

1. **Suffering to fill up what is lacking v24**
2. **Stewardship of the mystery v25-27**
3. **Striving for their completion v28-29**
4. **Struggling for their encouragement v1-3**
5. **Stability of faith v4-7**

Paul's ministry was rooted in a hope that they would be stable in their faith.

1. A firm faith is rooted in us "receiving Christ Jesus!"
 - a. Have you really received Christ Jesus?
 - b. GOSPEL...response
2. A firm faith is found in our walk, not our talk...as you received Christ, so walk in him
 - a. Lifestyles
 - b. Love
 - c. Priorities
 - d. Perseverance
 - e. Peace with God
3. Directly linked to a firm faith is good discipline...or as the ESV translates it, good order.
 - a. This really should speak to us shouldn't it?
 - b. It is almost as if the firmness of our faith is directly linked to the discipline or order of our lives.
 - c. I rejoice to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ
 - d. So, if our lives are characterized by no discipline and disorder, our faith is instable
 - e. If our lives are characterized by discipline and order, our faith is stable.

God is a God of order

1. 1 Corinthians 14:39-40 *Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.*
2. God is a God of order...and there is an order to how He works in this world...bear with me.

• **We have been commissioned to carry this Gospel to the ends of the earth.**

1. He has issued us all this call and He has made it clear. It is unquestionable.
 - a. Matt 28:19-20 *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*
 - b. Mark 16:15 *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"*
 - c. Luke 24:46-47 *Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*
 - d. John 20:21 *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you"*
 - e. Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*
2. If we are going to impact the world with the power of the Gospel to the greatest possible extent, we will do it through the church.
 - a. What type of church would do this best?

- b. a disorderly, undisciplined, reactive church.
- c. or an ordered, well disciplined, proactive church who's head is Christ?
- **If we are going to impact the world with the power of the Gospel to the greatest possible extent, we will do it through a well disciplined, ordered, healthy church.**

1. Acts 2:42-48

a. **The Word v42a**

b. **Community, Communion, and Calling on God Together v42b**

1. A Community that encourages, ministers to, and shepherds its members.
2. Communion that moves the group to look **backward** to Christ's sacrifice, **outward** to those who have not responded to that Sacrifice, **upward** to Christ's return, and **inward** to our own spiritual condition.
3. A group of people that call upon God together...prayer.

c. **Miracles and Marvel v43**

d. **Helping and Harmony v44-46**

1. They helped one another.
2. They were a unified family

e. **Praise, Favor, and Fruit v47**

1. The greatest outreach program in the community is the people of the local church excited about what God has done, is doing, and is going to do in the local church and praising Him before others
2. And that excitement and praise of God spilling over into the community and causing awe among those in the community.

2. If we are going to have maximum impact in the world, we will do it through the church...a healthy, disciplined, well ordered church.

• **If we are to have an orderly, disciplined church what types of families are necessary?**

1. The church is made up of families....but not solely families!!! Widows/widowers and Singles!
 - a. I want to submit to you that one of the main reasons our churches are weak and dysfunctional is because families are weak and dysfunctional.
 - b. One of the reasons our churches are often undisciplined is because our families are
 - c. One of the reasons our churches are often disorderly is because families are
2. If we are to have maximum impact in the church, our families must be in order
 - a. Husbands submitting to Christ and loving their wives
 - b. Wives loving their husbands and children, being self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands
 - c. Children submitting to, honoring, and obeying their parents
3. If we are to best reach the world, we will do it through orderly churches. And if we are to have orderly churches, we must have orderly families.

• **If we are to have orderly families, we must be orderly individuals**

1. It all comes back to individuals.
 - a. We can't blame the world, the church, or the family.
 - b. We must look in the mirror and ask ourselves...am I disciplined? Is my life orderly?
 - c. Is our faith firm enough that it demands discipline and order in our lives?
2. Our discipline is directly linked to how firm our faith is
 - a. Paul rejoiced to see their order and the stability of their faith
 - b. So receive Him, walk in Him, and be rooted, grounded and established in the faith.
 - c. And when you are, a disciplined and orderly life should be a growing byproduct.

Cautions:

1. **Let's be careful that we are not reactive, but rather proactive.**
 - a. So often we look around us and react to the negatives in nominal Christian lives and make our personal decisions based on that
 - b. So often we look around and react to the negatives in families in our culture and make our family decisions based on that
 - c. Churches look around and see the excesses of the American church and respond to it by throwing the baby out with the bathwater....we swing that pendulum! And I confess I am the chief of sinners in this regard.
 - d. Do you not see that by being reactive, rather than proactive we are just like the world?
 1. They base their personal decisions, family decisions, and church decisions on what the world around them is doing...and are **RELEVANT**
 2. We base our personal decisions, family decisions, and church decisions on what the world around us is doing... **REACTIVE**.
 3. We must base our decisions on Christ and His Word!!
 - e. Be proactive, not reactive.
2. **Let's be careful that we don't build our house on the Puritans...but on Christ.**
 - a. There is much that we can learn from the Puritans. I love them
 - b. However, if you are patterning your life after the life of your favorite Puritan
 - c. Or your family after what the Puritans said
 - d. Or your church after what the Puritans did
 - e. Or your disciple making after what the Puritans did...you are falling far short of the standard.
 - f. Let's stop going to the Puritans as the standard and go the standard: Christ and His Word
3. **Let's be careful that we are balanced...out of balance is really out of order**
 - a. We may seem like we are well ordered, but if we put too much emphasis on any one of these areas to the neglect of the others, we just think we are well ordered.
 - b. ...I haven't got myself to the proper level to do anything else
 - c.well, my family isn't hitting on all 8 cylinders so I can't go beyond that
 - d.well, my church isn't sound enough or impressive enough so I can't invite that person, or take part in that effort, or go on that mission trip.
 - e. Truth is like walking on the edge of a razor blade and we all totter