

**Message #20****Colossians 4:7-18**

There is no such thing as a New Testament Christianity that is not intimately connected to each other. There is no such thing as a faith that is not intimately connected to the church and those in it.

In the mind of Paul, who is the apostle to the Gentiles for the Church Age, the New Testament Church was a place where people took a personal interest in each other.

**A CHURCH IS TO BE A PLACE THAT TAKES A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF EACH OTHER, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL TO THE LORD.**

This Colossian church was a church Paul had not personally even visited (Col. 2:1). Yet Paul took a very personal interest in this church and he wanted this church to take a personal interest in him.

**PART #1 – Faithful believers soon come to Colossae. 4:7-9**

**Heading #1** - The men who would soon visit Colossae.

(Man #1) - Tychicus would soon visit Colossae. 4:7-8

Tychicus was a very close friend and associate of the Apostle Paul. He could be trusted with apostolic assignments and responsibilities—1) He was sent ahead to Troas on Paul’s third missionary journey (Acts 20:4); 2) He was sent to Crete to see Titus (Titus 3:2); 3) He was sent to Ephesus to relieve Timothy (II Tim. 4:12).

**Fact #1** - Tychicus was a beloved brother. 4:7a

Paul uses an article that means he wants to stress that Tychicus was “the” beloved brother.

**Fact #2** - Tychicus was a faithful servant. 4:7b

The word “servant” is diakonos, which may mean Tychicus was a faithful deacon. The word “diakonos” definitely means Tychicus was one who faithfully attended to and ministered to the needs of others.

**Fact #3** - Tychicus was a fellow bondservant. 4:7c

Tychicus was bound to Paul and dedicated to God’s Word and work at a time when it was not popular to be.

**Fact #4** - Tychicus was an accurate informer. **4:7d**

Tychicus could be trusted to share accurate information about Paul, his work and doctrine with others.

**Fact #5** - Tychicus was a successful letter carrier.

Tychicus carried both the Ephesian letter (Eph. 6:21) and the Colossian letter (Col. 4:7) to the respective church. More than likely, he also carried letters to Timothy (II Tim. 4:12) and Titus (Titus 3:12). Dr. S.L. Johnson called Tychicus the most “prominent postman” in the New Testament (Bib. Sac., p. 315).

(Man #2) - Onesimus would soon visit Colossae. **4:9**

**Fact #1** - Onesimus was a faithful brother. **4:9a**

**Fact #2** - Onesimus was a beloved brother. **4:9b**

**Fact #3** - Onesimus was a Colossian resident. **4:9c**

Now we may observe that Paul does not in any way bring up Onesimus’ past. Paul does not even mention the sin of Onesimus prior to coming to faith in Christ. He had been a “thieving slave.” Onesimus had sinned greatly against Philemon and according to Philemon it was a private matter to be resolved between those two. However, there is no hint of Onesimus having to make his sin, prior to salvation, public information to the whole church.

**Heading #2** - The purpose of the men’s visit to Colossae.

- 1) To inform them concerning Paul’s affairs. **4:7a**
- 2) To inform them about Paul’s circumstances and situation. **4:8a, 9b**
- 3) To encourage their hearts. **4:8b**

Paul was having great opportunities to minister God’s Word and to write God’s Word.

- 1) Churches out to look for verbal recommendations of faithful men, not academic qualifications.
- 2) Our faithfulness is directly related to others who are faithful to God and His Word.
- 3) Minor assignments in ministry may turn out to be major accomplishments in ministry.
- 4) Faithfulness to God includes an intimacy and accountability to each other.

**PART #2** – The Jewish believers who cared about the Colossians. **4:10-11**

Man #1 - The greeting from Aristarchus . **4:10a**

Aristarchus was a Macedonian from Thessalonica (Acts 27:2). He became one of the faithful Jewish traveling companions of the Apostle Paul (Acts 19:29; 20:4). He was a man who faced many terrible trials with Paul (Acts 27:2), including imprisonment (Col. 4:10).

When Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians, Aristarchus was Paul's "fellow prisoner." When Paul wrote the letter to Philemon, Epaphras was Paul's "fellow prisoner" and Aristarchus was Paul's "fellow worker" (Philemon 23-24).

The explanation for this may be that staying with Paul in his confinement may have been a choice rather than a sentence.

Man #2 - The greeting from Mark . **4:10b**

On Paul's first missionary journey, Mark had deserted Paul (Acts 13:13). When Paul was about to embark on his second missionary journey, he and Barnabas got into a heated argument about Mark. Paul did not want him to go and Barnabas did, so Paul and Barnabas ended up parting ways (Acts 15:37-39).

About ten years had passed and it is clear that Mark had proven himself faithful during those ten years, so when Paul wrote Colossians, he sent greetings from Mark and told the Colossians that if he came to them, to welcome him.

If you have previously blown it in some ministry capacity, turn around and start being faithful again and establish a good name for yourself and you can be used by God.

Man #3 - The greeting from Jesus who is called Justus. **4:11a**

Not much is known about him except what is in this verse—he was a faithful Jewish fellow worker with Paul and all three of these men were an encouragement to him.

Even great ministers need encouragement and great ministers get encouragement from those faithful and loyal to the work and to their ministry.

**PART #3** – The Gentile believers who cared about the Colossians. **4:12-14**

Man #1 - The concern of Epaphrus . **4:12-13**

Paul gives a good deal of information about Epaphras because he was a Colossian (1:7). Epaphras had taught the church and had gone to see Paul about its problems (1:7-8).

Epaphras was a tremendous prayer warrior. In fact, the words “labor earnestly” literally mean he agonized in prayer for the Colossian church.

**(Reason #1)** - He wanted this church to stand complete in all the will of God. **4:12a**

The word “perfect” is one that means to reach the finished, mature, completed stage (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 442).

**(Reason #2)** - He wanted this church to be full in all the will of God. **4:12b**

Epaphras agonized in prayer because he wanted this church to fulfill and accomplish all the will of God in every way.

We do not need more organizers in the church of God, we need more agonizers.

**Man #2** - The concern of Luke . **4:14a**

Luke was a Gentile and he was a doctor. He too, was a faithful man of God and very loyal to Paul (II Tim. 4:11).

**Man #3** - The greeting of Demas . **4:14b**

Paul simply names Demas with nothing else said about him. It would seem by this that Paul may have been unsure of Demas’ loyalty and commitment even at the time he wrote Colossians. We learn later that Demas deserted Paul because he was more interested in the things of this world (II Tim. 4:10).

**PART #4** – The Colossian assignment concerning the church of Laodicea. **4:15-17**

We know by the time John writes Revelation, Laodicea was such a lukewarm church that it was filled with unsaved people who would be spit out of the mouth of God. Paul must have sensed real problems in the church some 35 years before, when he wrote Colossians.

Before churches were built, they met in homes clearly indicating life in the church is life in a family. He also wanted the Colossians to stress the fact that the Word of God was to be read in the church. The church was to be a place that focused on reading and teaching God’s Word and apparently the church of Laodicea had departed from this **(4:16)**.

**PART #5** – Paul’s final words to the Colossians. **4:18**

1) Paul, himself, wrote this final greeting. **4:18a**

2) Paul wanted the Colossians to remember his imprisonment. **4:18b**

3) Paul wanted the Colossians to remember God's grace. **4:18c**

Paul began this letter focusing on God's grace (1:2), and he ended the letter with the same focus.

The grace of God is fully and finally found in Jesus Christ!