

Colossians 1:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Analysis

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Paul's ministry focuses on Christ—"whom we preach" (hon hēmeis katangelomen, ὃν ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν). Authentic ministry proclaims Christ's person and work, not human philosophy or mystical techniques. The three-fold "every man" (panta anthrōpon, πάντα ἄνθρωπον) emphasizes universal scope and individual attention: warning, teaching, presenting each person.

"Warning" (nouthetountes, νουθετοῦντες) involves admonishing against error and danger. "Teaching" (didaskontes, διδάσκοντες) communicates positive truth. Both are necessary: correction and instruction, negative and positive, preventing error and promoting truth. "In all wisdom" (en pasē sophia, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ) indicates comprehensive, Spirit-given understanding—not worldly cleverness but divine insight into God's ways.

The goal: "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (parastēsōmen panta anthrōpon teleion en Christō, παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ). Teleion (τέλειον, "perfect/mature/complete") doesn't mean sinless but fully developed, lacking nothing necessary for spiritual maturity. Perfection exists only "in Christ"—union with Him supplies every deficiency. Ministry aims at maturity, not mere conversion or initial experience.

Historical Context

Greek education prized wisdom accessible only to philosophical elites. Jewish rabbis taught select students. Paul democratizes spiritual education: every person receives warning and teaching toward maturity. This wasn't lowest-common-denominator dumbing down but high calling for all believers. The Colossian heresy created spiritual tiers—novices, initiates, perfect ones. Paul declares all can reach maturity in Christ through faithful teaching.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Does your church experience balance warning against error with teaching positive truth, or emphasize one over the other?
2. What does spiritual maturity look like practically—conformity to Christ's character, doctrinal understanding, ministry fruitfulness, or all three?
3. How do you pursue perfection/maturity—through self-effort and religious performance, or through deepening union with Christ?

Interlinear Text

ὅν ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον
Whom we preach warning all man
G3739 G2249 G2605 G3560 G3956 G444

καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐν πάντα σοφίᾳ ἵνα
and teaching all man in all wisdom that
G2532 G1321 G3956 G444 G1722 G3956 G4678 G2443

παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ·
we may present all man perfect in Christ
G3936 G3956 G444 G5046 G1722 G5547

Ἰησοῦ·
Jesus
G2424

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 3:15 (Parallel theme): And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Ephesians 5:27 (Parallel theme): That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Matthew 5:48 (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Colossians 3:16 (References Christ): Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 2:6 (Parallel theme): Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

Colossians 1:22 (Parallel theme): In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:

2 Corinthians 11:2 (References Christ): For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Acts 8:35 (References Jesus): Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

Acts 20:31 (Parallel theme): Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

2 Corinthians 4:5 (References Jesus): For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

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