

May 21, 2006

Series: Against the Tide

Sermon: "The Difference Between An Easy Life and a Great Life"

Scripture:

²⁴Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. ²⁵I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— ²⁶the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. ²⁹To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Chapter 2

¹I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.

-Colossians 1:24-2:1 (New International Version)

Introduction:

- True success can be defined as living a great life in Christ.
- True success means living a life that makes a difference, an impact on those around us.
- Paul discusses three attitudes, and how they drove him to be the person that he was.

I. You must be willing to suffer.

- Colossians 1:24, "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church."
- I Peter 4:1, "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin."
- Paul knew what it meant to suffer with Christ.
- If we are to succeed we must be tough, willing to endure criticism, willing to work hard, give beyond the call of duty.

II. You must be willing to serve.

- Matthew 20:28, "The Son of Man didn't come to be served, but to serve."
- Jesus also said, "the student is not above the teacher." (Luke 6:40)
- To be a leader requires two things:
 1. We must identify with those we lead.
 2. We must be willing to serve those we lead.
- Colossians 1:25, "I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—"
- Paul was the most significant leader of the first century church.
- Crucial principle - Success is not a life of privilege; it's a life of service.
- A leader who loved people devotes his life to serving them.

III. You must be willing to struggle.

- Success is about living a great life.
- Paul's struggle was to lead others into a life-changing relationship with Jesus.
- Colossians 1:29, "To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me."
- Colossians 2:1, "I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally."
- Success requires a commitment to hard work.
- Everyone who succeeds pays a great price through the struggle.
- Jesus lets us know it is worth it.

Conclusion:

- Success is not living an easy life; it's about living a great life.
- We must be willing to suffer, be willing to serve, and willing to struggle.