

1st Over All

Colossians

Week 15 – Colossians 4:7-18 – Christ 1st Over Christian Fellowship

Purpose: Christians will enjoy the family provided through Jesus Christ and strive to share life and gifts with God's people as part of God's work to transform, sanctify, encourage, and build up to maturity.

Call to Worship

Stand and Read

Colossians 4:7-18 ESV

7 Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, 9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here. 10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. 14 Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

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

Prayer

Gratitude for God's Grace, the Joy of Faith Family, Petition to Help with Living as Family, and to pursue building, serving, and encouraging each other.

Sermon

Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

Opening Idea

2 Men Who Became Brothers

There is a story of two men who were raised in different families with different cultures and different stations in life. One was born into royalty, and the other was born into simplicity. One day, the simple son was asked to serve in the house of the king. He served with honor. He became friends with the royal son. Then something happened. Within the context of the king becoming antagonistic toward the simple son, the royal son and the simple son became brothers. In fact, the description of the depth of their friendship was that their souls were, “knit together”. The simple son, David, became like a brother to the royal son, Jonathan. As Jonathan’s father, King Saul, grew frustrated, threatened, and angry at David, Jonathan protected David and cared for him. Even when Jonathan knew that he would not become king and David would, Jonathan continued to love and care for David, like a brother. **(1 Samuel 18:1-5 ESV)**

God’s gift to His children is to knit them into the family of God. To have that type of life with your biological and your faith family is something precious, strong, rewarding, and encouraging. This is the nature of the relationship of those who live with Christ 1st Over their lives.

Paul closes out his letter to the Colossians writing about these types of relationships and emphasizing the goodness of God in forming the Body of Christ in this way. Let’s conclude our study of the letter to the Colossians and see God’s work in drawing people together who have Christ, 1st Over All!

(SLIDE 2)

We Need God’s Help

Be A Catalyst for Worship

God Makes Us Worthy to Walk

We Live to Show Christ is 1st Over All

(SLIDE 3)

We Will Live as Reconciled People

We Will Make Christ Known

We Will Live as “Connected In” People

We Will Live Liberated in Jesus Christ

(SLIDE 4)

We Will Live Sanctified in Jesus Christ

We Live with Risen Vision

Be Killing Sin

Be Putting On The New Life

Live in New Life Homes

Seasoned Life In Christ

Read

Colossians 4:7-18 ESV

(SLIDE 5) **7** Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. **8** I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, **9** and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

(SLIDE 6) **10** Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), **11** and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. **12** Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

(SLIDE 7) **13** For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. **14** Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. **15** Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. **16** And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. **17** And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

(SLIDE 8) **18** I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Series Graphic (SLIDE 9)

Notes on Colossians 4:7-18

Family Fellowship (v. 7-14)

Paul closes out the letter to the saints in Colossae writing about the brothers who are with him in Rome and reveals that they have a purpose and a message for the church in Colossae.

Brothers with a Message (v. 7-9)

7 Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, 9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

Paul leads with Tychicus. Tychicus is the messenger who is commissioned to deliver this letter to the Colossians and report on Paul's and the others situation in Roman incarceration. Paul affirms Tychicus' character and deep connection of love and fidelity. Paul describes Tychicus as beloved, brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant. Paul writes that along with the letter, Tychicus will also share the situation in which Paul and his companions live so as to encourage the inner parts, the hearts, of the Colossian saints. There is a bond of love and affection with the Colossians and Paul directs Tychicus to share what God is doing so that the hearts of the Colossian brothers and sisters will be encouraged!

Along with Tychicus, Paul is also sending Onesimus as a messenger and witness to God's work in Paul and his companions and their well-being. Onesimus is an escaped slave from the house of Philemon. Philemon is the host of the church that meets in his house. Onesimus is a Colossian and has been regenerated by God, received faith, believed in Jesus Christ, and repented of his sins. Paul is sending Onesimus back to Philemon to reconcile with Philemon as a brother in Christ (the book of Philemon). Paul writes that Onesimus is also a faithful and beloved brother. This is a description of a man who is not the same person who stole from his master and ran away. Paul writes that Onesimus is "one of you". This is Paul's testimonial about God's work to save Onesimus and God's work in transforming and sanctifying Onesimus than it is about Onesimus being from Colossae. Onesimus is a fellow saint in Jesus Christ.

Together, these men will give an eyewitness first-hand account of God's work in and through the brothers in Rome.

Brothers of Comfort (v. 10-11)

10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome

him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

Paul then writes about three men who are Jews and who are with Paul in Rome. There are more than three who are in Rome with Paul, but Paul points out that these men are Jews, “men of the circumcision”. There is no clear reason that Paul gives as to why he is pointing out that these three men are Jews. There are a few possible reasons for this revelation. One possible motive is that Paul is speaking against the Judaizers who are false teachers who disrupted the saints and caused division in the fellowship of the church with demands to use human works to cause justification and sanctification to happen. Colossae is a Gentile community and their experience with Jews was deceptive and destructive. Paul might be trying to show that race or nationality is the cause for salvation, but it is not the cause for condemnation either. God’s mercy demonstrated by His grace to give faith and cause a person to repent, be forgiven, believe and be reconciled to God is vital. There are Jews who have been reconciled to God by God, and these three men are such men. Their evidence and fruit of faith is their service, love, and comforting Paul. There is another possible reason for Paul’s highlighting that the three men are Jews. This additional reason might be that Paul is showing that Mark (John Mark) who abandoned the work of God and left Paul and Barnabas in a difficult situation (Acts 13) is now restored and he and Paul are reconciled with each other. This would have been to protect the fellowship of these men from those who would try to discredit Paul due to how he dealt with Mark and Barnabas¹. A third, whatever the reason, in a city that had a significant Jewish population there are only three Jews that Paul names who helped and comforted him. A final possibility for Paul’s cause to identify the three brothers as being Jewish is that Paul is showing the unity that God causes between Jews and Gentiles. God unites people into Christ!

Brother for Struggle (v. 12-13)

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.

Paul continues writing about the brothers who have been with him in Rome. He writes about Epaphras, who is a member of the Colossian church and more. Paul expresses greetings from Epaphras to the saints in Colossae and that Epaphras prays for them, standing in the gap space as he petitions God to continue maturing the saints; helping them grow assured of God’s will and living in accordance with His will. Epaphras is a commissioned messenger from the church in Colossae and Paul testifies that Epaphras has been faithful to represent the church well, striving and working diligently to accomplish what he was sent by them to do, and that Epaphras has strong affections for

¹ Richard R. Melick, [*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*](#), vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 329.

the church and prays for them often. Epaphras' work has blessed Paul and is a credit to the Colossian, Laodicean, and Hierapolis churches. Epaphras is a servant to three churches as well as a fellowship servant with Paul. Epaphras' work has been as if the saints of these churches have been there with Paul and worked.

Brothers of Love (v. 14)

14 Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.

Paul finishes this section of the closing of the letter to talk about two more men who are with Paul and serve alongside him. Paul writes that Luke is there with Paul and that He has great affection for Luke. Paul makes it clear that he loves Luke in a deep and brotherly way. Luke's training as a physician is something that God has used to His glory. It is likely that any physical issues Paul has struggled with, the possible thorn in his side in 2 Corinthians 12, Luke has helped Paul. Luke is accredited with writing the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. It is believed that Luke was often a scribe for Paul during Paul's various imprisonments, writing what God gave Paul. Paul writes to encourage the Colossians that there are men who are thinking of them and greet them in the Lord. Not only does Luke send his greeting, but Demas sends the Colossians greetings too. It is not clear if Demas was known by the Colossians. It is likely that Paul wants to strengthen the hearts of the Colossians by letting them know that he is cared for by men who are with Paul, are faithfully serving God, Paul, and them, and that there is familial love that sustains these men as they serve and endure this season of incarceration. It is also likely that Paul is speaking into the situation of the Colossian church to keep their mind and eyes fixed that God is working in great ways and in many geographical areas to build His church and they are part of that work. They are not alone. The disruption of the false teachers is not enough to separate them from Jesus and His Body – the church universal. God has brought them into the Body, and they live in family fellowship in Christ!

Shared Public Reading (v. 15-17)

15 Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord."

Paul directs the Colossians share his greetings with the churches at Laodicea. This general greeting is to be shared with the church, but Paul asks them to share his greetings with Nympha. God is using Nympha in a unique way. She likely has enough resources to afford a house that can host the church in Laodicea. She is using God's generous gifts to her as a good steward, and she is hosting the church. We see that she is not loved or respected more, but Paul expresses

greetings to her as a faithful servant to host the Laodicean church. Paul also includes a command for the Colossian church to follow. As they have the opportunity, they are to encourage a man named Archippus. He is mentioned in Philemon chapter one when Paul writes a letter to Philemon. It believed that Archippus is the son of Philemon and Apphia and that God is likely calling Archippus to serve the church. It is not clear from scripture what Archippus' role is in the church, but in this section of the Colossian letter, Archippus has a calling upon his life to serve the church of Jesus Christ. Paul makes it clear to the Colossians that Archippus is to be encouraged. Because Paul writes this directive into this letter, it becomes a public acknowledgement to encourage Archippus.

This passage helps us understand how God uses His word to build His kingdom. Although this is a letter written specifically to the church in Colossae, the contents of the letter are for Christians to read and grow into maturity. This section helps us today to see that although this letter was written to the Colossians, there are teachings that God uses to build up and encourage all of His people. We can learn from what is written and know more about God and there are things that we can take and use to grow in our knowledge of God and live by faith. The churches in various places at different times see how God uses His people to take part in loving and encouraging each other.

God's Kindness and Favor (v. 18)

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

Finally, Paul closes out this letter with a unique salutation. Although Paul uses scribes, like Luke, from time to time to write what Paul dictates, there are seven instances in the Pauline letters where he makes it known that he is the one who wrote the letter. This is most likely Paul's way to authenticate that this was a letter from Paul and not another person trying to write falsely using his name and authority. Paul had never met the saints in Colossae, so this provides assurance for them that this is a letter from the Apostle Paul.

Paul asks that they would remember his chains. This is a device to encourage the Colossians to think of Paul, remember that he is imprisoned, encourage their affection for him, and pray for care and opportunities to proclaim Jesus Christ. Paul is imprisoned due to proclaiming Jesus Christ and while imprisoned, God gave Paul words to encourage and help mature the Colossian saints and the church.

Paul's closing words are the same as his words that started the letter. Paul is petitioning God that He would continue giving Christians grace and deal with His people graciously. The only way that God's people have any benefit in this life now and any hope for eternity in God's presence is by the grace that comes from God. It is by God's grace alone that anyone is given faith, justified, sanctified, and glorified while doing the good works that God has given them to do, so that He is Glorified. The petition is one of powerful and sustaining work of God in the life of His people.

God's People Thrive in "*Christ 1st Over All*" Family Fellowship (SLIDE 10)

"Measured Faith" Service (SLIDE 11)

Gifts Given By God

Gifts to be Used to Encourage and Make Mature

Directed by God and Useful for His people

Unified by God's Word (SLIDE 12)

God's Word is given to the Church

God's Word is used to Unite God's People

God's Word is For All God's People

Enjoying God's Grace (SLIDE 13)

God's Grace is Good

God's Grace is Life Changing

God's Grace Brings His People Joy

We Will Strive For and Enjoy Fellowship living *Christ 1st Over All* of KBC (SLIDE 14)

Living in Faith Family Relationships

Utilize God's Word Together

Sharing God's Gifts with Each Other

Read

Ephesians 3:14-19 ESV

(The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed Eph. 3:1-13)

(SLIDE 15) 14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family[a] in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

(SLIDE 16) 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Series Graphic (SLIDE 17)