



Christian Character (Col 4:2-18)

People often hear, "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven." And while this is true, shouldn't we be known for more? Shouldn't Christians be known for forgiving others, sharing the good news of Jesus, walking in purity, wrestling in prayer, growing in maturity, and loving others? Yep!

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* All Scripture is from CSB (Christian Standard Bible) unless otherwise noted.

Colossians was written while Paul was imprisoned, likely in Rome. If so, this letter traveled over 1000 miles via land & sea to the church of Colossae.¹ Paul closes this letter affirming the vital role that **Christian character** plays between followers of Jesus and the watching world. Today we consider the Christian character of Paul's gospel partners, to see if this *IS TRUE* or *SHOULD BE TRUE* of us.

Real Relationships

Colossians 4:7-9 ⁷ Tychicus, our dearly loved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and so that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹ He is coming with **Onesimus, a faithful and dearly loved brother**, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

Tychicus was a **faithful** follower of Jesus and a faithful friend to Paul (mentioned 4 other times - Acts 20:4, Eph 6:21, 2 Tim 4:12, & Titus 3:12). Tychicus could personally share what was going on with Paul, because he invested time with Paul. Despite Paul's imprisonment in Rome, he had much to be thankful for and wanted to **encourage** the Colossian Christians through Tychicus and his travel partner, Onesimus. **Christians rarely traveled alone, and NEITHER SHOULD YOU.** Who are some of your brothers and sisters you are traveling this life with?

Onesimus was from Colossae, a slave who ran away to Rome, and later responded to Paul's message about Jesus. He was now called **a faithful and dearly loved brother**. In coming back to Colossae, Onesimus was returning to his Christian master, **Philemon** (read the 1 chapter writing on your own).

These 2 Christian brothers, Tychicus & Onesimus, made this long 1000+ mile journey from Rome to bring this important letter to the Colossian church. It must have been important.

Character Questions

- ① **Are YOU, like Tychicus**, a faithful follower of Jesus & a faithful brother/sister who is entrenched in the lives of other Christians?
- ① **Are YOU, like Onesimus**, formerly running from your heavenly master, but now a faithful and dearly loved brother?

3 Faithful Jewish Followers of Jesus

Colossians 4:10-11 ¹⁰ Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you greetings, as does **Mark**, Barnabas's cousin (concerning whom you have received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and so does Jesus who is called **Justus**. These alone of the circumcised [Jewish followers of Jesus] are my coworkers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

Aristarchus was faithful to Paul, even willing to face physical persecution for him while in Ephesus (Acts 19:29). Aristarchus journeyed with Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4), and then on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27:4), where he was now serving with Paul as a **fellow prisoner**.

¹ Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 168.

Mark, is *John Mark*, who wrote the gospel of Mark. Mark once deserted Paul & Barnabas in the middle of their mission (Acts 15:37-38), ultimately causing a division between Paul & Barnabas (Acts 15:39). But now, given a second chance, Mark is viewed as a trustworthy teammate.

Jesus was **called Justus**, instead of trying to wear the Name of the King. To clear away confusion, Jesus (*Yeshua*) went by his Latin version = **Justus**.

These were the 3 Jewish followers of Jesus ("**the circumcised**"), Paul's faithful **coworkers for the kingdom of God**.

Character Questions

- ① **Have YOU, like Aristarchus**, ever stood with another brother/sister when they were persecuted or going through tough times? Have you left your comfort to comfort them?
- ① **Have you, like Mark**, ever had a falling out with another believer, but were/have forgiven, and went back to serve again?

This is what REAL RELATIONSHIPS look like within the Church, the Body of Christ. They aren't perfect. They require time, effort, servanthood, grace, forgiveness, and second chances.

Colossians 4:12-14 ¹² **Epaphras**, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. **He is always wrestling for you in his prayers, so that you can stand mature** and fully assured in everything God wills.

¹³ For I testify about him that he works hard for you, for those in Laodicea, and for those in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ **Luke**, the dearly loved physician, and **Demas** send you greetings.

Epaphras likely heard the gospel from Paul and planted the church in Colossae. He was a **hard worker who prayed for his people to grow to maturity in Jesus** and worked hard for that to occur.

- ① **Are YOU, like Epaphras**, wrestling for others in prayer, asking God to help them grow in maturity? Are you, like Epaphras, working hard to share the Gospel with others?

Luke is the **physician** who accompanied Paul often, even until his death. He is the writer of both Luke & Acts, a medical doctor who used his abilities to minister to others far away from home.

Up until this point, **Demas** had been a faithful brother, but sadly, **Demas later deserted Paul according to 2 Tim 4:9-10** (Unlike John Mark, who returned, we have no record that Demas returned.)

- ① **Have YOU, like LUKE**, ever used your work skills to help further the gospel mission at home or far away? Have you asked God to use you that way?
- ① **Have you, like Demas**, abandoned other believers to satisfy your own selfish desires? If so, there is still time to turn back. Go and seek forgiveness from God and those you have deserted or harmed.

Encouraging Sister Churches

Colossians 4:15-17 ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to **Nympha and the church in her home**. ¹⁶ After this letter has been read at your gathering, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And tell **Archippus**, "**Pay attention to the ministry you have received in the Lord**, so that you can accomplish it."

Paul expected these letters to be read and then sent to the sister church in Laodicea, separated by almost 10 miles. Paul encourages **Nympha**, who used **her home** for the Laodicean church to gather in. Paul then encourages **Archippus** to carry out **the ministry** given to him by **the Lord** Jesus.

- ① **Do you, like Nympha**, use **YOUR home** to help the Church grow? Have you ever considered asking God how He might use your material wealth to bless others?
- ① **Do you, like Archippus**, pay close attention to carry out the ministry God has given to you? Do you even KNOW what ministry God is pointing you to? If not, it's time to start asking God!

Paul's Closing Words

¹⁸ I, Paul, am writing this greeting with my own hand. **Remember my chains**. Grace be with you.

Paul often had an assistant put to paper what he spoke. But now Paul signs this letter "**with my own hand**". This was no forgery, but a genuine letter from their spiritual father, closing with these words: "**Remember my chains. Grace be with you.**" These believers were to remember WHY Paul was imprisoned, for the sake of sharing the Gospel. When faced with persecution and death by both Gentiles & unbelieving Jews, Paul refused to be silent. Thankful for God's grace in his own life, Paul blesses these churches trusting that God's **grace be with** them.

And now comes a timely word for OUR DAY from this ancient 2000 year old letter from over 6000 miles away.

Paul tells the church of Colossae...

Prayer & Share

Colossians 4:2 ² **Devote yourselves to prayer**; stay alert in it with thanksgiving.

We, like the Colossians, are called during this time to **prayer**, not fear. We are to **stay alert**, not distracted by sin, persecution, nor this coronavirus. God is AT WORK. If anyone in this text had something to fret about it was Paul (in prison), but he tells the Church to be people who are known for our **thanksgiving!** In the midst of tough times, this is where we have 2 options 1) Worry or 2) Pray...and as we pray and ask God for help, we also THANK HIM for so much.

FEET2FAITH #1

Gather family or friends (or phone or video chat) this week and make a **list of everything you are THANKFUL for**; talk about how gracious God has been to you (e.g. health, food, house, friends, salvation).

Colossians 4:3-4 ³ At the same time, **pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ**, for which I am in chains, ⁴ so that I may make it known as I should.

This is how we can pray for pastors & missionaries, but it is also how we should pray for EVERY BELIEVER we know during this time.

FEET2FAITH #2

Pray together & ask God to end this virus & use this situation to open doors for believers to share Jesus w/ others.

INTENTIONAL in serving others and sharing Jesus

Colossians 4:5-6 ⁵ **Act wisely toward outsiders**, making the most of the time. ⁶ **Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt**, so that you may know how you should answer each person.

Outsiders are people we know/meet who are NOT followers of Jesus. We must be **prayerful & careful** when near them, **making the most of the time** we have around them.

✓ **Our lives speak LOUD, but our lips must get in the game too!** If you KNEW that Jesus was coming back the end of this week, would you just 'live it' in front of people...OR would you get bold, open your mouth, and share Jesus with them?

We must be prepared to act wisely and use **gracious speech, seasoned with salt** toward those who don't know Jesus yet. Our lives should SHOW Jesus and our words should SHARE Jesus in a kind & truthful way. **May we not be hypocritical nor apathetic as we GO to our Christ-less culture.**

FEET2FAITH #3-4

3) Ask God for opportunities to SHOW & SHARE Jesus with our community!

4) Use the tech to check on brothers & sisters! Use your phone, laptop, and tablet for ministry!

THIS IS WHAT CHRISTIAN CHARACTER looks like!

discussionquestions

These open-ended questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Small Group.

1. Share what most challenged or surprised you from today's teaching.
2. **Read back through Col. 4:7-18** and consider how these characteristics amplify the gospel message to our Christ-less culture.
3. **Read Col. 4:2-6.** Who's soul are you praying for? How are YOU showing and sharing Jesus with him/her...OR how can we help you with that privilege & responsibility?
4. Share prayer needs & lift them up together! Make sure to prayer for our political and spiritual leaders during the Coronavirus. Also, begin to brainstorm how we can minister to how our community during this time and share these ideas with other church leaders.