

Colossians 4:7-18

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[0 : 00] So you take your copy of God's Word and turn to Paul's letter to the Colossians. It's our final Sunday in this book. Lord willing, I don't fall over dead this morning.

Because then next Sunday someone else will have to preach the rest of it to you. I hope that you've enjoyed it as much as I have enjoyed teaching it and learning from it myself as I've studied it.

So we will look this morning at Colossians chapter 4 verses 7 through 18. Begin reading in verse 7. Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and 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 has taken place here. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you.

[1 : 05] And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions. If he comes to you, welcome him. And Jesus, who is 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.

For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Heropolis. Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, as does Demas. Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and to Nympha and the church in her house.

And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans. And see that 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 with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. This is God's word to us. It was written for his glory and our good.

[2 : 09] And we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. So we find ourselves at the closing of Paul's letter.

Let me remind you that all of the Word of God, the book that you have, I hope, in your lap or somehow digitally in front of you, the 66 canonized books of the Old and New Testament were written by God himself through men.

So men themselves penned the letters, the Spirit of God working in them. The Word of God was breathed out by him, yet was not divorced from the context, the particular circumstance, and the personality of the writer.

So it's proper, as Paul is writing a letter to a particular church, that he concludes the letter. He does what you do in a letter. He wraps it up. Finishes it out.

Finishes it out. And we've moved now from Paul's direct exhortation, his doctrinal stances and statements in the beginning of the letter, to his correction and now how it is that these things are meant to play out in the life of a Christian, to things that can seem, maybe at first look, a bit insignificant.

[3 : 24] I don't know if you, like me, upon the reading of epistles, again and again, will get to this point and just hurry up to the end. I finished the letter now. I just need to go through these names quickly to get to the end.

They have some historical significance, I'm sure, but there's nothing really to be learned from them. And this is a grave error. Every word is inspired by God.

It's important that Paul wrote this conclusion the way in which he wrote this conclusion. And we need to take the time to stop and look at it and see what it is that we can learn from it. This morning

there are a number of things we can learn from this.

We could take a look at each of these men's lives as individuals and look at the phrasing that Paul uses and the titles that he gives them. And certainly this is a thing that should be done at some point.

But this morning I primarily just want to say two things from this text. And that is that we are all needy and that we are all needed.

[4 : 22] We're all needy and we are all needed. We're all needy. Paul himself, arguably the greatest of Christians, needed support.

He needed a fellowship of brothers around him. He needed both spiritual and practical ministry to him in his life. And this is such a wonderful example of that.

He's not the only. We'll look further at that. But I want to take you to the Old Testament for just a bit. So turn to the book of Exodus with me. We've been in the habit, as we preach verse by verse, of doing something New Testament and then doing something Old Testament.

Before Colossians I preached through Mark. Before that we preached through Nehemiah. So we've kind of broken the pattern already. Prayerfully we're considering beginning the book of Acts. So we're breaking it all up.

So today I'm going to take you to the Old Testament for at least a little while. To scratch that itch. To Exodus chapter 4. And I just want to show you a few examples in the life of Moses.

[5 : 24] Again, a leader mightily used by God in the life of God's people. And the way in which Moses needed.

And the way in which God provided for that need. So Exodus chapter 4 verses 1 through 17. This is after the call of Moses, the burning bush experience.

God's still speaking to him from the burning bush. And Moses answered, But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice. For they will say, the Lord did not appear to you.

The Lord said to him, what is that in your hand? He said, a staff. And he said, throw it on the ground. So he threw it on the ground and it became a serpent. And Moses ran from it. But the Lord said to Moses, put out your hand and catch it by the tail.

So he put out his hand and caught it. And it became a staff in his hand. That they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has appeared to you. Again, the Lord said to him, put your hand inside your cloak.

[6 : 28] And he put his hand inside his cloak. And when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then God said, put your hand back inside your cloak. So he put his hand back inside the cloak. And when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh.

If they will not believe you, God said, or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the ground.

And the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground. So there's these three miracles, God says, both shows them that they will work. And then a third that he says, if you do this, it will happen.

If they don't believe what you say, do these things and they'll listen to you. And then his response beginning in verse 10. But Moses said to the Lord, Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.

Then the Lord said to him, who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.

[7 : 41] So God's response to him in his faithlessness is he knows I'm naturally gifted. I'm not a good speaker. God says, but I made your mouth. I will speak through you.

Moses responds, verse 13. But he said, Oh, my Lord, please send someone else. Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses. And he said, is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you. And when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do.

He shall speak for you to the people. And he shall be your mouth. And you shall be as God to him. And take in your hand the staff with which you shall do the signs. So even as God responds in anger, his anger is kindled against Moses.

And then he says, and I will give you a helper. I will bring somebody to help you. I will bring you a partner in the ministry that I have called you to. We see another example in Exodus 17. Please turn there.

[8 : 49] Beginning in verse 8.

Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. So Moses said to Joshua, choose for us men and go out and fight with Amalek.

Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand. So Joshua did as Moses told him and fought with Amalek while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. And whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands grew weary. So they took a stone and put it under him.

And he sat on it while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

[9 : 52] And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. So once again, a task given to Moses to see the people of Israel prevail in battle at the leadership of Joshua as long as the staff was raised.

And in his human frailty, he's unable to do this for the duration of the battle. And so he's supported by Aaron and by Hur. One more.

Turn a few books. Numbers chapter 11. Numbers 11 beginning in verse 11.

This is after the people of Israel once again have grumbled greatly. They've complained against God. God's actually set some fires at the borders of the camps that have consumed part of the camp.

He's died down those fires now. Beginning in verse 11. Moses said to the Lord, Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight that you lay the burden of all this people on me?

[11 : 06] Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth that you should say to me? Carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing child to the land that you swore to give. To their fathers.

He was like, Why am I in charge of all these babies? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, Give us meat that we may eat. I am not able to carry all this people alone.

The burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, Kill me at once. If I find favor in your sight, That I may not see my wretchedness.

Verse 16, Then the Lord said to Moses, Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, Whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, And bring them to the tent of meeting, And let them take their stand there with you.

And I will come down and talk with you there, And I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them. And they shall bear the burden of the people with you, So that you may not bear it yourself alone.

[12 : 13] So we're seeing again and again this pattern with Moses, That he's called to do these things by God, And God equips, And he equips him, How? With people. With help.

With partners. In the ministry. So the greatest of leaders for God still need other Christians. We see this to be true of Paul.

The more that you mature in your Christian faith, You're going to realize how much you need the church. How much you need other people. That's always true of you.

The more you mature, The more you realize how very true it is. So we get this list. A laundry list of shorts from Paul. About these different men.

The beginning, verse 7, Tychicus is sent to him with the letter To tell about all of his activities. Paul describes him as a beloved brother And a faithful minister.

[13 : 08] And a fellow servant in the Lord. At the writing of Colossians, Tychicus has been with Paul for approximately four years. We can't pin that time frame down exactly, But it's been about four years since he's been with Paul.

He's mentioned five times in the New Testament. All of which are very brief mentions. Usually it's just his name drop in there. But they give us a very, very rich profile of him.

I'll give you two examples. Titus 3.12 Tychicus is sent along with Artemis To temporarily replace Titus, Who's the pastor on the island of Crete. While Titus is coming to visit Paul.

So he's one of the men that's sent there To replace Titus for a time being. And we see this again in 2 Timothy 4.12 So that Timothy can travel to see Paul. Paul's now writing these letters, Afraid that his life is almost over.

Wants to see Timothy, his son in faith, One more time. And Tychicus is sent to replace him in Ephesus. You can see that in 2 Timothy 4.12. And he's been sent, verse 8, I have sent him to you for this very purpose.

[14:15] That you may know how we are And that he may encourage your hearts. The reason he's sent Is that he may encourage their hearts. And I think rightly to read and understand By knowing how they are.

By seeing the way in which God Has been graciously working through the ministry of Paul. To come and impart to them How things have been going. You see again in verse 9 The inclusion of Onesimus.

They will tell you of everything That has taken place here. It's a great encouragement Or it should be at least to us as believers To see the way in which God is working In the rest of the world. And Paul knows this.

And he sends Tychicus for this very end. On this particular journey Paul has sent him to carry the letter To the Colossians. Also to the Ephesians In the same region.

And likely, we don't know for sure But likely the letter of Philemon as well. Philemon who's a part of the Colossian church And the church there likely met In his house. This is an incredibly difficult journey So we shouldn't make light of that.

[15:15] Being sent to carry a letter Such a distance from a Roman prison All the way to the town of Colossae Would have taken quite some time. He would have had to cross Italy on foot At its very shortest distance The closest port from Rome To the east coast Would have been a hundred miles.

He had to sail across the Adriatic Sea Traverse Greece once again Closest possible thing Another hundred miles on foot Sail across the Aegean Sea And once he got to the coast of Asia Minor Where Ephesus was located He would have had to go yet another hundred miles On foot to there. It's not an easy thing to do. You add up those distances in your mind And you say, well that's no big deal But in this day it was incredibly dangerous To travel distances of this kind And in this way.

So a faithful man Being sent by Paul On Paul's behalf to be an encouragement To the churches at Ephesus And Colossae. And Paul sends with him Onesimus, verse 9 Our faithful and beloved brother Who is one of you.

Now we know If we've read Philemon And if we see this clue In this text in verse 9 That Onesimus Was a Colossian. Somehow Paul's encountered him Along his way And He knows He's from there He's sending him back To his people And we learn From reading in Philemon That Onesimus Was the slave Of Philemon And he's being sent back to him As part of his repentance.

[16:49] Right? That he was a runaway Became a Christian Under the ministry of Paul And he's now being sent back To Philemon And we can see a little bit about this So turn to the book of Philemon With me This is why we suppose That Tychicus Was also carrying this letter With Onesimus To give this letter to Philemon That Philemon would Rightly receive Onesimus back No chapters in Philemon So just verse 8 And I'll read through verse 22 Paul writes Accordingly though I am bold enough in Christ To command you To do what is required Yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you I Paul

An old man And now a prisoner also For Christ Jesus Appeal to you For my child Onesimus Whose father I became In my imprisonment We take that to mean That Onesimus Somehow encountered him While he was imprisoned And Paul shared his faith With him And he came to Christ Verse 11 Formerly He was useless to you But now he is indeed Useful To you And me I am sending him back to you Sending my very heart I would have been glad To keep him with me In order that he might Serve me on your behalf During my imprisonment For the gospel But I prefer to do nothing Without your consent In order that your goodness Might not be by compulsion But out of your own accord For this perhaps Is why he was parted From you for a while That you might have him Back forever No longer as a bondservant But more than a bondservant As a beloved brother Especially to me But how much more to you Both in the flesh And in the Lord

So you see what he's saying Is I could keep him I wanted to keep him And just say to you Send this letter to you To say I've kept him And this is your good service To me That I've kept Onesimus Because he's been A faithful brother to me And he's ministering To my need here But I also recognize That it's possible That maybe Onesimus Left you In order that he might Become a

brother And come back to you And be yours forever And serve you And so he's making This appeal to him To ultimately send him back But to do what he thinks Is right In the boss-employee relationship Between himself And Onesimus Verse 18 If he has wronged you at all Or owes you anything Charge that to my account I, Paul, write this with my own hand I will repay it To say nothing of your owing me Even your own self Yes, brother I want some benefit from you In the Lord Refresh my heart In Christ Confident of your obedience I write to you Knowing that you will do Even more than I say At the same time Prepare a guest room for me For I am hoping That through your prayers I will be graciously given To you And see this appeal On the behalf Of Onesimus To send him back And then to receive him again In return From Philemon Very neatly about this And I think of note As we consider The life of Onesimus A rebellious slave Who ran away But now Had become a Christian And saw the need To return to his master Right?

That things might be made right Between them The name Onesimus Was a common Greek slave name And it means useful In Greek And so in verse 11 When Paul This parenthetical You'll see It's a word play He's saying Formerly Useless Was useless Or useful Was useless To you Formerly useful Was useless To you In that he had no Real Eternal Bearing and weight In your life Right? [20 : 51] But now He is indeed Useful To you And to me So in Christ Onesimus Had eternal Value And worth And purpose In the service Of both Paul And Philemon Back home In the Colossian Church Faithful And beloved Brother They've been sent back To tell them Everything that's happened Alright Verse 10 We see Aristarchus Listed Fellow prisoner Greets you And mark The cousin Of Barnabas Concerning whom You have received Instruction If he comes To you Welcome him We don't know About the instruction But probably There had been Some other instruction That came from The church In Jerusalem About him Likely This is the case So he's just saying That instruction I've heard about Make sure you obey That instruction And Jesus Who is called Justice Now Aristarchus We know from Biblical text Was a native Of Thessalonica He first appears In the biblical narrative During Paul's ministry

In Ephesus He was part of That group That was seized That was associated With Paul The mob came And seized them In Ephesus He was one of Paul's companions Agreed about that In Acts 19 29 He traveled with Paul to Jerusalem Acts 24 And to Rome Acts 27 4 And now we find Him still Alongside Paul As a prisoner Also a prisoner Kept in chains Because of the Gospel of Jesus Christ We see Mark The cousin of Barnabas This is This is the Mark That authored The Gospel of Mark We talked about him Quite a bit At the very beginning Of our study Of that book That Mark Is kind of an obscure Character But he pops up In some places And is a wonderful Picture of redemption Mark is the one That deserted Paul and Barnabas You see this In Acts 13 Because of fear He was just afraid To go on In the ministry Of the gospel And he abandoned them And he was later The point of contention

Between Paul and Barnabas Acts chapter 15 And the reason That Paul and Barnabas Actually is part ways Is that Barnabas His cousin Wanted to give him A second chance And Paul said I only want brave men With me I'm going on Without him And so we see This great redemptive Story carried out In Mark's life As he is now One of Paul's fellow workers Paul now esteems Him well And God uses him To author The Gospel of Mark Which is so incredibly Precious To all of us And then we see Jesus Who was called Justice Now Jesus Was the Greek form Of the Hebrew name Joshua It was actually Incredibly common It's important That we know That so often Jesus was called The Christ Because of this It was a distinguishing Factor about who he was Not just another Joshua He was Joshua The Christ Joshua means In Hebrew Savior So this is another Man named Josh But not just Josh But one who's called Justice Justice would have been His surname His last name Of sorts Which means Righteous He was Righteous Because He has A Savior And Paul writes 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 And remember That Paul's Primary ministry Was to the Gentile population That there were Other apostles Most of the apostles Ministering to Jewish populations Peter was the major Leader of that Back in Jerusalem Ministering to the Jews Paul's been turned out To the Gentiles But all the same Right He's got this desire This hunger That people of his Ethnicity Would come to Christ Romans 9 3 He says For I could wish That I myself Were accursed And cut off From Christ

For the sake of my brothers My kinsmen According to the flesh Right Those that had The patriarchs Those that had The prophets Those that should have Known what true worship Of God would look like And yet had turned From Christ Paul longed for them To come to Christ And not only were they

Rejecting the gospel But they reject Paul Altogether Much of the danger Paul faced On his missionary journeys Came at the hands Of Jews I'll give you an example 2 Corinthians 11 26 As Paul records The challenges That have faced His Christian ministry On frequent journeys In danger from rivers Dangers from robbers Dangers from my own people Dangers from Gentiles Danger in the city Danger in the wilderness Danger at sea Danger from false brothers And you see him list In that danger From his own people So they were Jews Who did not seek To kill him Right But also they were A reminder These Jews That were fellowshiping With him They weren't Seeking his life As others were

[25 : 53] Right So what a comfort That would have been But they also Were a reminder to him Of the eternal purposes Of God A reminder to him That God was still In fact Working amongst His brethren Working amongst The Jewish people He knows about the church In Jerusalem He's visited the church In Jerusalem But these are men Who are with him Who are a wonderful Reminder of that I'm going to Encourage you to read At some point Romans chapter 11 And wrestle with it And try to understand What Paul is having to say About God's eternal purposes To the Jewish people The bloodline Jewish people But he turns From all of that And all of his Understanding Of how it is That God is still Working with the people In Romans 11 Verse 33 To 36 He says Oh the depths Of the riches And wisdom And knowledge of God!

How unsearchable Are his judgments! And how inscrutable His ways! For who has known The mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who has given A gift to him That he might be repaid?

For from him And through him And to him Are all things To him be glory forever Amen And I just imagine That hymn Paul sings to himself As he's troubled about his brethren He's troubled about Israel And yet he looks at the lives Of these three men Who have faithfully Given up all things In order to pursue Christ And he praises God For God's eternal purposes To the Jewish people Verse 12 Epaphras is listed Not the first time We've heard about Epaphras Epaphras was The founder of the Colossian church Became a believer in Ephesus Brought the gospel back To this rather insignificant town Kind of a blip on the map In history He says 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

For I bear him witness That he has worked hard for you And for those In Laodicea And in Heropolis It seems that he Expanded his gospel ministry Out beyond just Colossae And out to Laodicea And out to Heropolis As well And he has labored Even while he's been gone Even while he's been with Paul in Rome He's been struggling On their behalf So that they may stand Mature And fully assured In all of the will Of God Remember that At the very beginning Of the letter Colossians 1 Verse 3 When Paul hears About the Colossian church He says We always thank God The Father Of our Lord Jesus Christ When we pray for you Since we heard of your faith In Christ Jesus From Epaphras And of the love That you have for all the saints Because of the hope Lied up for you in heaven Of this you have heard Before in the word of truth The gospel Which has come to you As indeed in the whole world It is bearing fruit And increasing As it also does among you Since the day you heard it And understood The grace of God In truth Just as you learned it

From Epaphras Our beloved fellow servant He is a faithful minister of Christ On your behalf And has made known to us Your love In the Spirit There's this This Work on Epaphras' part Which Paul sees As an extension of his As Epaphras became A believer in the Ephesian church Under the ministry Of Paul And he's now Taking it back home He's rejoicing in And he's sharing in this work That Epaphras is doing And sees this point Of Epaphras' ministry And his prayers That he may stand Mature And fully assured In all the will of God And it goes on then In Colossians chapter 1 And so from the day we heard We have not ceased To pray for you Asking that you may be filled With the knowledge Of his will In all spiritual wisdom And understanding That you may know rightly Who God is And then Verse 10 How you should walk So as to walk in a manner Worthy of the Lord Fully pleasing to him Bearing fruit In every good work And increasing

[29 : 52] In the knowledge of God Are you seeing it? Are you catching All of the spiritual Both investment Into Paul As he is needy As well as the way In which he's extending His ministry Through the lives Of these men Paul needed These men Paul was needy Not just physically But verse 14 We see him mention Luke The beloved physician Luke is only mentioned Three times In the New Testament And all of these times Are in Paul's letters Here Philemon verse 24 And 2 Timothy 4 11 Luke is the one Who authored The gospel of Luke As well as The book of Acts Pretty

significant As far as his contribution To the scripture But mentioned very little In the scripture It's been understood That Luke was Paul's Personal physician And that he joined him On his second missionary journey And mostly remained with him For the remainder Of his life

That Luke Certainly a man Gifted by the Spirit At least at record taking And giving us The gospels Certainly could Teach well The doctrines Of Christ But primarily Tied himself To the side of Paul In order to be His physician There's much postulation About what the thorn In Paul's flesh was But most agree That it was some kind Of physical ailment That caused him A great deal of trouble As he traveled And after his First missionary journey It's believed that Luke Picks up with him In order to help him And to aid him And to meet his Physical needs As he's going Luke recognizing That he was given A gifted mind by God Has been able to study And to know How it was That he could help Paul Along the way And he does so He's with him here In this house imprisonment That he's at Able to minister To his needs And the rest of verse 14 He mentions Demas Demas is with him In Rome As does Demas

Now sadly We find out later That Demas doesn't Remain with him 2 Timothy 4 9 and 10 Paul writes to Timothy Do your best To come to me soon For Demas In love with this Present world Has deserted me And gone to Thessalonica Crescens Has gone to Galatia Titus To Dalmatia And so Demas Deserts him Deserts him Because he loves the world More than the ministry Of God That Paul Was doing And this should be An encouragement To all of us Especially those Who are in Places of Christian leadership Jesus had his Judas Paul had his Demas And it's a comfort To know that the two Greatest leaders In the world Have had men Who have failed them Along the way And then he concludes Give my greetings To the brothers At Laodicea And to Nympha And the church In her house Which was understood To be the church In Laodicea And when this letter Has been read among you Have it also read In the church Of the Laodiceans And see also That you read the letter From Laodicea There's a lot of postulation About what the letter

Of Laodicea is Some people suggest That it actually was A particular letter Written to the Laodiceans Many agree That it actually was The letter of Ephesians That was actually taken And dropped back off On the journey Back to Rome And that they all Benefited from these letters We don't know for sure But all the same There's an instruction To read Paul's other letter To be sure that they're Very clear On the understanding Of the gospel Of Jesus Christ And then in verse 17 He writes And say to Archippus See that you fulfill The ministry That you have received In the Lord So I've been talking And I know in Spattering of history About these men About Paul's life And the way that Paul himself Was needy Paul needed men Right?

The grace of God To him Through men To minister to him And to help him Minister To others We see also Verse 17 That we are Needed So we are needy But we are also Needed Say to Archippus Now Archippus Is only noted Here in Philemon 2 We don't know A lot about this man Fairly insignificant In the scope Of history Again Philemon Believer in the Colossian church Colossae itself The Rome Rome had built The road around Colossae Was really insignificant Reminds me a lot Of Dhalonega In a lot of ways Nothing major Happening In the town Your educations Are major But Not real significant As far as Commerce Or military Might Was concerned Right?

[34 : 28] In Philemon 2 Though Archippus Is called Paul's Fellow Soldier And I don't Believe that his Ministry was Of any Particular note Simply because It's not noted He doesn't say See that you Fulfill the ministry And then give us The specifics Of what that Ministry Is But just Fulfill the ministry That you've received In the Lord This Task that God Has granted To you I don't think It's particularly Noteworthy I think Paul Just recognizes That this man Needs to be Encouraged To continue In his ministry As a disciple Of Jesus Christ What is the ministry That all disciples Of Jesus Christ Are given?

To make disciples This is the work That we are to be about As believers In Jesus Christ And so I think That we could read Rightly read And say to Archippus See that you continue To make disciples Of Jesus Christ This is the ministry That God has given you In Christ As a follower Of Him And we find ourselves In the church In a great deal Of trouble And I'm speaking In broad And general terms There are certainly Exceptions to this And I think in many ways Our church Is an exception To this But so many Churches Function As businesses Where the pastor Serves as the CEO And much of this Comes out of the Church growth movement Of the 60's And the 70's The glitzy up Of the church The putting on Of program In so many churches We don't need prayer Because we have websites We don't need evangelism Because we have Road frontage So much of this Was given away And so many

For generations Have sat in churches And they've seen Their part To be sure That they give Direction to The CEO Of the company They pay his salary And they make sure That he does The things That he's supposed To do And as long As they can look Around and they See some growth Of some measurable Kind in the life Of the church Then everything Is good And everything Is going well And we could talk For the next few Hours about all The detriments That this has been To the life Of the body But we see A much different Picture in the Scripture Of what the church Is supposed to Look like Christianity Is a team sport We're all meant To get in the mix And play together 1 Corinthians 12 20 and 21 Says as it is There are many parts Yet one body The eye cannot say To the hand I have no need of you Nor again the head To the feet I have no need of you And I think we get this I think we all Understand that I can't say to anybody Else in this church You're not necessary But here's the problem I think often

What happens And at least not In word But functionally People say You have no need Of me You turn it around And you say I'm not a necessary Part of the body Of Christ And this is not The church Pictured in Scripture The way many of us Function in church Is entirely foreign To the pages Of the New Testament New Testament believers Would look at our scene Today and go What has happened That you believe That your part In the church Is to show up And occupy a chair Is not the case There's a time And a place For such a thing But it's not the only time And the only place You are needed If you are found In Christ He has set you On a mission You have a part To play I don't know What it is In every single case I think one of the things I ought to be doing As a pastor Is helping you understand Who you are And how you can serve What body part You are What's happened Is this has placed A huge labor A difficulty

On pastors And some of the statistics Are just absolutely Staggering about What's happening In the lives Of churches And what's happening To pastors I want to just Show you a few This is a study Conducted by Lifeway Research 1500 Southern Baptist Pastors Let me say to you That I'm an exception To most If not all Of this I don't mean this To be whining In any way whatsoever Please don't hear that From me at all I feel very loved By our church I'm very thankful To be a pastor Of this church But I just Want to point out To you the danger Of thinking in this way Not believing That you're needed Not believing That you have a place And a part to play In the life of a church So here's some stats I'm going to rattle Them off to you 25% of pastors' wives See their husband's Work schedule As a source of conflict 45% of pastors Say they've They've experienced Depression or burnout To the extent That they needed To take a leave Of absence For ministry So give it up For a while 52% of pastors

[39 : 12] Say that they And their spouses Believe that being In pastoral ministry Is hazardous To their family's Well-being and health 56% of pastors' wives Say they have No close friends 70% of pastors Don't have any Close friends 75% report Severe stress Causing anguish Worry Bewilderment Anger Depression Fear And alienation 80% of pastors Say they have Insufficient time With their spouse 80% believe That pastoral ministry Affects their families Negatively 90% work More than 50 hours A week Which I don't think That's that big a deal That sounds whiny 94% 94% Feel under pressure To have a perfect family You get that 94% of pastors Feel Of these 1500 Feel under pressure To have a perfect family Everything's always Put together 84% Say they're on call 24 hours a day 80% Expect conflict In their church 80% Expect That the church

Is going to be A disaster 54% Find their role Of pastor Frequently overwhelming! And the last one 53% Are often Concerned About their family's Financial security That shouldn't be so In the church Just should not be The case And so much of this Is the result Of A pyramid Scheme of sorts We put the pastor At the top of So much of this Is about pedestalling A pastor Making them The perfect one In which we should follow So many churches Are cults Of personality And hear me carefully About this People attend a church They're in fellowship With a group of believers Because of who the pastor is Not because of Christ And this is so dangerous And from the very outset Of Christ family church Existing We have always said It's been the great desire Of my heart That I could cease To exist That this afternoon I get in a horrible accident And I'm gone And this church Does not fall apart If anything This church is bound Together further You have my permission To take a Sunday off And mourn And you better get back In the mix And we have men In this church Who are gifted preachers And should be up here And should be talking Instead of me Just get back in it And pull together And soldier on Because you don't follow me You follow Jesus Christ The very greatest thing That I can do for you Is show you My great need of grace And constantly push you Towards the cross You don't need me You need Jesus I'm a man And I have Just natural failing I have

natural limits To what I'm able to do Take my introversion As an example I'm a horrible small talker And probably all of you Have experienced Some moment of weird With me Where I just didn't know What to say And I'm working on it And I think that This is a thing That can be redeemed in me That the spirit Can in fact Change my personality And so I pray for that And I work for that But I know that Sometimes I'm just Awkward

I'm not the guy That gets in the middle Of a new people Social setting And pulls it all together And makes it feel great It's just not me I'd really rather Stand against the wall In the corner And watch a room Than be the center Of attention In a room So I have limitation To who I am But I'm just A part of the body Who's the head Of the body?

Christ I'm not the head I'm needy I need you And you're needed For this very reason And you're needed Ultimately Because you're needy So get that Because we need Christ That's what makes us needed If we do it well We are constantly Showing people The gospel of Jesus Christ We're constantly Showing them The way it works out In our lives But it doesn't have To work out perfectly Because we're people So stop thinking That you're not good enough Many of you think You're not good enough To serve others And to serve the church And ultimately You're not insulting yourself You're insulting our God Who's changed Who you are He's changed your heart He lives inside of you And you're saying He can do nothing With me You are needed Because you're needy Minister in the church Point people To the cross of Christ So often I hear people say That they don't have time

[43 : 35] To do this Now listen You may not have time To be in the cleaning rotation To come up to the building And clean That's okay You may not have time To come up here And cut grass with us That is okay Right You may not have time To come to our picnics We had one yesterday Some of you weren't there That's okay These are extra things The grass could be Three feet tall I don't care If this church is Functioning spiritually Together It's okay to not have time For those things But If you don't think That you have time To make disciples This is what God Has called you to Then you either Don't understand The importance of it That's possible You just haven't seen That being a follower Of Jesus Christ Means That I make disciples That I'm about Sharing my faith With other people Or You don't have Your priorities Set right They're all askew Right You serve yourself Much more Than the living God Set your face Towards God Ask what he would Have you do With your days And I can promise you It'll have very little

To do with you And it'll have much To do with serving him By serving the church And when I say that I mean those who are Yet to be part of it As well God is calling together Christ died For the church And he is calling Its number together And when it's completed He'll come back Praise God Come thou fount Of every blessing And then verse 18 So we are needy And we are needed And he closes it out I Paul Write this greeting With my own hand He often was speaking To somebody Who was transcribing For him He takes the time I'd love to see That original manuscript I wish we could That original handwriting Remember my chains Don't forget that I am in prison For the gospel Of Jesus Christ Back at the beginning Of chapter 4 We talked about Praying for opportunity To share the gospel To be opened up And then he says Grace be with you And this is a common Closing salutation You see it at the end Of Romans Into 1st and 2nd Corinthians The end of 1st and 2nd Thessalonians 1st and 2nd Timothy

Titus Very common closing Salutation Grace be with you And really that little phrase Is kind of the summary Of Paul's letter To the Colossians Salvation comes By grace alone Through faith alone And the all sufficient Supreme work of Christ Alone And the Christian life Is sustained By the same And so as we talk About being Needy and needed It is the grace of God To us in Christ Like put into play By the work of his spirit By the word of God Right That sustains us in this And encourages us In the right way That we should go And so As you're considering These things I want you to recall that I want you to remember That it is God Who is at work In you To accomplish These things And I want you to Do so by Reflecting with me On 1st Corinthians Chapter 15 Verses 8 through 11 I'll read it carefully To you Paul has been talking About the resurrection Of Jesus Christ And his appearing To varying groups

Of people And in verse 8 He says Last of all As to one Untimely born He appeared also To me For I am the least Of the apostles Unworthy to be called An apostle Because I persecuted The church of God But by the grace of God I am What I am And his grace Toward me Was not in vain Right So he was converted From one who was Persecuting the church Of Jesus Christ Into one who served The church Of Jesus Christ And he says By grace This happened This grace for me Was not in vain On

the contrary I worked harder Than any of them Though it was not I But the grace of God That is with me Whether then it was I Or they So we preach And so you Believed Let's pray together