

For Christ and for the sake of others...

Rejoice in suffering. (24)

Jesus Christ's suffering was predicted in Isaiah 53; He forewarned His disciples they would suffer in Matthew 10. Paul was writing from prison. He forewarned that all who desire to live godly in Him would be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12). Suffering is not strange for Christians; don't be depressed, alarmed, or hurt; rather - rejoice! This doesn't come naturally to us; our flesh wants to do the opposite.

Steward your best in the church. (25a)

Anything, everything you have God gave to you for His glory.
What will you be held accountable for stewarding someday (Matt 25:14-30)?
Paul was a tentmaker, but he ultimately wasn't known for his tentmaking skills but for his work preaching the gospel.

Minister the Word of God. (25b)

The Word of God must be central and foundational to your ministry, or you will have nothing to show for in the day. There is nothing wrong with this book (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), though you may not understand it all. There are 66 books – God has a lot to say to us, but not believing this book is killing our culture.

Reveal the riches of God's glory: Christ in you. (26-27)

The riches Paul speaks of is not money, but Christ living in you... Woah! Buddha, Mohammed didn't claim to live in anyone. Living the Christian life is not performance-based, but resurrection-based. You are completely acceptable in Him! Your score is a zero. But Christ scored 100. So with Christ in you, you're a 100! Ask God to live His life through you. You don't do what you do so that God loves you! Live out your identity – you are who God says you are. Live like it!

Labor in God's power to see every person complete in Christ. (28-29)

Teaching and admonishment is done by other believers who come alongside you.
You can't grow without being around other people who know you, love you, and you allow them to speak into your life. It doesn't mean you will always enjoy receiving it. Neither will you always enjoy providing it either.

Questions for Discussion:

What are some ways you have or are experiencing suffering for Christ? How did or are you handling it?

How would you assess your perspective on your secular work vs. your ministry work?

Which are you known for most? If your secular work, what would it look like for you to shift it more towards ministry?

How familiar are you with the 66 books of the Bible? Do you have a Bible reading plan? If so, what does it look like?

How well do you understand your identity in Christ? How would you explain it in your own words?

Are you still stuck in a performance-based guilt producing system of trying to be more acceptable to God?

How well do you receive admonishment? Are you more defensive, or more teachable?

How well to you admonish others? Do you go around policing them, or admonishing out of a sincere love for them?