

# Summary

In this sermon from Colossians, Pastor Mark challenges believers to stop treating Jesus as a mere seasoning added to life when things get hard, and instead embrace Him as life itself. Drawing from Colossians 1:24 through 2:10, he explores how Paul, writing from prison, models a perspective on suffering that is rooted in purpose, dependence on God, and rejection of counterfeits. The anchor verse for the series is Colossians 3:17, which calls believers to do everything in the name of Jesus with gratitude, whether in word or deed. Pastor Mark outlines three key truths about suffering: first, that our suffering has a purpose and is not a malfunction in God's plan; second, that our struggle reveals weakness and invites us to depend on Christ's strength rather than our own; and third, that pain attracts counterfeits and shortcuts that cause us to lose connection with Jesus as the head. He closes by inviting the congregation to see their struggles not as signs of weak faith, but as invitations to discover the deep mystery of God's presence, to mature, and to hand their weakness over to Christ.

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you today as a group of people who each carry our own struggles, questions, and moments of doubt. We ask that you open our hearts and minds to what you want to speak to us today. Help us to set aside our own agendas and truly hear from your Spirit. May this time together draw us closer to you and to one another. We invite you to be not just a seasoning in this conversation, but the very center of it. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Ice Breaker

What is your go-to comfort food or meal when you are having a rough day, and who usually makes it for you?

## Key Verses

- Colossians 3:17
- Colossians 1:24
- Colossians 1:27
- Colossians 2:6-7

- Colossians 2:9-10
- John 16:33
- John 9:3

## Questions

- Pastor Mark used the image of seasoning to describe how we sometimes treat Jesus. In what areas of your life are you most tempted to add just a little bit of Jesus rather than making Him the center?
- Paul says in Colossians 1:24 that he rejoices in his suffering. What do you think makes it possible for someone to genuinely rejoice in the middle of pain or hardship?
- Pastor Mark suggested shifting the question from 'Why is this happening?' to 'What is the purpose of this?' How does that change in perspective affect the way you approach a current or past struggle?
- Have you ever experienced a season of suffering that later revealed something meaningful or produced growth you could not have gained any other way? What did that look like?
- Pastor Mark listed several modern versions of 'Jesus plus' thinking, such as Jesus plus control, Jesus plus positive thinking, or Jesus plus trying harder. Which of these do you find yourself most drawn to, and why?
- Colossians 2:6-7 describes being rooted, built up, strengthened, and overflowing with thankfulness. Which of these four areas feels most underdeveloped in your life right now, and what might help you grow in it?
- Pastor Mark said that suffering is not a malfunction in God's plan but actually a feature. How does that idea challenge or encourage you, especially in light of something you are currently walking through?
- The sermon ended with three reflection questions: Where am I depending on my own strength? What distractions are keeping me from Christ? How might God be using my struggle to build something in me that could not be built any other way? Which of these questions hits closest to home for you, and why?

## Life Application

This week, identify one area of your life where you have been relying on your own strength or adding something to Jesus as a substitute for true dependence on Him. Each morning, before you tackle that area, pause and pray a simple prayer inviting Christ into it specifically. Ask him for his wisdom, patience, or

grace rather than reaching for your usual coping strategy. At the end of the week, reflect on whether anything shifted in how you experienced that struggle.

## Key Takeaways

- Jesus is meant to be our life, not just a seasoning we add when things get difficult. Colossians 3:17 calls us to do everything in his name, meaning every area of life belongs to him.
- Our suffering has a purpose. It is not a sign that God is punishing us or that something has gone wrong. God uses pain and struggle to reveal His mystery and to mature us in ways nothing else can.
- Our struggles reveal our weakness, and that weakness is an invitation to depend on Christ's strength rather than our own. Paul contended for others not in his own power but through the energy Christ provided.
- Pain and suffering attract counterfeits. Whether it is control, escape, comparison, or trying harder, adding anything to Jesus causes us to lose connection with Him as the head of our lives.
- The fullness of God lives in every believer through Christ. This is the mystery Paul describes as Christ in you, the hope of glory, and it is the foundation for walking through any struggle with hope and strength.

## Ending Prayer

Lord, thank you for this time together and for the truth of your Word that meets us right where we are. We confess that we often reach for substitutes when life gets hard, and we ask for your forgiveness and your grace to redirect us back to you. Help each person in this group to see their struggles not as evidence of your absence, but as invitations into a deeper experience of your presence. Root us deeply in you, build us up in faith, strengthen us through your Spirit, and let gratitude overflow from our lives even in the hard seasons. You are not just a seasoning. You are our life. We trust you with everything we are carrying today. In the name of Jesus, amen.