Colossians 4:7-18

Introduction:

1. Every word of God is pure (Prov 30:5), so we want to consider these pure words and find their precious value.
2. We have enjoyed many delightful meals from the smorgasbord of gospel truth contained in this short epistle.
3. Our God is a personal God, and He deals with men personally; so we have here the names of several saints.
4. God chose these notables for perpetual remembrance in His churches throughout all ages. What a blessing!
5. Each hearer and reader should consider and examine himself to see if he is worthy of such apostolic mention.

4:7 Paul sent his good friend Tychicus to Colosse to inform the church there of his situation.

1. Rather than write about his situation, Tychicus would verbally inform them of all matters.
2. The saints of God should be interested in the welfare and circumstances of good ministers.
3. These two verses in Colossians are very similar to two verses in the twin epistle (Eph 6:21-22).
4. We read of him in similar work in other places (Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; II Tim 4:12; Tit 3:12).
5. Clearly of Asia, he was likely of the capital city, Ephesus, based on what Scripture does say.
6. We may also read of this man in subscripts to two of Paul's epistles (Ephesians, Colossians).
7. Tychicus would carry the epistle from Paul to the Colossians and inform them about Paul.
8. It is a trait of true Christianity and love to remember those in affliction (Col 4:18; Heb 13:3).
9. The saints of God should always be concerned and interested in the welfare of one another.
10. We never read about Paul's love for his natural family, but here is a beloved brother in Christ.
11. Blood is thicker than blood - the bond in Christ was more precious to Paul, and should be to us.
12. Paul likely lost family for the gospel's sake, but he gained 100x in Christ (Mark 10:28-31).
13. Faithfulness – fidelity and trustworthiness – is a beautiful character trait of virtuous saints.
14. Not all the ministers of Christ in Paul's time were faithful (II Cor 2:17; Phil 1:15-16; 2:21).
15. We shall soon read of Demas (4:14), and we know that all men forsook Paul (II Tim 4:9-18).
16. Of course, all ministers claim to be faithful, but only a few are actually so (Ps 12:1; Pr 20:6).
17. This man labored with Paul in whatever he had before – a fellowservant – Paul's companion.
18. The ministers of Christ have a fellowship – comradeship – that is unique to their holy calling.
19. Ministers find great comfort commiserating with other faithful ministers under the same trials.
20. The Lord Captain has called His soldiers to a lonely and difficult war, but companions help!

4:8 Paul intended for Tychicus to also inquire of their condition and comfort them in the gospel.

1. Tychicus is not coming merely by his choice and mission, but by my purposeful instruction.
2. Paul was also enquiring after their state, which would show the apostle's love for their souls.
3. Good ministers want to know the condition and circumstances of the saints for prayer and help.
4. A great part of the gospel is to give comfort to those already saved (Rom 1:12; I Thess 3:7-10).
5. Paul has already expressed his great ambition for the comfort of those in their region (2:2).

4:9 Onesimus, another good friend, went with Tychicus in the delivery of the epistle to Colosse.

1. He also was a faithful and beloved brother, the servant of Philemon in Colosse (Phile 1:10-22).
2. Three epistles were likely carried at once from Paul – Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon.
3. Observe the important words "who is one of you," indicating local membership (Col 4:12).
4. This can hardly mean bare citizenship in Colosse or of the same nationality as these saints.
5. How would such a worthless mention be compatible with "a faithful and beloved brother"?
6. As citizens of the kingdom of heaven, how would national similarity commend him to them?
7. Each saint is part of the general assembly, but also of a local assembly (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-28).
8. While we are all members of the body of Christ, family of God, and kingdom of heaven – the general assembly of all elect men and angels (Heb 12:22-24), it has no real function on earth.

9. Onesimus, a servant of Philemon and saint in Colosse, must have run away and been converted from rebellion by Paul, while Onesimus was on business in Rome (Gal 4:19-20; Jas 5:19-20).
10. The book of Philemon is a precious personal appeal by Paul to Philemon to receive his servant.
11. Whenever possible, it is good to send two together, for the corroboration of two is irrefutable.
12. Jesus sent out both the twelve and the seventy, two by two, for the truth of gospel witnessing (Deut 19:15; Eccl 4:9-12; Matthew 11:12; 18:16; Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1; II Corinthians 13:1).
13. No matter how low your station in life or wicked your past, we are one in Christ (Gal 3:28).
14. Paul comforts him and encourages the church to receive him by "faithful and beloved brother."
15. These two men would inform the church of the proceedings and situation with Paul in Rome.
16. Comparing the persons present with Paul in Rome in this epistle and Philemon confirm timing.

4:10 <u>Aristarchus and Marcus, who were with Paul in Rome, sent their salutations to the church</u>.

1. A salutation is a kind and expressive statement of good will, in the name of the Lord by saints.
2. Aristarchus was a Macedonian of Thessalonica (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Philemon 1:24).
3. Though now a prisoner of Rome, he was still concerned in the welfare of the Colosse saints.
4. The choice to follow Jesus Christ holily and zealously will bring persecution (II Timothy 3:12).
5. Paul was blessed to have a few comrades in Christ, who were not afraid to suffer with him.
6. Marcus is John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas by his converted sister Mary (Acts 12:12,25).
7. Mark had failed his ministerial calling and deserted Paul (Acts 13:1-5,13; 15:37-39; Pr 25:19).
8. Repentance, forgiveness, and restoration brought esteem and use again (II Ti 4:11; Phile 1:24).
9. A gospel bears the name of this loser, who was saved and forgiven by the grace of Jesus Christ.
10. How often do you read John Mark's gospel and despise it? David's Psalms? Peter's epistles?
11. Clearly, Paul, Barnabas, or another had given commandments Mark was now fully restored.
12. Due to their great loyalty to the greatest apostle, they would have resented Mark for quitting.
13. O for the spirit of forgiveness and meekness to cover the saints and servants of Jesus Christ.

4:11 <u>Aristarchus, Marcus, and Justus were saved Jews working in the kingdom of God with Paul</u>.

1. The name "Jesus" is the Greek form (translated into English) of the Hebrew name Joshua.
2. Compare Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8, to see Moses' Joshua referred to by the name "Jesus."
3. History indicates, after the resurrection of our Lord, saints called such children other names.
4. This converted Jew, named Joshua by his mother, took on another name to honor our Lord.
5. If he took the name with meaning, then he was a just man, and known for it by other men.
6. We meet with two other men by this name in Acts (1:23; 18:7); this one probably of Corinth.
7. These were the only Jews assisting Paul in the city of Rome. Where was Peter, the first Pope?
8. The location of this summary and the exclusion of Timothy, Luke, and others identify three.
9. What a blessed privilege to work for the advancement of the kingdom of God! Glory!
10. They had comforted Paul by their steadfastness, labor, and friendship in the midst of affliction.

4:12 <u>Epaphras, a minister from the church in Colosse, gives a holy example of fervent prayer</u>.

1. Epaphras was a principal minister of this church, as Paul had already indicated (Col 1:6-8).
2. Epaphras would not accompany Tychicus and Onesimus, for he was in prison (Phile 1:23).
3. He also was of membership in the same body with them, contrary to the other greeters.
4. Ministers are truly servants of Christ – they serve Christ as His ambassadors in the churches.
5. He also salutes them, since he were not to accompany Tychicus and Onesimus at this time.
6. His ministerial character is an example to all who do bear or would bear the same noble title.
7. Prayer is labor – the Bible example being wrestling and importunate knocking (Gen 32:24-25).
8. Prayer is labor – for the flesh grieves and resists prayer more than any other spiritual exercise.
9. It is the fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much (James 5:16), as Epaphras here.
10. Having stated ministerial prayers for them (1:3,9-11; 4:12), would they pray for him (4:2-4)?

11. Here is a wonderful prayer request, which is further explained by Paul's own request (1:9-11).
12. While absolute perfect is impossible (I John 1:8,10), relative perfection is (Gen 6:9; Rev 3:2).
13. Perfection is living without obvious defects and confessing and reforming any weak areas.

4:13 <u>Paul, observing Epaphras firsthand, declares his great zeal for the saints there and nearby</u>.

1. Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were cities in the same area of Asia Minor, our Turkey.
2. Ministers must have a burning desire for people, whether in his city, or others he may meet.
3. Due to the proximity of the cities, Epaphras would also have known the other churches well.

4:14 <u>Luke and Demas, also with the apostle, but not of the Jews, sent their greetings as well</u>.

1. Luke, writer of a gospel and Acts, was a Gentile companion of Paul (II Tim 4:11; Phile 1:24).
2. Conversion does not necessarily nullify the natural gifts and calling from God (I Cor 7:20).
3. Tent making was no more incompatible to the apostle, then medicine the apostle's companion.
4. Not merely a Christian doctor, he was a beloved one. Christian doctors are a double blessing.
5. Demas here is yet faithful, but he shall fall away, for love of this present world (II Tim 4:10).
6. We presume II Timothy to be Paul's last epistle (II Tim 4:6-7), when Demas had forsaken him.
7. There is another world, and it is that world we are to seek and love (3:1-7; Psalm 73:25-26).
8. The Christian life is a long race, not a sprint. God save us from Jehu, Solomon, and others.
9. Not all who say they are of us, are so (I John 2:19). Heresies will expose them (I Cor 11:19).

4:15 <u>Paul directed the Colossians to salute a sister church and a smaller church in a man's house</u>.

1. Laodicea was only a short distance away, and one of the churches John wrote (Rev 3:14-22).
2. Paul had already expressed his great concern for this church, along with the Colossians (2:1).
3. The praying of Epaphras indicated the proximity and connection of these two churches (4:13).
4. Nymphas was a man, as proved by the following male pronoun, so forget any other idea here.
5. Some of the early churches were small enough to assemble in the houses of that day, though certainly not all (Acts 5:42; 21:20; Rom 16:5; I Cor 16:19; Philemon 1:12).
6. There is no rule to assemble in a house, any more than in a temple (Acts 2:46; 5:42), by a river (Acts 16:13), in a school (Acts 19:9), in a cave (Heb 11:38), or in an upper room (Acts 1:13).
7. Jesus attended and participated in synagogue worship, which was never taught by God's law.
8. Affection and greetings among the churches serve to comfort and strengthen the saints.

4:16 <u>The church at Colosse was to publicly read this epistle, then exchange epistles with Laodicea</u>.

1. How boring, to sit and listen to a whole epistle read out loud! Carnal Christians would sleep!
2. The time has come when men will not endure sound doctrine, as this epistle is precious with it.
3. Paul wrote an epistle to the Laodiceans, which God excluded from the New Testament canon.
4. The Old Testament names the book of Jasher and the book of the wars (Num 21:14; Jos 10:13).
5. We are told Solomon wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs, but we have only a few of each.
6. Between the testaments are some books called Apochrypha, which we reject as being inspired.
7. Paul's personal letter to Philemon survived in the churches, but his epistle to Laodicea did not.
8. How did the canon occur? By the providence of God in elevating some and rejecting others.
9. We believe the preservation of God's word in the King James is by the very same method.
10. There are two families of Bibles – that of the martyrs and that of the martyr-makers (Rome).
11. It is apostolic to read the Scriptures, and by Scriptural example, to give the sense (Neh 8:8).
12. Sermons from an obscure text, out of context, are not preaching the word, regardless if Charles Spurgeon and other "pulpiteers" did it or not. We follow Paul (Acts 17:2-3; II Tim 2:2).

4:17 <u>Archippus, a minister at Colosse, was to be told to take heed to the ministry he had received</u>.

1. It is not wrong for saints to exhort their ministers to be faithful to their God-given ministries.
2. Of course, such exhortation is done in meekness and respect, not pride and condemnation.
3. Paul's instruction here is either a mild rebuke or an encouragement to this minister there.
4. Coming from Paul in the manner expressed, the exhortation would have been very weighty.
5. Observe that every man's ministry is from the Lord, so the exhortation is to be faithful to Him.
6. Taking heed to himself and the doctrine are the two pillars of ministerial success (I Tim 4:16).
7. The soldiers of Jesus Christ must be very dedicated men in their holy calling (II Tim 2:1-5).

4:18 <u>Paul signs the epistle, as usual, though others certainly wrote it for him, and begs for prayer</u>.

1. Paul was the greatest of the apostles, especially to Gentiles; his signature carried great weight.
2. His salutary signature, a blessing of grace, was his token in every epistle (II Thess 3:17-18).
3. He seldom wrote his epistles; he dictated them, and others wrote them (Gal 6:11; Phile 1:19).
4. He asks for sympathetic prayer in his bonds, which he enjoined upon the Hebrews (Heb 13:3).
5. His salutation? "Grace be with you. Amen." We are nothing without the precious grace of God.

<u>Conclusion</u>:

1. Are you worthy to be included in this list of "worthies," if the apostle had known you and written to a church?
2. Are you committed to the kingdom of God, as were these dedicated disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ?