

a call to MINISTRY

Colossians 1:24-29

Introduction:

2010 Winter Olympics –
Dave Murray Downhill Course



The Apostle Paul – he was willing to risk everything for the sake of Christ.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.
Philippians 3:12-15

We should all be downhill skiers.

We are not all vocational ministers,
but all of us are called to use our gifts
in ministry.

I. A call to ministry is a call to suffering.
Verse 24

It is a call to self denial.

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?"
 Luke 9:23-25

Paul's suffering was both physical and emotional. II Corinthians 11:24-29

Yet Paul could rejoice in what he suffered, because he knew it was for their gain – and for ours.

"I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's sufferings."

- Christ's death was not lacking in any way. Christ's death paid the penalty for our sins once for all. Hebrews 10:10-14
- But there will be sacrifice and suffering in bringing the gospel to those who have never heard it before.

The greatest defect in the modern church is its cowardly retreat from the high demands of the Christian faith. Our day is no different from Paul's in requiring heroism, daring and sacrifice from Christians.
 W.D. Chamberlain

There is a cost involved in following Jesus.

But the prize is worth the cost.

II. A call to ministry is a call to share the mystery of Christ. Verses 25-27

Paul saw himself as a servant of Christ and the church.

Paul was commissioned by God to teach the word of God in all its fullness.

We are called to share the mystery that has now been revealed.

- The gospel is for all people.
- The heart of this mystery is "Christ in you, the hope of glory".

III. A call to ministry is a call to make disciples. Verse 28

The goal of Paul's ministry was to bring people to maturity in Christ.

Perfect doesn't mean sinless perfection, it means wholeness or maturity.

The focus was on Jesus.

"We proclaim him."

Admonishing and teaching explain how Paul went about making disciples.

- Admonish is the warning.
- Teaching is the instruction. It is helping people to understand the Scriptures and apply them to life.
- There is no substitute for life on life learning.

Paul sketches out his understanding of his commission from God and the identity and purpose of the church.

- To present the word of God in its fullness and make known its glorious riches.
- To proclaim Christ and admonish and teach with all wisdom so that believers are firm in their faith.

- To create believers encouraged in heart, united in love and full of understanding.
- To reach out with the good news to those whom some may deem unworthy and excluded. John Garland

IV. A call to ministry is a call to rely on his power. Verse 29

All of the above is impossible without his power working in us.

Paul labored in ministry.

Paul wrestled with the enemy, with opposition, with doubt, discouragement, failure and adversity.

But Paul was never alone in his struggle, because Jesus Christ was at work in him.

Conclusion:

A call to follow Christ is a call to ministry.

It is a call to

- Self denial
- Share the gospel
- Make disciples
- Rely on his power.