

The Necessity For Apostolic Kinship

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Colossians chapter 4. We're going to start in verse 7. Seth, I believe it was Seth, was the last one to preach on verses 1 through 7.

So I'm going to continue where he left off. And, you know, it's a really interesting thing. Colossi seems to be a church that was just getting going, and there was a lot of establishing to happen.

And Paul articulates that in the beginning of the letter. So we are also a church that's getting established. We're not established yet, but we're in the making.

So there's a lot that we can draw from the book of Colossians. So I'm thankful that we went through this book. And I think there's a lot in this passage that we're about to read that relate to us.

And so, Lord willing, we can draw even more with the last one today. So I'm going to read verses 7 to the end, and then we'll dive in.

[1 : 10] I'll kind of explain what I think the meat of this passage is. So, Colossians chapter 4, starting verse 7, it says, They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

And see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.

For I bear witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. 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 read also to 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.

[2 : 58] Okay, so this is God's word to finish out Paul's letter to the Colossians. And, you know, at first, reading through the text, this can kind of seem like dismissive or non-important.

Kind of just sounds like Paul saying, say hi to so-and-so and say hi to this guy. And this guy says hi to you. Grace and peace, you know. It's kind of like, okay, we get it.

You know, it's kind of like reading the, you know, the genealogies. It's just a bunch of names. It's like, what's the meaning behind this? And initially, when I first read it, that was my thought.

I'm like, how the heck is this important? But I think it's 2 Timothy 3 says that all scripture is breathed out by God. And it's profitable for teaching and reproving and instruction.

So as I read this and I looked at all these names and I was thinking about why and how Paul was talking, I think this is very relevant not only to our church but to many churches.

[4 : 07] And it teaches us about what the relationship between one another can look like, especially in an apostolic way.

And so I went ahead and titled this message, The Necessity for Apostolic Kinship.

The Necessity for Apostolic Kinship. And I'll explain why I said that. A little bit of a Brian kind of title there. But the reason I chose to title this The Necessity for Apostolic Kinship is because what I think lies in the text here is very much what kinship embodies.

And honestly, what the apostolic, what we're doing, embodies as well. And so here's what I mean by that. So apostolic or apostleship, the word apostle literally just means sent one or sent person, messenger or envoy.

So when something is apostolic, it in large part is referring to either relating to the apostles or just being sent out by God purposefully.

[5 : 23] So the necessity for a apostolic kinship refers to a body that is sent out, but not just a body or a people, but one that is kin.

And the word kin literally just means blood relationship. And obviously, all of us are not literally bound by blood. We all come from different families and that sort of thing.

But I do believe that there is a huge deficit in the church today of family found in the church body. And so when you talk about kinship, the reason I chose the word is because the body of Christ united through the body and blood of Jesus Christ should be more than just blood.

It should be greater. And when we think naturally about family and blood relationship, we immediately think of the closeness. You know, you're close with your family members.

Even if you have a bad relationship with your family or you don't feel close, your family is inescapable. You're bound to them as long as you live.

[6 : 34] They're there. They're your family. You can't abort them. You can't divorce them. They're always there. So there's this type of non-severing with kinship, which I think we should value in the body of Christ.

Because if we are members of one another through Jesus, then we cannot separate ourselves from one another. So the necessity for apostolic kinship. I'm going to walk through the passage and explain how I think for our church this would be extremely beneficial.

And that if we were to abort this, would be aborting God's mission to the church. Or more specifically, God's witness through the church. So a little bit of my aim, and before we get into the passage, is to show how the apostolic team that Paul lays out through all those names, those guys are his apostolic co-workers.

He calls them beloved brothers, servants. So my aim is to show how the biblical apostolic team looks more like kinship or family than it does anything else.

It looks more like that than it does just partners, you know, somewhat like business, or just kind of working alongside each other.

[7 : 47] And then when we're done, we're like, see ya. It looks more like family than it does anything else. And that in addition to that, as much as we are united through the body and blood of Jesus will prove to be how much we are family.

How much we believe that. And so more and more churches today in America have been found with the, you know, entrepreneurial type spirit. The kind of American dream at its core resulting in what I think is winning to people, to everything else, but Jesus himself.

And no, I don't think that all churches are rotten to the core. But I think fundamentally there's something missing that teaches people about God and about the body that he died for.

So, you know, in churches today, they might be one with, or one to a handful of things. It might be new habits, new ways of life, maybe a self-help if you're struggling.

It might be one to friendships or even positions of influence. I could go on. But, however, to find a church that is zealous for the kinship found between men like Paul and Timothy, or Jesus and John, you know, intimate relationship.

[9 : 11] Or even his disciples, where the scriptures say that their hearts burned within them as they walked along the road. So, that type of kind of connection, that type of burning in relationship, to find that seems really rare nowadays.

And so, we're at the precipice of getting established at Christ Church here, and this has got to be at its core. And so, I assure you that if that kind of church is planted, the kind that is zealous for that relationship, that it will be characterized by the life of Christ himself.

It will look like God living through his people incarnationally. And I believe that the church must return fundamentally to the confession that looks a lot like, you know, the song we sing, A Mighty Fortress.

Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also. The body they may kill, God's truth abides still. His kingdom is forever. I think that when we are a united people, we are looking like God, which is sacrificing our lives for one another.

There is more power in a group of people that is willing to die for one another than there is any individual articulate of any business model for church ever. And I think that that's valuable.

[10 : 34] So, let's get into the text. And I'm hoping that from what all I just articulated to you, that you'll see that a little bit and even imagine how Paul would relate to his coworkers maybe in that view.

So, quite a handful of names here throughout this passage, but we're going to kind of just go through from the top. And right off the bat, it talks about Tychicus being the messenger or the agent that's delivering this letter, it seems.

Because Paul says, Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. I have sent, in verse 8, it says, I have sent him to you for this purpose. So, Paul is sending Tychicus as the kind of messenger to deliver these things.

Trustworthy enough for that. We first meet Tychicus. I hope I'm saying his name right. I hope most of these names are... I listened to him early this week and I was like, I think I got it.

We first meet him in Acts 20, verse 4, where we see him as one of Paul's companions traveling to Corinth. Or sorry, from Corinth to Jerusalem.

[11 : 55] Tychicus is a native to Asia, which is today Asia Minor. Tychicus, we really don't have much on with what the New Testament gives us, but he's trustworthy, according to Paul, to deliver his letters.

And he has the same language, actually, for Tychicus in Ephesians 6, as he does in Colossians 4 here, which is, Tychicus, the beloved and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything.

So, something about him, something about Tychicus' life with Paul was trustworthy enough. Maybe he just observed everything. He's like, this guy is responsible for informing you guys of how we are, and we'll do a good job to explain that.

So, he's a trustworthy guy. But he doesn't just send him with a mere purpose to deliver the letter.

He sends him with two purposes. One, to tell you how we are, he says, but also that he may encourage your hearts. So, Tychicus might be especially gifted in this, gift of encouragement, which is valuable and useful to Paul.

[13 : 17] So, he's saying, send this guy so that they'll get a little boost or refreshment. And with Tychicus, it says in verse 9, if you scroll down, With him, Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.

Because the church at Colossae is largely Gentile, I believe the phrase, he is one of you, is meaning Gentile, versus merely just one of you as in he's a Christian as well.

I think it's a little bit more meaningful to that church by saying he is like one of you in his descent Gentile. But one thing about Onesimus is that Onesimus was not saved the whole time, at least it seems, because Onesimus was the fugitive slave of Philemon, which is one of Paul's friends.

And Onesimus actually robbed Philemon and fled to Rome to escape from him, but providentially ran into Paul while he was in prison there.

So, Onesimus was thinking, I'm going to rob Philemon and get out of here. I'll be good. But God saw it fit for him to connect with Paul by circumstance in Rome.

[14 : 44] And Paul availed himself of the opportunity there to preach the gospel to Onesimus. So much to where Paul in Philemon, if you go back and look, it says that he became his son in the faith.

And Paul doesn't use that language in many places. He uses it with Timothy. In different spots, he calls Timothy his son, but he also calls Onesimus his son. So not only was Onesimus not a believer, but he ran into Paul and so much to where Paul led him to Christ and now can call him his son.

Notice the familial language there. You know, I think it even says, my child Onesimus. I appeal to you for my child Onesimus. That's very familial. And that's in Philemon.

We're in Colossians and here, when Paul introduces each person, he calls them faithful, but he also calls them beloved brothers. You know, that's more than just coworkers.

Coworkers is not, you know, to diminish that fact. They are that, but he calls them brethren. And so some think that, like I said before, that Onesimus came to Christ before he was already in Colossae and maybe he was just kind of a struggling Christian.

[16 : 02] And then he was born again by being led to Christ by Paul in his imprisonment.

Given that Paul says, I appeal to you for my son, or my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly, he was useless to you.

This is Philemon. Or Paul speaking in the letter to Philemon. Formerly, he was useless to you, but now he's useful to both you and me. So formerly, he was kind of saying he was just a slave, not useful.

But now that he's come to Christ and I have fathered him, he's very useful to you. And actually, if you read the book of Philemon, Paul is kind of in turmoil.

Well, not in turmoil, I guess you should say. He doesn't really want to send Onesimus because he has such a benefit from him. But he knows it would be good for him to go back. And he urges them to receive him not as a slave, but as a brother in Christ.

[17 : 08] So even there, you see it after Onesimus' conversion. He says, relate to him not as a slave, but as a brother. There's the familiar language again.

So with him, Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you, they will tell you everything that has taken place.

So both Tychicus and Onesimus are partners in that work. And then in verse 10, he introduces another character, Aristarchus, who he calls his fellow prisoners.

We know that he was in prison with Paul. He was walking through the struggle with him. And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions.

If he comes to you, welcome him. Very briefly on Aristarchus, he's mentioned in the book of Acts during one of the riots in Ephesus.

- [18 : 15] Paul preaches, I don't know if you remember, Paul preaches to, I think it's Demetrius, one of the idol makers. He's a metal worker making idols. Artemis is one of the false gods that was really propagated in Ephesus.

And Paul preached to Demetrius, kind of stirred up the crowd. And I think Paul escaped, but they seize Aristarchus, named mentioned right here, and then Trophimus, another companion.

So he's mentioned there in Acts. But there's not a ton on Aristarchus. Most of these guys, there's really not much.

The most is probably like three times some of these people are mentioned in the whole New Testament. But Paul seems to really commend them in his letters, or seems it fit to mention their names.

You know, you have to remember, this letter is being read to an entire church. Not sure what the size of the church is. Not only Colossae, but actually two churches, the church at Laodicea. So he's specifically naming these people who seem to maybe have a sphere of influence.

- [19 : 26] But if not that, they're very dear to Paul, and they should be dear to us. John Mark. So in verse 10, it says, Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions.

If he comes to you, welcome him. Mark, or known as John Mark, is first mentioned in Acts 12, the cousin of Barnabas.

And he is a companion of Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey. They're sent out together and start preaching the gospel.

I think Cyprus is the first place that they hit. And then after Cyprus, we see in a peculiar way, it says that John Mark left them in Pamphylia, which is right after their time in Cyprus.

And people dispute why he left. Some people say, you know, scholars say maybe because of the fruitlessness in Cyprus, there was only one recorded conversion, that they were pretty discouraged.

- [20 : 37] So John Mark, maybe he was like, I'm going home, guys. I'm done. We're not really sure. Maybe he had business to take care of. That was too much that he had to go back.

We don't know. But he left in Acts 13 in Pamphylia. And in Acts 15, if you go, he appears again on Paul's second missionary journey, about to leave with Barnabas.

But this time, Barnabas was like, we should take John Mark with us on our second go around. But Paul said, no, John Mark is unreliable.

Something about John Mark leaving the missionary journey the first time did something to Paul that showed him that John Mark was not fit. It was kind of a disqualifier.

And again, we don't know why John Mark left. It could have been something akin to, you know, Aunt Debbie's funeral. Got to go home, make a good showing with the family. But, you know, Paul is a very radical missionary.

- [21 : 44] And I can imagine him saying something like, let the dead bury their own, John Mark. You know, not to say that he wasn't letting him go. He did let him leave.

But I think it's important to note that Paul has a view of the apostolic ministry as not for the faint of heart. And if someone is going to leave, then they're not so easily let back in.

There is qualifiers for doing the work. I'm going to touch more on that later. But we see that with John Mark. We see that with Paul in Acts 15.

It says that he said that John Mark was not fit to come back. And then John Mark, it says that there arose a sharp disagreement. So they butted heads about that.

You know, it wasn't just like, yeah, I'll stay behind. It was probably more like, no, you're not seeing this right. I should come because X, Y, and Z. And Paul's like, no, you're not fit. Whatever, sharp disagreement. So what ends up happening is Paul doesn't take Barnabas with him.

[22 : 53] Barnabas and John Mark actually leave together to go on their own separate way. And Paul takes Silas instead. So Paul acquires a new companion, even after the time that he was with Barnabas.

It's interesting. You don't see Paul forfeiting Barnabas, or sorry, forfeiting his position to not take John Mark at the expense of his companion Barnabas.

He says, you know what, Barnabas, if you want to leave too, that's fine. I'll take Silas with me. He has a rigidity to his decision and his apostolic way.

And I think that's important to note because so much of the church nowadays, we're talking about the apostolic. We're talking about church being sent down. That's the language that we see here and what this church is.

So it's important to note that we have to draw from that. We have to look at Paul's way of life, how he sees people who are committed to his work, as well as one another, how we see people committed to this work that we're doing.

[24 : 00] And at bare minimum, say that church planning is not whimsical. You can't come and go as you please. That doesn't mean that church planning is covenantal, meaning that you're going to be severed if you break the covenant.

You can go. But according to Paul, it's very serious. You know, let goods and kindred go. You know, this mortal life also. Paul realizes that doing this work could result in the death of his own life and his companions.

But he's down. You know, he says in another passage, I know whom I have believed. You know, he saw the Lord. He was convinced that his life was totally worth sacrificing and even the life of his, his fellow workers.

So. I really think it's, it's, it's valuable to see that discourse with John Mark, because I do believe that what John Mark experiences and what happened with Barnabas and how Paul dealt with it happens all the time, not in practice or practical outflowing merely, but in our thoughts, how committed we are to the work.

How much do we trust God's call on us to fulfill the ministry? If we're constantly wrestling in our minds with, is this a good idea?

[25 : 34] Oh man, I really missed the comforts of home or wouldn't it be better to go back to Egypt? This kind of mentality. This doesn't work for, for apostolic ministry.

It's, it's duplicitous at the worst and will hinder the kinship between one another. So that's why I mentioned John Marks, because although it's such a small thing, you know, he left, there's a disagreement, they move on.

I think there's a lot there. And I think that many churches and his congregants see church as something to where, you know, if I, if I find a good church, good, but I could get up and leave at any moment, you know, and there is a little bit more pressure when we talk about church planning versus just church attendance.

There is a distinction. So don't misunderstand me when I'm talking about anyone, but for Christchurch, this is very applicable because we are sent ones.

We came from Bellicose. We were sent out for a specific work and we're on the precipice of just getting going. So this is very relevant. So please see that. My prayer is that you see that in the word of God and we should draw from that.

[26 : 48] So that's John Mark. Paul says in verse 11 that, or sorry, after that, there's a guy named Jesus, not the main Jesus.

It's also called Justice. And then he says, these are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God. So all the names that we just read seem to be Jews or seem to be, you know, men of the circumcision.

And he said, and Paul said that they've been a comfort to me. Maybe it's just who they were, their character that was a comfort. Maybe it's the fact that they were kin to him, you know, of the same tribe.

Not sure. But in one way, we know that they comforted him. And then we introduced a guy named Epaphras who Paul says in verse 12, is one of you a servant of Christ Jesus.

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

[28 : 02] For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis. So Epaphras, he says, one of you, again, I think he's probably saying Epaphras is Gentile like you guys at Colossae.

Epaphras is likely the one who planted the church at Colossae. If you go back to chapter one, Paul is commending them for receiving the word delivered by Epaphras.

Epaphras was the first person to preach the word to them and so began the church at Colossae. This could mean that Epaphras was recognized as an apostle by Paul as well.

We're not sure. He seems to have the lingo of Paul. If you look at how Paul talks about him in verse 12 here, it says that he's got two things.

One, he's always struggling struggling on your behalf in his prayers. Very interesting phrase, you know, to characterize somebody. He works hard in prayer. He's an intercessor, you know, and he struggles too.

[29 : 10] He doesn't just put in half the effort. He struggles. He wrestles. But to what end? Why does Epaphras struggle? It says, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

That's pretty awesome because if you go back to Colossians 1 down to verse 28, we hear Paul say, him we proclaim, talking about Jesus, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

And then he says in 29, for this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. Same language. Paul says he struggles.

He's struggling with all Christ's energy within him. Why? Why does he say that? To what end? Go back in the verse. So that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Okay? This character recognizes Paul. Paul struggles and Epaphras as well in his prayers. They struggle, but to what end? Both of them see the same goal, which is to present you mature and make you fully assured of all the will of God.

[30 : 24] When we're talking about building a church, how did they build? How did Paul build? How did Epaphras build?

And they did it by working hard with a struggle, and they did it with the goal of maturity. So everyone in this room to one degree or another has level maturity.

Some are more mature than others, and some people in this room are already at work to that end, but it's good for us to look at the Word of God and say this is why we struggle for one another, so that we might actually be mature, not infants, as it says in other places, but as adults, you know, in the faith.

we see that Epaphras has that mantle, that he shares that with Paul, he's locked in on the vision of that, and I just want to kind of hone in on the unity between Epaphras that you can see there, even in the language struggling, presenting mature, the unity that we should strive to have.

Earlier this week, I went out with some guys, Judah was with me, we went to a young adults ministry in the city, some of our other guys were with us, some people there, and went down just to meet people, but with also the intent of mission to reach some people who maybe don't know God, but are affiliated with church, very big young adult ministry, a lot of people there, and as I was talking to one of the guys, who was actually a leader at this ministry, he was asking a lot about Christ church, kind of where we are, how we are doing, I was asking about his life, and then I started to articulate how we are still building the foundation, and how family is a big aspect of that, and I talked about the need for paternal presence, or the presence of fathers in the life of the church, and we eventually got down the road to me asking them, do you think, either in the past or presently, that you have experienced being fathered by someone in this church, or another church in the past, and he's like,

[32 : 57] I don't know, I don't think so, and knowing what I know, I was shocked, because I'm like, oh my gosh, this guy is just, you know, riding off of who knows what, mentors, influencers, all those things are good, but Paul says you have many of those, but you don't have many fathers, that's the rebuke, you know, to a church that has no paternal presence, is you have guys, you have mentors, you have instructors, but you don't have many fathers, Paul said that he became a father through the gospel, so the way that we do that is through the gospel, but that has to be an aim, a little tangent there, where were we, I was just talking about Epaphras, oh yeah, so the goal is maturity, that's the goal of every church, so we might present its members to saints mature, you know, we can really forget that sometimes, we go week by week, and it's kind of just like, there's a lot of responsibilities, a lot of things to do, but are we growing in our maturity in Christ, and maturity towards one another, and that should be our aim, so moving on, it says in verse 13, for I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you, talking about

Epaphras, and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis, verse 14, it says, 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, I'm not going to go into much about Luke and Demas, but Luke is the author of Acts, so he was there for a lot of it, you know, Demas is mentioned two other places, one in Philemon and one in 2 Timothy, the one in 2 Timothy not being a very good light, Paul says that Demas has forsaken me in love with this present world, so it's very possible that I don't think Demas is apostate in that section as much as Paul sees him as taken up with other things, you know, maybe he got a sweet job offer, and he's like, sorry,

Paul, I'm going to take this, and Paul's like, what the heck, you know, why are you in love with the world, we've been doing this forever, you know, we don't know much, but we do know that about Demas, and we do know that Paul, again, with Paul's zealous, rigorous view of apostleship, that he sees something maybe like that as you're in love with the world, Demas, you know, you've got things out of priority, and let us not be like Demas, you know, whether in small or in great.

It's important to realize that everything that Satan works is crafty, and begins in small increments, doesn't happen all at once, and we must be on guard, the love of the world, and other things that slip in, especially at the beginning of a church plant.

Satan would love to devise in our hearts love for other things, and distract us from the work. You know, I might beat a dead horse by saying that, but we don't wrestle with what we can see, with flesh and blood, the scriptures say.

[36 : 40] So we have to be focused on what God has said. That is the only way that we walk with sight, in a sense, is we can see what God has said, and we can follow him, believing in faith that he rewards those who seek him, right?

So 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. A little shout out to the ladies.

Nympha seemed to be a prominent enough woman to get her name put in the letter, but we also see that she was likely very hospitable.

the church in her house. She would have gatherings of prayer or at least some type of gatherings.

I forgot to mention this about John Mark, but John Mark's mom, Mary, also was mentioned in Acts as one who regularly had people gather in her house for prayer, which is also mentioned.

[37 : 53] so the women in the church seem to be of prominent standing for Paul to mention as well.

And then it says, and when this letter is read or has been read among you, have it also read to the church of the Laodiceans and see that you also read the letter from the Laodicea.

last character here in verse 17, that's mentioned.

It says, and say to Archippus, see that you fulfill the ministry that you have received from the Lord. Okay, this phrase is, I think, one of the more prophetic phrases that we could draw from this passage for Christ's church today, right now, because we are a collective group with callings and giftings.

And Paul singles out one guy, Archippus, mentioned two other places very briefly and says, hey, say to this guy, fulfill what you're called to do. What was Archippus called to do?

[39 : 13] Nobody knows. Apparently, Paul does, though, and Archippus. And he calls him out and says, hey, you remember this? Remember how God anointed you to do this? Remember how you're gifted? Remember how you minister in this way?

Do it. You know, maybe Archippus was dragging his feet. Maybe he got discouraged, whatever. Paul has enough boldness and apostolic authority to say, look, dude, I was there for that, and you know what you're called to do.

And you can do it. By the grace of the Lord, you can fulfill your calling because God literally supplies you. He makes up your constitution with the giftings that he assigns and gives you grace to do it.

So he's saying, remember that and fulfill it. And I can only imagine what it was like maybe to be Archippus and have that read to the church and have his name called out.

Maybe he was like, geez, Paul, I get it. I'll get going. But in addition, you have to remember, Paul's a father.

[40 : 24] He's not just like an angry boss that calls you out. He's a father. So I imagine that Paul, with his fatherly tone, and Archippus knowing about Paul's fatherly tone, can receive that saying, I know Paul loves me.

I know he's there for me. And he's encouraging me and rebuking me like a son. And I'm sure you guys have many people in your life that if they said something like that to you, you'd be like, get out of here, man.

You don't even know me. Get off my back. But there's also people that would say the same thing, that you would be humble and sober and you would say thank you. Because of that equity, because of the familial tie, the relational kind of substance between each other.

You know what I mean? This has got to be present. It's got to be somewhere in there as he's speaking. And so he says say to him, see that you fulfill the ministry of the Lord.

that you have received in the Lord. I don't know if you guys remember, this is very similar to Paul saying to Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you.

[41 : 52] It was given to you by the laying on of hands. Very similar. He calls him out and says, hey, Timothy, guard that. Just like that. That tone he's saying to Archippus, see that you fulfill the ministry.

Which fulfill here literally means to fill up. It doesn't mean just do a bunch, but actually let your life be full. Let the calling that God has impressed, the area that God has impressed and gifted you, let it fill up your life.

Don't let it lack. And there's much to be said about our giftings, our callings, and how we relate to one another. But one thing for sure is that it must be full.

If we know them, some of us don't know them very well, and that's where we got to start to take aim and use the other parts of the body to be like, how am I gifted? How has God called me?

But some of us know how we're called, but we're not fulfilling, we're not filling up. and maybe you need a fatherly figure to just help you along and say, hey, fulfill the ministry.

[43 : 08] You've received it from the Lord, I'll go out and do it. And we can't be idle in that. So after Paul caps it off with his exhortation to Archippus, he seals it, with his apostolic heart by saying, I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

This is for me. Realize who this is from. Don't forget about me. Remember my chains. And he says, grace be with you. So that's the scope of the passage.

I think when I first, like I said in the beginning, when I first read this, I was like, you know, daunted by all the names a little bit. But these people are Paul's apostolic crew.

You know, and we are an apostolic crew. I mean, how much we're knit together will prove to be how we are. But we have to look at the scripture and say, the kinship that is wrought through Jesus, what we have through the body and blood of Jesus and what he did on the cross is more, it's not less than the forgiveness of sins, but it's more than that.

Because the forgiveness of sins through the cross is not just that that was purchased. It was reconciliation to the father. You see that?

[44 : 38] That's familial. Not having your sins forgiven and then being reconciled to God. That is a type of kin relationship.

You have God as your father through Jesus. And we share the same father. And we're brothers and sisters of one another.

Fathers and mothers. So to abort those characteristics is to abort the omission of God and Christ Jesus for us. Yes, he's forgiven us and washed us clean of our sins.

Totally clean. But he has also called us to be kin. to relate to one another as family. And it takes work to do that.

It doesn't happen in one day, nor should you expect it to happen in one month or maybe even one year. But you have to have the purpose in mind saying God wants this for us, so we're going to strive for that.

[45 : 44] And so we see that in the letter. We see that in Paul's heart. He literally says when I'm sending Onesimus, who he calls his son, he's sending my very heart. What kind of person talks like this?

You know what I mean? And I think we've been blessed to come from a very great church, Bellicose. We're sent out with a lot of affection. And it wouldn't be strange to me, and this is how I know this, it wouldn't be strange to me for someone to say, hey, we're sending so-and-so from Bellicose and with him our very heart.

You know, whoever that person is, they've been proved, they've been tried, and you'll know them, and you'll have affection for them, because you know where you came from, and the seed of family is there.

So, I want to kind of wrap up with five closing points, which I think are applicable to Christ's church, but also are found here in this passage.

And really briefly, five ways to embrace the apostolic kinship that we see in the scriptures. Number one, and this is kind of to be on guard against, number one, is to put to death a duplicitous heart.

[47 : 13] You know, James 1.8 says that the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Being double-minded, duplicitous, always being like, should I do this, should I do this, is this good, is this bad, having that kind of mindset.

We really need to put that to death. Not saying that you shouldn't, you know, if you're ignorant, strive for knowledge and ask questions, but there is a type of love of sentimentality, can be even idolatry, you know, where you came from, idolizing what you had, that needs to be put to death, if that exists in us, and it can creep in.

you know, Jesus, when he often talks, although some places may seem to be, you know, hyperbole, talks in a very matter-of-fact way, you know, if anyone does not hate his mother and father, you know, all the excuses of the people, Lord, I just bought a field, you know, Lord, my father just died, let the dead bury their own.

It's like, geez. But what he's getting at is basically like, be undivided in your devotion to God, be undivided in your aim, and do not let the love of this world or the love of comforts, either in the privacy of your own mind or your outward workings hinder you from following Christ.

So point number two, that's point number one. Point number two, very simple one that you've heard a thousand times, but it's love one another.

[48 : 49] Romans 13, 8 says, owe no one anything except to love each other, for the one who loves one another fulfills the whole law. There's that word, fulfill, you know, filled up.

You obey all the commands, Jesus says, when you have love for God and your neighbor, right? This is the law and prophets, he says. And so we must do that to one another.

We must honestly strategize how to love each other better. And if there is something that hinders us from loving each other, we must repent.

I was convicted earlier this week about how in my own heart, I really didn't have full affection for this person in my life and I was mulling over why that was.

And it came to me, why? And it was like crystal clear. I was, I had strains of jealousy and just a projection of judgment rather than grace for this person.

[50 : 04] God and the Lord convicted me and said, this is why you're not loving him. It's because you're letting these things to thrive. Even on a small, it seemed to be small level, it ruled the ability to love him.

And so I repented. I said, Lord, I need to be saved. You know, we don't love perfectly, but here it stands. Oh, no one anything except to love each other.

Romans 13 says. Point number three is encourage one another. Like Tychicus, it seems to be a trend that he brings the word and encourages, uplifts one another.

Some of us are gifted with encouragement. Some of us are gifted with encouragement, don't use it as much. Other ones just need to encourage more. But broadly speaking, all of us need to look for ways to encourage each other.

So as to spur on more love for each other. Point number four is struggle for one another and with one another. Just like Paul and Epaphras did to present the saints mature in Christ, we should also struggle and wrestle to do that for one another.

[51 : 16] And also believe that God supplies grace and strength to do it. If we do it in our own strength, then we should, we might as well honestly give up.

And leave his church altogether. God has no interest in our own strength contributing to the work. Point number five is aspire to live quietly, which is a phrase I took from 1 Thessalonians 4.

Paul says aspire to live quietly and to work with your hands, mind your own affairs. And why I bring this one up, I think for us, is because there's really nothing attractive about the beginnings.

I shouldn't say nothing. On the surface, there can seem to be little that's attractive at the beginning of the church. And even the monotony of the mundane, whether it's handling kids, handling, normal life.

But Paul says to live quietly and to do it unto God. And I think that many people nowadays do not live quietly. We're not talking about just mere silence and volume, but we're talking about a type of quietness that trusts in God and says that, God, you appoint the times, you appoint the seasons, everything comes under your hand, and I will trust you and be faithful to do that.

[52 : 52] In Matthew 6, when Jesus is talking about prayer, he says to go into your room. Oftentimes, when we pray, it's out loud, corporate prayer is good, but it's not only that.

Jesus singles out and says, when you pray, do it in secret, do it in quiet, live quietly. I once heard a pastor that was talking with his wife and his wife was looking at him and saying, does anyone do anything in secret anymore?

And he kind of looked at him and he's like, yeah, sin. But if we can be a people that's known by proving the work that we do in the shadows and in the quiet, that's literally how Paul commends Epaphras.

He says, I bear him witness that he's worked hard. We have no idea what kind of work he did, but according to Paul, he's done a lot for you guys. And he struggled in his prayers.

In Psalm 33, it says, behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him and those who hope in his steadfast love. Know, Christchurch, today, that you have the Lord's eye if you fear him and you hope in his steadfast love.

[54 : 11] And know that that is all we need, is the Lord's eye and our work to live quietly, but also to be an apostolic kin, to strive for kinship.

You know, this is far more worthy than we can imagine, and I assure you that it will be proven in the day when we meet the Lamb. That's how we will know it's worthy.

In the last day when we dine, that Jesus himself girds himself as a slave and serves us, we will know that nothing that we did for Christ was wasted.