

Colossians: It's All About Jesus!

Lesson 8

Jesus Is the One We Demonstrate and Serve! Colossians 4:2-18

As we come to the end of this book, it's tempting to dismiss this last section of verses as information that was only pertinent to the Colossians. Between the list of names and their specific relationship with Paul and these believers, they could be quickly addressed and deemed unvaluable to the 21st century believer. But if we believe that every Word of the Bible has been breathed out by God and is useful for teaching, rebuke, correction, and training in righteousness, then we must unpack them as such (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Paul forces our Christian boots to hit the ground in this final charge. With a series of examples, he encourages every believer to live in a way that demonstrates and serves Jesus. When we believe that life is truly all about Jesus, we have to understand that we represent Jesus at all times.

You DEMONSTRATE Jesus to EVERYONE YOU MEET:

Whether we choose to acknowledge it or not, every person we meet will see the Jesus we proclaim. This means that we have to see every person we come in contact with has a chance to come to know Jesus. Paul begins his end by urging these believers: Because this is the Jesus you proclaim, represent him wherever you go. This means that we should:

- **Pray for OPEN HEARTS**

Colossians 4:2-4, Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Remember when we talked about the state of our dead hearts and minds? A person does not possess the ability to revive themselves. Only God can do that. This makes the work of the Spirit so important in the conversations we have with others. We can't save anyone. We can't argue someone into heaven. The Spirit must go before us and prepare the hearts and minds of an individual to receive the good news.

On one hand, this takes the pressure off of having the perfect Gospel sales pitch. On the other hand, this puts the pressure on our faithfulness to constantly being available and willing to demonstrate Jesus with our actions

and words. The truth is the Lord can use anyone when the His Spirit is moving. Our call is to humble ourselves and pray for those people we meet that their hearts would be open to hearing and responding to Jesus.

- **Make the Most of YOUR TIME WITH PEOPLE**

Colossians 4:5, *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.*

Because every person we meet is a Gospel opportunity, we must learn to make the most of every opportunity. As we live our lives on display to the world, our walking in wisdom allows us to seize opportunities for outsiders to see the joy of the Christian life. We must realize that after believing in Jesus, there is never a moment when we aren't Christians. To live foolishly and worldly gives greater potential to misrepresent Jesus to a lost and dying world. As we act wisely, we model Jesus's servant heart as we display his compassion, grace and forgiveness in everything we do.

- **Speak With TRUTH & GRACE**

Colossians 4:6, *Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

While the previous point addressed the importance of our actions in demonstrating Jesus, this point drives home the importance of our words. What we say, text, email, and post on social media is an opportunity to preach Jesus. Sometimes we let our thoughts and opinions fly without any consideration of how they represent the Lord. But our call is to have "seasoned" speech, using words that are acceptable and inoffensive.

The book of James addresses the contrasting potentials of our words. Our tongues are like bits in the mouths of horses (James 3:3), the rudder to a ship (3:4), and a small spark that sets a forest on fire (3:5–6). Which is why every believer should be urged to be quick to listen and slow to speak (1:19). Our words are powerful. Though their potential for bad is great, so is their potential for good. Our words can help clarify and direct people to the truth. Truthful responses offered with a "salt seasoned" spirit help us demonstrate the grace and truth of the Gospel.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to pray for open doors?
- What are some ways you can make the most of your time with "outsiders?"

- How would your conversations change if you wore a constant name badge that said “I Follow Jesus”?

You SERVE Jesus EVERYWHERE YOU GO:

The book heads toward the conclusion by seemingly rattling off a number of people in Paul’s final words to the people. But when we read about these people, we learn that each of them served Jesus wherever they went. They lived out what it means that life is all about Jesus. What do we learn from these individuals about serving Jesus?

- Be An ENCOURAGEMENT

***Colossians 4:7–9**, Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹ He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.*

Sometimes encouragement is one of the most undervalued attributes of the Christian life. The challenge of Tychicus and Onesimus is that they served Jesus by encouraging fellow believers in their walk with Jesus. Sometimes we hear from people, “I want to serve Jesus but I’m not a teacher and I can’t sing or play an instrument.” But one of the best ways we can serve Jesus is by being an encouragement to others.

This world is hard. For the Colossians, they are a minority group in a pagan culture. They didn’t need a guy playing the guitar so much as they needed someone to come alongside of them and say “The Lord loves you, keep going, stay faithful to his Word, hold fast to your faith, the world will always be opposed to you but Jesus is worth living for, and you’re doing a great job!” We need people who serve Jesus through the ministry of encouragement all over our churches and communities.

- WORK & PRAY HARD

***Colossians 4:10–15**, My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) ¹¹ Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always*

wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. ¹³ I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

In the example of these guys, these two ideas of working and praying go hand in hand. Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus were coworkers for the Kingdom of God who comforted and encouraged Paul. In fact, Paul saw them as equals because they worked alongside of him. It's a false idea that pastors are the only workers of the church. We are all coworkers together. We can serve the Lord by embracing our call to work hard for the Lord.

The next individual mentioned is Epaphras. He is described as a servant of Jesus, who wrestles in prayer for his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, as he stands firm working hard for the Kingdom. What an incredible way to be described! It doesn't matter who you are, we can all strive to be like Epaphras: a faithful servant, a prayer warrior, and a hard worker all in the name of Jesus.

- **Pursue the OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AROUND YOU**

Colossians 4:16–17, *After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.”*

Archippus was encouraged to complete the ministry he had received from the Lord. Ministry in this context simply means the place he was called to serve Jesus. We tend to over-spiritualize “ministry.” But as we make the most of the opportunities around us, every one of us has a ministry to which we've been called. This is yet another example of Paul going against the false idea that some people are called to ministry and others aren't. If we profess Jesus as Lord then we are ministers and servants of Jesus. The Lord has placed each of us strategically in our families, workplaces, and the like to demonstrate and serve Him in every area of life.

- **SERVE JESUS: NO MATTER THE COST**

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

This is an appropriate ending for our study through Colossians. If we truly believe that life is all about Jesus, then any other way to live is not worth

living. Paul practiced what he preached: He knew it was all about Jesus and that caused him to serve Jesus no matter the cost.

In the book of Colossians:

- Jesus calls us to know Him and live for Him (1:1–14);
- Jesus is at the center of everything (1:15–23);
- Jesus gives our life purpose (1:24–2:7);
- Jesus is our truth (2:8–23);
- Jesus unites us with Him (3:1–11);
- Jesus transforms our relationships (3:12–16);
- Jesus is Lord over all of life (3:17–4:1);

And if we believe all of those to be true, then we must understand that the rest of our life should demonstrate and serve this Jesus, no matter the cost (4:2–18).

Discussion Questions:

- How often do you view yourself as a servant of Jesus?
- How does this mentality change your everyday interactions?
- How has the Lord worked on your life through this study in Colossians?