

Colossians Pt. 8

Col 4:7-18

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Eric, Rod, Michael, and I along with some pastors from Mission Church went to El Paso to meet a Christian Reformed church gathering. It's been a long weekend...I haven't practiced my sermon yet so please bear with me.

Today we will focus on the last passage of Colossians in Chapter 4.

But first a question:

What do these movies have in common?



They all depict teamwork. This is what we will talk about today: If we could make a movie out of Colossians 4, we could call it “*Paul's People*” about the people with him, those who cared for him, and those he wanted to greet.

Let's go through this passage and talk about each person:

Tychicus

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

Tychicus is mentioned in Acts 20. He's from Asia, near Colossae, and traveled with Paul in Macedonia and Greece. He's also mentioned in Ephesians as the carrier of the letter: probably he carried both Colossians and Ephesians. These letters were circular letters to people of a particular region. But he's also mentioned in Timothy and Titus when Paul asks them to come to him quickly because, among other things, he has sent Tychicus off and only Luke is with him.

He is a dear brother: think of someone who is like this to you, someone who knows you and has cared for you. Faithful means allegiance; here the word means a fellow servant which means DOULAS, a compound word that means a '*slave with me,*' both serving the same master. Paul is saying that he and Tychicus are co-slaves to Jesus and he is commending him as someone close to him and faithful to the kingdom. He is being sent out for the purpose of encouragement: may he give you courage to continue to live in Christ.

Onesimus

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.

Onesimus was with Paul but came to him in an interesting way: he was bonded as a slave to Philomon and ran away from him, comes to Paul became a believer in Jesus, and was useful to Paul. Paul called him his dear son; it hurts Paul to send him away but he sends him back to Philemon not to be punished but to be received as a brother in Christ in love. This is found in the book of Philemon, which is short and revolutionary in the first century because it asks for a slave to be received as a brother in Christ. Tythicus is traveling with Onesimus to take him back to Philemon and to carry these letters.

Aristarchus

10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)

In Acts 16, Paul is healing and teaching people and the silversmiths don't like it because people aren't buying idols made to gods. They try to seize Paul but grab two of his companions instead. They make them stand in a hall where people proclaim allegiance to their gods.

Mark

Mark is the writer of the Gospel of Mark and close friends to Peter. Mark's writings were probably based on the sermons he heard from Peter but he is also close to Paul. We see a confrontation in Acts 13 when Mark leaves them. Paul doesn't like this, maybe because they counted on Mark to help carry a lot of stuff. Paul was angry with Barnabus who wanted to take Mark on their second journey. They disagree and Paul and Barnabus split up and go different ways to talk about the gospel. The instructions he is talking about refers to this and the resolution they have made.

Justus

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

We don't know much about him except for what he learn in this verse. Tychichus, Onesimus, Mark, and Justus are all men of circumcision: people were Jewish and believed in the Messiah. Think about people who have been of comfort to you: who serves you a meal? Today Tessie is cooking and she is a comfort to us!

There are more:

Epaphras

12 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.

We have heard about Epaphras already in Colossians. This is noteworthy because we know that he is the one who listened to Paul and then returned to Colossea and started a church there. He may have started the churches at Laodicea and Hierapolis as well. Paul is wrestling in prayer for him as he details in this verse: he wants him to produce fruit in his ministry so that he might be fully assured in the truth.

Luke and Demus

14 Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

Luke joins Paul in Acts 16 and we know this because from then on, it is written in first person. Luke attended Paul as a doctor and wrote collective stories about what happened. He tacks Demus onto this greeting: we also see Demus in Philemon. However, in II Timothy we learn that only Luke was with him...Demus has loved the world and deserted him.

II Tim 4:10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

Nympha

15 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.

Nympha is the leader, the host who invites people into her house to eat and be in community together.

Archippus

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

We don't know what this ministry is but probably it's to the church in Colossae...whatever it is, Paul wants him to continue in it.

<These are Paul's people>

Now we come to Paul:

Paul

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

We've been reading about Paul's ministry and letters all summer. Now at the end of Colossians, we see the end of this letter: He greets them in his own hand. He wants them to remember he is suffering and offers them grace. **Grace** is the gift that justifies us: **Justified** means to be aligned with something (like text on a page). *Grace aligns us with Jesus*. This is a continual gift so that as we live, we are continually aligned with what the Spirit is doing in our world. This is Paul's farewell!

Final thoughts:

We have relationships in community: We are Village people who are called to be close to one another, to journey alongside one another, to be faithful together, to have allegiance with the work of the kingdom, and to be co-slaves to the Lord, not pulled to the left or right. We are called to wrestle in prayer for one another, together to stand firm against the philosophies of the world, to be mature, to produce fruit, to bring people into the kingdom to be fully assured in our faith. This implies that we are not fully assured all the time: this is what we are to wrestle with in prayer.

Grace be with you, Village, the grace that aligns you with Jesus and justifies you that you might pray, be a fellow servant, and be fully assured.