

Fulfill Your Ministry: Colossians 4:12-18

Pastor Adam Hall ☞ Dryden First Baptist Church ☞ May 29, 2022

Colossians 4:12-18 ESV

¹² 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. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord."

¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Introduction

- there is nothing worse for the _____ season than cool and cloudy weather
- I remember the greenhouse growers in Leamington complaining often that the weather was not good enough for growing cucumbers and tomatoes
- they wanted sunny weather but they got cool and cloudy weather
- crops, plants and other living organisms need the heat and the sun for them to thrive and to grow

- imagine if a plant never got any heat or any sun, that plant would never grow an inch or produce an ounce of food
- plants that _____ eventually end up dying and being absolutely useless
- plants need heat and humidity so that they can grow

- we as Christians need to grow too, not just yearly, not just monthly, not just weekly but daily in the Lord
- Epaphras knew the needs of the Colossians, he knew that they needed to grow in the Lord
- so he prays for the Colossians to mature in the Lord and be assured in the Lord
- are you _____ daily in the Lord or have you become stagnant?

- and have you been praying that Dryden 1st Baptist church would grow in the Lord?
- the book of Colossians is ultra-focused upon Jesus Christ, His character and His work
- in Colossians 1-4, Paul emphasizes the importance and _____ of Jesus Christ
- Paul clearly proclaims the _____ of Jesus Christ in Colossians 1:15-20, which is the great _____ about Jesus Christ
- Paul proclaims that Jesus is supreme over _____ because the Father has created all things through Jesus Christ (1:15-17)
- Paul proclaims that Jesus is supreme over the _____ because Jesus is the head of the church (1:18)
- Paul proclaims that Jesus is supreme over _____ because Jesus makes peace through His blood shed upon the cross (1:20)
- Paul emphasizes the greatness of Christ by declaring that He is _____ and thus we must build our lives upon Jesus Christ
- Colossians 2:6-7 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in _____ .
- and Paul declares that Jesus is _____ and is in _____ in Colossians 3:11
- Paul is saying here that Jesus is all that _____
- in Colossians 3:1-4:6 Paul explains the new _____ that is to be lived in Jesus Christ
- if you have been raised with Christ then you must think about the heavenly things (3:1-4), you must put to _____ sin and order every area of your life according to Jesus Christ
- now we come to the last section in the book of Colossians where Paul gives _____ to the Colossians, _____ the Colossians and the Laodiceans one more time
- finally, Paul gives his final _____ upon the congregation

Brief Outline:

- 1) (4:12-14) More Greetings
- 2) (4:15-17) Final Commands
- 3) (4:18) Final Blessing

1) (4:12-14) More Greetings

(4:12) Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you,

- we hear about a co- _____ of Paul called Epaphras
- he has _____ been mentioned by Paul in the early part of Colossians
Colossians 1:7-8 just as you learned it from Epaphras our _____ fellow servant.
He is a _____ minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us
your love in the Spirit.

- Epaphras likely learned about Jesus Christ through the apostle _____
- we see how _____ should function through the example of Epaphras, you are
saved by Jesus Christ and then you preach Jesus Christ to others so that they can be
_____ by grace too

- Epaphras took the gospel of _____ to Colossae and because of his missionary
work there, by God's grace, it birthed the church at Colossae

- he is described in Colossians 1:7-8 as:

a) _____ fellow servant – he served alongside of Paul in gospel ministry

b) _____ minister – he was faithful in the ministry of preaching and teaching

- in Colossians 4:12, Epaphras, who is with Paul, _____ this congregation that
he has started

- Paul describes Epaphras as “_____ of you”

- this means that Epaphras is from the _____ of Colossae

- Paul describes Epaphras again as a _____ (Colossians 1:7)

- Epaphras did not serve himself but served _____ Christ and served the
_____ at Colossae and finally served the _____ of Colossae

- how difficult is it to be a _____ in our Canadian culture?

- the media and culture want us to focus upon _____ but followers of Jesus
Christ do not do that

- Jesus did not _____ upon Himself and Jesus did not serve Himself

- Jesus came to serve and thus we as followers of Jesus Christ need to serve

always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

- Epaphras was deeply _____ about this congregation that he started
- this concern led him to _____ this congregation by continually praying for them
- do you see how _____ describes the prayer life of Epaphras?
- he describes his prayer life as “struggling”
- this word “_____” is the Greek word “agonize”
- Paul describes _____ as hard work, a striving, a struggling or a wrestling
- Paul says something about prayer that we all can identify with and that is prayer is hard _____
- not many Christians find the _____ of prayer easy
- the _____ professing Christian in Canada according to statistics does not even take time each day to seek the Lord in _____
- this statistic reveals that _____ is hard work

- the _____ of Epaphras’ prayer is that they might grow in the Lord
- the _____ of Epaphras’ prayer is very similar to that of Paul’s prayer for the Colossians in chapter 1

Colossians 1:9-11 And so, from the day we heard, we have not _____ to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.¹¹ May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy,

- Paul and Epaphras had _____ for this church and this concern was evidenced by their _____ life for the Colossians

- Epaphras prays for two important things:

1) they might stand _____

- the word “mature” is the word that is sometimes translated “complete” or “_____”

- Epaphras prays that God would cause the believers in Colossae to persevere so that they could stand before the Lord as holy and blameless

2) they might be fully _____ in all the will of God

- the verb "fully assured" is passive

- this means that Epaphras is asking God to make them confident in the will of God

- Epaphras does not want the Colossian church to be _____

- he _____ that they _____ in the grace of God and in obedience to God

- He wants them to flourish in the Lord

- He desires that they enjoy the _____ of Jesus Christ each day

- He desires that they grow submission to Jesus Christ, by _____ to death sin

- He desires that they grow in their _____ to one another

- imagine if your child never _____ and they stayed at the same height for years; would this be a serious _____ for you?

- how much more should we be concerned about our _____ in the Lord both individually and as a _____ ?

(4:13) For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.

- Paul can _____ because he knows just how diligent and hardworking Epaphras is for the Colossians

- _____ also mentions _____ other congregations

1) the congregation at Laodicea

- Laodicea was a _____ that was near Colossae in what is now modern day Turkey

- this church is famous because they are mentioned in _____ as being a "lukewarm church"

- they had _____ been as faithful to the Lord as they should have been and were not finding their _____ in Jesus Christ

2) the congregation at Hierapolis

- this is the _____ reference that we have to a church at Hierapolis in the Bible

- this _____ was close to the city of Laodicea and Colossae

- - in Colossians 4:13 we see that Epaphras not only _____ his home church, which was Colossae, but also the _____ in the surrounding area, which were Laodicea and Hierapolis

(4:14) Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.

- _____ who is a physician greets this church
 - it is thought that he is the author of the _____ of Luke and the book of Acts
 - the _____ of the gospel of Luke does seem to highlight certain medical issues that only a _____ would highlight as we see in Luke 8
- Luke 8:43 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone.
- Matthew and _____ only mention the length of the woman's disease but Luke explains the money that was spent by this woman on doctors
 - because of these medical references in the gospel of Luke this likely connects this Luke with _____ the author of Luke and Acts
- _____ is mentioned in two other letters by Paul
- a) Demas sends his _____ to Philemon in the book of Philemon
 - b) In 2 Timothy, Demas is described by Paul as being in _____ with the present world and as having left Paul
- 2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas, in love with this _____ world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.
- it is thought that Demas wanted to live in ease and luxury so he left the hard work of _____ and went back to his hometown

2) (4:15-17) Final Commands

(4:15) Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

- Paul sends his greeting to the _____ in Jesus Christ at Laodicea
 - in this letter, we see just how _____ connected the congregations of Colossae and Laodicea were
- then Paul greets a _____ named Nympha who has a church at her house
 - almost all of the translations identify the name "Nympha" as a feminine
 - a few translations use the masculine form of the _____ Nympha which is Nymphas
 - this is _____ a theological hill to die on

- whether this person is male or female it does not really matter
- we know that they were wealthy because you would need a _____ home to accommodate the church at Laodicea
- we need to highlight that just because the _____ met at the house of Nympha it does not mean that the host was the _____ or a leader in the church

(4:16) 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.

- in Colossians 4:16 we see the _____ of the supremacy of Christ in the book of Colossians
- the Colossian church and Laodicean church were to _____ letters
- there is much debate about what is the Laodicean _____
- some have suggested that the Laodicean letter was the _____ of Philemon or even the book of Ephesians
- we do not know, but what we do know is the importance of the _____ of the supremacy of Jesus Christ in Colossians

(4:17) And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord."

- Archippus is mentioned in Colossians and in the book of Philemon
- we know every _____ about him except that he needs to fulfill the ministry that the Lord has given him
- do you see that it is the whole church's responsibility that he _____ his ministry?
- the Colossian church, as a _____ of believers, was to encourage this man to make sure that he continued in his _____
- we do not know exactly what Archippus' ministry entailed but we can gather that he was _____ off in what the Lord had commanded him to do
- to receive a ministry from the Lord is a huge _____ and it is a blessing that we should not take for granted
- Paul encourages Timothy and Titus in the 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, to _____ in their ministry several times
- Paul _____ Timothy in a similar way!

2 Timothy 4:5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the _____ of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

3) (4:18) Final Blessings

(4:18) I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

- Paul writes this greeting with his own _____ which means that likely Timothy was writing the main part of the letter while Paul dictated and Paul wrote these closing lines himself

- Paul _____ writes that he is writing the greeting

1 Corinthians 16:21 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

2 Thessalonians 3:17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my _____ hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I _____ .

- Paul does this to _____ that he is personally certifying the letter

- it is kind of like those political commercials that you hear that say, "I am so an so, and I _____ this message"

- Paul calls this church to remember his _____

- this would mean that he would want them to pray for him while he is in _____

- but they were also to remember that the _____ that Paul was in prison was because of his preaching of the gospel

- Paul ends this letter with a _____ of grace "grace be with you"

- Paul wants this church to _____ the grace of God through Jesus Christ

- Paul starts this letter with a _____ of the grace and peace that comes from God and now Paul ends this letter with a _____ of the grace of God

Application

1) We Need to Hear the Gospel of Grace _____ !

- Paul starts this letter with _____ and peace

Colossians 1:2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and _____ from God our Father.

- Paul _____ this letter with a declaration of grace

Colossians 4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

- Paul starts many of his letters with this same emphasis on _____
- the grace of God through Jesus Christ is ultra-important for us to know and to _____

- as a Christian we need the grace of God at the _____ of our Christian life and all the way to the _____ of our Christian life
- as a Christian we need the grace of God at the start of our _____ and most certainly at the _____ of our day
- we need God's grace all the _____

a) God's grace saves us

- God's grace is His favor given to people who do not _____ it
- God in His grace sends His son to people who do not even want grace and certainly do not appreciate the _____ of God

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

- because of the grace of God through Jesus Christ we have many _____
- we can have peace with God even though our sin had made us _____ with God
- we can be made right with God even though our _____ had alienated us from God
- we can have the _____ of the glory of God – which is eternal life with the Lord forever

b) God's grace keeps us

- the grace of God _____ us in the Lord!
- I love the _____ that Paul gives to the Corinthians about the grace of Jesus Christ

- Jesus Christ and His grace _____ us until His second coming

1 Corinthians 1:8 who will _____ you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

c) God's grace causes us to _____ in holiness

- the grace of God saves us, _____ us in our faith and it enables us to grow daily in grace

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the _____ of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should _____ in them.

- apart from the grace of God through Jesus Christ we can do _____ and we _____ nothing

- so you no longer have to _____ why Paul pronounces grace at the start and the end of the letter

- furthermore, if God's grace causes us to _____ then we ought to pray like Epaphras for _____ one of us

- we ought to seek the Lord and ask Him to cause us to be fully _____ in Jesus Christ

- if you are a follower of Jesus Christ today, you _____ the Lord's grace every day

- _____ the Lord for His wonderful grace and mercy

- let us, each day, be _____ of the grace of God

- I am studying the book of Jeremiah right now and it certainly does focus upon the _____ of God and the anger of God at sin

- but the Lord continues to remind the people of God of His grace and _____

- and then the Lord pronounces that a righteous _____ will come out of Judah who will deliver

Jeremiah 23:5 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

- if you are outside of Jesus Christ, today is the day to _____ the grace of God that He offers to you freely through Jesus Christ

- stay in your sin no longer, stay in your sorrow no longer, and _____ Jesus Christ and His grace offered to you!

2) Fulfill _____ Ministry

a) What is your ministry?

- Paul's exhortation to Archippus in Colossians 4:17, is an exhortation that we all _____ to hear because we all need to continue in the _____ that the Lord has given us as believers in Jesus Christ
- a preacher was preaching on how to _____ your faith with those who do not know Jesus and said "every believer is either a missionary or they are an _____"
- someone in the congregation was upset by such a comment because they were not doing the work of ministry and were _____
- they went to the preacher and said, "well I guess I am an imposter"
- which category are you going to be _____ in?
- are you an imposter or _____ ?
- this person's attitude was terrible, they basically said, "I do not want to share my _____, so I will _____ with being an imposter"
- instead of giving into fear and _____ as Christians let us strive to serve the Lord by serving others the good _____ of Jesus Christ
- I have said this before and I must say it again, _____ single gospel has a great commission recorded in it from Jesus
- Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all see this command, to _____ the world with the gospel, as important
- _____ the great commission was this important to Jesus and the gospels, it ought to be just as important to us!
- so let us follow Christ in making disciples of the _____ !

b) Are you prepared?

- life happens fast and we sometimes do not live for the Lord like we _____ to and then we are suddenly at the end of our life living with our regrets
- this week I was fishing and caught a big fish and as I dragged in onto shore the line broke with my favorite spoon still stuck in the mouth of the fish
- the fish flapped and floundered and then boom off the fish was back into the water with my favorite spoon
- it all happened so quick and then the fish I caught took off with my favorite tackle
- this is how quick things happen in our life but we are often unprepared to do the necessary work to execute the ministry that the Lord has given us

- if you are a Christian then the Lord has given _____ a ministry to fulfill

c) Will you be obedient to carry out your ministry?

- this ministry entails for each one of us the preaching and speaking of the gospel to our family and friends to _____ them to Christ

- but it also entails us being _____ to a local church and _____ our gifts in the local church

- when we fail to carry out the commands that the Lord gives us we are _____ of the sins of omission

- we _____ the word of God and do other things that we think are more important

- let us be diligent and fulfill the ministry that the Lord has _____ us for His name's sake!

Philemon 1:6 and I pray that the _____ of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

Next Sunday – June 5

- **Pastor Adam will present his Ordination Statement as submitted to the Fellowship of Baptist Churches**
- **Prepare your heart for communion.**



The Following Sunday – June 12

- **Review of Colossians Sermon**
 - **Membership Vote and Covenant for new members**
- Testimonies, Membership Vote & Covenant**