

Devotion on Book of Colossians (Chapter 4 v7-18) - 31 May 2014, Anno Domini (Ascensiontide)

(Anno Domini, abbreviated AD or A.D. expressly complies with Isaiah 61:2 & Luke 4:19, i.e. "To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." (Isaiah 61:2))



7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: 8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; 9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here. 10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) 11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. 15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. 16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. 18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen. (Col 4:7-18)

In the concluding verses of Colossians, Paul gives recognition to those who have been with him in Rome (vs 7-14), to the brothers and sisters at Colosse (v 15), gives command to the Church at Colosse (vs 16-17), and issues his benediction at the last (v 17).

**CO-WORKERS:** Paul includes greetings from the eight fellow believers who have been such a boon to his labors at Rome: Tychicus (7-8), Onesimus (9), Aristarchus & Mark (10), Justus (11), Epaphras (12-13), and Luke & Demas (14).

**Tychicus:** "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts." What admirable qualities Paul ascribes to Tychicus – beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow-servant in the Lord. The Army of God is like unto armies of land warfare in many points. Tychicus serves the role of intelligence officer. Paul has sent him to Colosse as an embodiment, in person, of those qualities he represented to Paul in Rome. First of all, Tychicus is sent to learn the condition of the Church at Colosse. You may wonder what Paul would do if the Church seems to be struggling on the brink of

oblivion. Please remember that Paul began this chapter with an exhortation to pray for each other. If the report is unfavorable, Paul will pray, and enlist other believers to pray, for the Lord's blessing on the Church of Colosse. Secondly, Tychicus is sent to report the circumstances of Paul and the Church at Rome. Each element of an army needs to know the disposition of its headquarters and maintain communication therewith. So does each element of the Church need to maintain communication (fellowship) with all other elements of its branches.

Paul was not only a soul-winner, but a maker of friends. He desires to know how his friends (brethren and sisters) are doing in the mission field. Should we not bear the same interest?

**Onesimus:** *"With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here."* Remember Onesimus? Once a run-away slave (Philemon), Onesimus is now a friend and fellow minister with Paul. Backgrounds from our former lives fade into obscurity when we come to know the Lord. Nothing is impossible with God our Father. Onesimus was from Colosse and very able to identify intimately with the people. When we visit our churches abroad, we have a deep interest in how they are faring; but we also share, in detail, how we are faring. This enables us to pray for one another with knowledge.

**Aristarchus & Mark:** *"Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)"* Interesting that Paul mentions these two together. If we review Acts 13, we see that Barnabas and Paul had taken John Mark on their first missionary journey. The youthful Mark seems to have forsaken the trip mid way and gone home. On the next trip, a division between Barnabas and Paul arose when Barnabas desired again to take Mark. The two separated at that point; however, we see that the mission of Barnabas and Mark was successful and now Paul recognizes the fact. Regardless of our past failures in the service of God, there is always a new Spring coming.

**Justus:** *"And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me."* Justus, Aristarchus, and Onesimus were all a great help and comfort to Paul. They were Jews converted to Christ. When we walk in the Church doors, we should not be greeted with whispers behind our backs, inquiries about our shabby appearance, or inquiries of an unpleasant nature. How should we greet and treat one another in Church? Let God answer: *"29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* (Eph 4:29-32)

**Epaphras:** *"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis."* Did you notice that prayer is also a labor? It is so often a comfort, but it is also a labor of love and an obligation to pray on behalf of your fellow believers. Do you? Though Epaphras is in Rome, his prayers reach across the miles to Asia Minor and benefits the Church at Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. Not only does a man bear his testimony in the work of the Lord, but others

must recognize that testimony as well (as does Paul here).

**Luke & Demas:** *“Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.”* Luke was called the “beloved physician” by Paul. Paul was able to heal miraculously, so why the need for a physician? Because Paul knew the apostolic gifts would soon end and the learned skills of the physician would be used of God for healing. Luke was not only a physician, but a scribe as well for Paul. Luke was trained and qualified to heal the body through his physician’s skills, and the soul through his teaching of the Gospel. These two send their greetings to their brothers and sisters in Colosse. Did you of the AOC know that you have family relations in the Solomon Islands, in Fiji, in the Philippines, in Pakistan, in India, in Africa, in South America, and in Canada – not to mention the islands of the Caribbean? (Altogether, in more than twenty-two countries around the world). The sun never sets on the AOC.

**PAUL’S GREETING:** At present, we have several churches in Africa top which we should send greetings and prayer, to those in Pakistan, in India, and elsewhere. *“Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.”* And, may I add, the Church in India, in Pakistan, in Africa, in South America, in Canada, and the Islands of the Sea.

**PAUL’S COUNSEL:** *“And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.”*

- 1) Read this letter of Paul’s to the Church at Colosse;
- 2) Read it to the Church at Laodicea;
- 3) Read the letter Paul wrote to the Church of Laodicea to the Church at Colosse. The Gospel truth must go round and round; and
- 4) Tell Archippus to be sure to continue in that ministry to which he has been called of the Lord.

How often do ministers come to us as wolves in sheep’s clothing claiming the Lord has called them to our Church? After much time and expense, we learn that they would steal away the flock to some other church whose doctrines are alien to both the Christian faith and thus the AOC. Keep on the path that the Lord has set your feet, or do you believe the Lord mistakenly called you to the wrong ministry?

**PAUL’S BENEDICTION:** *“The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen”* How strongly should we remember our brothers and sisters in bonds? *“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”* (Heb 13:3) Paul is a believer in the grace of God. He opens his Epistle with a salutation of grace (Col 1-2) and he closes it with a benediction of grace. Perhaps we should follow his example in all our writings and conversations.