



# THE SCROLLS

Helping one another mature so we can impact our world for Christ

Passionate About Service

For the week of August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005

## Beliefs

- ? Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

## Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving My Time
- Giving My Money
- Giving My Faith
- Giving My Life

## Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility
- Forgiveness

## Indebted

One of the remarkable things that we learn as we grow in our faith is the significant part that others have played in bringing the good news about Christ to us. I will never forget the first person who told me the gospel. John Wesley White was (perhaps still is – I'm not sure) an evangelist with the Billy Graham team. I heard him speak to a large crowd in my home town of Santa Rosa when I was 13. He was the first one to really tell me that God loved me in Christ. But if I think further back, before John Wesley White, there were others. Listen to what Ray Stedman has to say about our debt to them.

*Have you ever asked yourself, how many prayers and tears, how much heartache and disappointment has someone gone through for you in order that you might come to Christ? I never read the Scriptures without a momentary thought, at least, of what it cost others for me to have this Bible in my hand: the blood of martyrs, the fears and tears of persecuted people throughout the centuries, the sweat and labor of translators, and the effort of teachers to make it plain and clear. We should never read the Scriptures without remembering that someone has died to make it possible.*

One person whom we are indebted to in a long line of people is the Apostle Paul. In this week's passage we learn some amazing things that Paul went through so we and others might know.

## Monday – Celebrating Suffering

Please read Colossians 1:24-29.

**Text Insight** – Verse 24 has caused some problems for Bible students over the years. Just what does Paul mean in the last half of this verse? We will explore that more in Tuesday's section. For today, let's focus on Paul's willingness to suffer and his joy in it.

1. In what ways did Paul's suffering lead to the benefit of the Colossian believers? In what ways has it led to our benefit?
  2. How is it possible that Paul could rejoice in suffering? Please read Acts 5:27-42 (focusing on verse 41). Does this Acts account help you to add to your answer?
  3. Please read Matthew 5:10-12. What insights does Jesus give in the benefits of suffering for him?
- Digging Deeper** - In our culture we are taught to avoid any kind of suffering at all costs. Is it possible that as Americans we are wrong about suffering? Is it possible that Jesus and Paul (in some mysterious way) are right when it comes to suffering for his sake? Close your time today asking God to teach you the truth about suffering for his sake.

## Tuesday – Joined with Christ

*Paul sees his own sufferings as part of what he calls 'the king's afflictions.'... This is not to be seen as an addition to the king's own suffering; rather, it is to be seen as an extension of it. Paul is thus content to take his share of suffering, in prison for the sake of the gospel.*

Tom Wright – *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters*

Please read Colossians 1:24-29.

1. What did Paul mean when he said that he was *filling up in his body what was lacking in regards to Christ's afflictions*?
2. Is Christ still suffering today or was his suffering completed at Calvary's Cross? Read the account of Paul's conversion (Acts 8:1-3 and 9:1-6, focus on verse 5). This post-resurrection account tells us that even in his resurrected state, Jesus was still experiencing persecution (and suffering) because of what his young church was experiencing from Paul (and others). Why did the persecutions of early Christians bring hurt and suffering to Jesus?
3. To this day, Jesus suffers when his followers suffer. What does that tell you about Christ and his relationship with you?
4. How did this truth help Paul grow in his willingness and joy in suffering?

## Wednesday – Becoming a Servant

*...we Christians are given the high privilege of serving the Living God, of God using us in our weakness, failure, folly and faultiness to proclaim this truth to others. The realization that the God of Glory is willing to do that should create in us a deep sense of gratitude that we can be his servants.* Ray Stedman – from his sermon, The Great Mystery

Please read Colossians 1:24-29.

1. If someone asked you about your career or vocation, what would you say? If someone had asked Paul, what do you think he would he have said (in light of Col. 1:24ff.)?
2. Why did Paul consider it such a great privilege to serve Christ by serving the Church?
3. Do you think of yourself as a servant? Why or why not? What do you think it means to be a servant of Jesus Christ?

**Digging Deeper** - Becoming a servant rarely happens without deciding to become one. We don't drift into a servant's role. Drifting will naturally lead to a life that is self-serving. Becoming a servant of Christ, rather, comes as a result of an intentional decision that being a servant of Christ is the greatest calling a person can follow. If you have not already done so, consider intentionally deciding today to become his servant. And then ask for his grace and help to grow in that wonderful calling.

**Closing Prayer** – *Lord Jesus, you came not to be served but to serve and give your life as a ransom for many. How could I do any less? Lord, I want to become your servant. Help me. Give me the wisdom to see that serving you is the greatest thing I could do with my life. Give me the strength I need to carry this desire out. And give me grace when I fail. In your name I pray. Amen.*

## Thursday – Washing Feet

*There is, perhaps no part of Christian experience where a greater change occurs, upon entering into the life hid with Christ in God, than in the matter of service.* Hannah Whitall Smith – *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*  
Please read John 13:1-18.

1. This classic section offers many insights on becoming a servant. Write down one or more insights that come to you upon reading this passage.
2. Why did Jesus choose feet washing to teach his followers about servanthood? What activity might he choose in our day and age to teach us this lesson?
3. What kind of character is required to become a servant of others? What kinds of actions?

**Digging Deeper** – Read John 13:17. What blessings do you think await those who take a servant's posture? What can you do today to care for others and thereby serve them? Ask for the Lord's help.

## Friday – The Greatest of All

Please read Colossians 1:24-27 and Mark 10:35-45.

1. What did James and John aspire to? What was right about their desire?
2. What did these two not understand about true greatness?
3. Why is pride such a great roadblock to servanthood?
4. In our new lives in heaven, our current values will be flipped upside down. Greatness will be rewritten. Take some time as you close to consider life after death and the value of having a servant's heart. Ask Christ to fill you with a deepening sense of the value in being a servant.

## Saturday – Upside-down Thinking

*I want you to know how glad I am that it's me sitting here in this jail and not you. There's a lot of suffering to be entered into in this world—the kind of suffering Christ takes on. I welcome the chance to take my share in the church's part of that suffering. When I became a servant in this church, I experienced this suffering as a sheer gift, God's way of helping me serve you, laying out the whole truth. (The Message Paraphrase)*

1. Imagine Paul's life before he met Christ. Powerful. Prestigious. Passionate. Imagine for a moment as you read the above paraphrase, the radical transformation that took place in his life. What had to have happened to bring him to this place?
2. Why would our world today consider Paul's words ludicrous and insane?
3. Choose a powerful and prestigious personality from our current pop-culture. Now imagine him or her saying what Paul is saying. How would our media/culture react to such a radical change?
4. Only in Christ is such a change possible. Ask Jesus to continue his radical transforming work in your life.

Book Recommendation: Spiritual Leadership by J. Oswald Sanders



### Homegroup Discussion

*This section is designed for Home Groups and Small Groups who would like to discuss the Scrolls together. Begin by reading Colossians 1:24-28 and the opening introduction, "Indebted."*

1. In what ways did Paul's suffering lead to the benefit of the Colossian believers? In what ways has it led to our benefit?
2. How is it possible that Paul could rejoice in suffering? Please read Acts 5:27-42 (focusing on verse 41). Does this Acts account help us with our answer?
3. Read Tuesday's quote. To this day, Jesus suffers when his followers suffer. What does that tell you about Christ and his relationship with you?
4. Why did Paul consider it such a great privilege to serve Christ by serving the Church?
5. Do you think of yourself as a servant of Christ? Why or why not? What do you think it means to be a servant of Jesus Christ?
6. Close your group time by reading the "Digging Deeper" section under Wednesday. Invite your group during a time of silent prayer to commit themselves to becoming servants of Christ.

### Family Time with Kids

*Families can use these kid-friendly questions to help your children learn what you studied this week. Begin by reading Colossians 1:24-28*

1. In Colossians 1:24-25 Paul writes he has suffered as a servant of God. What type of suffering did Paul endure (2 Corinthians 11:23-27)? How do you think Paul felt?
2. Did Paul's suffering have a purpose? When you talk to friends and family about Christ does it have a purpose? Is it hard to talk to others about Christ? Would it be hard for Jesus to talk to others about what He did for us?
3. Please read John 13:1-18. This story tells us many wonderful things about becoming a servant. Write down one or more lessons you learn from this story.
4. Why did Jesus choose feet washing to teach his followers about being a servant? If Jesus lived on earth right now, what activity might he choose to teach us this lesson?
5. What blessings do you think await those who take a servant's posture? What can you do today to care for others and thereby serve them? Ask for the Lord's help.

