

Colossians: Jesus Our All In All

Colossians 4:1-18

Colossians 4:1

(KJV) Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

(NIV) Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Paul addresses slave owners, reminding them that if they are now in Christ, they have been transformed by Jesus:

2Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Therefore, their treatment of their slaves/workers must be just and equal. Beloved, we know from history's lesson to us that giving unsaved masters even a measure of power over slaves results in unfair treatment, control, and abuse. Paul reminds the Colossian masters that they are now accountable to God for how they treat their workers:

Hebrews 4:13

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Christian employees should never have to be anxious about poor treatment from believing employers. The fruit of the Spirit should be evident in their leadership and personal character, and gloriously so:

Galatians 5:16-26

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

God is watching, Christian masters!

Colossians 4:2

*(KJV) Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;
(NIV) Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

Devotion to prayer is a matter of the heart, but there is a sense in which prayer is a raw discipline - we just have to get to it!

1Thessalonians 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.*

“Prayer is the fuel that powers the church.” No prayer. No power.

2Timothy 3:5

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

What a prayerless church is left with then is rules, regulations, *religion*. God is nowhere present. It is a dead church. Paul would never endorse a church like that, let alone the Colossian church that was borne of his ministry!

Being watchful for wolves is an exhortation straight from the lips of Jesus:

Matthew 7:15-20

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

And being thankful is really just the fruit of being humble:

1Thessalonians 5:18

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Colossians 4:3

(KJV) Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

(NIV) And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Oh, dear Christian, woe to us if we cease to pray! Prayer support is not just for massive ministries but every individual soul winner that ventures out Monday morning to their mission field assigned by God. They are not going out solo, but with the blessing and prayerful empowerment of the Holy Ghost by God's saints.

Matthew 9:37-38

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Isaiah 6:8

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

A surrendered life in Jesus is a life God can work through. And be assured that God will provide opportunities to share the Gospel with the unsaved and to share our personal testimony:

1Peter 3:15

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Although Paul himself was in chains when he wrote this letter, there was nothing chained about the Gospel, which Paul consistently and faithfully proclaimed from captivity.

2Timothy 2:8-9

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained.

Colossians 4:4

(KJV) That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

(NIV) Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

It is so imperative that we keep the simple Gospel message, well, *simple!* The presentation of the Good News should be clear, free of distraction, and covered in prayer:

Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

Romans 6:23a *For the wages of sin is death;*

Romans 5:8

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 6:23b *but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Romans 10:9

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Romans 10:13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Colossians 4:5

(KJV) Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

(NIV) Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Colossians 4:6

(KJV) Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

(NIV) Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Having a humble, faithful and consistent manner of life and conversation with the unsaved means that when it comes time to share your personal testimony and, ultimately, the Gospel, there will be an authenticity and sincerity from your heart that cannot be denied!

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Do you have a personal testimony ready to share as the Holy Spirit prompts you to share it with an unbeliever? Are you able to transition from that testimony to a simple presentation of the Gospel? Do you believe that your lifestyle and conduct before unbelievers is consistent with God's will so that your witness rings of authenticity?

Colossians 4:7

(KJV) All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:

(NIV) Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

Colossians 4:8

(KJV) Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

(NIV) I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.

The updates from Paul demonstrate sincere love and concern and care from Paul to his precious children in Christ:

1Thessalonians 2:19-20

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.

Spiritual and practical updates are not just reserved for missionaries in the field, but to all who have a sphere of influence and a daily mission field of their own. We owe it to those who uphold us and our ministries in prayer to give updates to the praying saints about our possible physical needs - petition - and what God is doing through us - praise. Also, Paul was not above needing prayer:

Hebrews 13:18-19

Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

Colossians 4:9

(KJV) With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.

(NIV) He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

We will be speaking more on the redeemed runaway slave Onesimus in our study of Philemon. Suffice to say, spiritual encouragement is coming the way of the Colossian believers via this precious convert to Christ. He will bring, not only practical updates about Paul and his ministry team, but spiritual encouragement:

Hebrews 3:13

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Beloved, I hope and pray that you will be a deliverer of spiritual encouragement to someone today!

Colossians 4:10

(KJV) Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

(NIV) 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.)

Colossians 4:11

(KJV) And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

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

This is family talk, plain and simple! Greeting and salutations abound from Paul, as if he were right there with the Colossian believers. The love of Christ here is tangible, and a further example of the faithful witness of love to the neighbouring cities and regions:

Colossians 1:3-5

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people – the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel

They have proved a comfort to me. Paul is tender and sincere in his gratefulness for generous brothers and sisters in Christ who have proven themselves to be true believers by their faith expressed through works:

James 2:14-17

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Colossians 4:12

(KJV) Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

(NIV) 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.

Discipleship is simply duplicating one's life in another. Discipleship is on full display here as we see how Epaphras has been so influenced by Paul, to stay connected in prayer to Jesus, and therefore remaining a humble and faithful shepherd to the Colossian believers.

Colossians 4:13

(KJV) For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

(NIV) I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

What is this work that Epaphras is attending to on behalf of the Colossians believers? Prayer!

Colossians 4:14

(KJV) Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

(NIV) Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

More family business, expressed through Paul, expressed through love!

Colossians 4:15

(KJV) Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

(NIV) Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

House churches, traditional churches, churches abound! But we all know that whether in Biblical times or today, the church is simply born-again Christians gathering together to share in worship, the Word of God, and fellowship. Simple, right?

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Colossians 4:16

(KJV) And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

(NIV) 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.

Letters, letters, letters! In Biblical times, the written letter was the primary way to communicate, one tribe to another. How much of the New Testament is really just Paul's letters of warning, admonition, and encouragement? Amazing! Today we can access a host of ways through technology to communicate God's love and the Gospel, one to another, and to a lost and hurting world. Amen!

Colossians 4:17

(KJV) And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

(NIV) Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord."

Count the cost, beloved. Consider that God began a good work in you, and will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus:

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Consider that Jesus is our Leader and Example:

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

John 19:28-30

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Beloved, stay connected to Jesus through the Word of God and prayer, and ask Him for the strength and perseverance through His Spirit to complete the spiritual assignment before you today. He is your all in all!

Colossians 4:18

(KJV) The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen. Written from Rome to Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.

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

We come to the end of this amazing Book of Colossians with Paul reminding the Colossian believers that this letter was written from his heart to theirs - raw, honest, and sincere - and also that they must remember his chains. We would do well to remember today that no chains will ever hold captive the Holy Ghost within God's people. And no chains will ever hold captive the Gospel and God's Word. Paul was a living example of this truth!

God wants to remind us today through the Book of Colossians that when we make Jesus and His Word our all in all, God will see to it that our spiritual fruit is abundant, and our victory over sin, self, and the world is assured.

Hallelujah!

Isaiah 55:11

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

- Reverend Darren McClelland