

Colossians – Workers with Paul Col. 4:7-14

Thesis: To help us understand that each one has an important role to fill in the kingdom of God.

Introduction:

Many times, we overlook those who are mentioned at the end of one of Paul's epistles. However, their names are there for a purpose.

Because Philemon and Colossians were written at the same time and delivered by the same person, many of these that are mentioned in our text are also mentioned in the book of Philemon.

Each of these men that were with Paul served a valuable function.

I. There were several workers that we with Paul (4:7-14).

A. Tychicus (4:7-9)

1. Tychicus has the most written about him as anyone in this section.
2. Notice how he is described by Paul (4:7).
 - a. Beloved brother
 - b. Faithful minister
 - c. Fellow servant in the Lord
3. Paul sends him to the church in Colosse so that they can know what is happening with Paul and so that Paul can know how they are doing (4:8).
4. Notice some other facts about Tychicus.
 - a. He was with Paul and waited for Him in Troas when Paul was on his way to Jerusalem.
 - 1) Acts 20:4-5 - And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia-- also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. {5} These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.
 - b. Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus so that he could know how they were doing.
 - 1) Eph. 6:21-22 - But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; {22} whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.
 - 2) II Tim. 4:12 - And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.
 - 3) It is interesting that Paul now gives him the same task for the church in Colosse.

- c. Paul also thought about sending Tychicus to Titus when Titus was in Crete.
 - 1) **Titus 3:12** - When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.
- d. We can easily see how important Tychicus was to Paul's ministry.

B. Onesimus (4:9)

- 1. Notice how Paul describes Onesimus.
 - a. A faithful and beloved brother.
 - b. Also, Onesimus was from Colosse.
- 2. Onesimus was a slave that escaped from Philemon and had been converted by Paul.
 - a. **Philemon 1:10-11** - I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, {11} who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.
 - b. Onesimus had gone from a slave of Philemon to his brother.

C. Aristarchus (4:10a)

- 1. Aristarchus is described as a fellow prisoner, indicating that he and Paul were in jail because of the gospel of Christ.
- 2. Aristarchus traveled a great deal with Paul.
 - a. **Acts 19:29** (Aristarchus was seized by the mob in Ephesus) - So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.
 - b. **Acts 20:4-5** (Aristarchus was one of those that waited for Paul in Troas when he was traveling to Jerusalem) - And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia-- also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. {5} These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.
 - c. **Acts 27:2** (Aristarchus also traveled to Rome with Paul) - So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us.
- 2. Aristarchus is also mentioned as being with Paul when Paul writes to Philemon.
 - a. **Philemon 1:23-24** - Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, {24} as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

D. Mark (4:10b)

- 1. Mark was one that was originally with Paul and Barnabas.
 - a. **Acts 12:25** - And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.

- b. **Acts 13:5** - And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had **John** as their assistant.
2. However, for some reason, Mark decided to depart from them
- a. **Acts 13:13** - Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and **John**, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.
 - b. **Acts 15:36-40** (This caused a division between Barnabas and Paul) - Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.” {37} Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called **Mark**. {38} But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. {39} Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took **Mark** and sailed to Cyprus; {40} but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.
3. Even with all this, Mark had proven to be useful to Paul.
- a. **II Tim. 4:11** - Only Luke is with me. Get **Mark** and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.
 - b. **Philemon 1:23-24** - Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, {24} as do **Mark**, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

E. Jesus, called Justus (4:11)

- 1. This is the only time in the New Testament that Justus is mentioned.
- 2. Justus is also the last Jew that is mentioned by Paul; everyone else was a Gentile.

F. Epaphras (4:12-13)

- 1. Notice how Paul describes Epaphras.
 - a. He is a bondservant of Christ.
 - b. He labored fervently in prayers for the church in Colosse, praying that they would remain faithful.
 - c. He also had great zeal for the church in Colosse.
- 2. Paul opened this epistle by talking of Epaphras.
 - a. **Col. 1:3-8** - We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, {4} since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; {5} because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, {6} which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; {7} as you also learned from **Epaphras**, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of

Christ on your behalf, {8} who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

3. **Philemon 1:23-24** (Epaphras was also well known to Philemon) - Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, {24} as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

G. Luke (4:14a)

1. Luke is described as a beloved physician.
 - a. It was Luke who penned an account of the gospel of Christ and also wrote the book of Acts.
 - b. Luke spent a great deal of time with Paul on his journeys.
2. **II Tim. 4:11** (Even as everyone departed from Paul, Luke remained with him) - Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.
3. **Philemon 1:23-24** - Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, {24} as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

H. Demas (4:14b)

1. Demas, to begin with, was a faithful worker with Paul.
 - a. Not only is Demas mentioned by Paul here, but he is also mentioned in Paul's letter to Philemon.
 - b. **Philemon 1:23-24** - Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, {24} as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.
2. However, Demas departed from Paul, and more importantly, from God.
 - a. **II Tim. 4:9-10** - Be diligent to come to me quickly; {10} for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica-- Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.
 - b. Apparently, Demas loved the world more than he loved his God.
3. We should look to Demas for a reminder that it is possible to fall away.
 - a. We are not told why Demas fell away, only that he did.
 - b. We must be careful that we do not fall away from God.
 - c. **I Cor. 10:12** (After listing several sins of Israel) - Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Practical Application:

II. Each of these men fulfilled a key role in the kingdom of God.

- A. All of them worked in some capacity with Paul.
 - 1. Some of those with Paul were messengers.
 - 2. Others were entrusted to preach somewhere.
 - 3. Others were even in prison with Paul.
 - 4. Each of them fulfilled an important role.
 - a. They understood that the important thing was to spread the word of God.
 - b. They were not interested in personal glory.
 - c. They provided great encouragement to Paul as he faced severe trials.
 - d. They were able to help Paul spread the word of God.
 - 5. They were there when Paul needed them the most.
- B. Today, there is an important role for each of us to fulfill.
 - 1. The purpose of the church is to save souls.
 - a. **Mk. 16:15** - And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”
 - b. **Acts 2:47b** - And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.
 - 2. Everything that we do should revolve around the saving of souls.
 - a. Whether that is providing encouragement for others, helping those who are in need, or delivering messages so that the word of God can be spread, each of us has a role to fulfill.
 - b. When our focus is on the saving of souls, we will be more apt to fulfill our role in the kingdom of God.

Conclusion:

We must all work at fulfilling the roles that we have been given within the body of Christ.