

"The Importance of Good Friends"

Part 2

Colossians 4:10-18

Introduction: Last week in our study we looked at some of Paul's friends that he mentions at the end of Colossians. In our study we looked at three points.

- **Friends overcome differences.**

Notice Colossians 4:10-14

- **Friends stay close through difficult times.**

Notice Colossians 4:10

- **Friends extend forgiveness.**

Notice Colossians 4:10 again.

Tonight, as we continue, we are going to look at another point about friends and then we will look at the conclusion of the letter.

- **Friends care about your spiritual condition.**

1. Friends sacrifice for friends.

Notice Colossians 4:12

Epaphras was believed to be the pastor of this church at Colossae. He was the one who made the journey to Rome to tell Paul about the heretics that had made their way into the church.

Colossians 1:7-8

⁷ As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

⁸ Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

Epaphras cared so much for these people that he was willing to make a journey that was more than a thousand miles to report to Paul and to get Paul to write a letter to instruct this church.

Application:

Epaphras was willing to go the extra mile for his friends in the church because that is what friends do. They sacrifice time and comforts to help their friends in their spiritual walk.

Philippians 2:2-4

² *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

³ *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

⁴ *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

2. Friends pray for friends.

Notice Colossians 4:12 again.

Epaphras labored fervently in prayer for those who were believers. He desired to see them stand perfect and complete in the will of God. The words "labouring fervently" speaks of fighting in a battle. Notice how Vines defines the word.

"to suffer reproach; to wrestle earnestly in prayer"

This definition tells me that Epaphras knew he was in a spiritual battle and he wrestled in prayer for his fellow saints. Now let us consider the meaning of two more words.

Perfect - This refers to being spiritually mature.

Complete - This refers to being full or filled up.

In these words, we get a clear picture of what Epaphras desired for the church that he ministered to. He wanted to see them come to spiritual maturity and to be filled with the fulness of God. This was a prayer for them to be surrendered to the will of God and to be controlled by the Spirit of God.

Application:

As I study this, I realize that true friends want the best for others and the best that a person can have is a deep relationship with the Lord. Epaphras never prayed for money or greater possessions. That was not his concern. He wanted them to have a relationship with the Lord that would glorify God. If they had this relationship God would see to the basic needs of life.

Matthew 6:30-33

³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Notice Colossians 4:12-13

Epaphras had a great zeal for the believers and this means he had great excitement for them. When these people showed spiritual growth Epaphras was full of joy. What brought joy to God brought joy to Epaphras. Epaphras lived Paul's Words from Romans 12.

Romans 12:15-16

¹⁵ Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

¹⁶ Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

➤ Conclusion of the Letter

In verses 14-18 Paul closes the letter and as he does we can clearly see several points that show us what churches are to be involved in.

1. Gather together.

Notice Colossians 4:15-16

We see as Paul closes this letter that he is expecting that the church will come together to hear the reading of the letters. A couple of lessons ago we considered how God had made man in a way that we need one another. God had said that it is not good that man should be alone. We are to gather together on a regular basis for several reasons. One of the reasons is to encourage one another.

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

²⁵ *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

Coming together as the body of Jesus Christ strengthens our faith. Show me a believer who has stepped away from church and I will show you someone who is weak in faith. The Livestream is good for those who cannot get out but it is not the same as coming here and fellowshiping with one another. When we are gathered together as the body, the Spirit of God ministers to us in a special way in which we do not get at home. I know this to be true because we are commanded to be gathered together so to disobey the command is sin and in sin, we are missing blessings.

Matthew 18:19-20

¹⁹ *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

²⁰ *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Psalms 133:1-3

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

² *It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;*

³ *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*

In verse 2 we see that gathering together is like the oil that Aaron was anointed with. In the Bible oil speaks of the Holy Spirit. So, to gather together in a church that preaches and teaches the Truth is to be in a place where we can be filled with and blessed by the Spirit. The dew of Hermon gave life to the land so it could bear fruit and not become barren. In the same way as we come together, we too are blessed by the Spirit so that we might show forth the fruit of the Spirit.

2. Study the Word.

Notice Colossians 4:16

These letters which were the inspired Word of God, were to be read and studied within the church gatherings. We have discussed this many times but I will say it again, we **MUST**

be students of the Bible. We need to know the Scriptures in order to live the Scriptures. From the Word of God, we get:

- a. Comfort
- b. Wisdom
- c. Guidance
- d. Correction
- e. Discernment
- f. Equipped
- g. Hope
- h. Understanding of what we are seeing today.
- i. Knowledge of God and His will.

The list goes on and on but from this we can clearly see why it is so important to be under the sound teaching of the Word of God.

Psalm 119:97-105

⁹⁷ O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

⁹⁸ Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

¹⁰¹ I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

¹⁰² I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

¹⁰³ How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

¹⁰⁴ Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

¹⁰⁵ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

3. Be an encourager of the ministry.

Notice Colossians 4:17

We cannot be sure who Archippus was. Some believe he was the son of Philemon.

Philemon 1:2

² *And to our beloved Apphia (Philemon's wife), and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:*

Notice Colossians 4:17 again.

Some believe that he was the interim pastor while Epaphras was in Rome. We do not know for sure but we do know that he had a part in the ministry and when the letter was read aloud his name would have been mentioned. The people were to encourage Archippus in his ministry. Maybe he was discouraged because of the heretics who had come in. We do not know but we do know that he needed encouragement.

Serving in the ministry can be very difficult and discouraging at times. When you are involved with your spiritual gifts you are on the front lines of the battle. Satan and his demons will do all they can to discourage you to get you to quit. In those times you need people around you that will encourage you. So, when we are encouragers, we are fulfilling a major role within the church. We have no idea what people are going through so when God lays it upon your heart to encourage someone don't let the opportunity get away.

Conclusion:

Notice the thoughts of a 1st Century philosopher named Aristides as given by Haw. This is the translation of Aristides' apology.

"It is the Christians, O Emperor, who have sought and found the truth, for they acknowledge God. They do not keep for themselves the goods entrusted to them. They do not covet what belongs to others. They show love to their neighbours. They do not do to another what they would not wish to have done to themselves. They speak gently to those who oppress them, and in this way they make them their friends. It has become their passion to do good to their enemies. They live in the awareness of their smallness. Every one of them who has anything gives ungrudgingly to the one who has nothing. If they see a travelling stranger, they bring him under their roof. They rejoice over him as over a real brother, for they do not call one another brothers after the flesh, but they know they are brothers in the Spirit and in God. If they hear that one of them is imprisoned or oppressed for the sake of Christ, they take care of all his needs. If possible they set him free. If anyone among them is poor or comes into want while they themselves have nothing to spare, they fast two or three days for him. In this way they can supply any poor man with the food he needs. This, O Emperor, is the rule of life of the Christians, and this is their manner of life."