
Sermon Notes

March 22, 2015

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Partners in Christ Colossians 4:7-18

Teamwork

- ❖ Knowing Christ and making Him known is not a solo event, it is a team effort
 - in God's kingdom there are no "superstars" or super Christians
 - Christ's followers have a corporate identity
- ❖ In a culture that focuses so much attention on rugged individualism, it is hard for us to fully appreciate the importance of our shared, corporate identity
- ❖ Though Paul is often referred to as the greatest and most important missionary in church history, he understands how vital it is for him to be part of a team of people who are all intent on pursuing the same goals
 - Paul recognizes that his friends are indispensable assets to his ministry
 - it has always been that way... it always will be that way

Tychius (vv. 7-9)

- ❖ Tychius is an encourager who has a servant's heart

- ❖ Tychius is mentioned 5 times in the New Testament
 - his first appearance is in Acts 20:4
 - he leaves family and friends, makes the difficult, dangerous journey to accompany Paul to bring an offering and to show solidarity with the believers in Jerusalem
- ❖ Four years later, Paul relies on Tychius to hand deliver his letters to the churches in Colossae, Ephesus and a personal letter to Philemon
 - Tychius reminds us how important it is for us to be "the hands and feet" of Christ
 - we all benefit from Tychius' ministry, and we can all certainly benefit from his example
 - what may seem simple or mundane to us can make a tremendous difference to someone else

Onesimus (v. 9)

- ❖ Philemon's runaway slave
- ❖ Paul refers to Onesimus as a *faithful and beloved brother*
 - his sinful past is no longer an issue
 - Onesimus returns to Philemon ready to serve
 - Onesimus has a new identity and a new nature that causes him to understand who he is really serving

Aristarchus (vv. 10-11)

- ❖ Aristarchus was a Jewish believer from Thessalonica
 - he first appears during Paul's 3 year ministry at Ephesus (Acts 19:29) and subsequently goes along with Paul on his return trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4)
 - he willingly shares Paul's prison experience and gives up his own freedom to minister to Paul's needs
- ❖ Aristarchus encourages us both to follow his example and to be on the lookout for those who faithfully serve so quietly behind the scenes

John Mark (v. 10)

- ❖ The cousin of Barnabas and a companion with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13)
 - John Mark deserted "the team" and later, when Barnabas wanted to restore him, it led to such a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas that they parted company and went their separate ways
 - Peter, who is no stranger to spectacular ministry failure, works to restore John Mark to usefulness
- ❖ Paul recognizes the changes and requests that the Colossians not shun John Mark... *welcome him*
- ❖ By the end of his life, Paul will ask for John Mark to be brought to him because he is useful for service
- ❖ John Mark reminds us that God is the God of second chances

Epaphras (vv. 12-13)

- ❖ The founder of the Colossian church and most likely its current pastor when Paul writes his letter to it
- ❖ Whether he is with his flock or way from them, Epaphras is noted as one who is *always struggling* on their behalf in prayer
- ❖ Note what Epaphras prays for
 - *stand mature* (complete, fully developed)
 - be *fully assured in all the will of God* (know God's will and DO IT!)

Luke (v. 14)

- ❖ Paul's personal, on-call physician
- ❖ Luke reminds us that God takes people from all walks of life and uses their specialized talents, skills, training, and abilities for His purposes
- ❖ God needs specialists in every field and discipline who are willing to make themselves available for His purposes

Personal Application

1. What encourages you about the lives of these people who supported Paul and worked behind the scenes to further God's work?
2. With whom on this list do you most identify? Does reflecting on their life give you any new ideas about how you might serve?