

“Oh, that we might know the Lord!
Let us press on to know him!”
(Hosea 6:3)

GOD CHASERS CLASS

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT BIBLE STUDY, FEBRUARY 12, 2012

FELLOWSHIP HALL 9:15 AM

“Double, double, toil and trouble”

—Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*

That familiar line from Shakespeare’s play is spoken by witches reciting an incantation intended to stir up double toil and trouble for Macbeth. It’s kind of the same thing Satan and his fallen angels have in mind for you (I’ll bet there are times you feel they are succeeding).

Struggle more, try harder, work longer, endure suffering—doesn’t that sound like your life some days (maybe some years)?

This Sunday’s study from **Colossians 1:24 – 2:3** will be almost entirely about suffering, struggle, and toil. Sounds uplifting, doesn’t it? But if you personally know a little too much about those subjects in your present or past experience, this lesson will be uplifting.

To start, we will look at something mysterious and amazing about Jesus and His suffering. Tullian Tchividjian, in the book *Jesus+Nothing=Everything*, reminds us eleven different ways that when we are facing more burden than we can handle in life, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually, the first solution is to look to Jesus. Yet you and I are often so pressed down and practical minded about the issues we face that we neglect the one thing that helps the most. So let’s look at Jesus. Paul wrote to the Colossians:

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.

Wait, what? We are to fill up what is lacking in Christ’s affliction? What could possibly be lacking in Christ’s affliction? And we are supposed to somehow finish it? I’ve been digging into this verse for weeks, knowing we would soon get to it, and I have a completely different perspective on it today than I did before. There’s been a lot taught from this verse through the decades about suffering, mostly about how Christians must rejoice in suffering, and about how we need to grit our teeth and be happy about having to rejoice in suffering.

But I don’t see Paul saying that, not in this text. What he does say, when you peel back the layers, is really quite remarkable. We’ll start peeling layers very early in Sunday’s session.

Paul also talks in this passage about toil and struggle, and I’ve been studying that for weeks as well. Toil and struggle are inescapable this side of heaven, but Paul (and Tullian in our book) point us to a key about toil and struggle that we’re usually too busy to even notice, much less rely on. Let’s try to uncover that on Sunday. I’ll see you at 9:15.

Tom