

- I) V12 INTRO: Epaphras, **who is one of you**, a servant of Christ greets you always
- II) Paul had just referred to three Jewish converts who ministered alongside him
Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus also called Justus
- III) During this time, it was common to be known by more than one name
- IV) When you compare the names of the apostles, some had more than one name
You have Simon, also known as Peter, as well as Cephas
You have Lebbaeus, also known as Thaddaeus, and as Judas the son of James
John and James, are called called Boanerges (sons of thunder)
Simon the Canaanite, is also referred to as Simon the Zealot
Thomas (Hebrew word), also called Didymus (Greek word for the twin)
- V) You also have John, who was also called Mark
Saul, who is better known as Paul
- VI) We left off in our last study with Jesus who is also called Justus (V11)
I mentioned that Justus is only spoken of in this passage
- VII) With that, we note that his name Jesus (Savior) is a name **he could not live up to**
On the other hand **Justus** means righteous, a name he could evidence
This is because with God's help, it is possible to live a righteous life
- VIII) To live **righteously** speaks of a life that is conformed to the word of God
It speaks of having a relationship with God, and of being **just** and **right**
- IX) This is what God requires of believers
Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord
require of you? But to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
- X) To be **just** speaks of acting with **fairness**, **righteousness**, and **integrity**
To be fair speaks of treating people impartially and equally
Integrity would speak of firmly holding to moral principles (no hypocrisy)
- XI) **Justus** could be righteous because he was saved and empowered to by the Spirit

- I) Titus 2:11-12 The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, **righteously**, and godly in the present age
CONTINUING
- II) V12 Now we have Epaphras, who is **the pastor** of the Colossian church
Col 1:7 (Epaphras is) Our dear **fellow servant**, who is a **faithful minister** of Christ **on your behalf**
- III) Epaphras went to Rome and told Paul about the error creeping in to the churches
He also let Paul know that the Colossians were doing well in their faith
Col 1:8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit
- IV) Epaphras was away from the church, so Paul sent greetings to them **on his behalf**
As **their pastor** he would not want them to be overly concerned for his welfare
Because of this, Paul makes mention of his greetings to the church
- V) Here Paul refers to him as **a bondservant**, highlighting his character and conduct
Bondservant: Doulos; a voluntary servant, or slave
- VI) OT: Ex 21:2-6 said bondservants would serve six years and be freed in the seventh
In his writings, Paul only referred to himself and Timothy as bondservants
- VII) Quote: This **voluntary decision** demonstrated a servant's love for the master and a desire for lifelong service, revealing that a bondservant is not merely a forced laborer but often one who willingly commits to service out of loyalty or gratitude.
- VIII) **Spiritually**, it illustrates our loyal service and commitment to Jesus
Dt 34:5 speaks of Moses as the **Lord's bondservant**
Lu 1:38 Mary the mother of Jesus said I am the Lord's maid(bond)servant
Ro 1:1, Gal 1:10, Titus 1:1 Paul spoke of himself as a bondservant
Rev 1:1 John spoke of himself as a bondservant
2 Pe 1 Peter, a bondservant
Jas 1:1 James, a bondservant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ
- IX) Paul reminds them of Epaphras' **love** for them, and his **constant prayer** for them
Laboring fervently speaks of wrestling in agony **in prayer**
It speaks of his desire and affection for them, and his concern for their walks

I) **EPAPHRAS WAS THEIR PASTOR**

He agonizes in prayer that they would **stand** (immovable) **perfect** and **complete**

II) **Perfect** speaks of reaching spiritual maturity and proper behavior

Phil 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

III) **Complete** speaks of being complete in moral character and love: mature

HOW DOES MATURITY AND CHARACTER OCCUR

IV) It comes from holding fast to correct teaching and putting it in to practice

V) Paul warned them against being **cheated** through philosophy and empty deceit

He told them that, in Jesus, they have everything they need

Col 1:9-10 For in **Him dwells** all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and **you are complete in Him**, who is the head of all principality and power

VI) Epaphras was concerned that false teachers could influence them

Because of this, he had great concern and zeal for them, praying fervently

VII) The desire of every minister is that the church would grow in maturity and faith

A **genuine** pastor desires the members of the church to live for Jesus

VIII) People decide who their pastor will be, and often forget who first nourished them

They may forget the pastor, but that doesn't mean that he forgets them

IX) When someone comes to faith through their ministry, their love can be strong

It can often be a very strong, even jealous love for them

1 Co 4:15 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus **I have begotten you** through the gospel.

X) The true heart of a shepherd is for the believers to grow in maturity

Gal 4:19 My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until **Christ is formed in you**

HOW DO YOU GROW IN THE LORD

XI) Pastors teach the word so that the church gains maturity and discernment

Eph 4:13 We should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine

- I) When the sheep are maturing, the pastor is blessed and at peace
3 Jn 1:3 It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it.
This is what Epaphras was praying for them, that they would mature in their faith
- II) V13 For I **bear him witness** that he has **a great zeal for you** and those who are in
- III) Not only did Epaphras care about his own church, but also for other churches
These churches were nearby: he may have had a part in their conversions
Col 2:1 I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in **Laodicea**, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh
- IV) He could have pastored those churches, also: or simply loved the body of Christ
He had a great zeal for them, desiring fervently to promote their welfare
Many pastors care for other pastors and congregations
- V) V13 Paul makes mention of **Hierapolis**
It was to the N of Colosse, and had believers there: it is now without Christians
HE CLOSSES BY MENTIONING SOME PEOPLE
- VI) V14 Luke the **beloved physician** and Demas greet you
Luke wrote a Gospel and Acts: Gentile, traveling companion, and friend to Paul
Luke finished well and ultimately received a commendation from the Apostle Paul
- VII) In Paul's last epistle, 2 Ti, he makes mention of his friend Luke
In that last letter, Paul made it clear that he had been abandoned by all
2 Ti 4:16 At my first defense no one stood with me but **all forsook me**
- VIII) Though many had abandoned him, Luke had not
2 Ti 4:11 record his last words concerning Luke: **Only Luke is with me**
- IX) Luke **held fast** until the end, finished the race, and obtained the prize
Jn 8:31 If you **abide in My word**, you are My disciples indeed.
- X) Luke had his eyes on heaven, and ended up hearing Jesus' welcome
Mt 25:21 His lord said to him, '**Well done**, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. **Enter into the joy of your lord.**'

- I) V14 In contrast to Luke, you have a man named **Demas**
Philemon 24 calls Mark, Aristarchus, **Demas**, and Luke Paul's **fellow laborers**
From Col and Philemon, we see Paul had considered him **a faithful believer**
- II) In the closing of Colossians we have something like a group photograph
Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, **and Demas**
- III) You can almost see them posing together, their arms around one another, smiling
As you look at the photo, all you see is the outside **but you can't see their hearts**
DEMAS' HEART WAS FAR FROM GOD
- IV) At this time he was believed to be **a fellow worker** with Paul
He once cared for Paul when he was imprisoned, and paid a price for doing so
- V) Like Aristarchus and Epaphras, he took great risks by coming to see Paul
- VI) It would seem that he at one time, had had a great love for Paul that drove him on
But something happened because in the end, he abandoned Paul
- VII) Once again, we learn much from the last words someone speaks of someone else
2 Ti 4:10 **Demas has forsaken me**, having **loved this present world**, and has **departed** for Thessalonica
- VIII) I cannot imagine the pain and sorrow Paul experienced as he wrote those words
- IX) Jesus had made it clear that following Him was not an easy road
To complete the journey requires a sincere and complete commitment to Him
- X) It seems that initially, Demas was willing to *physically* make the sacrifices to serve
When he no longer had satisfaction in ministry, he went *back to the world*
- XI) Paul said He **loved** this present world more than he desired Jesus and heaven
The longing for this world held him captive
He remained a slave to his **longing** for the things of this age
- XII) The draw was so strong that when it came down to it, he abandoned Christ
His longing for the things of this present world was overpowering

- I) Demas loved this age more than he ever desired the coming one, in heaven
He was like Lot's wife who when God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, **looked back**
Though warned not to, she looked back (with longing) and became a pillar of salt
IN CONTRAST
- II) **Moses** was in line to become ruler over the most powerful nation on earth
Pharaoh's daughter had raised him, and he could have ascended to the throne
BUT HE DIDN'T
- III) The writer of the Book of Hebrews gives us insight into this
Heb 11:24-27 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy **the passing pleasures of sin**, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; **for he looked to the reward**. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.
- IV) Moses chose to suffer affliction with the children of Israel, and died at 120
He could have ruled many years, but would have spent eternity separated from God
- V) Demas chose to enjoy a few years, but ended up spending eternity without God
Heb 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.
- VI) V15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and **Nymphas** and the church that is in Nymphas was a Christian man who lived in Laodicea
He was wealthy because his house was large enough for the church to meet in it
- VII) From the beginning the church met in various locations, but often met in homes
On Pentecost, about 3,000 people came to faith through Peter's preaching
Ac 2:46 Continuing daily with one accord **in the temple**, and breaking bread from **house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart
- VIII) Meeting in houses became fairly common in the early church
There were not always locations available for them to meet in
1 Co 16:19 Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.
Philemon 2 refers to the church that met in his house
- IX) **This church** began in a house (first in Pomona, and then in Ontario)

- I) In the case of Nymphas the church of Laodicea met in his home
The fact that the church met there reveals he was a person of character and wealth
- II) Nymphas was **wealthy**, but he was also **hospitable**
Hospitality is a gift necessary for the church to grow
If he and his wife were not hospitable, people would not come
1 Pe 4:9 Be **hospitable** to one another without grumbling.
- III) V16 Now when this epistle is read among you see that it is read also in the church
A letter was being circulated **from** Laodicea, and they were to read that letter
Some believe the letter arriving from Laodicea was Paul's letter **to the Ephesians**
- IV) We really do not know that much about the church of Laodicea
- V) It seems that the church planted by Epaphras (1:7; 4:12-13)
It is mentioned 4 times in Colossians (2:1; 4:13, 15, 16), and Rev 1:11; 3:14-22
Colossians was written around 60-62, and the church was already in existence
THE LAODICEANS RECEIVED A LETTER
- VI) Laodicea is one of the seven churches that are mentioned in Rev 2-3
Rev was written between 90-96 AD, so the church was in existence for 30-40 years
SADLY
- VII) The church ended up having a very high estimate *of its own importance*
Rev 3:17(Jesus) **You say** I am **rich**, have become **wealthy**, and have **need** of nothing
These are all indications of a large, powerful, influential congregation
- VIII) **The fact:** It is not what we say of ourselves but what *God says of us* that matters
- IX) They thought they were powerful, but Jesus did not think that of them
Rev 3:16 You are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth
Rev 3:17 You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked
Rev 3:19-20 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me
A WORD TO ARCHIPPUS
- X) V17 And say to **Archippus** *take heed* to the **ministry** which you have *received* in the
There are questions concerning Archippus and the ministry *that he had received*

- I) Archippus is mentioned in Philemon 1:1-2 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker—also to Apphia our sister and **Archippus our fellow soldier**—and to the church that meets in your home
- II) Archippus was more than likely a member of Philemon's family
The term **fellow soldier** would seem to speak of a ministry office
2 Ti 2:3 Join with me in suffering, like a **good soldier** of Christ Jesus.
- III) This would be confirmed by the command to take heed to the **ministry** he received
Ministry: diakonian; waiting at table
- IV) He may be a pastor in the church of Colosse, working along side of Epaphras
As mentioned, Epaphras may have pastored Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis
- V) Paul had a specific command for Archippus
Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord **that you may fulfill it**
- VI) Archippus, **as a minister** of the gospel, is commanded **to take heed** to the ministry
He must not take lightly or neglect the responsibilities he has been entrusted with
- VII) Being a shepherd is a noble calling, and must be carefully and faithfully performed
Hirelings neglect and use the congregation for their own interests
Jn 10:11-13 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep

TRUE SHEPHERDS CARE FOR THE SHEEP

- VIII) Paul commands Archippus to **take heed** to the ministry which he had received
Archippus is a pastor/teacher and he is to **carefully safeguard the** ministry

HOW DO WE SAFEGUARD MINISTRY

- IX) It begins by first safeguarding our own manner of life
1 Ti 4:16 Take heed to **yourself** and to **the doctrine**. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.
- X) He is to take heed to himself, but also to take heed to **fulfill** the ministry he received
He must understand he **received** his ministry: it is not the result of natural talents

- I) 1 Ti 1:12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry,
Ac 20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the **Holy Spirit has made you overseers**, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.
- II) That you may **fulfill (complete) it**
Leave nothing undone, but continue to serve wholeheartedly, to the end
1 Co 9:27 I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (from preaching, teaching, and leading the church)
Do this, though many, including Demas, would not
- III) Keep yourself in the love of God, and stir up love for others as you serve Him
It is not only *how* you begin, but how you end that reveals your ministry
2 Ti 4:5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, **fulfill your ministry**.
- IV) V18 This salutation **by my own hand**--Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with Paul dictated his letters
Ro 16:22 mentions that Tertius was the one who wrote on behalf of Paul
Gal 6:11 See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand
- V) By signing the letter he would be authenticating it as his own
- VI) Some were writing letters in his name, bringing false doctrine in to the church
2 Th 2:1-2 Brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word *or by letter, as if from us*, as though the day of Christ had come
Because of this, Paul would close the letter with his own signature
FINALLY
- VII) V18 Remember my chains: What a touching way to close a letter
I am in prison, chained to a guard, and writing this letter to you
QUOTE: When we read of his chains, we should not forget that they moved over the paper as he wrote; his right hand was chained to the left hand of the soldier who guarded him

- I) I have paid a very costly price for remaining faithful to Jesus, and His message
Do not forget me, do not reduce the cost of discipleship, remain true to the gospel
It is a message that calls us to lay down our lives and to pursue God

- II) Paul suffered in prison, but he maintained an eternal perspective
2 Co 4:17-18 Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal!

- III) In light of this: remember my chains and may God's grace be with all of you