

Let's Worship God

15th-20th April 2019
Colossians



Colossians

Monday - Colossians 4:1-9 - Tychius

One of the marks of genuine Christianity is love for those who share 'like precious faith'. It is amazing to read in Paul's letters that although he was often in great discomfort himself and suffering extremely adverse circumstances, his concern was always for those to whom he was writing. So it is here in Colossians; Paul wants to send two of his companions to the church in Colossae so that they will not be anxious about him, and so that they can bring encouragement to the church.

Tychicus had been a faithful companion to Paul on his missionary journeys and had probably spent some time with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome. He was now being given the responsibility to take the letter to the Colossians and probably the one to Philemon and to Ephesus as well. (Compare Col. 4:9 with Philemon 1, 8-22; Eph. 6:21, 22)

What is really significant here is the way that Tychicus is described by Paul. There are three outstanding Christian characteristics displayed in this man. There is no evidence that he was a great preacher or teacher, but the character he displayed should be coveted by all professing Christians.

He was a 'beloved brother'. Paul recognised in him one who knew the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, he not only spoke like a Christian, he lived like one. This godly Christian man was also one who was willing to be a servant, no job was too small or menial for him to perform as he faithfully served Paul as he served his Lord. Paul also recognised that his own work was no more important than that of Tychicus, for he considered him as a 'fellow-servant' in the Lord. What greater commendation could there be than to be described as 'a beloved brother, faithful servant and fellow bond servant in the Lord'?

Questions

1. Think about how Tychicus served Paul and see that could be applied in your own circumstances.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would serve others.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Colossians 4:5

Praise: Psalm 87 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Colossians

Tuesday - Colossians 4:9; Philemon 1:1-25 - Onesimus

The one whom Paul sent with Tychicus to Colossae was no stranger to at least some of the people in Colossae. His story is told in one of the other letters that the two men were going to carry with them. Onesimus, whose name means 'useful', had been a slave of Philemon, a man who had come to faith in Christ, probably through the ministry of Paul himself. Unlike his name, Onesimus had been anything but useful to his master. He had apparently stolen from his master and had run away to Rome. In the remarkable providence of God, in the city known for its depravity and vice, this runaway slave came face to face, not only with the apostle Paul, but more importantly, with Paul's master the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now Paul wants to send him back to Philemon, no longer as a worthless, untrustworthy and dishonest slave, but as a faithful and beloved brother in Christ. In the letter Paul sends to Philemon he tells him of just how useful Onesimus had now become to him. Indeed, Paul would have loved to have kept Onesimus with him, but believed that it was the right thing to do to send him back to his master.

There are two wonderful lessons in this incident:

1. The gospel has the power to change all sorts and conditions of men. There is no-one beyond the transforming power of Christ. This gives great encouragement to go to men and women with the gospel.

2. The gospel is able to bind all classes and conditions of men into a loving brotherhood. There could scarcely be a bigger gulf between a runaway slave and the master from whom he had stolen and fled, and yet these two are now united in the bonds of Christ Philemon v.16.

Questions

1. Think about barriers that can exist between professing Christians and how they can be overcome.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would be united in Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Colossians 4:5

Praise: Psalm 88 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Colossians

Wednesday - Colossians 4:1-14 - Encouragement

There are several people who were with Paul during his imprisonment who wish to join with him in sending greetings to the church in Colossae. They are, of course all individuals with their own particular characteristics, but they can be grouped together to illustrate certain values:

The first three, Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus could be described as 'gracious comforters'. All three were Jews and all were companions with Paul in his journeys and in his sufferings. More is known of Aristarchus and Mark than of Jesus. Aristarchus came from Thessalonica, suffered at the hands of the mob in Ephesus (Acts 19:29) and travelled widely with Paul (Acts 20:4, 27:2). Mark was the writer of the second gospel, the cousin of Barnabas; a man who had failed (Acts 15:36-41) but had been restored and was very dear to the heart of Paul (2 Tim. 4:11). The little that is said about Jesus is the best thing that could be said about any believer; he was righteous.

These three men were the only three Jewish Christians in Rome who stood with Paul and helped him in his work of ministry and evangelisation. It was perhaps a source of disappointment to Paul that so few of his 'kinsmen after the flesh' had come to faith in the city of Rome. The contribution that they made to Paul's ministry was tremendous for they are described as bringing encouragement to the apostle. There was so much in the life and ministry of Paul that could have been discouraging; he was persecuted, beaten, mocked, shipwrecked, mocked and imprisoned and generally given a hard time. How important therefore were those faithful brethren who remained with Paul through all his trials and gave him encouragement in the Lord. It is difficult to estimate the good that is done for the kingdom of God by those who encourage their fellow believers.

Questions

1. Think about how you could encourage a fellow believer this week.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would be an encouragement to a fellow Christian.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Colossians 4:5

Praise: Psalm 89 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Colossians

Thursday - Colossians 4:12-13; Colossians 1:1-12 - Epaphras

If the first three men could be described as 'gracious comforters', Epaphras should be seen as the 'faithful servant'. Epaphras was from Colossae and it seems that he was the one who had brought the gospel to Colossae and possibly also to the neighbouring towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis. He had gone to Rome to consult Paul about the situation in the Colossian church and he appears to have painted a faithful picture, highlighting the good as well as the bad. In his report to Paul, the one thing that stood out was his love and concern for his fellow believers in Colossae.

Paul says how the love that this man had for the believers in the Lycus valley showed itself in his faithfulness in prayer for them. There is no greater service that can be undertaken for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ than prayer. A believer who is truly a faithful servant will be faithful in prayer. The prayers of Epaphras were not just ritual or form; his prayers were sincere, genuine and heartfelt. He is described as striving or wrestling in prayer, the word literally meaning 'to agonise'. It is the same kind of agonising or striving seen in Jacob at the brook Jabbok or in the Lord Jesus Christ in Gethsemane. Not only were his prayers earnest, they were also constant.

In his praying he does not seek material blessings or even peace and stability, he prays that they might be steadfast and mature in their faith, and that in the midst of all the difficulties that faced them, they might have a full assurance of faith. This is the longing of one who has learned for himself and desires for those he loves to 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness'.

Questions

1. Think about how to develop your own prayer life to be more like Epaphras.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would persevere in prayer.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Colossians 4:5

Praise: Psalm 90 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Colossians

Friday - Colossians 4:1-14 - Luke & Demas

The final two companions sending greetings to the Colossians demonstrate a rather dramatic contrast; Luke the loyal and faithful companion and Demas who proved to be a faithless friend.

Luke had frequently accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys (Acts 16:10-17), and had been a regular source of comfort to him and encouragement to him. As a doctor, too he would also have been a great help to Paul in his physical weakness. If there is one characteristic that stands out in Luke, it is his loyalty. He was on both the second and third missionary journeys; he was with Paul in Jerusalem and accompanies him in this imprisonment in Rome. When Paul comes to the end of his life during the second Roman imprisonment, it is Luke who is there with him when everybody else has gone (2 Tim. 4:11).

Demas, on the other hand, is portrayed in quite a different light. If the only references to Demas were the ones in Col. 4:14 and Philemon 24, he would have been seen simply as one of that faithful band of men and women who ministered to Paul. Sadly, at the end of his life Paul had to write 'Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica' (2 Tim 4:10). It may be that Demas simply could not face up to the rigours and dangers of life with Paul rather than that he abandoned the faith, but nevertheless, it is a sad commentary on a life that had begun well.

No wonder the Scripture urges professing believers to be on their guard lest they fall away from the profession they have made (1 Cor. 10:12). We should not be too hard or judgemental with regard to Demas for we know nothing of his circumstances, but rather use his experience as a warning not to become confident in our own strength or ability, but to rely only upon the Lord.

Questions

1. How were Luke and Demas different?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would rely on the Lord's strength.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Colossians 4:5

Praise: Psalm 91 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Colossians

Saturday - Colossians 4:15-18 - Conclusion

The last four verses of the letter contain some final greetings from Paul both to the church in Colossae and also to that in Laodicea. As was quite common in the time of the early church, believers in Laodicea met for worship in a private house. One of the believers, Nympha opened her house for the public meetings of the church. The home was, and should always be the centre of all true religious life - the use of a meeting house for worship is only an extension of the religious life of the family - and that life is seen in worship, fellowship, and outreach.

It seems as though it was Paul's practice to treat the letters he sent to different congregations as circular letters. The Colossian letter was to be read in Laodicea and a letter sent to Laodicea (either now lost or possibly the letter to the Ephesians which was then sent to Laodicea) was to be read in Colossae. This is, of course the characteristic of all Scripture. Although written in particular circumstances to address specific difficulties all Scripture is of universal application.

The words addressed to Archippus, who was possibly the son of Philemon (Phil.2) and described as 'our fellow soldier' may have been to encourage him to be more diligent in the performance of his duties or it may have been an injunction to the congregation to give him support and co-operation so that he could fulfil his responsibilities.

In closing the letter Paul authenticates it by writing the last few words himself. He seeks prayer for the difficult circumstances in which he finds himself; not dwelling overmuch on the difficulties but just reminding the believers of his condition. He then commits the church to the Lord and to His grace - the best and most basic blessing of all.

Questions

1. Think about the lessons learned in the study of Colossians and see how they have been applied in your life.

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Colossians 4:5

Praise: Psalm 92 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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If you have any queries please contact - admin@rpglobalalliance.org