiritually beneficial.

▶▶ Only when preaching and teaching ~ centers ~ on the Person and work of Jesus ~ 77

▷▷ can ~ unbelievers be saved ~ and believers grow strong in the faith. 11 5/15

NOW LET'S CONSIDER ~ THE SECOND FEATURE ~ OF PAUL'S MINISTRY OF proclamation.

PAUL'S MINISTRY OF PROCLAMATION ~ INCLUDED ~ WARNING EVERYONE.

▶▶ "warning" here ~ refers to warning believers ~ against error, ~ i.e., ~ false teaching.

▶▶ This warning against false teaching ~ likely included ~ warning believers ~ ¶¶

▷▷ concerning ~ the dangerous consequences of it.

▶▶ This is very much in keeping ~ with the overarching reason Paul wrote this letter

WARNING BELIEVERS AGAINST FALSE TEACHING ~ and its dangerous consequences ~ ¶¶

▶▶ is part and parcel ~ of a Bible teacher's or preacher's ministry.

▶▶ It is also part and parcel ~ of the ministry of the local church.

▷▷ We'll see this ~ when we get to 3:16, ~ where Paul calls upon believers ~ to warn one another.

WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHING IS A RECURRENT THEME IN THE NT.

▶▶ In his sermon on the mount, ~ Jesus said, ~ "Beware ~ of false prophets."

▶▶ In Matt. 24:24 ~ CSB, ~ Jesus said, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "For false messiahs and false prophets ~ will arise ~ and perform great signs and wonders ~ to lead astray, ~ if possible, ~ even the elect. ¶¶ 6/15

▶▶Peter said ~ that ~ 77

▷▷just as there were false prophets in ancient Israel, ~ there would be false teachers in the church.

▶▶John exhorts us ~ to "test the spirits ~ to see ~ if they are from God."

▶▶Then he tells us why. ~ "because ~ many false prophets ~ have gone out into the world."

▶▶Paul warned the Ephesian elders ~ that after his departure, ~ false teachers would come in.

ALSO, ~ THE NT ~ IMPLIES ~ THE DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES OF FALSE TEACHING.

▶▶Jesus calls false teachers "ravenous wolves."

▷▷Paul calls them "fierce wolves," ~ and says ~ that they will speak ~ "twisted things."

▷▷These descriptions ~ certainly don't imply ~ beneficial consequences.

▶▶The sources of false teaching ~ point ~ toward its dangerous consequences.

▷▷Jeremiah (23:16) tells us ~ that false teachers ⇔⇔ "speak visions ~ from their own minds, ~ not ~ from the Lord's mouth."

▷▷Paul ~ refers to false teaching ~ as ~ "the teachings ~ of demons."

▷▷The sources of false teaching ~ certainly don't imply ~ beneficial consequences.

THE NT ~ ALSO ~ EXPLICITLY SHOWS ~ THE DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES ~ of false teaching. 7/15

▶▶Peter calls false teaching ~ destructive.

▶▶In 2 Timothy and Titus, ~ Paul, ~ respectively, ~ talks about ~ ¶¶

▷▷false teaching ~ "upsetting the faith of some," ~ and ~ "upsetting whole families."

▷▷In both cases, ~ the verb for "upsetting" ~ means ~¶¶

↪↪"to turn upside down, ~ to upset, ~ to break down, ~ to ruin.

BOTH ~ IMPLICITLY ~ AND EXPLICITLY ~ THE NT ~ POINTS OUT ~ THE DANGEROUS consequences ~ of false teaching.

▶▶False teaching ~ is destructive.

▶▶It is not ~ neutral, ~ harmless, ~ or constructive.

WARNING BELIEVERS ~ AGAINST ~ FALSE TEACHING AND ITS DANGEROUS consequences ~ ¶¶

▶▶is part and parcel ~ of an elder's ministry to the church he serves.

▶▶Marching orders from Paul. ~ Acts 20:28-31. (verse 31 added on hard copy)

▷▷²⁸ Pay careful attention ~ to yourselves ~ and to all the flock, ~ in which the Holy Spirit ~ has made you overseers, ~ to care for the church of God, ~ which he obtained with his own blood. ~ ²⁹ I know ~ that ~ after my departure ~ fierce wolves ~ will come in among you, ~ not sparing the flock; ~ ³⁰ and from among your own selves ~ will arise men ~ speaking ~ twisted things, ~ to draw away the disciples after them.

▶▶So, ~ it is incumbent upon me ~ to return often ~ to this theme, ~ in order ~ to protect you. ¶¶ 8/15

☞☞ Ok, ~ we are discussing ~ the five features ~ of Paul's ministry of proclamation. ☞☞

NOW LET'S CONSIDER ~ THE THIRD FEATURE ~ OF PAUL'S MINISTRY OF proclamation.

PAUL'S MINISTRY OF PROCLAMATION ~ INCLUDED ~ TEACHING EVERYONE.

- ▶▶ This is pretty self-explanatory, ~ so I think ~ just some brief comments will suffice.
- ▶▶ "teaching" ~ means ~ to provide instruction ~ in a formal ~ or informal setting.
- ▶▶ Instruction ~ in doctrine and conduct ~ is vital ~ to a believer's spiritual health.
- ▶▶ Teaching ~ is part ~ of the *Great Commission*.
- ▶▶ Jesus said, ⇨⇨ ¹⁹ Go therefore ~ and make disciples ~ of all nations, ~ baptizing them ~ in the name ~ of the Father ~ and of the Son ~ and of the Holy Spirit, ~ ^{20a} teaching them ~ to observe ~ all that I have commanded you. ~ Matt. 28:19-20a.
- ▶▶ Fulfilling the *Great Commission* ~ applies ~ to all believers.
- ▶▶ Teaching ~ is especially the responsibility ~ of elders and pastors.
- ▶▶ But it is also, ~ according to the *Great Commission*, ~ the responsibility ~ of every believer.
- ▷▷ As we'll see in 3:16.
- ▷▷ In addition ~ to Paul calling on believers to warn each other, ~ he tells us ~ to teach ~ one another as well. ↴↴ 9/15

NOW LET'S CONSIDER ~ THE FOURTH FEATURE ~ OF PAUL'S MINISTRY OF proclamation.

THE GOAL OF PAUL'S MINISTRY OF PROCLAMATION.

▶▶ that we may present ~ everyone ~ mature in Christ.

▶▶ Paul's interest ~ was in believers ~ not remaining spiritual babies ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but ~ in their becoming ~ spiritually mature.

BELIEVERS ~ ARE NEVER ~ TO REMAIN SPIRITUAL INFANTS.

▶▶ Paul rebuked ~ the Corinthian church ~ for their spiritual immaturity.

▶▶ Likewise, ~ the author of Hebrews ~ reprimanded his original readers ~ for *their* spiritual immaturity.

▷▷ He ends his reprimand by saying, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ Therefore ~ let us move beyond ~ the elementary teachings about Christ ~ and be taken forward ~ to maturity.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY ~ AIDS US IN GODLY LIVING.

▶▶ Within his reprimand of his readers, ~ the author of Heb. says, ~ in 5:14, ~ NIV, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ But solid food is for the mature, ~ who by constant use ~ have trained themselves ~ to distinguish good from evil.

▶▶ As we grow in the Word, ~ we learn to use it in daily life. ¶¶ 10/15

▶▶ As we apply the Word, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ we exercise ~ our "spiritual senses" ~ and develop ~ spiritual discernment.

▶▶ In Ps. 119, ~ the psalmist writes, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ I have stored up your word ~ in my heart, ~ that I might not sin against you.

▷▷ He also says, ~ Your commandment ~ makes me wiser ~ than my enemies, ~ for it is ever with me.

▶▶ The ability ~ to discern good and evil ~ is a vital part ~ of Christian maturity.

ALSO, ~ SPIRITUAL MATURITY ~ WILL HELP PREVENT US ~ ¶¶

▶▶ from being taken in ~ by false teaching.

▶▶ As Paul says in Ephesians, ~ when we're spiritually mature, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ we will "no longer ~ be infants, ~ tossed back and forth by the waves, ~ and blown here and there ~ by every wind of teaching ~ and by the cunning and craftiness ~ of people ~ in their deceitful scheming." (NIV)

▶▶ When we are spiritually mature, ~ we will no longer ~ lack understanding,

▶▶ We will not be ~ highly impressionable, ~ gullible, ~ foolish.

▶▶ We will not ~ be childish in biblical doctrine and behavior.

▶▶ And ~ we will not fall ~ for the doctrines ~ of demons. ¶¶ 11/15

FURTHERMORE, ~ PETER POINTS OUT ~ 77

▶▶ that we grow and mature spiritually ~ by feeding ~ on the word of God.

▶▶ In 1 Pet. 2:2 ~ CSB, ~ he writes, ~ 77

▷▷ "Like newborn infants, ~ desire the pure milk of the word, ~ 77

↳↳ so that ~ you may grow up ~ into your salvation.

▶▶ Peter wants us ~ 77

▷▷ to have ~ a strong desire, ~~~ to have a strong hunger and thirst, ~ 77

↳↳ for the spiritual nourishment ~ of God's word, ~ 77

↳↳ in order ~ to grow spiritually.

▶▶ What Peter is saying here, ~ carries the implication ~ that ~ 77

▷▷ we cannot ~ grow and mature spiritually ~ if we're not constantly ~ feeding on the word of God.

NOW LET'S CONSIDER ~ THE FIFTH ~ AND LAST ~ FEATURE ~ OF PAUL'S MINISTRY of proclamation.

FOR THIS I TOIL, ~ STRUGGLING ~ WITH ALL HIS ENERGY ~ that ~ he powerfully works within me.

▶▶ Paul's ministry of proclamation ~ involved ~ Paul willingly ~ exerting himself ~ 77

▷▷ toward presenting everyone ~ mature in Christ. 11 12/15

NO BELIEVER ~ CAN SUCCESSFULLY SERVE JESUS ~ WITHOUT WORKING HARD.

▶▶ Believers, ~ including pastors and church leaders, ~ will never ~ 77

▷▷ fulfill the ministry ~ the Lord has called them to, ~ 77

↳↳ if they are not willing ~ to put great effort into it.

▶▶ And every believer does have a ministry to fulfill.

▷▷ Every believer has at least ~ one spiritual gift, ~ 77

↳↳ which forms the basis ~ of our ministry.

THE WORD FOR ~ "STRUGGLING" ~ IS ~ AN ATHLETIC IMAGE, ~ 77

▶▶ depicting runners ~ straining ~ with every muscle ~ toward the finish line.

▶▶ Success ~ in serving the Lord, ~ like success ~ in sports, ~ demands ~ maximum effort.

MOST LIKELY ~ TO PREVENT SOMEONE MISUNDERSTANDING HIM, ~ 77

▶▶ Paul adds ~ that ~ it was not ~ in his own strength ~ 77

▷▷ he was expending maximum effort ~ in his ministry.

▶▶ He was depending ~ on God's mighty power.

▶▶ All of Paul's hard work ~ would have been useless ~ apart ~ 77

▷▷ from God's power in his life. 11 13/15

WE ~ ARE ONLY FOOLING OURSELVES, ~ AND HEADED FOR DISASTER ~ ¶¶

▶▶if we think ~ for one nanosecond ~ that we can be successful ~ in ministry ~ or in the Christian life ~ ¶¶

▷▷without God's power ~ working ~ in us, ~ through us, ~ and for us.

▶▶The classic verse on this ~ is [Zech. 4:6](#).

▷▷Then he said to me, ~~ "This ~ is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ~~ Not by might, ~~ nor by power, ~~ but by my Spirit, ~~ says the Lord of hosts."

▶▶And recall Jesus' words to believers ~ in Jn. 15, ~ "apart from me you can do nothing."

▷▷This ~ is not some arrogant statement ~ on Jesus' part.

▷▷And he's not putting us down.

▷▷He knows ~ that ~ ¶¶

↳↳we cannot handle ~ our ministry ~ or ~ the various circumstances we encounter in life ~ on our own.

▷▷I believe ~ that Jesus' words, ~ "apart from me you can do nothing." ~ is ~ ¶¶

↳↳a statement ~ of comfort and encouragement.

▷▷I have confidence ~ that Jesus ~ ¶¶

↳↳is trying to save us ~ from ~ the futility, ~ stress, ~ and frustration ~ of trying to do things ~ apart from him.

▷▷Let us ~ be very thankful to him ~ for doing this. ¶¶ 14/15

CONCLUSION.

AND THAT ~ 77

▶▶brings us to the end ~ of the five features ~ of Paul's ministry of proclamation.

LET'S PRAY 15/15