

Whatever Your Struggle

Colossians 1:24-2:23

The Problem with Struggle

- Most of us have a **struggle** threshold
- When suffering crosses the line, we look for something to **add** to Jesus

Paul's Context

- Writing from **prison** - not theoretical advice
- Writing about **suffering** while **suffering**

Four Truths About Suffering

1. Your suffering has **PURPOSE** - so EMBRACE the mystery (1:24-29)

- Paul **rejoices** in what he is suffering (v. 24)
- Suffering isn't a **malfunction** in God's plan - it's a **feature**
- The mystery: "**Christ** in **you**, the hope of glory" (v. 27)

Resistance Band Illustration:

- Your resistance band: _____
- Resistance builds **spiritual muscles** you can't develop any other way
- Key: Trust the **trainer** and follow the **training plan**

2. Your struggle reveals **WEAKNESS** - so DEPEND on His strength

Colossians 2:1-7

- Paul admits he's **contending** (fighting with everything he's got)
- Culture says strength = not needing **help**

Four-step progression to Access Strength (verses 6-7):

1. **Rooted** in Him (like a tree with deep roots)
2. **Build up** in Him (construction language)
3. **Strengthened** in your faith (not self-sufficient, but God-dependent)
4. **Overflowing** with thankfulness (the result)

3. Your pain attracts **COUNTERFEITS** - so REJECT the substitutes (2:8-15)

- When you're in pain, you become vulnerable to **counterfeits**

What Jesus has DONE (verses 13-15):

- Made you **alive** (not just improved your situation)
- **Forgave** all your transgressions
- **Canceled** your debt completely
- **Disarmed** every hostile authority
- Made a public **spectacle** of your enemies

4. Your difficulty exposes **DISTRACTIONS** - so FOCUS on what matters (2:16-23)

- Don't get caught up in secondary issues during struggle

Focus Questions:

- Am I trying to manage my pain or trust my Savior?
- Am I focusing on changing my circumstances or deepening my relationship?
- Am I looking for explanations or seeking His presence?
- Am I trying to earn my way out or resting in His love?

The Bottom Line:

Your struggle isn't evidence that God has forgotten you - it's evidence that He's not finished with you.