

Colossians 4

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Tape #8183
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Colossians, chapter four.

Paul had been dealing, in the end of chapter three, with interpersonal relationships, much as he did in chapter five of his letter to the Ephesians. As he talks about the wife, her relationship to the husband, how the husbands are to love their wives, the children obeying their parents, the fathers not provoking their children to anger, and then the servants with their masters.

It would seem that they would include the first verse of chapter four with chapter three, because the first verse ends that portion of the epistle that deals with interpersonal relationships. Having dealt with the servants and their responsibility to their masters, or what we would say today, the employees and their responsibility to their employers.

He now speaks of the responsibility of the employers to the employees.

The *Masters* (or employers), *give unto your servants that which is just and equal*; In other words, he's calling upon them to pay them a fair wage.

knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. I think that this is a very important thing that we need to remember. Nobody can really rule properly unless he is ruled. You have to realize that one day we are going to answer to the Lord. I have a Master in heaven. And I'm going to have to give an account unto Him. I think that it's extremely important that we have this recognition.

You remember when the centurion sent to Jesus concerning his servant, that was sick. The people said, oh this centurion is really a great fellow. He, you know, has contributed to the synagogue and he's been a very good, just ruler. And Jesus said, I will come to his house.

No doubt, the centurion received word that Jesus was coming to the house. His wife probably got upset and said, oh, no, no, no, He can't come here. The house is a mess! Don't let Him come. I don't want all the people crowding around here. He sent a message back and said, you don't have to come. But then he said, I understand what authority is about. I am a man of authority and I am under authority.

In other words there is the chain. I have authority. I am under authority. I understand what authority is about because I can say to a servant, go and he will go. I can say to another, come and he comes. I understand what authority is about. And I know that all you have to do is just say the word and my servant will be healed. You remember that Jesus marveled at his faith. He said, I haven't seen such faith in all of Israel.

But the chain of command and authority. So maybe you are the owner of the business, but yet we are going to one day answer to the Lord.

Now, one of the problems today with government and say even the Supreme Court, is the failure to recognize that they are not the highest court. And one day they will be responsible and held responsible for their decisions.

I heard Blackburn—I didn't hear him. I read in the one of the news media, this week, concerning Blackburn, who was the judge that wrote the assenting opinion on the abortion law. He said that it troubled him for many years. I thought, good! But then he said, I now feel very good about it. And I thought, bad! But he'll feel very bad about it one day, when he will have to answer to God for the millions of babies that have been aborted as a result of that decision that he made as a member of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Whenever you put a man into rule that doesn't understand that he is under authority, you always develop a tyrannical government. And so masters, if you are an employer, if you own a business, if you have employees, give them a fair and just salary.

Now, that sort of ends the part of interpersonal relationships.

Now Paul goes on to say, ²*Continue in prayer*, Why do we need to continue in prayer? Why the persistence in prayer? We know that it is not to change the mind of God. We often say that prayer changes

things. Yes, I think it does change things, but I don't think that it changes God's mind. I believe that every right thing we've every prayed for, God intended to give it to us before we prayed. In fact, I think that prayer really begins with God. The purpose, the heart of God, that's where prayer begins. Those purposes of God are placed upon our hearts.

Delight thyself also in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4). So He puts it in our heart as a desire. We in turn express that desire to God in prayer. The cycle is complete. Now God is able to do for us what He has been longing to do.

Jesus said to His disciples in John 15:16, you did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I ordained that you should be My disciples, that you should bring forth fruit, that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. Notice, "may" give it to you—not "shall".

In other words, the prayer opens the door for God to do what He's desiring to do in your life or through your life. Prayer opens the door to allow God to do it for God will not violate the free will or power of choice that He has given to us. So prayer moves in the cycle. It begins in the heart of God. Why then do I have to persist in prayer? Well, many times we begin to pray over an issue without fully understanding the full purpose of God.

Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, who was barren, in that day, they had polygamy. The other wife, was very prolific. She had many children. She was chiding Hannah all the time. Obviously Elkanah favored Hannah. But the other wife just had one child after another, where Hannah could not bear children. And that was a curse in that culture. It was actually legal grounds for divorce in that culture. So Hannah was extremely troubled. On the way to Shiloh to worship God on one of the feast days, as she was weeping, her husband Elkanah, said what's wrong with you? She said, give me a child or I'm going to die. He became angry. He rebuked her. He said, I'm not God! I'm not the one! I can't do it. And he was upset.

Well, when she got to the tabernacle, the place of worship, she was in such great agony of spirit and soul, that as she was praying, her mouth was moving but no words were being audibly uttered. It was just so deep. It was, just, she couldn't speak. It was just the movement of her mouth. But no sounds were coming out.

Eli, the priest, seeing her lying there in this agonized condition, assumed she was drunk. And he said, let the booze alone lady, it's not good for you. And she said, I'm not drunk, but my soul is grieved. And then as she prayed, she said, Lord, if You will just give to me a son, I will give him back to You all the days of his life.

At this particular time in the history of Israel, things were going bad. Eli, the priest had wicked sons. And Eli was not disciplining his sons. They were making a sham of the whole religious system. They were mistreating the people that were coming to worship. They were grabbing the best of the meat. If someone would object they would just have them thrown out. They were vile, wicked boys. Eli wasn't stopping them. And the result was, people were hating to come to worship at the tabernacle because of the way they were treated by Eli's sons. It was a time of spiritual declension.

God needed a man. A man who would become a judge over Israel, leading them back to worship with God. There was no man available. So God had to get a woman before He could get a man. So He closed up Hannah's womb until she was brought to that place of saying, God, just give me a son. I'll give him back to You, all the days of his life. Suddenly she is in harmony with God's purpose. And thus the prayer that she had been praying, no doubt, for years, to have a son, the prayer is now to be answered because now she is in harmony with God's purpose and God's desire.

So God gave to her a son and true to her promise, as Samuel was weaned, she brought him back to the temple and said, Lord, for this child I prayed and now I give him back to You. He was raised by Eli, there in the precincts of the tabernacle and all. He began to minister very early in life. God delayed. It wasn't that He wasn't intending to give, but He was waiting to get her heart in harmony with His heart. And I think that is true in many times with us. We pray and it seems like there is no answer and sometimes we're prone to give up.

But Paul said, continue in prayer. In other words, don't stop praying. Don't give up. Perhaps God is waiting to get us in harmony with His purpose. The moment we come into harmony with the purpose of

God, then we will see the answer to prayer.

Sometimes God waits in order that He might give more and in order that He might get greater glory. The case of Lazarus of course, Jesus, not going immediately to Bethany to heal him from his sickness, but waiting until he dies, in order that He might give a greater miracle that would bring even greater glory to God.

So continue in prayer.

and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Don't give up. Watch, he said, in the same with thanksgiving.

Over and over, Jesus said, watch and pray. Be alert. In the garden, when the disciples went to sleep. He said, watch and pray, that is, stay awake! Don't sleep. Be alert. And so we're exhorted to watch with thanksgiving. It is so important that we learn to give thanks unto the Lord in all things.

Paul, writing to the Thessalonians said, in all things give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. In everything, give thanks. That's God's will! People often say, oh, I wish I knew the will of God. Well, I can give you a good start! Just in everything give thanks! That is God's will.

You can't do that, however, unless you are fully convinced that God loves you, because many times we do not understand the testings that God puts us through. And unless I'm fully convinced that God loves me supremely, I am, at times, prone to challenge my circumstances and to challenge God concerning my circumstances.

Why, God, would You allow that to happen to me? And we are prone to challenge God unless we're convinced that God loves us supremely and that God is in control of all of the circumstances of our lives. If God loves me and I believe that, and He controls the circumstances of my life, and I believe that, then nothing happens to me but what God has allowed it to happen. If He has allowed it to happen, He has a good purpose for its happening, for all things are working together for good to those who love God. So, when I have that kind of a foundation, God loves me! He is in control of the circumstances of my life. I am then able in everything to give thanks because this is God's will for me.

So, with thanksgiving. Again, when you come to the stage of life that I have come to, looking back, I have a much clearer understanding of a lot of the trials that I went through in my earlier years--Trials and testings where I didn't pass all of them. I failed many of them!

We are familiar with the story of Job and all, of the testings that he went through. And it said, in all of these things, he did not curse God or charge God foolishly. I've never cursed God, but I sure charged Him foolishly. I said, I don't think God really loves me. If God really loved me, why would He allow this to happen to me? And I didn't understand what was going on. I, often times, complained to God. Lord, let Him know my feelings concerning some of the things, concerning some of the things that were taking place. But later on, when I saw what God was doing, I saw the full cycle. I realized the purpose of that testing. Then I had to come back. I had to apologize to God. I had to tell Him, oh, I was so sorry that I thought those things about You! I said some of those things to You. I accused You, foolishly. Lord, I so sorry. Lord, if You would have let me know what You had in mind, You could have saved Yourself all of that griping and grief and all that I gave to You. But you see, He is wanting to build trust. So often when we cry out to God, asking for the reason, He'll just say, trust Me, son. But why, God? Just trust Me.

The commitment of my ways, Peter said (1 Peter 4:19), if any of you suffer according to the will of God, let him commit his soul unto Him as a faithful Creator. Oh, what a rest we've received, once we've learned to just commit our ways unto the Lord! And so continue in prayer. Watch in the same with thanksgiving.

³*Withal praying also for us,* And when you pray, with all of the other things, pray for us, Paul said.

that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: When you are praying, put us on your prayer list and pray that God will give us an opportunity to share the glorious mystery of Christ. What is that mystery of Christ? The mystery is that God has also chosen the Gentiles to be a part of the family of God. That it is Christ in us, the hope of glory. And in Christ, there's neither Jew nor Gentile, that the Gentiles also can receive the indwelling of Christ, the glorious mystery.

This, Paul said, the mystery for which I am in prison. It was because of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles that the Jews were so upset with him. When he had come back to Jerusalem with an offering for the church,

that he had taken from the Gentile churches, he was there and he purposed to be there on one of the feast days in order that he might participate in the feast. And as he was going through the rites of purification in order that he might participate in the feast, some of the Jews that had also come for the feast, saw him. They saw him in the temple area. They began to cry out, this is the fellow who is telling the Gentiles that they can be saved, that they don't need to keep the law of Moses! And they began to beat him up. They were going to try and kill him.

The Roman guard at the Antonio Fortress, saw the tumult. They came rushing down and they rescued Paul from the hands of the Jews who were trying to kill him. As they came up to the porch at the Antonio Fortress, Paul said to the captain of the guard, can I speak to them? He said, sure. So Paul began to address them. He said I understand your feelings. I was just like you at one time. I sought to wipe out this new sect. I know how you are feeling. I understand you. And if they will testify, the high priests actually commissioned me to go to Damascus and imprison those that were of this persuasion.

But as I was on my way to Damascus, about noon there was this bright light from heaven. And he told of his conversion. It went well until he said, "I am sending you to the Gentiles". And the moment that Paul said, Gentiles, it was like throwing a match on gasoline. The thing just blew up! They began to throw dirt in the air. They began to scream. They began to rush toward the Antonio Fortress. And the captain of the guard did not speak Hebrew. He did not understand what Paul was saying to the crowd. So they brought him into the Fortress for his own protection.

And he said, scourge him and find out what he said. As the executioner was preparing to scourge Paul, he said, is it lawful to scourge a Roman citizen who has not been charged with any crime?

So the executioner went to the captain and said did you know he is a Roman citizen? He came out and said to Paul, I purchased my citizenship. It costs me a pretty penny. What about you? Paul said, I was free born.

Well, the Jews brought their charges against Paul. And he was held over and bound, to stand trial in Caesarea. And there were three different occasions where he stood trial there. When he realized he was getting just the runaround, he said, I appealed to Caesar, the right of a Roman citizen. So he was taken then as a prisoner to Rome.

He is now in Rome as he is writing this letter. And the reason why he is in Rome is because of his taking the mystery of Christ to the Gentiles. Christ in you, the hope of glory. And that the Gentiles could also be partakers of the covenant and of the goodness and the grace of God that was once for the Jews, but now is open to all.

So pray for me.

⁴*That I may make it manifest, this glorious truth, as I ought to speak.*

Now his exhortation, ⁵*Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.* Today, this afternoon, I turned on television. And during the timeout period in the first half, I did a little channel surfing. I went to a religious channel. And my heart was grieved at what I saw. I thought that any person of the world, seeing this, would be so completely turned off to Christianity. This is a sham! And my heart just was grieved because it was so obviously a worked up, emotional thing. Anyone with any intelligence could see through it. I thought, this in the minds of many people is Christianity. And I just hurt inside.

I went a little further and I saw another character, with a cigar. And I thought, God, help us. We don't have a chance.

Walk in wisdom to those that are without. Let your life be a positive witness for Jesus Christ. We're not a bunch of hair-brained idiots, screaming. God, help us. God help us to walk in wisdom to them that are without, redeeming the time. Time is short!

I believe that as Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said time is short, it's time that we just have our contact with the world, just as light as possible. We don't have any time, really, to indulge in joys or sorrows, or time to enjoy our possessions. It's just really time to give ourselves fully, to sharing the Word of God with others. Redeeming the time. Buying up every opportunity that you have of sharing with wisdom the hope of salvation that we have through Jesus Christ.

⁶*Let your speech be always with grace, God, help us on this one!*

Let it always be with grace, *seasoned with salt*, I mean, it adds flavor. It adds. It enhances the taste and the flavor. Let our speech be that way.

that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. Questions, concerning your faith, that you might know how.

Paul now turns to the closing salutation as he talks about those that are with him and as he greets certain ones in the church in Colosse.

Now geographically Colosse was very close to Hierapolis and to Laodicea. And there were fellowships in Laodicea, as well as Hierapolis, as well as Colosse. It was one of the churches of Asia.

It is interesting that when Jesus addressed the churches of Asia in Revelation, the seven churches, He did not address the church of Colosse, nor the one at Hierapolis. But Colosse and Hierapolis are just adjacent to each other.

So Paul said, ⁷*All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:* ⁸*Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;* Tychicus was the one that brought the letter from Paul. Paul is in prison in Rome. And he brought the letter to the church in Ephesus and then carried the letter to the church at Colosse. It is thought that the letter to the church of Ephesus was also written to the church in Laodicea. And so he'll tell them to read also the letter from the church in Laodicea, that is the one he wrote and that they should get it and read it also. And it is thought that that is similar to the letter or is the same as the letter to the church in Ephesus.

But when he comes, when he brings this letter, he will declare to you my state—my state here in Rome. And also, I've sent him for the purpose that he might know your estate and comfort your hearts.

Now Tychicus was one of Paul's companions. In Acts 20:4, we read that there accompanied with Paul into Asia, Sopater of Berea, and Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, who of course was from Derbe, Lystra, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

In Ephesians 6:21, Paul said, but that you also may know my affairs and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord shall make known to you all things. Of course, here Tychicus is to do the same thing to the church in Colosse.

In his letter to Titus (Titus 3:12), he said, when I shall send Artemas unto thee or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis, for I have determined to stay there this winter. But at the last letter that Paul wrote, 2 Timothy, which we'll be getting to in a couple of months, this last letter to Timothy, Paul's final letter, he said and Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. And that was perhaps with the epistles to them.

Now we are introduced to another one who was with Paul. ⁹*With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things, which are done here.* From this we know that Onesimus was from Colosse.

Now Onesimus appears once more in Paul's letter to Philemon, that was probably brought at the same time by Tychicus, but that was a personal letter to one of the members in the church in Colosse. And the letter of Philemon has to do with Onesimus' conversion.

Onesimus was at one time a slave of Philemon. And he ran away. Now in those days, the penalty for a slave to run away was usually death. Onesimus ran away from Colosse. He came to Rome. Somehow in Rome he met Paul and was converted. And so Paul sent back to Philemon, a letter requesting that Philemon free Onesimus in order that he might be with Paul, because a close bond had been created and Onesimus had been a great help to Paul. Here Paul calls him a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you, that is, he is from Colosse. He, with Tychicus, will let you know all of the things, which are done here.

So in his letter to Philemon, he brings up Onesimus. He said, I beseech thee for my son, Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bond. Paul had the opportunity, perhaps he was in jail, a fellow prisoner. But at any rate, we know that he accepted Christ and Paul in his letter to Philemon, to intercede for Onesimus, said, that if he owes anything, put it to my account because you know that you owe me your very soul. So Onesimus.

At verse ten we have another one. ¹⁰*Aristarchus* (who Paul calls his fellowprisoner) *my fellowprisoner saluteth you,* He greets you.

Aristarchus, we find in Acts 19:29, it was when Demetrius the silversmith got together other members of their trade. They said, you know, this guy Paul is putting us out of business. He is telling the people that there no gods that are made with hand. Our trade is suffering. Fellows, we could be out of business if we don't do something about it. So they started creating a tumult. They just started down the street yelling. People started following them, not knowing what was going on. They began to gather in that great arena, there in Ephesus. They began to chant, "great is Diana of the Ephesians". Now they couldn't find Paul, so they grabbed Aristarchus and Gaius, who were from Macedonia, actually from Thessalonica. They were Paul's companions in travel. They rushed in with them in accord into the theatre where this big ruckus was taking place. So Aristarchus was in there in this very tense situation.

In Acts 20:4, we read that he accompanied to Asia as one of the company that went to Asia of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus.

In Acts 27:2, he was with Paul on the journey to Rome. And he was, we read there, a Macedonian of Thessalonica. In Philemon, he is just mentioned as one of Paul's fellowlaborers. He's mentioned in the salutation of Paul there. So Aristarchus, my fellowprisoner greet you.

And then *Marcus* (or Mark) the *sister's son to Barnabas*, or Barnabas' sister's son. He, thus is the nephew of Barnabas.

Concerning Mark, in Acts 12:12, when Peter was in prison, the church was praying. James had just been beheaded by Herod. When he saw it pleased the Jews, he had Peter imprisoned, intending also to kill Peter. You remember the angel came and awakened Peter in the middle of the night. He told him to put on his sandals and to follow him. He led him out of the prison. He then went to the house where the church was praying. The house happened to be that of the mother of Mark, also known as John Mark or as Marcus. It was at his mother's house where the church was praying.

Now when Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, they took with them John whose sir name was Mark. In Acts 13, when Paul and Barnabas began the first missionary journey, Mark went with them to a certain point, but when they had come to Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, and John Mark departed from them and returned to Jerusalem.

So when they were ready to take their second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take his nephew, Mark, again. Paul said, no! He left us the first time. He got homesick. He left us. I don't want to take him. Barnabas said, he's my nephew. I'm going to take him. Paul said, no you're not! We won't go if you are going to take him. And the contention became so great that Paul took Silas and headed off. Barnabas took Mark and they headed off in another direction.

There is a place where God used the contention to double the missionary teams. So rather than just one team going, God uses that to spread the gospel that much further. Now, there can be differences of opinion within the church. Holy men like Paul and Barnabas had their disagreements. Paul didn't want Mark with them. But in years to come, that all changed.

Here Marcus, the sister's son to Barnabas, (*touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;*) And then in Philemon 24, Marcus is mentioned again as one of the companions of Paul. And in Paul's last letter (2 Timothy 4:11), he speaks about how most of them have forsaken him. Tychicus, he is sent on a mission. Only Luke is with me. So he said, take Mark, and bring him with you for he is profitable to me for the ministry! So now Paul is asking, bring him. He's been profitable to me for the ministry. So, things were all patched up, you know, it all came together towards the end.

Peter said the church that is Babylon elected together with you, salutes you and so does Marcus, my son. So he, no doubt, was accompanying Peter, also with Peter, had to leave Jerusalem.

So, then ¹¹And *Jesus, which is called Justus*, Jesus was a common name, that's why they said Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is the Greek name for the Hebrew name, Yeshuwa, which means Jehovah is salvation. So there were many who were named Jesus, but they surnamed him Justus. And in Acts 18:7, we read and he departed from there and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. So Justus lived right next door to the Synagogue in Corinth. And in Paul's first visit to Corinth, he met Justus. He was a Jew. He lived right next to the synagogue. Joined hard, means that they probably shared a common wall with the synagogue.

And here Paul declares and Jesus, which is called Justus, *who are of the circumcision*. This is he was a Jew.

These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Then we have ¹²*Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ*, That is, Epaphras came from Colosse. That was his home church. He was one of you.

saluteth you, He is a servant of Christ and he greets you.

He's *always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*. Oh my! What a tremendous recommendation as Paul said in the beginning, continue in prayer. He's saying, Epaphras is always laboring, fervently in prayer for you. He is one of you. You are on his heart. And he is always praying for you.

In Colossians 1:7, back earlier in this book, as you have also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is for you, a faithful minister of Christ.

In Philemon, Paul said there greets thee, Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus. So Epaphras is from Colosse and is a faithful servant of Christ, a man of prayer. He is one who was laboring fervently for them in prayer.

He said, ¹³*For I bear him record, (that is Epaphras), that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis*. Now as I said, these three cities, actually Hierapolis and Colosse are adjacent cities. They are sort of on the hill. Down below in the valley is Laodicea. But it is close by.

¹⁴*Luke, the beloved physician*, Now Luke is the author of the gospel according to Luke. He is also the author of the Book of Acts. However, he is not named as such in either book. In fact Luke's name is only mentioned three times in the Bible, here in Colossians and in his second letter to Timothy, the final letter—only Luke is with me. In his letter to Philemon, he talks about Lucas as one of his fellow laborers.

Luke was called the beloved physician here. According to early church tradition, he joined Paul when Paul left Troas for Macedonia. It is there that the account takes on the personal pronoun, and “we”. So that's when Luke joined with Paul in the missionary journey.

It is thought that Luke as a physician, was probably a slave for in those days, most physicians were personal slaves of the wealthy people. It is thought that his master was Theophilus, who he addresses in both the gospel of Luke and in the Book of Acts. The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and to teach.

So Theophilus is thought to be the master of Luke, who released Luke when he accepted Christ, from his slavery in order that Luke might become Paul's companion because Paul was a sickly person. He speaks of his oft infirmities or sicknesses. And so it was obvious that Paul needed a physician with him. According to the early traditions, Theophilus released Dr. Luke from his slavery and he became Paul's companion and personal physician as Paul made these arduous missionary journeys.

Then we have Demas. Luke, the beloved physician, *and Demas, greet you*. Also in Philemon, Demas is mentioned as the fellow laborer. But sadly, in 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul's last letter, he said, for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world. He's departed unto Thessalonica and Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. So Demas forsook Paul because of the love of the world. That's a sad commentary on Demas, who was here a fellow laborer with Paul.

Now Paul said, ¹⁵*Salute (greet) the brethren which are in Laodicea (not far away), and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house*. Now, we don't know about anything Nymphas, except he had a house church. They had a meeting in his house. In the early church, most of the churches were homes. They met in the homes of the believers. It was sometime later when they started building places for them to all gather, but the original churches met in the homes.

¹⁶*And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; In other words, exchange with them the letters. They have received a letter, probably the letter to Ephesus. And so, exchange letters.*

When this is read, then cause also the church in Laodicea to read it, *and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea*. ¹⁷*And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received in the Lord,*

that thou fulfil it. A good exhortation! God has given you a ministry, now take heed that you fulfill it. God has given to each one of us, a ministry. It's important that we discover the ministry and two, that we fulfill the ministry. What is the ministry that God has called you to do? Everyone of us has a ministry in the body of Christ. We are all a part of the body. And each of us has a place of ministry in the body.

The exhortation to Archippus, is that he fulfill that ministry.

When Paul wrote to Philemon, who was also in the church in Colosse, he said and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus, our fellowsoldier, and to the church in your house. So Archippus had a church meeting in his house. And so the exhortation to him, the ministry, which you have received in the Lord. It was probably that of teaching the whole Bible study in his house.

¹⁸*The salutation by the hand of me Paul.* Paul is the one that wrote this salutation. Most of Paul's letters were dictated. He had bad eyesight so he would sign the letters.

Wouldn't it be great if we find an original manuscript somewhere with Paul's signature? That would be exciting! The salutation by the hand of me, Paul! The problem is, though, we would make an icon out of it. We would worship it. So God's smart in just not letting us have any of the originals.

Remember my bonds (Paul said). *Grace be with you. Amen.* And so the close of the letter to the church in Colosse.

And now we move on to Paul's letter to the church in Thessalonica. Paul didn't spend much time in Thessalonica, he just sort of got things started when the riots began. They had to get Paul out of there to calm things down. But we'll get to that. It's amazing the things in just such a short time, that Paul did teach to them because he referred to the things that he taught. It is interesting, one of the main subjects that he taught was prophecy and the soon return of Jesus Christ. So we will get that when we get to the letter to the church in Thessalonica. So study. Read ahead. Chapter one of 1 Thessalonians is your assignment for next week.

Father, we give thanks again for the opportunity of knowing You better as we study Your Word together. Enrich our hearts, Lord, in the things of the Spirit. And Lord, help us that we might take to heart these exhortations, that we might indeed, continue in prayer and watching with thanksgiving. Help us, Lord, that we will discover the ministry that You have for us and to fulfill it Lord, for Your glory. Bless us now, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.