

## Colossians 4:7-18

### Announcements: (pickle ball)

- Facility Contracts (hoping by Easter; in inspection/finance periods - still fundraising)
  - City Church Georgetown (Big Cafe/ Amazing Grace Building). Back up offer too...
- Speak on the rioting and unrest and Iran, Europe and Radical Islam (in the US)... (last days)
- Finishing Colossians - Will start the Book of Ruth soon if you want to start reading ahead...

Please open to **Colossians Chapter 4** (need a bible? Raise your hand... Backs of chairs...)

- Last time: Watchful & Winsome
  - Prayers - Persistent, Watchful, and Thankful) ...for Open Doors/Clear Words!
  - Witness - Walking Wisely, and Speaking Graciously (seasoned w/ Salt) = each one.
- This time: 20 point message. Nah! But it might feel like it. Gospels... Acts... Epistles...
  - Puzzle without the box. Getting pieces as you go... (over 100 named (10 here))

### Message Title: PUZZLE PIECES!

- Faithful Messengers (verses 7-9)
- Jewish Co-Laborers (verses 10-11)
- Gentile Co-Laborers (verses 12-14)
- Closing Instructions (verses 15-18)

Easy to skim over. Kinda like the movie credits (most people don't even take notice...)

- Real people, real friendships, made real impacts (risked everything for the Gospel)
- Not through superstars, but ordinary, faithful, beloved servants. (various backgrounds)
- Relevant for us: which are you on the list? Ask God to speak to you in this passage!

Reminder for context, Paul is writing as a prisoner from Rome (on house arrest this 1st time)

- To this Colossian church he's never met (though they know many of the same people)

### Faithful Messengers (verses 7-9)

V. 7 - Tychicus - The Encouraging Courier

V. 9 - Onesimus - The Redeemed Runaway

V. 7 - Tychicus (Tie-kih-kus) - Apparently, the Colossian church had never met/heard of him.

- Acts 20 - Paul's traveling team from Ephesus (likely converted there - 3 yr ministry). Witnessed the riot/other perils on the way to Rome; helped carry offerings to Jeruslaem.
- Eph 6 - same language, almost identical as Colossians 4 (also in 2 Tim 4, Titus 3)
  - The whole way through! Dependable companion & messenger!

Vv. 7-8 - He will tell you all the news about me... I am sending him to you for this very purpose

- Charged with giving an update to the Colossians about Paul and the others in Rome.
  - Likely with the intention of reporting back as well... 1,000+ miles of perils

V. 7 - A beloved brother - Agapetos Adelphos - Greatly loved | of the same womb. Love this guy!

V. 7 - A faithful minister - Pistos Diakonos - Trustworthy. Reliable. Demandable. Proven. Deacon.

V. 7 - A **fellow servant** in the Lord - **Syndoulos** - Serving the same master. Shared submission.

- **Not about title or position**, but **character, faithfulness, and humility**
- **Important work entrusted to dependable people**. The church is built on them...
- Reminds me of the **Pony Express in the 1800's** who carried mail across dangerous terrain. **Not glamorous**, but **essential**
- **In the church** - these are **the faithful ones**. Showing up early, staying late. Working... though you may never see them! They're not doing it for the applause of men! (setup, teardown, teach Sunday school/hold babies, council off to the side, prepare food, print bulletins, AV tech.)
- Churches are **not built by one man on the stage (wrong)**, but by **many Tychichus!**

V. 8 - And **comfort (encourage) your hearts**

- **Parakaleo** = idea of coming alongside to strengthen hearts (**ministry = not info only...**)

V. 9 - [He is coming with] **Onesimus (Onesie = Snuggie!)**

- **Context from Philmeon** = a runaway slave from Colossae who appears to have done something bad (likely theft/debt). But now, is **a faithful beloved, brother (v. 9)**
- And there's a lot of ways Paul could have labeled this man, but instead... he is now **one of you (v. 9)**. Not with a worldly label, but as **a dear family member!** (**counter culture in Rome**)
- **God sets people free! Exodus! Jubilee!** - The Gospel **doesn't erase**, but it **does redeem!**
- **Play on words in Philemon** - from **Useless to Profitable**. (now, **living out his purpose!**)
  - **Behold the old is gone and the new has come!** (not: who were you, but: who ARE?)

**Gospel Identity Transformation**. Your past does not define you...

- The church is a place of restoration. **Jeremiah 18** - **marred on the potter's wheel = new!**
  - **I've witnessed it over and over again**. Some of you **now!** (**any to name?**)
- If you've been redeemed like Onesimus, **tell your testimony to the world!**

V. 9 - **They [Tychicus & Onesimus] will make known** to you all things which are happening here.

- These two guys were **entrusted with carrying the letter (Holy Scriptures!)**
  - **Add it all up: Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon...**
- And possibly (likely) gave **updates beyond what we have** in the letter... (who knows!)

Now we will look at six individuals. **Three Jews, Three Gentiles**. (**also, counter culture!**)

- **Jesus' ministers to the Gentile Decapolis and the Samaritan woman...** (as well as **Jews**)

**Jewish Co-Laborers (verses 10-11)**

Remember, the church began in the Jewish land, by a group of Jewish disciples worshipping a Jewish Messiah... Here, we see a **"remnant"**

V. 10 - **Aristarchus - The Suffering Companion**

V. 10 - **[John] Mark - The Restored Brother**

V. 11 - **Jesus (Justus) - The Mystery Man**

- Aristarchus, Markus, and Justus **sound like a law firm**, ha!

V. 10 - **Aristarchus** ...greet you (likely knew **Tychicus** very well...)

- **Acts 19** - Seized along with Paul in the **Ephesian mob**. Listed as a **Macedonian**.
- **Acts 20** - Lists him to be a **Thessalonian** and then **traveled with Paul to Jerusalem**...
- **Acts 27** - Even stuck with Paul **all the way on the journey to Rome** (shipwreck and all)
- **V. 10 - My fellow prisoner** - **Literal or metaphor?** Could be either way... (**likely literal**)
- With Paul **through thick and thin**. A **"ride or die"** friend! **You got any of them? Are you one?**
- Some friends will **meet you for coffee**, others will **visit/join you in jail**.
  - **Show up at 1:00am, jump on a flight, drive to another state, 3rd world countries...**

**V. 10 - With Mark** (we know **from other passages** he goes by **John Mark**)

- **V. 10 - The cousin of Barnabas** - worded **as if they knew Barney!** **Back story needed...**
- **Acts 13** - **Deserted/bailed/left** Paul and Barnabas in Pamphylia. (**sickness, persecution, homesick, Paul in spotlight, harsh realities of missionary journeys...? Don't know.**)
- **Acts 15** - **Pauly and Barney had a little fighty**. (**sharp disagreement**) - **these things happen**.
  - **Right or wrong? Paul and Silas** (2nd journey), **Barnabas and Mark** (off to Cyprus)

**But here, the glories of reconciliation & restoration... though it may take years (12 ish)...**

**V. 10 - About whom you received instructions ...if he comes to you, welcome him**

- **Somehow instructed already** on the matter. But give him a **warm welcome!** (**receive kindly**)
  - Almost as if to say, **don't hold any of those past failures against him...** (**Mark watching :**)
- **Mark is with Paul in Rome** at the moment of writing! (**both in fellowship with God/each other!**)
- **2 Timothy 4:11** - **"Get Mark and bring him with you for he is useful to me in the ministry"**
- **According to church tradition, Mark wrote his Gospel (Peter's account)** and was **martyred in Alexandria**. **Mark, though bailed at one point, was later faithful unto death! Teshuvah!**
- **If you have failed** in life/ministry, **please take note** from the life of **Mark**. **Your story is not over!**
- If you've been at **odds with people in church**, take note from the lives of **Paul/Mark**. **Hope!**
  - **though it may take time (12 years ish)...** (**I thank God** when these moments come!)
- **The point: failure isn't final**. **Love hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things...**
  - Consider **Mark's Spiritual Mentor, Peter** - **denied Christ three times**, yet **Jesus restored him** to become **a pillar in the early church!**

**Speaking of Jesus...**

**V. 11 - And Jesus (hey-soos in Spanish :)**

- **Lesous** in Greek | **Yeshua (Joshua)** in Hebrew = **"The Lord saves"** | **"Yahweh is salvation,"**
- Jesus was a **very common name** in the 1st century. **Jesus of Nazareth!**
- **V. 11 - Who is called Justus (Latin)** = **"righteous"** or **"just"**
- **Only mentioned here** in Scripture, no **nothing but his name...**
  - (**that's how some serve / under the radar**) - **others won't see, but God knows...**
- But he is **listed among the other two** as **"fellow worker for the kingdom of God"** (v. 11)
  - **Is there any higher calling in this life to unify over?**

**Yet, there's also something sad in this statement...**

**V. 11 - These are my only fellow workers ...who are of the circumcision (Jews)**

- **Most Jewish believers had abandoned** Paul or **opposed him in his ministry** (**Judaizers**)
- But here were **three rolling bros!** **Jonathan and David / Jonathan and his Armor Bearer.**
- **Fellowworkers (sunergos)** = **fellow helper** - **refers to someone who is a team player!**
  - Someone who **does not seek to run or control things**, nor serve **personal agendas**.

V. 11 - They have proved to be **a comfort to me**.

- **Um yeah!** In Paul's darkest hours, he had **three likeminded, selfless, loyal, helpful brethren!**
  - I have these people in my life. Some of the pastors and elders here among us...
- Lord, **help us to be like those three men** were to Paul, to others around us...
- Your **presence and perseverance** with people can make more of an impact than you realize...

Now Paul turns to **three Gentile workers**... *spread the love!*

### **Gentile Co-Laborers** (verses 12-14)

V. 12 - **Epaphras** - The Zealous Intercessor

V. 14 - **Luke** - The Physician & Historian

V. 14 - **Demas** - The Tragic Warning

Vv. 12-13 - **Epaphras** (invented the epi-pen - haha! - pappa pappy!)

- Who is **one of you** (a member of your own fellowship). He was **a Colossian**.
  - Likely helped **found and teach** the Colossian church. *Pastor/overseer*
  - **Initially brought the news** of Colossae to Paul! (**Colossians 1:7**)
- A **bondsman of Christ**, always **laboring fervently** for you in prayers
- A **prayer warrior** - **laboring fervently** = **agonizomai** (same root as **Jesus in the Garden**)
  - Athletic straining language. Where we **"agony"** - *strive, fight, wrestle in prayer...*
  - Picture **Jacob wrestling with God** and not giving up until he receives a blessing
  - Not casual prayer, but intense, committed prayer (*in the arena or warfare*) - **why?**
- I bear witness (testify) that he has **a great zeal (deep concern) for you**
  - Epaphras prayed hard because **he cared deeply**. (*I've seen! Prayer / Selah Nights*)
  - Some of you, this is your ministry; Or, God is calling you to press into this ministry.
  - May not have **finances/physical health** to go outreach/on mission, but **you can pray!**
- *\*Some people build with a hammer; some build with their knees in the prayer closet!*

**Pappa Pappy Prays Three Main Things** for the Colossian Church - (dangers re: **false teaching**)

V. 12 - That you may...

- **Stand perfect** - **teleios** = *an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal... mature*, fully developed
- **Stand complete** - **fully assured/confident** = **perfect tense**, lasting permanent assurance.
- **In all the Will of God** - **Obedience and discernment** to live out that *mature assurance...*

Epaphras prayed not just for Colossae, but the **entire Lycus River Valley**.

- V. 13 - And those who are in **Laodicea & Hierapolis**. **Map!**
- *\*Like Georgetown, Liberty Hill, Leander, and Round Rock = Williamson County*

V. 14 - **Luke**

- **Acts 16** - The **"we"** passages begin in Troas (*Luke joined Paul's traveling team!*)
- **Philemon 24** - *"fellow worker"*
- **2 Timothy 4:11** - *"Only Luke is with me"* (Luke **stayed to the very end** with Paul)
- **Author of Luke and Acts** (about **27% of the New Testament**).
  - **Rome documents?** God values accuracy, order, and truth (*scientific/methodical*)

- V. 14 - The **beloved physician**
  - **Physician** - Possibly treated Paul's "**thorn in the flesh**" - **Galatian eye issues?**
  - **Beloved** - *Not a hated doctor* - ha! **Good bedside manner!** (**valued**)
- For Luke, picture a **medical missionary**. *Not a pastor with a seminary degree...*
- Luke didn't *stop being a doctor* when he met the Lord. *skills/experience redeemed!*
- **Practical ways of service** are a *huge blessing* to the kingdom of God, and are **a calling**: *Accounting, construction (team), designing, utilities, nurses, police/safety, technology...*

V. 14 - And **Demas (San Dimas High School)** *Rarely does someone name their kid Demas...*

- Not much said here in Colossians, but **a sad warning** when *putting the pieces together...*
- **Philemon 24** - "**fellow worker**" (written *right around same time as this*) - *Now the sad part...*
- **2 Timothy 4:10** - "**Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted [forsaken] me**"
- A strong start does not always guarantee a strong finish. Abiding and perseverance is required.
- **Demas** *bailed out on Paul (likely the entire faith)* - "**having loved the present world**"
- **WARNING: gradual drifting**. Keep a check on your **heart affections** (*riches... pleasure...*)
  - **Lot's Wife in Genesis 19** - *Looked back, longingly to the world (past life)... **Trap!***

At the time of Paul's writing...

V. 14 - [they all] **greet you**.

**Good ministry has a diverse team:**

- *Faithful servants, prayer warriors, redeemed vessels, practical experience, restored friendships.*

**Closing Instructions (verses 15-18)**

Final verses of the Book... includes **four remaining insights**:

V. 15 - **Nymphas**: House Church

V. 16 - **Laodicea**: Mutual Sharing

V. 17 - **Archippus**: Finish Strong

V. 18 - **Paul**: Salutations & Grace

V. 15 - Greet... **Nymphas** (debates on *male or female?* ...due to *manuscript masculinity/femininity*)

- **Doesn't really matter too much for us today... This person hosted! Hospitality!**
- **...and the church that is in his/her house. (that's how this church started!)**
- **Tabernacle/temple / synagogues** as worship centers, but **Early churches met in homes**.
  - It wasn't until the **third century** that buildings came along for the Christian Church.
  - Mainly due to the **legalization fo Christianity by Constantine** and the *swelling numbers*. (*groups could not longer fit in homes*)
  - Prior to that, the **underground, persecuted church** met in homes (*still today in places*)
- **The point for us today: someone opened their home for fellow believers in smaller groups!**
  - You *may not be gifted at teaching, medicine, or constructing*, but you can **open your home, and make some cookies!** (*though not as often, I've witnessed many of you*)
  - (*do that, friends! Organically and Officially* (connect groups, etc))
- And a church is *less about the building* and *more about the people!* (*buildings aren't forever*)
  - Church *isn't just about Sunday mornings*, it's also the *fellowship throughout the week...*



Vv. 15-16 - Greet the **brethren who are in Laodicea**...

- Paul had a heart for the whole region as mentioned earlier on the map.
- **Church of Laodicea** - later rebuked for being **Lukewarm by Jesus (Rev 3)**.
  - You know that **churches can drift over time too** (not just people: i.e. *Demas*)

V. 16 - Now when this epistle is **read among you**

- A simple note, but gives us 1st century context.
- **Public reading of Scripture** (similar to Synagogue worship) but in this case, Christian apostles.
- 2,000 years later, and here we are **publicly reading among the ekklesia** = **A centerpiece!**
  - **Keeps people and churches from drifting...**

V. 16 - See that it is read also **in the church of the Laodiceans** ...and that you likewise **read the epistle from Laodicea**. (multiple letters throughout multiple areas...) - **Likely immediate copying!**

- **Question:** Does your Bible have the Book of Laodicea? Where is the **epistle from Laodicea**?
- **A few thoughts:** Lost letter (like Corinthians / not inspired), Referring to Ephesians (may have already been circulating), a letter from Laodicea to Paul (not likely) - **fifth century Latin = false!**
- **Not every letter written** in the 1st century was inspired by the Spirit for Canonization.
- Take away: mutual sharing among fellowships (cross-congregation cooperation) -
  - **Encouragements and warnings:** Missions field vs deep compromises

V. 17 - And say to **Archippus**

- **Philemon 2** calls him "*our fellow soldier*" - indicating a hard worker in the ministry.
  - Possibly Philemon's son and a **local church leader** in the Clossian area.
- A couple instructions. **Called out publically:** **Encouragement, Accountability, and Warning!**
- **Take heed to the ministry** - "*Watch out! Pay attention! Be alert!*" present imperative...
- **Which you have received in the Lord** - looks back to a **moment when called to the ministry**.
  - And remember, it's all **from the Lord** (*Eph 2:10 1 Cor 12:11, Eph 4:11, etc*)
- **That you may fulfill it.** **Pleroo** = "fulfill, complete, fill up to the brim"
- **Application:** speak **"hang in there / don't give up"** words to people who struggle at times... **Finish well, man!** - *some of you need to hear that today... (Gal 6:9) (you by name?)*
- **Are you taking heed to fulfill your ministry?** **Procrastinating, Neglecting, Forgotten, Ghosted?**
- Jesus prays to His Father and declares in John 17:4-5, ESV - I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

**Final salutations...**

V. 18 - This **salutation by my own hand**—Paul

- As was common, someone else dictated the letter (*with better handwriting*) and **Paul signed it**.

V. 18 - **Remember my chains**

- Not for pity; for remembrance. *Don't forget the cost.... And don't forget me... Pray for me...*

V. 18 - **Grace be with you. Amen.**

- **Charis** = **God's favor!** Same word to open (1:2) and close. *From grace to grace...*
  - **Beginning (justifying), sustaining (sanctifying), to the end (glorifying)**

- The **final and most important puzzle piece** - *Grace from our Lord Jesus Christ!*

### **Closing:**

Well, **that's Colossians**. *Did you enjoy it?*

- *Supremacy and Sufficiency of Christ* (image of the invisible. All things consisting)
- *Dangers Against False Teachings* (legalism, gnosticism, etc)
- *New Life in Christ!* (powers disarmed, canceled the record of debt - clothe yourself as such!)
- *Christian Conduct in Relationships* (social structures and community)

Every name is a puzzle piece. **Every piece matters**. *Are you numbered among God's people?*

- *Will you be known as faithful like Tychicus, or as one who loved the world like Demas?*

**PRAY**