

Colossians
“A Worthy Walk”
IV. Closing 4:7-18

4:7-18
“You are the Church”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 7-11 People who stayed

III. Vs. 12-15 People prayed and strayed

IV. Vs. 16-18 People with passion

I. Intro.

There is a tendency when reading New Testament letters to skip the closing as it is usually personal notes to people whom the writer knew. These hard to pronounce names provide yet another window into the lives of the early church. They were common ordinary people who had been transformed by an extraordinary God. There are three general observations that these 12 verses provide us:

- **Family**: These 8 names all have words like “*fellow*”, “*beloved*”, “*brother*” “*one of you*” attached to their name. The implication is obvious; the early church was **not an institution** it was a **family**! This is a great word to the church today that far too often it is run like a corporation and loses its compassion and intimacy.
- **Faithful**: Second the use of the word “*servant*” or “*bondservant*” along with the word “*faithful*” suggests that the early church hadn’t divided it’s self into “*professionals*” and “*amateurs*”. The early church **didn’t GO to church** they **WERE the church**. There weren’t any spectators in chairs there were only participants in the streets.
- **Followers**: Finally, Paul knew these folks and it appears that discipleship was the norm within the early church. How would Paul know “*Onesimus was a faithful brother*”, or “*Tychicus was a faithful minister*” if he hadn’t mentored them and coached them? The early church had taken Jesus’ words at the great commission seriously and were not engaged in making “*decisions*” **for** Christ they were involved in making “*disciples*” **of** Christ!

I have little doubt that if the church today would adopt these three principals that the early church had we would be far more successful in reaching a lost world.

II. Vs. 7-11 People who stayed

Vs. 7-9 Paul mentions people that were a part of his mentoring program. These men had earned a great deal of trust from Paul not only in his praise of them but also in his trust of them to carry such a letter. After the resurrection Jesus didn't start a seminary, He sent the Holy Spirit to empower and turned them loose on the world. Rabbis that examined Jesus methods and took note that although He had unlearned fishermen they marveled realizing that they had "*been with Jesus*". Paul mentions three groups of people:

- People who **STAYED**
- A person who **PRAYED**
- A person who **STRAYED**

People who STAYED!

1. **Tychicus**: His name means "*fortunate*" and in Acts 20:4 we are told that he was from Thessalonica and a part of the delegation that traveled with Paul as he took a love offering from the churches in Macedonia to the suffering church in Jerusalem. In 2 Timothy 4:12 we are told that Paul sent him to Ephesus to replace Timothy. In Titus 3:12 Paul was about to send him to the Island of Crete to help with the work there. Paul gives three descriptions of his character:

- a. **Beloved Brother:** Before Tychicus was noted for any other attribute he was a loving brother. Paul had taught him that the best way to be faithful servant and teach others is by a demonstration of love.
- b. **Faithful Minister:** Paul assesses the *quality* of his work and says that as a servant of Christ he was faithful. God doesn't ask us to be brilliant, popular or eloquent, He asks that whatever the assignment He gives us we will be faithful to complete it.
- c. **Fellow Servant:** Finally Paul addresses the *equality* of the workers and says that Tychicus saw himself on the same level as everybody else. He didn't see himself as over others but rather served as though he was under all. No wonder he was loved and seen as faithful. Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 23:8 "*for one is your Master, and all are your brothers*".

It is interesting to note the priority of Paul's assessment of Tychicus: What Tychicus *did* was not as important as the way in which it was *done*...as he performed his service in love. No matter what we are called to do in Christ's service "*beloved*" ought to be in front of it!

2. **Onesimus:** Name means "*profitable*" and was no doubt attached to his life as he was a slave. His story is told in Paul's companion letter to Philemon a pastor of a church in the region and slave master of Onesimus. During this one page letter you read of Paul's appeal to Philemon to receive the runaway slave Onesimus back not as a mere slave but as a brother in Christ. To add more drama the punishment inflicted upon a runaway slave was death and Paul had Onesimus carry the letter back to his master Philemon. Paul describes him **three ways** as well:

- a. **Faithful:** Prior to his conversion Onesimus might had been "*profitable*" but he was not "*faithful*". Paul speaks to the *attitude* and by which a person serves. You can be of value in your service and still not be faithful in your service but if you are first faithful to serve as unto the Lord you will always be of more valuable then you were.
- b. **Beloved brother:** Here again this speaks the *motive* of his service as now it was as a beloved brother not as a servant to his master. We will always serve greater when our motive is love.
- c. **Who is one of you:** Paul addresses his status which was total *equality* as he was "*One of You*". Our service will be better when we are equal with each other, part of a team that share in the victory and blessings!

Vs. 10-11 This section give us some more names:

1. **Aristarchus**: He came from Thessalonica and most likely became a Christian under Paul's ministry in that city and then later joined Paul when he was sent from Caesarea to Rome as Paul calls him a "*fellow prisoner*" suggesting that he had also been charged with a crime against Rome that dealt with his trust in Jesus.
2. **Mark**: Is referenced back to Paul's first missionary journey where Mark (also known as John Mark) went along with his cousin Barnabas. We know that because of Mark's flaky nature there arose a dispute about whether he should continue with the team. Paul refused to take him and Barnabas refused to leave without him. Years have passed and restoration has happened as Mark is now with Paul. Paul has written instructions for the Church in Colossi to welcome Mark with now hesitation. Saint's make sure you move in grace, as God is a God of multiple chances.
3. **Justus**: Is also known by the common name of Jesus but chose the Roman name so as a Jew he could be a better witness to the Romans as had Paul who was known as Saul.

III. Vs. 12-15 People prayed and strayed

1. **Epaphras: A person who PRAYED**: We have already read his name in the first chapter and know him as the evangelist that went out from Paul's time in Ephesus to plant church in Colossi, Laodicea and Hierapolis all sister cities. Paul says of him that he had a great concern for their wellbeing. This was visible as he was a "*servant by choice*" and always laboring in prayers for them that they would stand confident in the will of God. Here was a man that didn't stop his ministry at evangelism but continued on as a shepherd laboring in prayer for those he a shared with.
2. **Luke**: In 2nd Timothy Paul's last letter he writes that "*only Luke was still with him*". Here was a man who remained connected to Paul throughout his whole ministry. Paul's calls him the "*beloved physician*" and I believe that his healing touch went well beyond the body to the soul and spirit.
3. **Demas: A person who STRAYED**. We know that he was from Thessalonica and had served with Paul a while as he is mentioned in other letters so he must have traveled with him. In Paul's first letter to Timothy 4:10 he writes of Demas that "*he has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica.*" What a reminder to us that it is not how well we start the Christian life but how well we finish it! We have all known a Demas who started well was on fire for the Lord but has left their faith and went back to the world's attractions.
4. **Nymphas**: Some versions have this name in the masculine others in the feminine but it is most likely that this was a woman who had had opened her house to for fellowship. At any rate here was a person who served with the gift of hospitality as many in this fellowship have and what a blessing they are to the rest of us.

IV. Vs. 16-18 People with passion

Vs. 16-18 We do not have the letter other than Jesus' to the church that met in Laodicea but these letters were to be shared, studied and applied which shows that the first century church already recognized this letters as being divinely authored and that Paul and others were just the pin.

Archippus: Paul's mentions him in his letter to Philemon and many feel that he was the son of Philemon. Paul exhorts him not to neglect the calling that was upon his life.

Saint's we all have been given a ministry by the Lord. **The question is: Are you taking heed to it that you may fulfill it?** I can't fulfill your ministry as I've been called by the Lord to be a part of the ministry found in Ephesians 4 that is to "*equip the saint's for the work of ministry.*" I'm called to equip people not so they can be entertained but for the work of service to the King and His children. You have every right to expect that out of me...I pray that I am equipping you. And the only way I can tell how I'm doing is by watching most of you go to work for Christ. How do you know what your work is for the Lord? Well what are you passionate about? What are your interests? Answer those questions and you will know where your work is. That's why we here don't have programs that I appoint people towards we have folks with passion that get to work. Recently someone came to me with a heart to start a book club and now we have a ministry for those that love to read good Christian books and share with each other. I met with another person who saw the need to reach out to folks like her and her husband so they are going to start a ministry called "common ground" for 20-30 something's every other Saturday night in He-Brew's café.