

Col 4:15-18
“Precious People” (Pt. 4)

Introduction

What is the key to ministry?

The word that keeps coming up in this area, is **Faithfulness!**

1 Cor 4:2 Moreover it is **required in stewards** that one **be found faithful**.

“Faithfulness in ministry”; or **“one who just keeps on keeping on”!**

Doing what he/she is supposed to do, and when they are supposed to do it.

God doesn't tell us that we need to “be famous, successful, or rich”, but just simply, “BE FAITHFUL”!

The last couple of times: We asked the question,

“If your name was written in the Bible, what would they say about you?”

- It sure would be cool to have your name in the Bible.
- But even though your name may be written in the Bible, that doesn't mean He is talking about you. But for sure, our names are written in heaven, and God has the records on us.
- We talked about how we will all be standing before the Lord, who will look at our works for reward.

1 Cor 4:5

4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; **but He who judges me is the Lord**.5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. **Then each one's praise will come from God.**

First we looked at 2 Faithful men:

#1 - Tychicus

Col 4:7 **Tychicus**, a beloved brother, **FAITHFUL minister**, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.

#2 - Onesimus

Col 4:9 with **Onesimus**, **a FAITHFUL and beloved brother**, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here.

One day when we stand before the Lord, we all desire to hear the Lord say,

Matt 25:23

23 "His lord said to him, **'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been FAITHFUL over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'**

Then in verses 10-13 we looked at 4 more faithful men and the unique ways they were faithful:

1. **Aristarchus** was faithful in **“Trials”**
2. **John Mark** was faithful to **“Restart”**; **Start Again or Start Over**
3. **Justus** was faithful to **“Continue on in the Ministry”**
4. **Epaphras** was faithful to **“Labor in Prayer”**.

Last we looked at the contrast between **faithful Luke**, who was with Paul to the very, very end, and **unfaithful Demas** who loved this present world and departed.

Today we look at two new people “Nymphas” and “Archippus”, and also the people in “the Churches of Colossae and Laodicea”.

4:15 #9 - “Home-fellowships” - Laodicea and Nymphas and the church in his house

Col 4:15

15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.

A. Greet

Gk. Word (aspazomai) – Salute, embrace

Paul adds to the Corinthians letter: 2 Cor 13:12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

B. the brethren who are in Laodicea,

One of the 3 churches in the “Lycus Valley”, the other is Hierapolis mentioned earlier when it was speaking about Epaphras’ prayer life, and that he prayed for the whole region:

Col 4:13

13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

C. and Nymphas

Some manuscripts have the masculine form and some have the feminine. But the “Textus Receptus” or “Byzantine manuscripts” by which the King James Version (KJV) was translated from and it’s manuscript has it in “the masculine”.

But most all other Manuscripts such as “the Alexandrian Text”, (Papyrus 66, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Ephraemi, Codex Regius, and Codex Sangallensis), has it in the feminine.

Note: (Someday I must do a teaching on, the various “Variant Texts” and how to choose?)
Not today, but in the future we will have a discussion on this.

The bottom line is that no “Variant text” has changed the truthfulness of God’s word, or doctrine, or even the lose of verses or stories in the Bible.

D. and the church that is in his house

It is a blessing to open your house for such things; this church was evidently in Laodicea.

4:16 Read to Laodicea – and read their letter

Col 4:16

16 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

A. Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans,

Laodicea (later mentioned in the scathing rebuke of (Revelation 3:14-22) was a neighboring city of Colosse, along with Hierapolis (Colossians 4:13).

Paul wanted people to read and hear the instructions from his various letters.

It was the general practice to distribute all apostolic letters among the churches, especially those close to each other.

B. The church that is in his house:

Having no buildings of their own, the early church met as “house churches.”

For many it was that persecution was great. They could not have an established building.

It appears that because few houses were large enough, there were several “houses” needed. And in these “house churches” in a city, they would have a “Pastor or Elder” overseeing each one.

What was their General Practice of the Church?

Right from the beginning we see this detailed:

Act 2:40-41

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added [to them].

Acts 2:42

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

4 things:

1. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine
2. Fellowship (Gk. Koinonia; Communion, intimately; partnership)
3. In the breaking of bread
4. And in prayers

The Chapter of Acts 2 ends this way:

Acts 2:46-47

46 So 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, 47 **praising God** and having favor with all the people. **And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**

C. and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

When Paul and other apostles wrote letters to churches they simply read them publicly.

Apparently, Paul wrote a letter to the Laodiceans that we do not have.

Paul no doubt wrote many letters to churches and people that were not to be a part of the Canonized New Testament.

So we have a letter that he wrote to the Laodiceans that was no doubt of great help, benefit and comfort to them, but it was not God's intention to make it apart of the New Testament books.

We see this also in what Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians:

1 Cor 5:9

9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

So it appears there was a letter written to them before 1 Corinthians.

Just because Paul wrote a grocery list or letter, doesn't mean it was supposed to be a canonized and become a book of the New Testament.

Quote: (Guzik)

We should not assume from this that our treasure of inspiration is incomplete.

The Holy Spirit has chosen to preserve those letters that are inspired for the church in a universal sense. Paul was not inspired in this way every time he set pen to paper.

4:17 #10 - Archippus (Are-kip-us) – take heed to your ministry

Col 4:17

17 And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

A. And say to Archippus,

- "Do what God has told you to do, Archippus."
- Paul did not want him to go AWOL ,but to finish what the Lord had called him to do.
- **We all at one time or another "need to be encouraged to keep on going".**

Note: What about right now?

Do you need to hear such a word of encouragement today?

God is speaking to us right now, take this message as that encouragement and "keep on doing whatever it is He has laid upon our hearts to do", in order to bring it to completion!

We all need to be encouragers:

Heb 12:12-13

12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,

13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

B. "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

This is a good word to every one of us.

But it is touching to think that this man **Archippus** must have been at a point of special need, because he needed this word of encouragement from Paul.

It also shows Paul's tender concern for this individual.

Paul encouragingly mentioned in the book of "Philemon" and is called a fellow soldier:

Philemon 1:2

2 to the beloved Apphia, **Archippus our fellow soldier**, and to the church in your house:

C. The whole last days church is sort-of an "Archippus":

Heb 3:12-14

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief **in departing from the living God**; 13 but **exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today,"** lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For **we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,**

Heb 10:24-25

24 And **let us consider one another** in order **to stir up love and good works,**
25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and **so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**

1 Tim 4:1, 6, 9-11

1 Now **the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith,** giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

1 Tim 4:6

6 If **you instruct the brethren in these things,** you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

1 Tim 4:9-11

9 **This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.**

10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

11 **These things command and teach.**

2 Tim 3:1-9

1 **But know this,** that **in the last days perilous times will come:** 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,** 5 **having a form of godliness** but **denying its power.** And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 **always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.** 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do **these also resist the truth:** men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 **but they will progress no further,** for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

2 Tim 4:12-15

12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

13 But **evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.** 14 But **you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of,** knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood **you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

4:18 Remember my chains

Col 4:18 This salutation by my own hand -- Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

A. **This salutation by my own hand -- Paul.**

As was the custom in that day, Paul generally dictated his letters, and personally signed a postscript with his own hand.

His health was failing and was also his eye sight was growing bad:

Gal 6:11 *See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!*

B. **Remember my chains.**

There is much emotion, sorrow, and strength in this simple phrase.

Paul knew very intimately the confinement and loneliness of a prisoner.

Paul also had the uncertainty of not knowing if his case before Caesar's court would end with his execution.

Later Paul exhorts: (don't let it be out of sight, out of mind)

2 Tim 1:8

8 Therefore **do not be ashamed** of the testimony of our Lord, **nor of me His prisoner,** but **share with me in the sufferings** for the gospel according to the power of God,

Heb 13:3

3 **Remember the prisoners as if chained with them--those who are mistreated**--since you yourselves are in the body also.

C. **Grace be with you.**

Paul **opened his epistle** with **the salutation of grace** and **now closes it with the benediction of grace.**

- As it began, so it ends because grace is the whole deal.
- We can only go forward safely in the Christian life if grace is with us.

Grace:

1. **Paul called the Gospel; "the Gospel of the Grace of God"**

Acts 20:24b

24 and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the **gospel of the grace of God.**

2. **Grace is the first step into salvation:**

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith,** and that **not of yourselves;** *it is the gift of God,* 9 **not of works,** lest anyone should boast.

Example:

The two "Thieves" on the cross next to Jesus. What an amazing faith this thief on the cross next to Jesus showed!!

3. We are to have Faith in the grace!!!!**Rom 1:17**

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed **from faith to faith**; as it is written, "**The just shall live by faith.**"

4. The full revelation of God through Jesus, was "Grace:**John 1:14**

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, **full of grace and truth.**

John 1:16 And **of His fullness we have all received**, and **grace for (KJV) grace.**

5. Grace is what makes us stand and it is how we stand:**Rom 5:1-2**

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 through whom also we have access by **faith into this grace in which we stand**, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:20b But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

Prov 24:16a For a **righteous man may fall seven times** And rise again,

6. As we struggle with the sin of this world and the sin in our own bodies, we come to a God of all grace on a throne of Grace:**Hebrews 4:14-16**

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession.

15 For we do not **have a High Priest** who cannot **sympathize with our weaknesses**, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.

16 **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may **obtain mercy** and **find grace** to help in time of need.

7. Grace is to be what we set our full hope upon**1 Peter 1:13**

13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **rest your hope fully upon the grace** that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

8. Final verse of the Bible!!!! (Last word from Jesus to us, is grace!!)

Revelation 22:21 The **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

D. **Amen:** Literally - “So be it”; or “So be it, LORD”!!

Conclusion

1. Let’s be faithful members of the Body of Christ, and take heed to the ministry God has given us:
1 Cor 12:7
 7 But **the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one** for the profit of all:

1 Cor 12:11
 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, **distributing to each one individually as He wills.**

2. Let us be faithful to think about each other, and to be ready to reach out and encourage one another.
Heb 3:13a but **exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today,"**

3. Let us look like the New Testament Church and not just some “American Cultural Church”.
That isn’t what the Lord had in mind:
Acts 2:42
 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

4 things:
 1. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine
 2. Fellowship (Gk. Koinonia; Communion, intimately; partnership)
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