

# Colossians 4:7-18

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[ 0 : 00 ] As he's talking to this church in Colossae, so follow along as we read Colossians chapter 4, starting in verse 7. Tychicus will tell you all about my activities.

He is a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts. And with him, Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that is taking place here. Eristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions.

If he comes to you, welcome him. And Jesus, who was called Justice. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

[ 1 : 04 ] For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, as does Demas.

Give my greetings to the brothers of Laodicea and to Nympha and the church in her house. And when this letter has been read among you, have it read in the church of the Laodiceans. And see, you also read the letter from Laodicea.

And say to Archippus, see that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord. I, Paul, write this greeting from my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Let's pray. Lord, as we look at this word, I ask that you would help make it clear, that your spirit would apply it. In this passage, as we look through these names and these greetings, these comforts, that you would give us a desire to serve you, to live our lives for your goodness and for your glory.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So like I said, we're wrapping up the book of Colossians. And we've spent the past three and a half so chapters looking at theology and talking about what Christ has done.

[ 2 : 20 ] And those things are very, very important. In fact, we'll talk about at the end of the sermon why they're so important. And it might be easy for us to dismiss this list of names, right?

It might be easy to say this is kind of boring. It's kind of like a genealogy. There's names. It can certainly be an intimidating passage to preach compared to some of the sermons we looked at before where the passages of Christ-centered doctrine and teaching might seem much easier. But this passage, when we read it and we understand its context in Scripture and what Paul is saying to these people and who is with Paul and what's happening when he is in prison, help us understand that first century context.

What was actually happening? What was going on in the day-to-day lives of Paul and these people? It gives us human insight into the inner workings of the apostles' ministry and the power of the gospel.

That even though the apostle was imprisoned, the gospel cannot be. So this book, as we've talked about through and we've read through it, is written during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

[ 3 : 25 ] So Paul is living in his own house. He's chained to a Roman presbyterian guard. And Acts chapters 21 to 28 tell the larger story. I'm not going to read that for you.

But in synopsis, Paul and Tychicus and Aristarchus are with Paul together. They're making their way to Jerusalem where Paul was arrested.

And eventually Paul stood trial before a Roman governor named Felix. And they kept him in custody for two years. So Paul was in prison and Paul kept being brought out to talk to people, to

talk to Felix.

And they would dialogue about things. But Felix was replaced. And after two years without Paul being condemned, the Jews were getting frustrated. So they're pushing for Paul to be sent back to Jerusalem.

They were saying, hey, let's have Paul sent back. Let's have a trial. But in reality, they were planning to ambush him and kill him. So Paul appeals to Caesar.

[ 4 : 26 ] He had a right to do that as a Roman citizen. So he appeals to Caesar. And so they put him on a boat, essentially. And through a bunch of trials and tribulations and shipwreck, he makes his way to Rome.

And Luke records in Acts 27, 1 to 2. And when it was decided that we should set sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustine cohort named Julius.

And embarking on a ship of Adirathium, which was bound to set sail in the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian, a Thessalonica.

So we get a bit of a glimpse here, even in Acts 27, of Luke and Paul and Aristarchus on board this ship that's heading to Rome.

A lot of things happen in that journey. But eventually, Paul ends up in Rome. He ends up in house arrest. And Paul writes what we call the prison epistles. He writes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

[ 5 : 29 ] And we've spent a good bit of our time reading through Colossians, and we're going to spend some time today even in Philemon. But as we're going to see, many of the people that were with Paul in Acts will show up in Ephesians, will show up in Colossians, will show up in Philemon.

So with that background in mind of what was going on, why did Paul end up in Rome, why is he in prison, we're going to look through this passage in kind of three different ways. We're going to look at the people that Paul calls out.

We're trying to make a quick stop at the people who are named and who they are and what they're doing. We'll look at the purpose that Paul has. Why does Paul care to write out all these things that are going on, talking about this person and that person.

And then we'll look at the power of the gospel that is without chains. So Paul lists off the bat two messengers who are going to be going to this church in Colossae.

He sends a man named Tychicus and he sends a man named Onesimus. And Tychicus is probably the carrier of this letter. He is sending him to the church in Colossae.

[ 6 : 42 ] Probably also maybe the letter to Philemon. And he sends him with the purpose of communicating to the church how Paul is doing. He's like, he's going to make known to you all the things that are going on.

He's a faithful servant, I'm sorry, a faithful minister and a fellow servant in the Lord. And he's going to come there and he's going to encourage your hearts. And then he sends Onesimus.

And Onesimus is a runaway slave. You may have heard his name, read the book of Philemon. But most likely Onesimus ran away from Philemon, who was one of the men at Colossae.

He must have left Colossae and in God's providence ended up in contact with Paul. In that process of working with Paul, he became converted, he became a help to Paul.

And Paul appealed to Philemon when he says, I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.

[ 7 : 47 ] I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. So you've got Paul writing a letter to Philemon and you've got Paul saying, I'm also going to send this letter to Colossae with Tychicus and Philemon.

And so these men are going back out of wherever Paul is in Rome. So Paul is sending these men out on this journey. And it's interesting, Paul calls Tychicus a fellow servant or a fellow slave.

And Epaphras, he calls him a servant of Christ Jesus. But he doesn't refer to Onesimus, who actually was a slave. I mean, he's sending him back. He asked Philemon essentially to have him back as a help to him.

But Paul never calls him a servant. He's not saying that since he's a Christian, he's not a servant. He still technically is. But Paul was asking that Onesimus be allowed to return to him in the letter that he sent to Philemon.

And he's assuming, based on the text in Philemon, that Philemon will respect that. That Philemon will give him his freedom and that he will be able to return and support Paul.

[ 8 : 58 ] So these two men are traveling back to Colossae. They're going to bring the message. They're going to talk to the church there about all the things that are happening in Rome with Paul. And then Paul goes on to list some Jewish companions that he says have been a comfort to him.

He says, So Aristarchus is a Jewish traveling companion of Paul.

Aristarchus and Gaius were actually seized in Acts 19 during the riot of the silversmiths. When they're preaching, there's a riot. And it says the city was filled with confusion.

And they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. And then Paul also lists Mark and justice.

We don't have any mention of justice in the Bible. There are other justices mentioned, like the one that's put forward to be an apostle. There's most likely a different justice. But we have seen Mark.

[ 10 : 10 ] You guys are familiar with Mark. Mark has accompanied Paul and Barnabas in Acts 12 when they returned from Jerusalem to Antioch. He's the author of the second gospel, most likely. And Mark, Paul, and Barnabas had some sort of falling out.

They had some sort of disagreement. Paul did not want Mark to go with them on their next journey. And in Acts 15, they separate. They essentially break up. One part goes one way, one part goes another.

So Paul took Silas with him on his journey, and Barnabas took Mark. But by this point, around 60 AD, when this book is written, there seems to be a healing of that relationship.

It seems like Mark is with him and greets them. And then even in 2 Timothy chapter 4, we see Paul telling Timothy, Luke alone is with me.

Get Mark and bring him with me, for he is very useful to me for ministry. So here's a man that was estranged, that they had disagreements on, that now they are working together for in ministry.

[ 11 : 08 ] And then Paul says that he's found these three Jewish Christians, Aristarchus, Mark, and Justice, to be a comfort to him.

Is Paul saying that they are more of a comfort to him than his Gentile companions? Or is he showing some sort of ethnic partiality by saying these three men are a comfort? I don't think so.

I think Paul, as a Jew, who has regularly been fighting for the truth of the gospel, who has been fighting against Judaizers, who have misinterpreted and made heresy out of the gospel, he's found comfort working with fellow Jews who have understood and embraced the gospel.

When he arrived at Rome, even, the Jewish leaders there said, you know, we want to hear what you're talking about. We've heard about this thing, the way. Tell us about what's going on. And so Paul goes in and tells them what he believes, and they pretty much just dismissed him.

They had nothing to do with this gospel. And so I think Paul found comfort in the fact that here are people that are somewhat close to his nationality. They are Jews, but they're also people who have embraced the gospel.

[ 12 : 18 ] It was encouraging to work with these men who did not reject the Messiah and encouraged Paul to continue his ministry. Paul also mentions some Gentile workers who were with him.

He mentions Epaphras, which in Philemon he says is a fellow prisoner. Epaphras came from Colossae, probably was very instrumental in founding and creating that church.

Colossians chapter 1, 7 says, You learned it from Epaphras, speaking of the gospel. Our beloved fellow servant, he's a faithful minister of Christ in your behalf. And he's made known to us your love in the Spirit.

And we see that Epaphras, he may be in Rome here, he may be a prisoner with Paul, but his heart still is back with Colossae. He's back with those Christians. We just read in chapter 4, Epaphras, who was one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in the will of God.

For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

And he mentions two more men. He mentions Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas.

[ 13 : 32 ] And you may know this name Demas. He's mentioned here and in Philemon, but not much is said besides the fact that he also is sending a greeting. But we know from 2 Timothy 4, 10, that Demas, in love with the present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.

And that's a cautionary tale, like the story of the sower, which Jesus told in Matthew 12, 13, right? There was the sea sown among thorns, and one hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the weed and prove it, proves unfruitful.

So three workers who are co-workers with Christ, with Paul, working to spread the gospel, working to minister to him, working to care for those in spiritual need.

Paul lists Nympha, who is the host of a church in Laodicea, and then Archippus. And there's a good possibility that Archippus is Philemon's son.

Based on the two verses in Philemon, in verses 1 and 2, it says, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy, our brother, to Philemon, our beloved fellow worker, and to Aphelia, our sister, and Archippus, our fellow soldier, and the church in your house.

[14:50] And so he lists this to all three of those people, most likely all live in the same house, with Aphelia being Philemon's wife, and Archippus, their son. So Paul calls him a fellow soldier in Philemon.

There's probably some specific work or ministry that he was called to do that Paul is pushing him towards. So we've seen those people. We've seen Paul's closing greeting.

We've looked at who he's talking about, who he's talking to, all these names. But why? Why does Paul call this out? This is the second longest greeting.

We just read it actually today in our consecutive reading in Romans 16. It's the longest greeting that Paul has sent in the New Testament. But why does Paul have this very long, second largest greeting? Why bother to take all this time to call these people out?

And Paul's purpose, really, is to move from the generic theological doctrine and instructions that he was going through, the Christ-centric teaching.

[15:47] He's talking to them about union with Christ that applies to every church, to every believer. Those things are true and they apply to them. Now he's moving to some specific notes, some specific instructions, or greetings to people in those churches.

And really this passage serves to inform, encourage, commend, remind, and instruct those people who are receiving it. These are very specific things to that church.

He's saying, I'm going to inform you about myself. I'm going to send Tychicus and Onesimus.

They're going to tell the church about all of my activities. It wasn't a church that Paul had visited, but he had heard about it from Epaphras.

He wanted them to know, here's what's going on. Here's what Paul is doing. Here's what the gospel is spreading, even in Rome. And he wanted to provide them an update. And so he doesn't just include all that update in the letter.

He says, I'm going to send Tychicus and Onesimus. They're going to share that with you. But Paul is concerned that this church knows what is going on. And then Paul's purpose is to commend.

[16:55] He wants to say, these people, these men are profitable. They're carrying a letter. When they get this letter, I want you to listen to them.

And it's not uncommon, right? If you think about it, the fact that they were carrying a letter that talks about who they are, right? Versus today, I could send an email. I could call somebody and say, hey, I'm sending a letter to you, and it's going to be carried by somebody.

You can trust them. Paul had to send a letter, but the letter carried by people, and then commend them saying, I'm sending Tychicus and Onesimus. You can trust them.

They are fellow workers. And he commends both of them so that there was no hesitancy in the church to say, oh, you know, can we trust these guys? And he also commends Epaphras for his hard work and his prayer life.

He says that he struggles on their behalf. Paul wants to see this church encouraged as well. He says, I'm going to send Tychicus to encourage you, to inform you, and yes, but I also want him to encourage your hearts.

[18:00] He says specifically, he is a faithful brother, a beloved brother, and faithful minister, and I want you to know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

Tychicus is a pretty well-traveled individual. Paul sends him to places. He contemplates sending him. There's passages talking about sending him here or there. And so Tychicus is almost like this arm of Paul going out and doing these things, encouraging, caring.

And Paul is sending him, having commended him as a brother and a faithful minister, he's sending him out to encourage the church. He wants their hearts to be strengthened, to be joyful, to

understand the good work that God is doing.

He's also reminding them of Epaphras' dedication. He wants them to know that Epaphras may not be with you anymore, but he is still laboring on your behalf in his prayers. It's encouraging, right, for us to hear that somebody is praying for you.

But Paul says he's not just praying for you, but that he struggles with you and struggles on their behalf in his prayers. Struggling with your prayers on behalf of somebody might include fighting off distractions, but ultimately it's pleading with God.

[ 19 : 17 ] It's coming before God. It's begging God to answer, to do the good things that he's promised, to do the things that you want done for these people. And so Epaphras is pleading with God to strengthen and equip this church.

Paul tells them that Epaphras is praying for them to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. He says in verse 1, chapter 9, we are praying for you after we heard about it from Epaphras, we're praying for you to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.

So if you're looking for something that you can pray for, for any Christian, this statement that Paul has read in Colossians chapter 1, verse 9 and 10 and 11 really is a good example.

We can pray that God will cause people to be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom, to walk in a manner worthy of their calling, to be fully pleasing to him, to bear fruit, to have knowledge of God, to be strengthened with all power.

And so, Paul is reminding these Christians, Epaphras, who loves you, is praying for you, praying for these things. And Paul really wants this church not just to be encouraged, but to instruct them.

[ 20 : 39 ] He wants them to greet the church in Laodicea. He wants them to have fellowship with this church. He says, read the letter that I send to them and then you read the letter, give them this letter, instruct them, read this together, have fellowship so that you can learn from each other.

Some people say that the letter to Laodicea is the book of Ephesians. We don't have any proof of that. We don't have any letter to Laodicea necessarily, but Paul asked them to share that letter together.

And then Paul tells Archippus to fulfill his work. He says, say to Archippus, see that you fulfill the ministry you've received in the Lord. Whatever that ministry is, Paul is telling the church, you need to talk to Archippus and remind him that he's got a ministry and a calling from God and that he needs to fulfill it.

There is work to be done and we don't know if it was at risk of not being done or not. We do know that Paul has had Onesimus living with him and Onesimus was a slave in the house of Archippus. So maybe Paul heard concerning news about the ministry that Archippus had or his lack of doing the ministry, the lack of work he was doing. Maybe he was concerned. We don't know.

[ 21 : 56 ] But Paul wants the church to encourage him forward in his work. And then Paul tells the church, remember my chains. Paul was in chains. I'm sure that was a stark reminder as he wrote this.

He's like, I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. As he's doing that, the chain is clinking, the shackles, maybe he's pulling on the guard's arm as he's trying to write. He's reminded again, yes, I'm here, but I'm in chains.

But Paul's chains and Paul being put on house arrest and chained to a guard could not and did not prevent Paul's ministry. In fact, it perfectly demonstrates the power of God, the sovereignty of God, God's power made perfect in weakness.

While Paul was in chains, the gospel clearly was not. And that's evident from the years that Paul spent in Rome. He asks them to pray for him that a door will be opened and that he have boldness to speak.

We looked at this last time in Colossians 3, 4. At the same time, pray also for me that God may open a door to us for the word to declare the mystery of Christ on account of which I am in prison that I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak.

[ 23 : 14 ] So Paul was asking then, give me boldness, pray for boldness, pray for an open door. But then, in Acts chapter 28, we read, Paul has finally arrived in Rome and the book kind of closes with this statement.

It says, he lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God, teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

So even under house arrest, even in confinement, Paul had freedom for people to come and go to him. He was able to speak. He was able to send Tychicus and Onesimus out to Colossae, out to Laodicea, out to Ephesus.

People could come and hear Paul teach. Paul was able to do that with all boldness and without hindrance. Even in prison, right, when it says in Philemon that Epaphras was a fellow prisoner, Epaphras was able to pray.

Even when confined and under house arrest, Epaphras was able to beg God and seek God for the work of his spirit. And so this really demonstrates the sovereignty of God, the effectiveness of God's word and spirit.

[ 24 : 29 ] And it's not constrained. The gospel is not constrained. God's word will accomplish everything it was set out for. So we've seen the historical context of this passage.

We've seen Paul in Rome. We've looked at the people that he mentioned. We've seen that the letter was written from his rented home while he was under house arrest. And we've seen that he prayed for freedom of the gospel, for doors to be opened.

And then we look at Acts 28 and it looks almost like Paul's house has become a gospel distribution center. There are people who are coming to Paul like Epaphras and Onesimus.

There are people that Paul is sending out like Onesimus and Tychicus. There are people who are staying with Paul like Luke and Demas and Mark who are praying for the ministry, who are praying for the saints.

They are comforting and encouraging Paul. And there are people in the churches that he knows of that he wants to strengthen and encourage and help them. And it can be tempting I think to look at this and just kind of leave it at that, to leave this as a nice history lesson, a lecture, if you will, on Paul's history in Rome.

[ 25 : 51 ] Right? To look at this and say, alright, names and people and events and things they did, that's great. But as I kept studying this passage, I kept coming back to why, what does this matter?

How does this passage apply to Christians 2,000 years later? We can text our missionaries and do video calls with them. We can send them emails like, how does a greeting like this have any bearing on a Christian today?

How do we apply it to our day-to-day ordinary Christian life? And the word ordinary sticks in my mind. These folks we're talking about don't seem like ordinary Christians.

Paul's commending and encouraging people for their service in the kingdom of God. Nympha is a lady who's hosting a church in her house.

Epaphras is a man who is struggling in prayer and hard work for multiple churches. Archippus has a ministry that Paul is encouraging him to fulfill in the Lord.

[ 26 : 57 ] Paul himself is here chained but able to spread the gospel and to preach and to teach and it's easy I think for us to hear that and to get this feeling that these are a bunch of super Christians.

Unique people with unique gifts who are just so close to the apostles that their work in the ministry is so different from anything that we could do today. Any ministry that we could be called to.

But what if like Paul I told you all like Paul told Archippus fulfill the ministry that you received in the Lord.

Would you know what that is? Would you know what to do if I said fulfill the work God's given you to do? Do the job that God's called you to. What would that look like?

Maybe it's hospitality or prayer comforting people encouragement sharing the gospel. All those things were happening here in Rome and in Colossae and in Ephesus and Laodicea.

[ 28 : 04 ] But do you feel like you don't have a real ministry? You don't have a calling? You don't have something that sets you apart as something that God's given you to do? Maybe you don't know what God has called you to do in your Christian service.

Do you feel like there's no way a normal ordinary person would ever make their way into the list of stuff that the Apostle Paul has listed here? Nobody like us would get inside that list of closing greetings and commendations, right?

How do we get into that level of spiritual maturity? Well, it's actually simple. It's not easy, but it's simple.

What is God's will for your life? What has God called you to do? What do you know without a doubt that God has called you to do? What does God want for you to do for His kingdom?

What does God want you to do in relation to your brothers and sisters in Christ? The simple answer, again, not the easy answer, but the simple answer is to love God with everything you have, your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.

[ 29 : 23 ] That's clearly God's will for every single Christian, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. In fact, chapter 3 lists a bunch of commands that Paul gives to all Christians.

He says, put off these sinful, evil things and put on these Christ-like things. In the church, love each other, bear with each other, forgive each other. He tells them to be thankful, to sing together, to admonish one another in wisdom, to everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

So Paul gives us our calling. Paul gives us the first thing we must do and that's to love God and love our neighbor, to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ, to worship with them, to love them, to forgive them.

And Paul gives us these commands in chapter 3 and he doesn't say if you want to get on a list of successful people or if you want to even get Christ or if you want to get salvation or you want to be super spiritual, start by doing these things.

That's not Paul's order in this book. We think that sometimes. I think we tend to get it backwards. At least, I sometimes think if I'm going to be more spiritual, if I'm going to be the kind of person that I should be, if I'm going to be the kind of person that's in this list of people that Paul is commending, then they're, I need to do something.

[ 31 : 05 ] I need to double down on my Christian living. I need to double down on my calling. I need to just do better. I need to be a better Christian. And by being a better Christian, then I'll be a better Christian.

But Paul's list of things that he tells this church to put on and to put off aren't things that we do to become Christ-like. We don't love each other so that we become like Christ.

We love each other because Christ has made us, has united us to him. He has saved us. His spirit's inside of us. And so we pursue Christ and we pursue love for each other because of what Christ has done.

We love because God has first loved us. We pursue Christ with the desire to become more and more like him. And when we understand what God has truly done for us in Christ, when we look at it, when we understand and we read those prior chapters of Colossians and Romans and Galatians and we understand what is the gospel really saying?

What is it saying is true about me? What is it saying is true about my brothers and sisters in Christ or about the world? When we truly understand what God has done for us, then we naturally want to put off the evil and put on what is good.

[ 32 : 24 ] So Paul makes the connection before he even gives the instructions. In chapter 3, verse 1, Paul says, If then you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above.

So Paul makes this connection. If you've been raised, seek the things that are above. He says, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And he says, set your minds on things that are above, not on things on earth.

For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. So these people here that we've looked at, they too have died and their life is hidden with Christ in God.

This list of commands that Paul writes out that I would love to read but we don't have time to do that today is the calling for everyday ordinary Christians.

Everybody. Every believer in Christ is called to bear with one another. If you have a complaint, forgive each other. Put on love which binds everything together.

[ 33 : 27 ] Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Those are things that we're called to do. All of them flow out of the truth and the knowledge of what Christ has done.

Paul is saying this is true of you. If this is true of you, if you've been united to Christ, raised with him, then live like you've been raised with Christ. Live like somebody who has died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

See, all the people that were commended by Paul were really still sinners. right? Epaphras didn't spend so much time in deep prayer because he was somehow perfect or had some special ability. He had two things that really enabled him to pray for this church. He loved this church. Two things empowered him. The Holy Spirit in his heart working to make him more and more like Christ. And then a grasp of the truth from the first three chapters that provide this vision of a victorious Christ. Epaphras saw the glory of God in the gospel and it empowered his prayer life.

[ 34 : 38 ] He understood who he was praying to. He understood the necessity of Christians to mature in their faith. And so Epaphras prayed to God and sought people's maturity because of what he saw in the gospel.

the Bible says that out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. And if your heart sees, understands, and is enthralled with Christ then won't your overflow be one of walking and talking in a manner worthy of your calling?

Won't your life reflect the fact that you have been enamored with Christ and that Christ controls the things you do? That Christ shapes you into his image?

The point of Colossians has been that Christ is really supreme. Christ is supreme and this is what God through Christ has done.

And like most of Paul's prison epistles and the book of Romans, Paul calls for action and obedience, calls us to walk in a manner worthy of our calling, but he does that once he makes sure that we know what God has done.

[ 35 : 55 ] Our obedience and our walking in a manner worthy of our calling are fulfilling our ministry. The things that we're called to do as believers is a response due by those who have been transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of his beloved son.

Ephesians 2 tells it a bit differently. It says that God, because of his great love, made us alive together with Christ and he raised us up with him in the heavenly places and seated us with him with Christ.

That we've been saved by grace through faith. And then Paul says we've been saved so that you could walk in good works which God prepared for you beforehand.

So God has done the work of salvation. God has accomplished the work. God has done all those things that we've read about in the first two chapters of Colossians. justification through faith in Christ.

There's no work we're going to do to earn that. There's no work that we can do to earn our justification, our righteousness. These men and women aren't laying their lives down and giving up their homes for church services and seeking God in prayer and traveling distances to bring books and letters.

[ 37 : 15 ] They're not laying that down so they hope they can become better Christians or hope that they can remain a Christian. They're living this way because they've got a glimpse of what Christ has done.

They're living this way because they've seen how valuable and good God is and they're walking accordingly. See, true kingdom-building, Christ-honoring, God-glorifying work is done when normal, ordinary, everyday people see what God has done and respond.

God-glorifying work is done when normal, ordinary people see what God has done and respond.

They catch the vision of the victorious, conquering king who defeated death, who is reigning from heaven and will one day return to judge the living and the dead.

And they can't help but walk accordingly. Can you see why to Paul and to these men, their theology matters?

Can you see why your theology matters? Good theology matters. Whole Bible, systematic theology matters. And here's why.

[ 38 : 32 ] If your theology is a defeatist theology, right? Things are just getting terrible, we're going to hunker down, we're going to Jesus to return, avoid the world, and hope you can get out before it gets bad.

If that's your theology, then your perspective on investing in people, in supporting missions, in serving, in volunteering, in giving, will all reflect that attitude of like, why bother?

It's all going terrible and I'm just waiting to get out. It will look like somebody that's been happy to be saved, happy to be rescued, but not happy to share that, happy to keep it to themselves until the difficult part is over.

And if your theology is an apathetic theology, if you remember you're a Christian a couple days a week and you prioritize lesser things over gathering with believers, if you value the things that are going on in your life more than the gifts that God has given, the worship, the ordinances like the Lord's Supper, then your perspective on the church, your evangelism will be apathetic and lethargic and anemic.

Maybe you consider yourself a Christian but you've not been baptized, you haven't professed that faith for some reason or another, and that apathy will reflect in the ways that you interact with people.

[ 39 : 54 ] For sure, it will affect the ways you interact with people in the church, but it also limits your ability. You can't partake of those things like the Lord's Supper, that God has gifted his church with an apathetic theology.

Maybe you have a distracted or even a deserting theology. If you, like Demas, find the things of the world to be extremely attractive, and you recognize that fully living for Christ, truly walking in a manner worthy of your calling, would mean you could give up some of the things you really like, and that gives you some pause?

Maybe you end up living like the rich young ruler that Jesus talked to, who walked away from Jesus because he loved his possessions more than Jesus. Or worse yet, maybe you have no theology. You don't know God, you don't care about God or what he's done through Christ at all. Maybe you're content just bumping through life, eating, drinking, and being merry.

Maybe you're spiritual, but not religious, whatever that means. Let me warn you. Jesus said, if you aren't for me, you are against me.

[ 41 : 12 ] There's no middle ground when it comes to being on board with God. If you're not for me, you're against me. Your theology matters, and if you have none, and you reject this free offer of the gospel for the forgiveness of sins, this offer of being reconciled through Christ to God, God will be just as he promised, and send you to hell for eternal punishment because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. That free gift is offered to all. It's offered to you.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be saved. But, if you have the type of theology that Tychicus and Onesimus and Aristarchus and Mark and Justice and Epaphras and Luke and Nympha and Archippus and Paul had, the theology that believed that everything presented in this epistle is true, that Christ is preeminent over all things, all kings and all rulers, and that he has already reconciled all things to God.

And if you, like Paul says in chapter 2, have been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through faith, if you've had your record of debt canceled and your sin nailed to the cross, and you believe that God has disarmed the rulers and principalities and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Christ, that theology, that biblical worldview doesn't see any room for a defeated, apathetic, or distracted theology.

Instead, it responds with loving obedience, care for God's kingdom, and desire to see God's kingdom grow and be strengthened, to see God glorified in it.

[ 43 : 15 ] If there's one point, one summary that I would want you to take away from this passage, it's this. A true, correct vision of the supreme, victorious Christ and what he has done drove those people we are looking at, and it should be what drives our Christian walk and our service.

A true, correct vision of what the supreme, victorious Christ drove these people, and it should be what drives our Christian walk and service.

service. We've closed out this book, we've finished the book of Colossians, and there's one point that I want you to take away from this book as we've spent these four to five years preaching through it.

It's this. Jesus Christ, the creator of all things, has reconciled us, sinful, hostile people, to God through the cross, uniting us to himself so closely that we were buried, raised, and made alive with him.

We live the Christian life out of that union, seeking things above where Christ is seated, anticipating with joy and excitement that day when Christ will return, and we, still united to him, will appear with him.

[ 44 : 33 ] Paul says in chapter 3, verse 4, when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. won't that be a great day?

