

COLOSSIANS 4 - “Christian Graces; Final Greeting; Closing Exhortations and Blessing!”

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

BE REMINDED OF WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW!

2Pe 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

2Pe 1:11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2Pe 1:12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

2Pe 1:13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,

The Preeminence of Christ

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Col 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Col 1:19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, Col 1:20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Outline of Colossians 4:1-18

Paul continues his application of the preeminence of Christ in our lives.

I. In Christian Witness (Col 4:2-6)

Paul was a prisoner in Rome, but this did not stop him from bearing witness for Christ. He tells believers how to be effective witnesses for Christ.

A. Watch and pray.

“Watch” carries the idea of being alert, praying with your eyes open. This truth first appears in Neh 4:9, when the enemy threatened the Jews as they tried to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. “We made our prayer...and set a watch,” was Nehemiah’s solution; and it worked! Prayer is never a substitute for our own alertness. Christ teaches us that to watch and pray is the way to victory over temptation (Mar 14:38). We should watch and pray for opportunities to witness and serve.

B. Walk in wisdom.

“Them that are without” refers, of course, to the lost who do not belong to the Christian family. What a sad thing to be “without” — without Christ, without hope, without peace, without forgiveness! It is important that we Christians live wisely when among the lost, for unsaved people look at our lives and try to find things to criticize.

C. Have godly speech.

The salt of holiness must always flavor our speech. Old Testament Jews used salt in their sacrifices, symbolizing purity and the preservation of that which is good. The Greeks called salt *charitas* — grace — because it gave flavor to things. Our speech must not be corrupt (Eph 4:29); salt (God’s grace) holds back corruption. “Redeeming the time” (Col 4:5) means “buying up the opportunity.” As Christians, we must be alert to seize every opportunity to witness for Christ and win others.

II. In Christian Service (Col 4:7-18)

Ten who Paul mentions in closing: Tychicus had been with Paul for several years. He accompanied Paul from Ephesus (Act 20:4) as he returned to Jerusalem and possibly was a citizen of Ephesus. He had labored there with Paul for those three years. Tychicus was to carry the letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians. This man had a long and dangerous journey ahead of him. How thankful we are that he was faithful to deliver the Word, otherwise we could not study it today!

Onesimus was the runaway slave of Philemon, whom Paul had won to Christ. The apostle was now sending Onesimus back home to Colosse. He and Tychicus traveled together, with Onesimus carrying the precious letter to his master, Philemon.

Aristarchus is seen during the Ephesian riot, singled out as a leading Christian. He also accompanied Paul during that terrible storm en route to Rome, faithfully sticking” by Paul through thick and thin!

II. In Christian Service - Continued (Col 4:7-18)

Marcus is John Mark, cousin to Barnabas. Mark had “fallen out” with Paul years before (Act 13:13 and Act 15:36-41). When he wrote his last letter, Paul indicated that Mark was “profitable” in the ministry, a great example of forgiving the failures of others and giving them the opportunity to fulfill God’s purposes in their lives.

Jesus-Justus was a Jewish believer. He worked with Paul and comforted (encouraged) him. What a help he was to the apostle during those days in prison!

Epaphras, a Gentile was likely the founder-pastor of the church at Colosse. He was a godly man committed to the ministry of the Word of God and prayer! He did not simply “say prayers”; “he labored [agonized] in prayer.” If Christians prayed as hard as they played, they would see more of God’s blessings. Epaphras prayed that the Colossians might stand “mature and full” in God’s will. He wanted them to live up to their “fullness” in Christ. Yet his prayers were not for the Colossians only; he was zealous for the saints in the neighboring cities as well. What Christian love!

Luke was the Gentile physician who joined Paul at Troas, later writing the books of Luke and Acts. Luke and Demas are linked again in 2Ti 4:10-11. “Only Luke is with me...Demas has forsaken me”. You can summarize the life of Demas in three verses: “Demas, my fellow laborer” (Phm 1:24); “Demas...” (Col 4:14); “Demas has forsaken me” (2Ti 4:10 4). Since Colossians and Philemon were written during the same time, Demas’ backsliding, probably back into Judaism, must have been rapid. What a tragedy!

In his closing instructions, Paul sends a greeting to some of the saints and tells the Colossians and Laodiceans to share their respective letters with each other. It may be that the epistle to the Laodiceans is our Ephesians. “All Scripture is profitable” (2Ti 3:16), so we must not neglect any of God’s Word.

Archippus: He closes by warning Archippus not to faint but to fulfill his ministry in the Lord. He may have been the son of Philemon, since he is mentioned in that letter too (Phm 1:2).

Paul’s usual salutation of grace closes the letter, marking it as authentic.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

COLOSSIANS 4 -

Col 4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

“Christian Graces; vs. 2-4 How to talk to God about men; vs. 5-6 Then How to talk to men about God!”

Col 4:2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

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

Paul has been dealing with interpersonal relationships, much as he did in chapter five of his letter to the Ephesians. As he talks about the wife, her relationship to the husband, how the husbands are to love their wives, the children obeying their parents, the fathers not provoking their children to anger, and then the servants with their masters.

v. 1 Greek and Roman slaves were often mistreated by their masters. Here those masters were told they should act toward their slaves according to justice and equity, for God, their Master, required this of them, and would call them to account. This is a lesson that all masters throughout the world should carefully learn. Do not treat your servants as if God had made them of an inferior to you.

v. 2 First we’re told how to pray! Continue earnestly (perseverance with fervor) in prayer: Paul supported the Colossians through His prayers for them (Col 1:3-8). Their life and ministry would continue to prosper through continued vigilance in prayer, including prayer on their part, which does not come easy. Earnestly in prayer speaks of much effort steadily applied. Being vigilant (watchful, wakeful, alertly) in it with thanksgiving: We are to be vigilant in prayer, but always praying with thanksgiving for the great things God has done - intercession, watching for answers to prayer, and thanksgiving when answers are received.

vs. 3-4 Now, what you should pray for! Meanwhile praying also for us: Paul is asking, please pray for us! Not asking for prayer for his many personal needs, but that God would open to us a door for the word. Act 14:27; 1Co 16:9; 2Co 2:12. As I ought to speak: Even though Paul was in chains for his faithfulness to the gospel, he knew that he ought to speak it in a way that would make it manifest (clearly evident). Paul asked for that he would continue to make the gospel clear and evident, even if it meant more chains.

v. 1 Nobody can really rule properly unless he is ruled. You have to realize that one day we are going to answer to the Lord. I have a Master in heaven, to whom I am to give an account. It’s extremely important that we have this recognition. How wonderful that our Master, did not treat with justice, but He extended His grace and His mercy.

v. 2 Prayer opens the door for God to do what He’s desiring to do in your life or through your life. Prayer opens the door to allow God to do it for God will not violate the free will or power of choice that He has given to us. We need to continue in prayer to come into harmony with God. The moment we come into harmony with the purpose of God, then we will see the answer to prayer. Don’t give up. Watch, he said, in the same with thanksgiving. It is so important that we learn to give thanks unto the Lord in all things. This should the norm for us!

v. 3 Do you ever ask others to put you on their prayer list and pray that God will give you an opportunity to share the glorious mystery of Christ?

v. 4 Are you praying for your pastor? Children’s ministry workers? Youth pastors? That they may make the word of God -the mystery of Christ- to be presented in a manifest, clear, evident manner!

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Col 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.

Col 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Final Greeting:

Col 4:7 Tychicus (too-khee-kos'), a beloved brother, will tell you all the news about me.

Col 4:8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts.

Col 4:9 with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here.

Col 4:10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him),

Col 4:11 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.

vs. 5-6 The outer life of witness. The Christian life isn't only lived in the prayer closet. Our Christian lives must also be lived wisely *toward those who are outside*. It's important how we speak. We are to let our *speech always be with grace*. *Grace* has two possible applications here – God's grace and human graciousness. *That you may know how you ought to answer each one*: Paul believed that Christians would answer others from Biblical truth, and that they would work at knowing how to communicate those answers to *those who are outside*. It's okay to say, *I don't understand everything, but I know that He loves me. That I once was lost and now am found! That I was blind and now I see! I know that He has prepared a place for me and that I will be with Him, in His presence forever and ever! (Cf. Eph. 4:29)*

vs. 7-8 Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord,: The Colossians probably didn't know Tychicus. He would carry this letter to them (*will tell you all the news about me*). Tychicus apparently also brought the news from Colosse to Paul in Rome (Col 1:7). He also is mentioned in *Act 20:4* as one of the men who came with Paul from Asia to Jerusalem, to carry the offering of those believers to the needy Christians of Jerusalem and Judea.

v. 9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother: Onesimus was a slave owned by a believer in Colosse, but he ran away and came into contact with Paul in Rome. Paul could have written about Onesimus, “the escaped slave who I am sending back to his master.” Instead, he called him *a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord*, letting the Colossians know that Onesimus was now one of you.

v. 10 Aristarchus: A Macedonian from Thessalonica (*Act 20:4*), was Paul's travel companion. He was with the apostle when the Ephesian mob seized Paul (*Act 19:29*). He was also with Paul on his shipwrecked journey to Rome under his Roman imprisonment (*Act 27:2*). Here Paul calls him *my fellow prisoner*. It seems that *Aristarchus* was often with Paul in his hard times. *Mark the cousin of Barnabas . . . if he comes to you, welcome him*: Following the first missionary journey, Paul had a falling out with both Barnabas and Mark (*Act 13:5, 13*), but here we see that this was all in the past. The grace of God working in Paul changed him and softened him towards others that had previously offended him.

v. 11 Jesus who is called Justus: Of this man, we know nothing except his name. He is numbered among these previous four men, all of them *comforters* to Paul in his Roman custody preceding his trial before Caesar (*they have proved to be a comfort to me*). *My only fellow workers . . . who are of the circumcision*: At that time, Paul had only three *fellow workers* with a Jewish heritage. Yet these three has a most fruitful ministry. They *proved to be a comfort* to Paul.

vs. 5-6 Walk in wisdom to those that are without. Let your life be a positive witness for Jesus Christ. God help us to walk in wisdom to them that are without, redeeming the time. Time is short! We don't have any time, really, to indulge in joys, sorrows, or our possessions. Here, Paul genuinely completes his letter. Let your speech be always with grace, God, help us on this one! Let it always be with grace, seasoned with salt, having flavor. Talk with your life!

vs. 7-8 We are given here in the final greeting, ten named people, now all perfect, but all so human and necessary –this roll call will go out to thousands and thousands over the ages! Are you aware of how special you are and how important you are to the ministry of the gospel, as the named people have demonstrated? Tychicus carries with him four letters – to the Colossians, the Philippians, to Philemon and to the church in Laodicea. All of us can find our lives here! - *a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord*

v. 9 How would you, would I, have summarized Onesimus? As an illegal, unprofitable, runaway slave or as a profitable, *faithful and beloved brother*? Are you such an encourager?

v. 10 How awesome to see God's grace working in the relationship between Paul, Barnabas and John Mark! How thankful are we that grace has had its good work in us?

v. 11 Aristarchus, Mark and Justus have been medicine, encouragement, comfort for me, Paul says. Can that be said as being descriptive of us?

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

<p><i>Col 4:12 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.</i></p> <p><i>Col 4:13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.</i></p> <p><i>Col 4:14 Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.</i></p> <p><i>Col 4:15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.</i></p>	<p><u>v. 12</u> <i>Always laboring fervently for you in prayers</i>: Prayer is hard work, and Epaphras worked diligently at it, especially being aware of the danger of the false teaching in Colosse. Therefore, Epaphras prayed that the Colossians would <i>stand perfect and complete in all the will of God</i>. This is a wonderful prayer to pray for anyone. Paul called Epaphras <i>a bondservant of Christ</i>, using a phrase, often applied to himself, but seldom to others, except here and in <u>Php 1:1</u> where he speaks of himself and Timothy together as <i>bondservants</i> of Jesus. Epaphras was a <i>bondservant</i>, and was really committed to prayer, at which he worked hard. <i>Laboring fervently</i> suggests heavy toil to the extent of pain.</p> <p><u>v. 13</u> <i>He has a great zeal for you</i>: Epaphras prayed well because he cared much. If he lagged in zeal, he certainly would have lagged in prayer.</p> <p><u>v. 14</u> <i>Luke the beloved physician</i>: We are informed here that Luke, the human author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, was a physician. We also see that his works are written in more scientific, analytical mindset (<u>Luk 1:1-4</u>) and have much detail that a physician would be interested in (<u>Luk 4:38</u>; <u>5:12-15</u>; <u>Luk 8:43</u>). Demas: Here, nothing positive is said about Demas, only that he greets the Colossian Christians and therefore must have been known to them. In <u>Phm 1:24</u> he is grouped among Paul's <i>fellow laborers</i>. But in the last mention of him (<u>2Ti 4:10</u>), Paul said that Demas had forsaken him, <i>having loved this present world</i> (αἰὼν - ahee-ohn' - by implication the world; specifically Jewish, a Messianic period, present or future) and that he had gone on to Thessalonica. What a tragic account of a study in degeneration, loss of enthusiasm, resulting in failure in the Christian faith. The six people who greeted the Colossians had contact with Paul in Rome, during the time of his house arrest and custody before appearing on trial before Caesar. We see here that unlike the later one described in 2 Timothy, here, though Paul was chained, enjoyed at least the occasional the company of many friends and associates.</p> <p><u>v. 15</u> <i>Laodicea</i>: In <u>Rev. 3:14-22</u>, Jesus gave this church a rather scathing rebuke. Laodicea was a neighboring city of Colosse and Hierapolis (<u>Col 4:13</u>). <i>Nymphas</i>: There has been debate as to if Paul referred to a man or a woman with this name. Some manuscripts have the masculine form and some have the feminine. <i>The church that is in his house</i>: The early church met as "house churches." Because few houses were large, there were usually several "house churches" in a city, with a pastor or elder over each one. There were to churches with a special building until the third century.</p>	<p><u>v. 12</u> Do you pray for others that they would <i>stand perfect and complete in all the will of God</i>? What a wonderful prayer to pray for anyone! Do we <i>always labor fervently in prayer</i> for others?</p> <p><u>v. 13</u> Notice another descriptive of Epaphras is <i>that he has a great zeal for you</i>! Can that be said of you and of me, that we have a great zeal for others?</p> <p><u>v. 14</u> What a friend, a personal doctor, who would travel and stay with you, no matter what, is Dr. Luke! Note what Paul writes in his final letter, <u>2Ti 4:11a</u> <i>Only Luke is with me</i>! What a servant, fellow minister and dear brother to Paul! Demas, on the other hand is a tragic account of one in degeneration, loss of enthusiasm, which ended in his forsaking Paul, having loved this present world. Who will we be a Luke or a Demas in the end?</p> <p><u>v. 15</u> <i>The church which is in his house</i>! What a great little phrase. If you have a family, you have a church.</p>
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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

<p><u>Closing Exhortations and Blessing</u> <u>Col 4:16</u> <i>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.</i></p> <p><u>Col 4:17</u> <i>And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."</i></p> <p><u>Col 4:18</u> <i>This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.</i></p>	<p><u>v. 16</u> <i>Now when this epistle is read among you:</i> When Paul and other apostles wrote letters to churches, the letters were simply publicly read in the congregations. It was a way for the apostle to teach that church even when he could not personally be there. <i>It is read also in the church of the Laodiceans:</i> It was often the general practice to distribute all apostolic letters among the churches, especially those close to each other...<i>likewise read the epistle from Laodicea:</i> Apparently, Paul wrote a letter to the Laodiceans that we do not have, however we are not to assume from this that our treasure of inspiration is incomplete. The Holy Spirit has chosen to preserve those letters that are inspired for the church in a universal sense. Paul was not inspired in this way every time he set pen to paper.</p> <p><u>v. 17</u> <i>And say to Archippus:</i> This special word to <i>Archippus</i> is of special interest. Paul wrote another short word regarding <i>Archippus</i> in another letter, mentioning <i>Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house (Phm 1:1)</i>. <i>Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry"</i>: Paul wanted the Colossians (or possibly the Laodiceans to encourage and strengthen <i>Archippus</i> directly. Not behind his back, but directly to him. They needed to say it <i>to</i> him. This encouragement to <i>Archippus</i> spoke both to him and to us regarding some enduring principles of ministry; God gives <i>ministry</i> to His people. True <i>ministry</i> is <i>received in the Lord</i>. <i>Ministry</i> may be left unfulfilled. Believers must <i>take heed</i> to their ministry in order for it to be <i>fulfilled</i>. We should encourage others to <i>fulfill</i> their <i>ministry</i>.</p> <p><u>v. 18</u> <i>This salutation by my own hand:</i> As was the custom in that day, Paul generally dictated his letters, and personally signed a postscript with his <i>own hand</i>. <i>Remember my chains:</i> We note much emotion, sorrow, and strength in this simple phrase. Paul not only knew the confinement and loneliness of the prisoner, but he also had the uncertainty of not knowing if his case before Caesar's court would end with his execution. His referring to his sufferings are not pleas for sympathy. They are his claims to authority, which gives him the right to speak. <i>Grace be with you:</i> Paul's conclusion is the only one possible for the apostle of grace, confronting a heresy emphasizing elaborate hidden mysteries and righteousness through works. We can only go forward safely in the Christian life if <i>grace</i> is <i>with</i> us.</p>	<p><u>v. 16</u> Although we have no record of this letter to Laodicea, we do see the practice that letters received, were to be publicly read in the churches in the area to which they were addressed. How we should appreciate every epistle in the Bible, which needs to be read and understood by each of us!</p> <p><u>v. 17</u> How much do we need this exhortation right now? – <i>"Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."</i></p> <p><u>v. 18</u> Can you see yourself making such a close to a great letter? Remember my chains! Grace be with you!</p>
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	<p><u><i>I Surrender All</i></u> - VanDeVenter; Weeden - Maranatha! Praise Band</p> <p><i>1.All to Jesus I surrender; all to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.</i></p> <p><i>Refrain -I surrender all, I surrender all, all to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.</i></p> <p><i>2.All to Jesus I surrender; humbly at His feet I bow, worldly pleasures all forsaken; take me, Jesus, take me now.</i> (Refrain)</p> <p><i>3.All to Jesus I surrender; make me, Savior, wholly Thine; Let me feel the Holy Spirit, Truly know that Thou art mine..</i> (Refrain)</p> <p><i>4.All to Jesus I surrender; Lord, I give myself to Thee; fill me with Thy love and power; let Thy blessing fall on me.</i> (Refrain)</p> <p><i>5.All to Jesus I surrender; now I feel the sacred flame. O the joy of full salvation! Glory, glory, to His name!</i> (Refrain)</p>	
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