

## Greetings & Farewells!

### Colossians 4:7-18

I asked old Maud how she lost her husband. She told me her sad story...

"Well," She said, "he needed a blood transfusion, but his blood type was not on record, so the doctors asked me if I knew what it was, as they urgently needed to know, in order to save my Norman's life.

Tragically, I've never known his blood type, so I only had time to sit and say goodbye. I'll never forget how supportive my Norman was." She said.

"Even as he was fading away, he kept on whispering to me, "Be positive, be positive!" That was my Norman! Always thinking of others."

Paul never did ministry alone; he always had a team.

Proverbs 27:17 says that iron sharpens iron.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 says that two are better than one.

Scripture clearly supports working together to accomplish the goals of the gospel. We will get a

glimpse of this as we look at Paul's team here in Colossians 4.

Today we will look at the 8 men on Paul's team as seen here in Colossians 4:7-18. The first man is:

#### I. The man with a servant's heart: Tychicus!

Colossians 4:7-8, "Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts."

Tychicus is mentioned 5 times in the New Testament. We see him first in Acts 20:4 while in Ephesus at the end of Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. He traveled with Paul to Jerusalem in spite of the danger he knew this journey would encounter.

From Titus 3:12 we are led to believe he may have covered Titus's duties in the church in Crete for a while. Then in 2 Timothy 4:12 Paul sends him to cover for Timothy in Ephesus.

Tychicus is carrying the letter to the Colossians and we know from Ephesians 6:21 that he brought Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus.

It is also likely that he is bringing Philemon the letter Paul wrote to him regarding Onesimus who we see here in verse 9.

Paul calls Tychicus a beloved brother, a faithful minister and a fellow servant. High praise from Paul.

#### II. The man with a sinful past: Onesimus!

Colossians 4:9, "He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here."

What was Onesimus' past? He was a runaway slave. His master was a leader in the church in Colossae named Philemon, the recipient of the letter by the same name from Paul.

In Paul's letter to Philemon Paul asks Philemon to welcome Onesimus back as a brother. Onesimus came to Christ under Paul's ministry in Rome.

Paul said that Onesimus was not profitable for Philemon, but upon coming to Christ he has become

profitable. Paul sought forgiveness and reconciliation for Onesimus and Philemon.

#### III. The man with a sympathetic heart: Aristarchus!

Colossians 4:10a, "My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings,"

Aristarchus was originally from Thessalonica and first met Paul in Ephesus where he joined Paul's team.

He was arrested with Gaius in Acts 19:29 and was later freed and able to join Paul on his trip to Jerusalem in Acts 20:4. Then in Acts 27:2 we see that Aristarchus was travelling with Paul to Rome as a fellow prisoner.

#### IV. The man with a surprising future: Mark!

Colossians 4:10b, "as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)"

You remember Mark, don't you? Sometimes he was called John Mark.

He was on Paul's first missionary journey as we see in Acts 13. Shortly into the trip he quits the team and goes home.

Later when Mark wishes to rejoin the team Paul and Barnabas disagree on whether or not to allow him back on. The disagreement is so severe that Paul and Barnabas split up, Barnabas taking Mark along with him.

We see that Peter helps Mark in 1 Peter 5:13. Then, notice this in:

2 Timothy 4:11, "Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry."

So, Paul, who refused to let Mark back on the team, now finds him helpful. This is a great restoration story for this young servant of Christ.

Oh, there is one other thing we know about Mark. Do you know what it is? He wrote the gospel of Mark.

So, even when someone makes a mistake, they can become helpful and do great things. There is hope for all of us!

#### V. The man with a strong commitment: Jesus, called Justus!

Colossians 4:11, "Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me."

This is the only time Justus is mentioned in Scripture and is all we know about him. He was a comfort to Paul.

#### VI. The man with a single passion: Epaphras!

Colossians 4:12-13, "Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. 13 I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis."

Epaphras was a co-founder of the church in Colossae and possibly even the current pastor.

He served the church through his prayers. This is a great example for all of us. When we are busy, we can still pray. When we are hurt and bedridden we

can still pray. When we are driving, we can pray. When we are walking the dog, we can pray.

His prayer was that they would stand firm in the will of God and that they would become mature. These are great things to pray for the body of Christ.

As you may remember from our study of the 7 letters in Revelation, Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis are 3 cities all very close to each other. This is like Niswaga, Pequot and Breezy Point. And we see in this passage that Epaphras was concerned for the church in each of these cities. He truly had a heart for people!

VII. The man with a specialized talent: Luke!

Colossians 4:14a, "Our dear friend Luke, the doctor,"

Luke is only mentioned 3 times in Scripture. Here, Philemon 24 and 2 Timothy 4:11.

Luke joined Paul during his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey and remained with Paul for the rest of Paul's life.

Luke wrote more of the New Testament by volume than any other New Testament writer, as author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. Both of these were letters he wrote to Theophilus.

Some believe Luke joined Paul as his personal doctor who would treat Paul's reoccurring illnesses.

No matter what your skill is, there is a place in ministry for you.

VIII. The man with a sad future: Demas!

Colossians 4:14b, "and Demas send greetings."

Unfortunately, we learn in 2 Timothy 4:9-10 that Demas abandons Paul because of his love for worldly things.

This brings us to the closing statements of Paul's letter to the Colossians in which he writes:

Colossians 4:15-18, "Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

16 After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

17 Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord."

18 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you."

We see that Paul wanted the letter read to the entire church and once read to the Colossians it was to be read in the church in Laodicea.

We learn here of a letter to the church in Laodicea, which is believed by many to actually be the letter to the Ephesians. This makes sense as we know that Paul's letters were treated as valuable bits of information and widely circulated.

Paul also takes this opportunity to encourage Archippus to complete what he has started.

So, what do we learn from this portion of Colossians?