

**COMPLETE**

*in*

*jesus  
Christ*



Pergamon

Thyatira

Smyrna

Sardis

Ephesus

Philadelphia

Colossae

Laodicea

Patmos



## **The Church of Colossae – A house-church that Paul had never met.**

- the congregation was one of many that grew out of Paul's time in Ephesus.
- the church was “founded” by Epaphras
- Philemon was a member of the Colossae church, hosting the congregation in his home.
- **the Christians of Colossae were struggling two issues:**
  1. Syncretism: worrying whether faith in Jesus alone is enough to know God, or whether something more is necessary.
  2. Gnosticism: debating whether people are divine souls trapped in evil physical bodies.

- The **false teachers** were telling the Colossians that “*deeper knowledge*” and “*alternative experiences*” were required to really know God.
- **Paul** knew that Jesus was enough ... and that He was all that they would ever need.
  - ... they didn't need more “intellectual knowledge”, but transformed lives through what they had already received, believed & embraced.
- **So he prayed for them:** continuously; specifically; confidently.

## Chapter 1: Paul's Encouraging Prayer. 1:3-14

<sup>3</sup> **We always pray for you**, giving thanks to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for you ... <sup>6</sup> for the gospel, that is changing lives all over the world, has also changed your lives from the day you first heard it, understood it and believed it.

<sup>9</sup> **We have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you.**

1. **Asking God** to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. (v.v. 9-10)
2. <sup>11</sup> **Asking God** to strengthen you with all his glorious power. (v.v.11-14)

**The Point:** - Paul believes that God is powerfully at work transforming the world (v.7), so he asks God to hold nothing back from them:

- a complete knowledge of His will.
- heavenly wisdom; supernatural understanding.
- **all of his glorious power!**

## **Review:**

**1 ...<sup>21</sup>** *You who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. <sup>22</sup> Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body, and has brought you into his own presence holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.*

**<sup>23</sup>** *So, believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard this Good News. It has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it ...*

**This Week**: What it means to be a minister. (Colossians 1:23 – 2:5)

- Three things we are all appointed to do:

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**"Servant"** - **diakonos** *a common servant in a Master's house.*

- doing whatever they are commanded to do, no matter how low the task.

*huperetes (1 Cor 4) - an under-rower in a Galley ship*

*doulos (Col 3:22) – a slave under full submission.*

**This Week:** What it means to be a minister. (Colossians 1:23 – 2:5)

- Three things we are all appointed to do:

**1. A minister suffers with others.** (v.v. 23-24)

- with gladness.
- with purpose
- with no hint of self-pity *or* attention-seeking.

*<sup>23</sup> ... I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ all over the world.*

*<sup>24</sup> I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church.*

Among other things pastoral work is a decision to deal, on the most personal and intimate terms, with suffering. It does not try to find ways to minimize suffering or ways to avoid it. It is not particularly interested in finding explanations for it. It is not a search after the cure *for* suffering. Rather, pastoral work engages *in* suffering. It is a conscious deliberate plunge into the experience of suffering.

Eugene Peterson

One of my tasks as a minister is to help people live through their pain and suffering – in fact, to survive and thrive in the midst of it. Ministers who are too busy to do that are too busy for authentic ministry. People who enter into the lives of others invest time. They listen. They care. They weep and grieve. A ministry is not healthy if those who minister refuse to enter into suffering on behalf of others.

Charles Swindoll

**This Week**: What it means to be a minister. (Colossians 1:23 – 2:5)

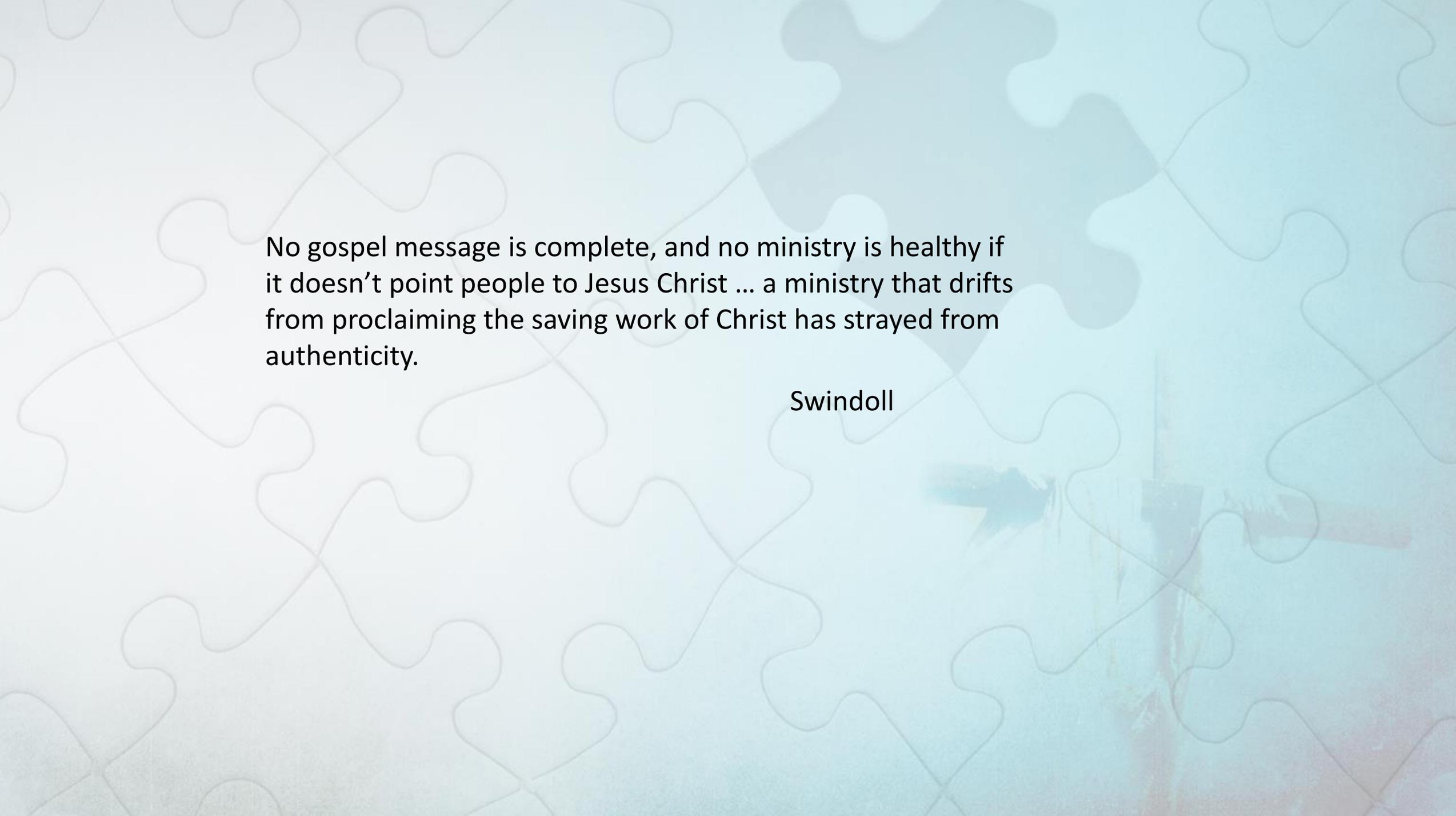
- Three things we are all appointed to do:

**2. A minister nurtures others.** (v.v. 25-29)

- by telling everything about Jesus.
- by telling everyone about Jesus.

*<sup>25</sup> God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you. <sup>26</sup> This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed that God wants all peoples – Jew & non-Jew – to have the riches & glory in Christ for them. This is the secret then: Christ lives in you. He is the hope of your glory.*

*<sup>28</sup> So, we tell others about Christ, warning everyone & teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. <sup>29</sup> That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.*

The background features a light blue and white color scheme. A large, semi-transparent puzzle piece is centered in the upper half of the image. The entire background is overlaid with a faint, repeating pattern of puzzle piece outlines. In the lower right corner, there is a faint, semi-transparent image of a wooden cross.

No gospel message is complete, and no ministry is healthy if it doesn't point people to Jesus Christ ... a ministry that drifts from proclaiming the saving work of Christ has strayed from authenticity.

Swindoll

**This Week:** What it means to be a minister. (Colossians 1:23 – 2:5)

- Three things we are all appointed to do:

**3. A minister is preoccupied with others.** (v.v. 1-5)

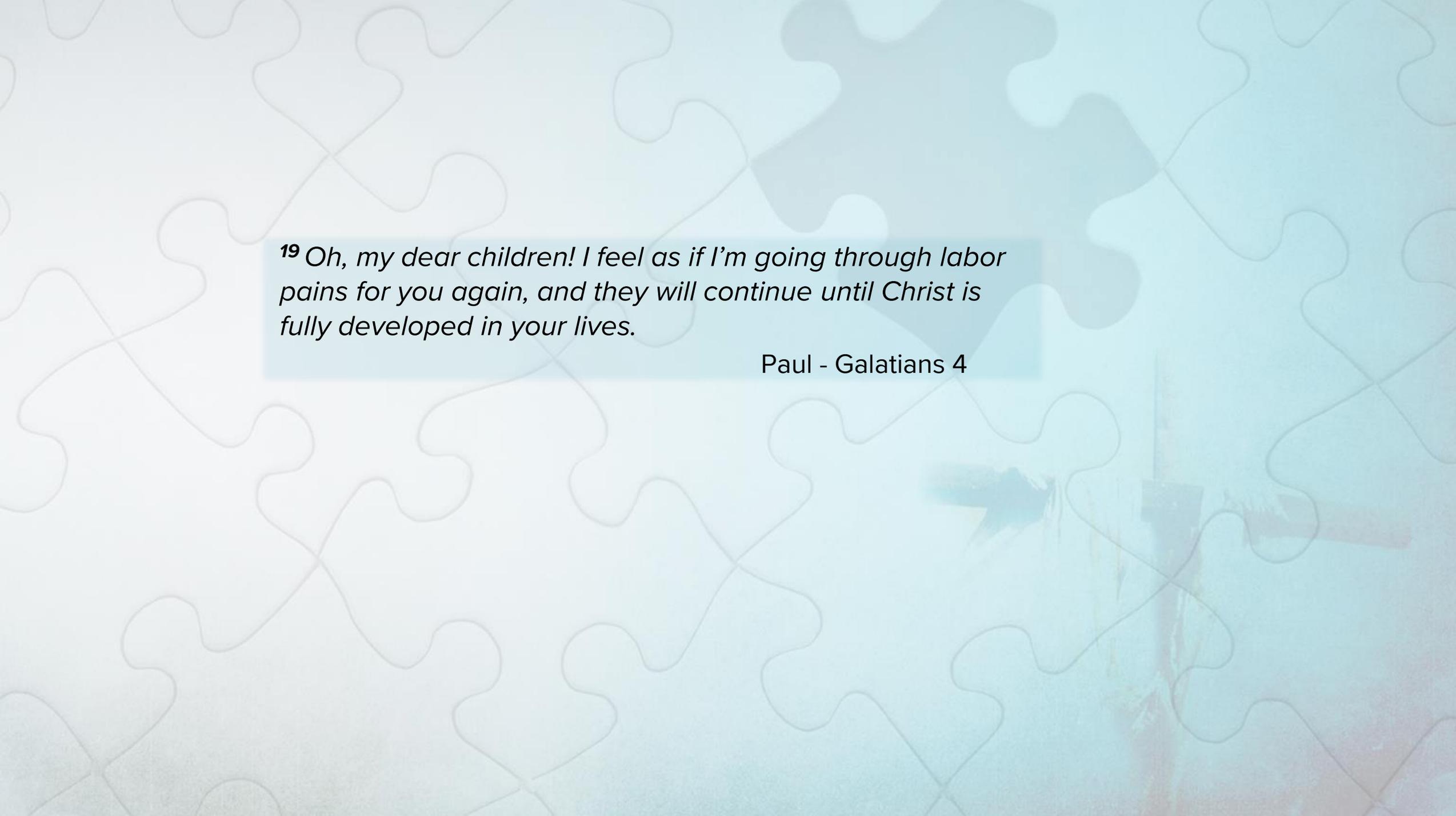
- labouring over them - (*agonizomi*: to labour/strive)
- encouraging them.
- knitting them together.
- providing them hope & confidence in Jesus.

***2** I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never met me personally.*

***2** I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. **3** In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

***4** I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments.*

***5** For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong.*



***19** Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives.*

Paul - Galatians 4

## Summary:

- to be a minister is to care about others ... always.
- to be a minister is a calling, not a career.

**... though some of us are provided for by others to minister with all our time, every one of us is called to minister and gifted by the Spirit to do so.**

*<sup>11</sup> The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> **for the perfecting of the saints to the the work of ministry (diakonias),** for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.*

*<sup>14</sup> We must no longer be children, tossed about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery and by their craftiness and deceitful scheming.*

Paul – Ephesians 4

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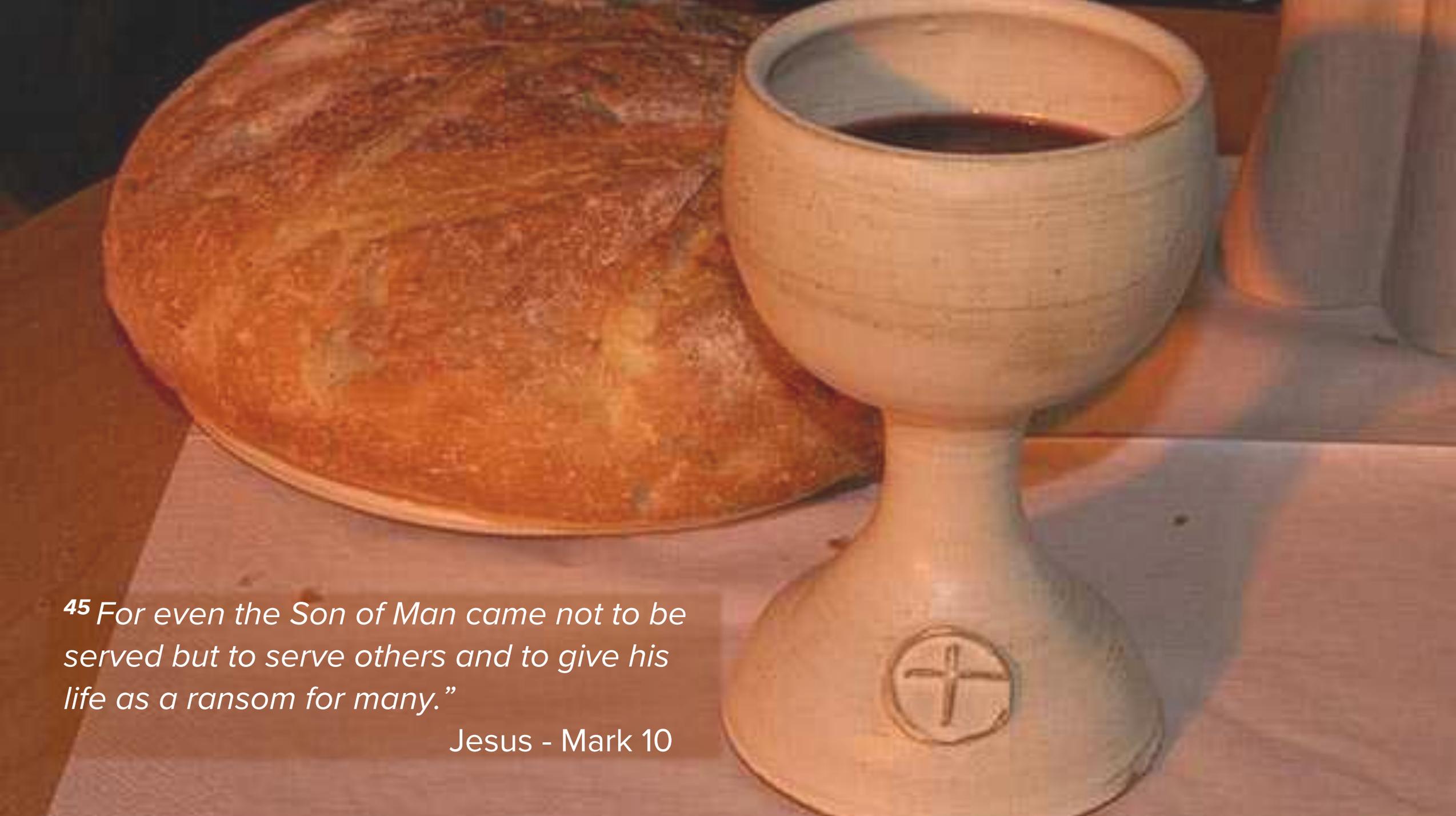
Challenge: Who around me is suffering, and how I can walk with them?

3. Sharing Jesus with others happens while we serve them.

Challenge: Others don't care what I know until they know that I care.

4. Serving others happens anytime, anywhere & for any reason.

Challenge: Am I an eager servant ... always prepared to fill a need wherever my Master directs me?

A large, round, golden-brown loaf of bread sits on a white cloth to the left of a white ceramic chalice. The chalice has a cross embossed on its stem and is filled with a dark red liquid. The background is dark and out of focus.

*45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Jesus - Mark 10