

Jesus knows & grows His Church

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Date: 25 October 2020

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[0 : 00] Let's turn to God's word. Turn to Colossians chapter 4. Our final chapter together in Colossians. Colossians and chapter 4.

We can read the whole chapter together. Colossians 4. Let's hear the word of God. Continue steadfastly in prayer.

Being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us. That God may open to us a door for the word. To declare the mystery of Christ.

On account of which I am in prison. That I may make it clear. Which is how I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders. Making the best use of time.

Let your speech always be gracious. Seasoned with salt. So that you may know how you ought to answer each person. Tychicus will tell you all about my activities.

[1 : 02] He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose. That you may know how we are. And that he may encourage your heart.

And with him, Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here. Alistair.

Alistair. Alistair. Alistair. And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions. If he comes to you, welcome him. And Jesus, who is called Justice.

These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers of the kingdom of God. And they have been a comfort to me. Apaphros, 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. For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

[2 : 03] Luke, the beloved physician, greets you as does Demas. I give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and Nympha and the church in her house. When this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of Laodiceans.

And see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, see that you fulfill the ministry that you received in the Lord. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

Remember my chains. Grace be with you. I said this is our last chapter here in this book, our last week together.

Looking at these verses. Looking at this letter from Paul to the Colossians. As we come to this final chapter, this, if we're honest, if we're very honest, this might be a chapter we perhaps might just read over or gloss over to come to the end of the book.

If you were to read this on your own, would you just read past these names and go, great, fine, moving on to perhaps the first Thessalonians. Would these final lists of names just be a brief reading as you move on to the next book in God's Word?

[3 : 20] If I'm to be honest, it's a bad habit I've got. Reading books, I will almost always miss or skip past the introduction. I will almost always not read the middle of the book.

It's not a good thing. But here, Paul is not just listing names for the sake of it. There's something going on here. The Holy Spirit has led Paul to write these words for a reason.

John Angus, Peter John Angus, a cloud that is one of his most common phrases, that no word in Scripture is wasted. No word is wasted.

So this is here for a reason. And what we have here in these final verses of Colossians 4, it matches up to what we've been looking at all the way through the book.

So on a human level, here is Paul from prison, like we said, finishing off his book. He's from prison. He's writing off his letter. He's finishing his letter. And before he stands off, he gives his greetings to

all those in this church in Colossae.

[4 : 23] He gives greetings from the provisional with him. He tries to remember him when he can. He lets them know that he is praying for them. He lets them know his love for them. He gives them final bits of instruction.

So on a human level, we see Paul, the caring, loving servant, doing his job well, showing his love, showing his care, his attention to this church. Of course, we have here on our level.

We see the spirit through Paul showing us that Jesus both knows and grows his church. And as we look at these verses, I want us to look at these verses in a way that we see that each person in this church, each person mentioned here, each name, that they are precious servants.

They're not just here to fill in spaces, that we're here for good reason. As we close our time together in Colossians, as we've gone through this book, and as we've witnessed the power and majesty and glory of Jesus in chapter 1, as we saw how he is Lord over all things, that all things belong to him, how we saw that Jesus alone gives us peace, that Jesus alone gives us life, we then come to this final chapter.

It's almost as if we're becoming down and down and down. He's Lord over all. All belongs to him. And now we see that we're here in chapter 4 on ground level.

[5 : 50] We're here now at the nuts and bolts of the church. We're here at the individual Christians, the individual people who Paul is writing to. The nature of this section is a list of names, a list of so much we can say, so many different ways we can look at it.

So to be simple, to be brief, if you've seen the outline in the news sheet, we can look at this just under four headings and looking just at the groupings of people as we go through this chapter. There's enough here for many sermons. You could do a sermon easily on each of the names given here. But don't worry, we won't do that today. Just briefly, briefly looking at this section and seeing how Jesus both knows his church and how he grows his church.

Starting off looking with me, please, in Scripture to verses 7 down to verse 9. Verses 7 to 9. It's important that as we look at these verses, we do have our Bibles open.

I know we all do here, but those at home have Bibles open and to see where we're going with this as we go through it. So verses 7 to 9, we see Paul beginning with these brothers, these dear brothers who he is currently with.

[7 : 09] These brothers that he is sending to the church. Tychicus and Onesimus. Now again, I won't say which professor, but there's a trick that we're taught off the books, off the record, about how to say the names, how to say the harder names, to say them fast, say them of confidence, because in the end, none of us have a clue really how these names are pronounced.

It's all up for a grabs anyway. So these two brothers, Tychicus and Onesimus, these two brothers are described as faithful and beloved. Faithful and beloved.

What a commendation to have from an apostle. To have an apostle describe you as beloved to him, as faithful in the gospel.

The term beloved, it's not a term that Paul or any of us would use lightly, is it? To call someone beloved is to really mean it. And Paul knew these men well.

He had served with them. He had shared the gospel together alongside them. Paul knows and he knew their qualities. And Paul, being a servant alongside them, would have known their weaknesses.

[8 : 29] This might be hard to believe, but of course, I am full of weaknesses. And each one of us, we are full of weaknesses. And as brothers and sisters in Christ, we know each other's strengths.

We also know each other's weaknesses. And it's those who will most fiercely and most clearly show me my weaknesses. They are the ones who I would call my most beloved friends.

Those I would call those who I would trust most. Paul calling them his beloved brothers. It also shows how Paul sees himself.

Paul sees himself as one of them. He's on the same level as them. They are brothers to him. Yes, he's an apostle. Yes, in his calling, he's been given a different task to them.

In his calling, he's been given perhaps a higher task, if you say. But yet, personally, they are brothers to him. And he is a brother to them. And calling does not equal worth.

[9 : 33] We see that from this verse or from these verses, verses 7 to 9. Our calling does not equal our worth to the church and our worth to our saviour. Dear brothers and sisters, this must be the same for us today.

We're all under the same banner as we gather together. We're all under the same banner of love of our saviour. We're all together here in one spirit to worship him.

And we do all have different callings. Different duties to do in life. At the very base of it all, we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

The fact Paul includes this just shows how keen it is to make clear to the church in Colossae that yes, he's an apostle, but also yes, he is their brother in Christ.

At the end of the day, that is all we are to each other. When everything else is stripped back, we are dearly beloved brothers and sisters. That's why we can talk to each other in love. We can talk to each other and open up to each other and show that gospel love to each other knowing that we're talking to a brother, talking to a sister.

[10:49] So Paul calls these to men beloved. He then also calls them both faithful. Tychicus is a faithful minister, a fellow servant. And Anisimus is a faithful and beloved brother.

Faithful ministers and a faithful servant. What more can we pray or desire after as a church? In Tychicus, he had a faithful minister.

In Anisimus, he had a faithful brother. Faithful ministers and faithful members. Faithful ministers and faithful servants. Faithful ministers and faithful ministers and faithful ministers.

We see throughout the letters of Paul that he used Tychicus as a messenger to deliver, as it were, the gospel. So as this man went around delivering the gospel, delivering the letters of Paul, delivering the good news to these churches, to encourage these churches, as he went around sharing the good news, as he went around sharing the gospel.

We see that this man was faithful. He was faithful in his duty. He delivered the words faithfully. He shared the words faithfully. He didn't try and change them.

[12:00] He didn't try and add to them. He shared the words the apostle gave him. He was faithful in his own service to the Lord. What more does the congregation want than a faithful minister?

One who is faithful in his service, who is faithful in his gospel presentation, who is faithful both behind the pulpit and also faithful in everyday living, who faithfully lives a Christian life.

Every minister, every teacher will fail in that again and again. But it's those who strive after that. Those who strive after that faithful service, that faithful living. They are those who will benefit the church. Those who will be blessed in their gospel ministry.

As we'll see later on as we come to the final verses, our ministers need our encouragement. Pray that the minister who the Lord provides for you here, in the meantime, pray for whoever has provided supply.

[13:09] Pray that we would all be faithful in our service. As we seek to serve God's people, that all we do and say will be faithful to him and faithful to his word.

Also pray for the church. Pray for yourselves. As we see here on Esimus, we know from the book of Philemon, of course, that he was trustworthy and faithful. This man, he was once a slave and escaped, and who Paul then calls his own beloved son.

Paul is sending this man back to his people, back to his church. He's from this church. He's one of them. And Paul is sending him back, telling the church that this man, he is a faithful and beloved brother.

Be praying for your ministers, yes, but be praying for each other. Be praying for yourselves, that we'd all be faithful together. In our walks, in our words, in our actions, in our public presentation, but also in our own homes, in our own minds, that we'd be faithful to the gospel.

It's very easy for us, is it not? Myself very much included, to put on a show. We can look the part, talk the part, act the part, but we must pray that we are truly faithful servants, as these brothers were.

[14:35] Our prayer, our prayer would be that God would both give us a faithful servant, but also keep us faithful, as we seek to share the world, as we seek to live that Christian life.

That brings us down to the next section, we could say, we have verses 10 to 11. Verses 10 to 11, we see that the reality of that, in the church, there is difference, in the church, there is comfort.

Difference and comfort, that in the church that we had before, in verse 79, in the church, there are those who are beloved, and as we strive towards that, and we strive towards faithfulness, now in verses 10 to 11, we see the reality, that we are different in many ways.

The men here mentioned, in verses 10 to 11, Stathos, and Mark, and Justice, or Jesus, say, these men are described, as being the only men, of the circumcision, who are still serving, who are still

with Paul.

These are the only Jewish converts, with Paul, at this time, those who were once Jews, as he was, and who have now, come to know Jesus, as Messiah, as their Saviour.

[15 : 52] So why is Paul telling, this church, this, why is Paul telling, the church in Colossae, that these men, that they're the only, Jewish converts, with him, that they are praying for them, why does the church, need to know that?

Well, Paul's showing them, that even though, these men, are from a different background, a different culture, a different world, in many ways, to those in Colossae, that these men, because they're all, now united in Jesus, because they're all now, one church, that these men, are praying, for them.

That these men, are encouraging Paul, and his work, of the kingdom. Paul reminds them, that these dear, brothers, these dear brothers, from this Jewish background, are praying for this church, made up of people, who have my pagan background.

Before they met Jesus, these groups of people, would never have interacted, favorably. Those who are once Jews, would never have taken time, to spend time, with those, who are once pagans.

Those who are once pagans, would not have any time, whatsoever, for those who are once Jews.

But now we see, that under Jesus, in the gospel, that these men, not just have time, for one another, these men, encourage one another, they love one another, they care, for, one another.

[17 : 17] Remember, remember dear friends, the scope, of the church, this day. Chapter one, we saw, all of creation is his, all the people, are his.

The church, is so much bigger, than what we see, or what we know, in our own experience. God has his people, in places, we can even begin, to imagine. I was reading, on Thursday evening, a wonderful article, looking at the growth, of the church in China.

Now we've known, for some time of course, that the church in China, is growing at a rate. But what's become apparent, is that the church in China, is also reforming, at a rate. There are more, Calvinists, more reformed believers, now in China, they reckon, than we have, even close to, in the west.

God is, building his church. There are seminaries, seminaries, popping up, underground in China, which are teaching, the highest quality, of doctrine, that we can get here.

Doing so, off a radar, underground. God is building, his church, and building up his church, in these places. People of different cultures, different backgrounds, different languages.

[18 : 42] My first time, visiting Ukraine, I was young, I was scared, it was the middle of the night, just turned, just turned 17, my first time properly, in Eastern Europe, and we're living, in a village, that's way off the grid.

The first thing, that pastor prayed, through our translator, that, that lovely minister, he prayed, and he said, Lord, I give thanks, for a reminder, there are Christians, outside of Ukraine.

There are Christians, outside of Ukraine. We all have that same mindset. We all need to be reminded, that God is building, his church, that Paul's reminding, the people here in Colossae, that these, who are once Jews, who are now fellow believers, and brothers of you, they are praying for you, and they are supporting, Paul.

There's difference in church, there's difference here today. We're all from different situations, different backgrounds, different positions, in terms of our money, and our lifestyle, and our lives, our family situations, all that is there, all that's fine, at the very centre of it.

We must bring it back, again and again, to what unites us. The simple teaching, in these verses, verses 10, verses 9, verses 10 to 11, this simple teaching, it's so against the world.

[20 : 03] If you even take a cursory glance, at the news, since the start, of this year, you will see, that this world, we are, it's fracturing more, and more by the day, it seems.

We are being put into groups, and into sections, divided up, by language, or colour, or politics, or anything else. And here we see, in this one verse, or two verses, cross-cultural, ministry, a cross-cultural church, where these men, between backgrounds, could worship together, could pray for one another.

As we look around us, as we see this fracturing, of the world, we must fight against that, and show that in Christ, if we are believers, we are united together, in him, and in him, alone.

In Jesus, these things, that the world, tells us, separates us, we must, let go of these things, and more and more, see what unites us, we are united, in Jesus, if we are fellow believers.

We cover again, and again, that in Christ, we have unity. In Christ alone, we have true, lasting, eternal unity. We looked at that before, in great detail.

[21 : 20] So we see, these men, we see Paul, reminding the church, in Colossae, that they are, a cross-cultural church. The gospel is not confined, by our backgrounds, not confined, to our own, individual cultures, but the gospel, goes across all these things, because it comes, from Jesus, because it's about, the one who unites, his people, because it's about, being united, in, and with, and through him.

We also see, that Paul is comforted, by these people. The church, that is cross-cultural, but the church, also, comforts. Even by this stage, as Paul's writing this letter, we know that Paul, is not a young man.

Paul is an older man, and as an older man, he is, in prison. It takes the time, to make special, mention, that these men, have been a real comfort, comfort, to him.

The Greek term here, for comfort, can be understood, as a comfort, but also, equally well, as an encouragement. So, as they encourage him, as these believers, encourage him, that also comforts him.

As he sees them, work the gospel, it encourages him, to keep going, and it comforts him, that the gospel work, is carrying on. At his time, may be drawn to an end, the gospel, is still, going.

[22 : 39] Now, we of course, are not in the same situation, as Paul, we're not chained, in our prison cell, but dear friends, we all know, that we need, encouragement, and we need comfort, this day, don't we?

We need that comfort, from our brothers, and sisters. We all need, that encouragement, from our brothers, and sisters. So, as we read these verses, as we hear of the, comfort, and encouragement, that Paul received, in his chains, from these dear brothers, let's strive, to comfort one another.

Let's strive, to see, these verses, to look around us, and see the, the darkening days, that we live in. The darkening situation, that we exist in, the place where God, has placed us, to serve him.

As we do so, let's strive, to comfort, and to encourage one another. In your time, just in our vacancy, strive to comfort, and encourage one another. As the evil one, as Satan, tries to get his foothold, in your midst, comfort, and encourage one another, in the gospel.

By doing so, you will grow, together, as a family. So the church, is different. The church, has different backgrounds, it's composed, of people, from, markedly different situations, but, we find unity together, in Jesus.

[24 : 03] And the church, we are here, to comfort, one another. To comfort those, who need comfort, and to encourage one another. To encourage those, who need, that gospel encouragement. Then we have, the next group, which Paul writes, about verses, 12 down, to verse 13.

We then, have the church, what we see, as local, and praying. Before we saw, the church, as different, and comforting, and now, we see the church, is also local, and praying.

And here we have, in verses 12 to 13, these, concentrated verses, about, the path, the path, the path, the path, the path, the path, the path, the path, as we see, in the first few words here, he is one of you, he is a, a local servant.

He is a believer, who is, serving, in Colossae, he is a believer, who lives, amongst, Colossae. He is gone from them, he is now with Paul, but he is from their community, his former congregation, and we see, that Paul takes time, to, to remind them, about the path, their dear brother, who has left them for a time, to go and serve, with, Paul.

He is with Paul, yes, but he sends, his greetings, back home. The path, as a servant, he is a servant, who it seems, is clear, has a, a good grasp, of what's happening, back home.

[25 : 32] Apathos', local knowledge, his knowledge, of his people, his knowledge, of his community, it's helped to shape, the letter, that Paul is even writing, to them, right, now.

We can look back, at Colossians 1, verses 3 to 8, later on, if you have time, Colossians 1, verses 3 to 8, you see, that Apathos is there, at the start, of his letter, and Paul is drawing, on what Apathos, has told him, as he writes, this letter, to the Colossians.

Apathos knows, his people, he knows, his church, because he knows, these wonderful people, because he knows, their situation, he then helps Paul, tell Paul, to inform Paul, how Paul, can minister, to them well.

As Christians, we must be involved, in the church, now this is obvious, we know this, but we often, need that reminder. Apathos here, he knew his people well, he knew their situation, he knew exactly, what needed to be said to them, he knew exactly, what help, they needed from Paul, he knew that, because he knew them.

Of course, in our island, going back, we were all, much more, part of the community, than perhaps we are now. I think that's safe, and fair to say, our culture is changing, we can no longer, just assume, that we are together, as community, we must work hard, at that.

[27 : 02] As brothers and sisters, in Christ, we must work hard, at maintaining, a real community, of knowing one another, of showing that community, care, for, one another.

because the better, we know each other, the better we know, our situations, the better it is, we can bring these things, in prayer. We see that, in Epaphrodes, don't we, in verse 12.

How does Paul, describe Epaphrodes? Well, he is the one, who is always, always struggling, on your behalf, in his prayers. Struggling, fighting, we can also, quite literally, quite easily, translate that as, he's always fighting, on your behalf, in his prayers.

Epaphrodes is there, and he is bringing, his beloved church, his beloved fellow members, in Colossae, to God in prayer, again and again. Epaphrodes loves his people, because he loves them, he prays for them.

Because he knows them, he can pray for them well. Because he knows them, he can struggle, in prayer for them, he can strive, and fight, and be always on his knees, for his people.

[28 : 07] Praying what? Praying that he would stand, mature, and fully assured. A praying church, is a healthy church. The more we, know one another, the more we will, pray for one another.

The closer we grow together, the closer we will, pray for one another. The more we build up together, as a community of believers, the more clear, and more precise, our prayers, will be, for each other.

And with that, the more, we will grow, as a people. Amen. Local, and praying. We must know, our own situation.

We must know, our own people. We must know, the person sitting beside us. We must know, where we are in life. Not in a nosy way, of course not, but in a real, genuine, caring way.

If we are going to call each other, brothers and sisters in Christ, let's be like a path. Let's look to, to his example. As Paul reminds, this church, of this dear brother, who knows them, who loves them, and is praying, earnestly for them.

[29 : 13] Let that be reflected, in our lives. We pray, that we be like him, in that way. That we would, truly, struggle, strive, in our prayers, one another.

Praying, for each other, in love. Bringing each other, to the fruit of grace, again, and again, and again. Knowing that God, hears the prayers, of his people.

That we be like a pathless. That we be, fully involved, in the life, of this congregation, but also the life, of our community. We must know, our community. We must know, what's going on around us. We must, be involved, as much as we can, as much as we're able, in our local villages, our local district. The more involved, we are, the better, and more clear, more precise, our prayers can be, for those, who need our prayers.

Epaphras, did it, at a distance. Epaphras, did it, at a time, where the gospel, was under great threat. Epaphras, did it, at a time, where his life, was likely, under threat, for doing so.

[30 : 24] We have freedom, today, to be amongst, the community. We have freedom, today, to serve, our community. So let's strive, to do so, like Epaphras. Struggling, striving, on our knees, before the throne of grace, bringing to God, the names, the situations, of our brothers and sisters, but also, of our wider, community.

Brings us then, to, this short, short verse, verse 14, where we see, that in the church, there is both, perseverance, and falling, away.

In verse 14, we have this very, quick, hello, this quick greeting, we could say, from Luke, and from Demas. And this short, hello of course, what tells us, so, so much.

First of all, we have, Luke, Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, here we have, of course, a close friend, of Paul. Luke, we know, is one of course, who wrote the gospel, but now bears his name, he wrote the account, of Jesus' life, we also know, that Luke of course, wrote, the book of Acts.

When we read, either book, we should all read them together, if we can, as we read Luke, then, we should almost try, to read Acts afterwards, or the other way around, because Luke, wrote both things, he wrote both things, to go together, so Luke, is fully involved, in the life of Paul, Luke travelled with Paul, he pops up again, and again, throughout Paul's letters, Luke is a fellow servant, of Paul, a good friend of Paul, a beloved brother, of Paul, and as far as we know, as far as we can see, Luke is with Paul, at the very end, as far as we know, that 2nd Timothy, is the last letter, that Paul wrote, in 2nd Timothy, chapter 4, and verse 11, we see that Paul, is there, with Luke, Luke, a faithful servant, who gathered, all the eyewitnesses, to write his gospel, a faithful servant, who then spent his whole life, traveling with, the apostle, and with the early church, who witnessed, the various acts, of the apostles, who documented all these things, a man who was, at the very centre, of the world, a man who was, at the centre, of the gospel world, a man who was, at the centre, of scripture, as he records, and writes, all that took place, a man who also, we see, had a day job, a man who, in many ways, was a normal man, who was a doctor, in his time, so this beloved, faithful servant, called Luke, he says hello, this brother, who has persevered, through many years, this brother, who has served, in many ways, who has been, of much use, to the gospel cause, who has recorded, the life of his saviour, the eyewitness accounts, who wrote all that down, and recorded all that, recorded the start, of the church, the early church, he recorded, the great works, that God did, the great conversions, in his early years, and then we have,

[33 : 42] Demas, triathlon, Luke says hello, Luke greets you, as does Demas, that I'm saying, says hello, because the word, again in verse 14, is very light, it's very pleasant, Luke says hi, as does Demas, is what we're going for, in this verse, and if we didn't know, anything else about Demas, we could assume, quite easily, that Demas, is just as faithful, just as incredible, just as blessed, as Luke, we've met, Demas before, in Philemon, verse 24, where he's called, a co-worker, with Paul, of course, as I'm sure we know, Demas does appear, once more for us, in scripture, he appears, in that final letter, of Paul, again 2nd Timothy, chapter 4, verse 11, just before, just before, Paul mentions Luke, in that letter, to Timothy, he mentions,

Demas, and Paul, says, about Demas, for Demas, in love, with this present world, has deserted me, and gone, to Thessalonica, where we see Luke, faithfully, persevering, and carrying on, his service, until we hear, no more of him, for Demas, the last thing, we hear about him, is that he's gone, he deserted Paul, with that, he deserted the gospel, cause, the love of the world, was more for him, and he's gone, and we hear, no more, about Demas, did he later, come back, to the church, did he later, come back, to his first love, we do not know, we cannot say, the sad, and true reality, for us, this day, dear friends, is, that as many of us, here know, that some, do not persevere, that some, do, fall, away, here, we must be, so, so, careful, we all, falter, we all, will falter, we all, will fall, at various times, and sometimes, some of us, will fall, in awful ways, for quite a long time, most of us, if not all of us, will have times, in our walk, where, we feel as if sin, has taken over, many of our brothers, and sisters, have, and do, fall away, for some time, but we return, back to our saviour, and we know that, in our experience, we all know people, who have, gone away, but yet, have come back, returned back, to our saviour, who have, have backslidden, but then, they have come back, to knowing, and worshipping,

Jesus, which is a reason, why we said before, like, church discipline, must always seek, restoration, where possible, always seeking, restoration, if at all, possible, the Westminster Confession, of faith, which is the standard, of the free church, we see, in the confession, that, that these dear brothers, went to great, great lengths, to make clear, and to be precise, when talking, about perseverance, when talking, about the fact, that some, do fall away, but also, that Christians, that even though, they fall away, if our time, will always, come back, there's a world, of difference, there's a whole, chasm of difference, between falling away, and coming back, and falling away, and never returning, we have that, in the confession of faith, chapter 17, and, we'll read a whole chapter, but if you have it at home, please go home, and read this, wonderful chapter, carefully worded, chapter 17, in the confession, the first section, they whom God, has accepted, and his beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his spirit, can neither totally, nor finally, fall away, from the state of grace, but shall certainly, persevere, within to the end, and be eternally saved, can neither totally, nor finally, then these were men, who were men, they knew, themselves, they knew the world, around them, so in chapter 3, then, in section 3, we have this, reminder, talking about Christians, nevertheless, they may, through the temptations, of Satan, and the world, through the corruption, remaining in them, the neglect, of the means, of our preservation, they may fall, into grievous sins, and for a time,

continue, therein, and so on, we all, may well, fall into sin, we all do, fall into sin, and for being honest, with ourselves, ourselves, ourselves, the sad reality, is, though, some, do not persevere, some, do not, return, as far as we know, back to, their, saviour, now, our hearts, and I hope we do, we should grieve, in our hearts, as we read, as we think, about Demas, as we think, about this man, who, who once served, so faithfully, who was called, a fellow worker, but then, at the very last, as Paul himself, is about to face his end, as, as Paul comes to the end, of his journey, the last thing he writes, about this man, is he's gone, he's gone back, to the world,

I'm sure this discussion, brings up so much, pain, and so much, worry, and so much, memories, perhaps, from many of us, it brings up people, it brings up situations, as a church, as brothers and sisters, what can we do, to those in our families, and those who are our friends, those who have fallen away, or look as if they are, falling away, what can we do, what can we say, what can we offer them, we offer them, the only thing we have, the gospel, we remind them, who they are in Jesus, we remind them, who Jesus is, what he's done for them, what that means for them, we remind them, again and again, of his promises, towards them, we remind them, of the Jesus, they once professed, about who he is, this is not easy, for us to talk about, not easy at all, for us to think about, as a church, of course, we know, that this is part, of our experience, in our church, in any church, in every church, there are those, who persevere, and sadly, there are those few, who do not, it raises many questions, it raises many issues, many heartbreaking, questions and issues, we must take these things, to the throne of grace, we can answer some questions, we can go into some detail, the confession gives us, some light, at the end of the day, there are many questions, we cannot even begin to answer, we leave these things, at the throne of grace, we leave it, with the one, who does know, the one, who does, have an answer, to the questions, that we, do not have answers to, the one who knows, all things, who sees all things, so in a church, we have perseverance, we have, falling away, and finally, and very briefly, see this final section, in verses 15, down to verse 18, as Paul concludes, this letter, see in the church, there is kindness, there is sharing, and there is encouragement, first of all, we can look, at Nympha, the church in her house, this woman, who is, kindly, lovingly, giving up, for use of her house, for the brothers and sisters, to meet together, to worship,

God, the commentators, make a point, I am inclined to agree, with the commentators, who say so, that this woman, is obviously a woman, of some sort of means, she is obviously, up there in the lake, somewhere, we know the church, of Colossae, wouldn't have been massive, but it obviously, was a decent sized church, and these people, met in her house, so this woman, is a woman, who perhaps was, higher up, she is a woman, perhaps of some means, a woman, who has some profession, we don't know, but a woman, who was willing, to give, her house, over, to the sake, of the gospel, a woman, who perhaps, faced, the very real possibility, of having her status, removed from her, of being mocked, by her peers, if not worse, to be a Christian, was not popular, to be a Christian, of course, meant for, for many believers, a hard life, at the very best, and at the very worst, the end, of their lives, this woman, was giving up, her status, giving up, perhaps, the, the, the, the privilege, of being well known, and well loved, and esteemed, in this pagan society, here she is, this woman, giving up, her house, she was also, willing to face up, to a very likely, situation, where she would be, mocked, ridiculed, ignored, despised, something incredible, something amazing, about Paul mentioning, this woman, very cross, very against the culture, of his day, very against the culture, of the day, for a man, nevertheless, a man who was trained, as a Pharisee, to, to, to, to compliment women, it's bad to say, but it's the truth, they were not worthy, they were not worthy, of the time of day, but yet, here we see,

[43 : 41] Paul was casually, and wonderfully, mentioning this woman, to give her greeting, this woman who served, in the church so well, greet her, for him, the importance, of course, of women, to the work of the gospel, cannot be, overstated, God has used, his beloved daughters, in so many wonderful ways, throughout scripture, and of course, throughout history, even our own experience, our own island, our own experience, here as a congregation, we all know, the way that God has used, his beloved daughters, to bless, and encourage, the church, those women, who showed such, faithfulness, such kindness, who sacrificially gave, in so many ways, the sake, of the gospel, in the church, we see kindness, the church, we also finally, see, encouragement, Paul concludes, his whole effort here, in verse 17, say to Archippus, see that you fulfill, the ministry, that you have received, as far as we know,

Archippus, as far as we can tell, from the wording, and from what we have here, the ways he's described, that Archippus, is likely to have been, if not the leader, one of the leaders, in this church, he's likely to have been, the minister, and Paul, instructs the congregation, that say, it's a plural word, and you all, all of you, tell Archippus, tell your minister, encourage him, remind him, that he fulfills, the ministry, that he's received, in the Lord, Paul ends, with that reminder, as a church, they must encourage, one another, and encourage, their minister, Paul ends, his whole letter, in a tone, in a sense, of encouragement, I again, just commend to you all, that whoever you may have, over you here, to encourage, that man, encourage his family, ministers, will face, situations, in terms of spiritual warfare, that many of us, do not understand, or can't begin to understand, situations, spiritual warfare, that is, hard put into words, encourage, the men, encourage your families, support them, as best you can, as they seek, to serve you, in, the gospel,

Paul concludes, this letter, so humbly, I, Paul, write this reading, with my own hand, remember my chains, grace be with you, as he sits in prison, writing this wonderful, beautiful letter, we've got the last month, going through, through the inspiration, of his spirit, as it still led him, to write these words, see Paul ending, so simply, ending, so humbly, as I leave you, this month, as we leave together, this time together, we spent, in this wonderful book, I do pray, and I do hope, that we leave, this book of Colossians, having, at least, a greater sense, of who Jesus is, because Jesus, is, reigning, over all things, because Jesus alone, gives peace, because Jesus alone, loves his people, because Jesus alone, gives life, to his people, it means, that we as a church, can serve him, faithfully, serve him fully, we as a church, can rely on his words, because he is, fully man, and fully God, we can trust, everything he says, but also trust, at the same time, that he knows us, he is with us, walking alongside us, and everything, that he leads us to do, as these early,

Christians, as this, wee church in Colossae, as he grew, this church, as they met one another, as the church, and the gospel, grew in this place, Jesus was with them, the same way, with us here, this day, Jesus knows his church, and he grows his church, how do we know, that Jesus grows his church, we know he grows it, because, here we are, in this small island, in this small building, reading about this small church, a few thousand years ago, and a few thousand miles away, God has kept, his people, from then, to now, he grows, his church, Jesus knows us, and he grows, his church, that is the case, until he comes again, to take us home, until he comes again, and it's all finished, until that day, he will keep growing, his church, until that day, he will keep walking, alongside, his church, that is our encouragement, I do,

I timed, myself here, I forgot to actually, look what it was, I read through the Colossians, I'm not a fast reader, I read through Colossians, and you can read through it, a few times a day, easily, especially these days, of lockdown, if you have the ability, to play it, you can play, through the whole book of Colossians, in 20 minutes, every morning, as you brush your teeth, and have your breakfast, play this book, read this book, the next few weeks, as long as you want, read it, spend time on it, remind yourself, again and again, that you worship a Jesus, who is Lord over all, who is Lord over his people, Lord over his church, and who is coming one day, take us home to himself, who will one day, reign over all things, with us, by his side, who will one day, come and make, all things new, and we will reign with him, for all time, for Jesus, who knows, his people, who loves, his people, let's, close that, word of prayer, saying, who knows, and can, thank you, and, thank you, thank you,

[50 : 04] Ellen, for all the time, and we're not. It's nothing moreavant, but all the time, it route re debts, but I think this week, and I want to take on my elbow, you know, can say Hayley, introduce yourself,