

## COLOSSIANS 4 STAYING or STRAYING

The Apostle took on interpersonal relationships in our last study. He lectured the ladies... He hounded the husbands... He chastised the children... And he implored the employees.

He was clear that we all are to love and respect one another AND that we are to stay in our role; We would say, "Stay in your lane!"

Paul was teaching order and rank.

What makes these roles work well? LOVE!

### PAUL'S PRAYER REQUEST

**Colossians 4:2** Continue (*persevere*) **earnestly** in prayer, being **vigilant** in it with **thanksgiving**;

- For you future preachers, here are the three points you need to make a sermon:
  - Pray earnestly...
  - Pray with vigilance...
  - Pray with thanksgiving...
- If you want the Lord to answer your prayers – Pray this way.
  - **NLT** – “Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”
  - **My advice** – Have a prayer list. People whom you pray for at least once a day. When you cannot sleep – **pray it!**

### PAUL NEVER PRAYED FOR PAROLE

**BUT HE DID PRAY FOR OPPORTUNITY TO PREACH, listen...**

3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery (*Revelation*) of Christ, for which I am also in chains, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

- When the Apostle was arrested he entered the jail looking around – NOT FOR A WAY TO ESCAPE – but looking for his next opportunity to share the Gospel.
  - I wish my attitude was so good... NOT THAT I WANT TO BE ARRESTED, but when I have a trial, a disaster, an inconvenience – Am I looking for a way “make it manifest as I ought to speak?”
  - Where will the Lord WANT me to make my faith manifest? IE, real... apparent... bold?
  - May my first thought after bad news be: “OK Lord, what are You up to?” “Who can I bless while being interrupted and inconvenienced?” Listen to V5...

5 Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time.

- We Christians need to careful... We need to be wise to present a positive witness to those outside of the faith!
- Many of them are running out of time – so we need to lovingly warn them.

**SO...**

6 Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

- **CEV** - Be pleasant and hold their interest when you speak the message. Choose your words carefully and be ready to give answers to anyone who asks questions.
- I have to admit that some of the stuff I have seen on Christian TV is embarrassing.
- CCSV, let us be humble and real witnesses to our city and neighborhoods.
- We need to be forgiving and humble and gentle like our Savior was. YES, He overturned some tables... BUT... He did that in His own Temple!
- Let us make sure OUR ministry is graceful and seasoned with salt.

**STAYING POWER (Read through V18)**

7 **Tychicus**, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts,

9 with **Onesimus**, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here.

10 **Aristarchus** my fellow prisoner greets you,

with **Mark** the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him),

11 and **Jesus who is called Justus**. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

12 **Epaphras**, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

14 **Luke** the beloved physician and **Demas** greet you.

15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and **Nymphas** and the church that *is* in his house.

16 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

17 And say to **Archippus**, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

18 This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

**Paul mentions by name 10 people as he closes. Let's see if they were the ones who stayed, or the ones who strayed:**

1. **Tychicus** V7- Paul called him a "beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord."

- a. Though NEVER in trouble with the law, Tychicus lived in prison in order to minister to the Apostle.
- b. That means he suffered starvation and possibly beatings,
- c. But he stayed by Paul's side!

2. **Onesimus** V9 - The object of the book of Philemon.

- a. Onesimus has strayed from his rightful owner (Philemon.)
- b. But once he came to the Lord, his straying days ended, and he became a faithful minister of God.
- c. Not much in the way of credentials, but Paul gave him credit for being one of the people who stayed!

3. **Aristarchus** V10 - Paul called him my "fellow prisoner," like Tychicus, Aristarchus was a volunteer prisoner who traveled with the Apostle. We know that Aristarchus was there for the Ephesian riot, the storm and shipwreck described in Acts 27. This is a man who knew the danger of sticking with the Apostle but did it gladly for the sake of the Gospel!

4. **Mark** V10 - "If he stops by, treat him well!" - This is the very same John Mark who Paul had at one time banned from any future trips. Mark had quit the ministry as a younger man - left in the middle of a trip. His failure was forgiven him.

5. **Jesus Justus** V11 - The name Jesus was a common name in these days. In Hebrew it is the name Joshua. We don't know a lot about this "fellow worker for the Kingdom." God knows his faithfulness!

These afore mentioned men were Jewish, here are the Gentile associates:

6. **Epaphras** - V12-13 - The Pastor of the Colossian church- While spending with the Apostle Paul the Apostle noticed the prayerful passion for his people back home.

7. **Luke** the beloved physician -V14 - Luke is the only Gentile author of a book of the Bible.

You have to laugh that Paul was used by God to heal hundreds of people, but he needed a doctor along.

Luke stayed with the Apostle until the end of Paul's life - probably prepared his body for burial. How nice to be both physician and minister. Sounds like somebody we know, right?

8. **Nymphas** - V15 - Nymphas is mentioned for being willing to open his house for a meeting place. May God bless the homes and the people in them who welcome the Church into their homes for ministry. May your carpeting last forever...

9. **Archippus** - V17 - Archippus was a minister who had received his call from the Lord. The Apostle sends him a similar message he had sent to Timothy when he said, "stir up the gifts within you."

10. Finally V14 - **Demas**, the man who strayed - Demas is mentioned three times in the New Testament. twice as one of Paul's faithful helpers and once in 2 Timothy 4:10 - Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed...

Those aren't bad numbers, 9 who stayed and one who strayed! I have thought of so many of you this week studying this chapter.

Those who have stayed and stayed, serving, loving, giving and encouraging all of us!

Keep up the good fight - The time is shorter than you know.