

Everyday People for Extraordinary Purpose |

Colossians 4:7-18

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daly preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. Well, good morning, everyone. It is great to be with you this morning. The conclusion of VBS and just seeing all the kids just full of energy, playing the games and just all that was just wonderful.

I'm just reminded of how scripture says that children are a gift from the Lord. A lot of people say they are the next generation and they absolutely are, but they're also the current generation in which we have to make sure that our children come to know the Lord, they come to know the Word of God.

They grow in faith and just seeing them grow is just a wonderful thing. So today we are concluding our sermon series on the book of Colossians.

Can you believe it? We're finally finishing this book, this biblical exposition, this verse by verse, line by line, this sermon series on the book of Colossians from the apostle Paul.

[1 : 23] We have uncovered truths about the preeminence of Christ, that Jesus Christ is all that we need and is in everything.

Paul urges us to put to death the former self and to put on the new self in Christ, the new attributes, right?

The things that are on God and to set our minds on the things that are higher and not the things that are lower. We have learned that in knowing the Lord, there is transformation that comes from the inside and it goes out.

We continue to grow in our walk with Him. And I'm here to remind you in this entire sermon series, let us be reminded that salvation is the beginning of your story.

It is not the end. It is the beginning of your walk in the Lord. Christ wants us, He calls for us to become more holy, to be more like Him, to follow in the footsteps of Christ, and to live a life that honors and glorifies Him.

[2 : 31] And today at the end of Colossians, you'll find in your notes, there's all of these people. As a kid, I always thought, man, who are all these people at the end of the letter?

What exactly is going on here? And today we're going to be examining every person who's mentioned at the end of this letter. We must come to understand who these people are, at least have a basic understanding.

Because all of these people contributed to early Christianity. They contributed to the spreading of the gospel, the spreading of the good news. The Lord felt that it was important that these names, these people, these individuals, would be in the pages of Scripture.

And further, just as God used all of these people, ordinary people, everyday people, for extraordinary purpose, in the same way God calls each and every one of us, to know Him, to grow in Him, to do good in His name.

But all of that to say, we are all called for extraordinary purpose. And at this time, I'd like for us to open in prayer and let's delve further in.

[3 : 46] Will you pray with me? Let's pray together. In gracious Father, we thank You for giving us this time and this opportunity to sing praises to Your Holy Name, to worship Your Name.

We worship who You are, that You are the living God and You have given us Your Word. Today, as we're going through the end of this book of Colossians, Heavenly Father, we ask that You are with us.

We pray that truth is spoken here. We pray that lives are transformed from the inside out. And we pray that we can learn about who these people are for You had a plan and a purpose for each and every one of those people.

And in the same way, You have a call for each and every one of us. You have a plan and a purpose for us. May we not only be hearers of the Word, but also doers.

We pray that we can be encouraged from these people. You call all of us to enter in that relationship with You and to grow in faith, to set aside the former things, to focus on the things above and put on the new life in You.

[4 : 52] May we grow in this faith. May we know You. May we get baptized. May we grow in this faith. May we be hungry for Your Word and live out this faith each and every day.

Be with us. We ask all of these things in the name of Jesus Christ. We pray and we all say together, Amen. And so what we're going to do today is a little bit different than what we typically do.

Normally I show the title of the verse, then I show you the verse on the slide, right? And then the corresponding, the supporting verses that remember context and connections.

Well, today we're going to go through every name that's mentioned in here. That's described through these Colossian verses. So if you want to have a Bible by your side, it's Colossians chapter 4 verses 7 through 18.

And then also there should be notes that have all of the names of these people. And where they're found in Scripture, I know it's a lot, but we'll break it down. And for all of these people, we can learn something.

[5 : 58] And so I want to start off with Tichicus, who is known as the beloved brother. He is the faithful minister, the fellow servant, and the encourager of hearts.

We begin with Tichicus. The Apostle Paul goes on beginning saying that this man is going to tell the Colossians about really all that's going on in the ministry.

He is a man who is described as the beloved brother, right? A faithful minister, a faithful servant. And this man was active in the early church and was in communication with the Apostle Paul.

It says that he was sent for the sole purpose of explaining, right? How things are going. But I love the language where it says that he is the encourager of hearts.

We find that in some of the corresponding verses as well. That's something that really sticks out to me because very often when as Christians, we need people who are encouraging.

[7 : 05] We need people who can encourage our hearts whenever we're going through life. And this language here, right? It's someone who is someone who helps the hearts of the saints, right?

It sticks out to me. Someone who is this encourager. He's also mentioned in the Ephesians passage and it's appropriate back then as it is now to have people who encourage the hearts of the saints.

How many of you have experienced encouraging words from someone? Maybe it was a guest speaker. Maybe it was a brother or sister in Christ. It was that encouragement that that helped you in your walk with the Lord.

And this is how we can think of this individual. Especially in the world and the culture that existed back then and the world and the culture that exists today.

Sometimes we need someone who serves in the ministry, who serves for the cause of Christ, who can encourage a church, who can encourage a congregation, the pastor, even the staff.

[8 : 11] It's something that is wonderfully written to be an encourager of hearts. Let's go to that next slide. You have Onosemis and for those of you who have been here, who have been faithfully attending, you know we went over the book of Philemon and you have Onosemis who is the faithful and beloved brother.

He is one of you. He is the beloved brother, right? He is what we know from the book of Philemon is that the apostle Paul was writing to Philemon the master of the runaway slave Onosemis, right?

He was writing, Paul was writing to Philemon to let Philemon know that Onosemis is not only a man who came to know the Lord, but one who is a free man in Christ and should also be rendered as a free man, as in no longer a slave.

And that's something that sticks out to me because sometimes you find people asking questions, well where does the Bible speak about slavery? Well it's very clear if you read Philemon and Onosemis being a man who was useful in the eyes of God, right?

And here he is in Colossians here. He's not only a free man in Christ, but he should be viewed as free from slavery and here in Colossians Onosemis is serving in the ministry again.

[9 : 38] It goes to show that this man was faithful to the Lord and continued in the ministry. Now something in looking at some of these individuals throughout history, it is said by some historians that Onosemis ended up becoming a pastor at one point.

Now we don't find that in Scripture, that is outside of Scripture, so there is some debate on that. But whether he did or didn't become it, this is a man who was changed, right?

He came to know the Lord, he became free from sin, but also became, we have enough evidence, evidence to show that he is a free man. And just a wonderful story in that.

So we have Aristarchus, the fellow prisoner, the fellow worker, the companion in travel. So what's interesting about him is the fact that he, right, he would travel with the apostle Paul and he was there during a riot that broke out in Ephesus and you find that in the corresponding passages of Acts 19 and Acts 20, verse 4.

So what was happening there, right, you're seeing that there's the mention that he's there. But what's very interesting about him is, Aristarchus is that he, there was a decline of sale of idols, right?

[10 : 56] And the people who were selling the idols were getting very upset that people were coming to know the Lord. And so this riot broke out and Aristarchus was with the apostle Paul and other people at that moment.

So it's a very interesting one if you ever go into the Acts of the Apostles in there. We also come to Mark, who's also known as John Mark, who is the cousin of Barnabas, one who is useful for ministry and the fellow worker.

So John, who is known as Mark, or John Mark, it gets confusing. There's all these Johns and whatnot. Just think of him as Mark. That'll make things a lot easier because he is viewed upon as the writer of the Gospel of Mark, right?

It's traditionally seen that this is the same man who wrote the Gospel accounts. Mark had a very close relationship with the apostle Paul and he was very useful for ministry. When you see that language, just like what was used for Onesimus, that he is useful to the apostle Paul, it means that the work that was being done for the ministry was of great significance, right?

So he's useful for me. He's like, hey, he's a very critical part. He's of great importance, of great significance. So this language is speaking of someone who was useful to the ministry of the early church.

[12 : 18] And now we come to the next person, Jesus, who is known as justice. Now I always love how in Scripture you find all of these names, right?

You find names of like the apostle Paul, right? You find Onesimus, all of these individuals. It's nice when you see these people in other books of Scripture.

What's very hard is when you find someone who's mentioned once and you never see him again. And this is the case for justice. His name is Jesus, but he wanted to be known as justice.

I'm pretty sure I think I can know why he wanted to be called justice instead of Jesus. Let's be honest here, right? What a name to live up to, right? When you have Jesus of Nazareth, right? And you yourself, you might have been named Jesus and you're like, well, I'm a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, but I can never live up to that name.

So I tend to think that's why, but that's just my own thoughts on that. But what's very interesting about justice is that he's a fellow worker for the kingdom and he is of the circumcision, right?

[13 : 28] So again, this is not Jesus of Nazareth. We have to make that very clear. But it's someone that is different, right? This is, Jesus was a common name at the time and justice probably preferred being called justice to avoid confusion and he can't live up to the name of Christ, right?

What's interesting though is in verse 11, that's the only time that you find that name, Jesus known as justice. That's it.

And I have to tell you when I'm preparing for these sermons, I look at the context, the connections and scripture. I also like looking up history, especially when you have all these names.

Where else were they find? Is there an emperor or is there something that's outside of scripture that maybe shows something that's going on? I can find nothing on this guy.

Absolutely nothing on him. He's only referenced once in him. Now some of us may say, well, wait a minute, aren't there, isn't there another justice in scripture?

[14 : 31] In fact, there's three justices in scripture. You'll find that in your notes here. You have Jesus called justice. You have Joseph called Barsobus justice or Tideus justice.

So there's three different justices there. And there can be some confusion. Some think it's the same person. But for this case, I'm not convinced, I'm thinking these are just the three different individuals, three people who are known as justice.

What's encouraging though is that even though justice here, Jesus known as justice, who was not found anywhere in scripture, in fact, there's no other historical documentation or anything about this guy, what is so critical is that he was in the Word of God, that the Lord thought it was so important for him to be in the pages of scripture.

And that's interesting, right? All we know is that justice was a Jewish convert, one who is of the circumcision, right? You see that language in there.

Now what's interesting in scripture, you find that justice, or Starkas and John Mark, are all Jewish converts. Whenever you see that language, they are of the circumcision.

[15 : 50] These are people who were once Jewish and they had converted to Christianity. It is said that the apostle Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles. Well, yes, he is the apostle to the Gentiles, like to us.

But also, in cases like this, there were people who were Jewish. That's just part of how Christianity was spreading. And so it's great to know that justice and Aristarchus and John Mark, you see cases of people who were once Jewish, once of the circumcision who became Christian.

So now we go to Apaphras, the servant of Christ, the prayer warrior, the hard worker for those in Laodicea in Hieropolis. Well, I like this guy already, right?

He's a hard worker, he's a prayer warrior, right? That's like a good guy to know, right? This was a person who believed in the power of prayer.

And he was constantly praying for fellow believers. He was a servant of Christ and one who was constantly in prayer. For some of us, we may identify with this individual, someone who is constantly praying for those who are in need, right?

[17 : 05] One who, or maybe you identify with his work ethic, one who was known to the degree, known to the point where he was recognized for his work in Laodicea in Hieropolis.

And certainly today, the idea with all of these people, I want you to keep in mind, is all of these people played different parts in the body of Christ. Much like how we today all have our gifts, our talents, and our abilities to serve the living God.

We are all part of the body of Christ. We need people today who are praying. We need people who are praying for our church, for churches in the Treasure Valley, for congregations, individual, for healing, for revival in this land.

We need people who pray. How is your prayer life? It's just something that I felt very convicted when I was, well, I want to be known as someone who prays to the Lord.

Maybe this is an encouragement for you as well. Let's go to Luke, the beloved physician, the writer of the Gospel of Luke, the fellow worker. He's also found in 2 Timothy and Philemon.

[18 : 11] The beloved physician, right? A fellow worker, one who was useful for the ministry. And what's really cool about this is sometimes you see people who serve in different occupations, right?

People who, you might work in the real world, right? You might have a profession or be a professional. You can still serve the Lord.

You can be a, you know, you can be the mayor. You can be serving at the, working at the college and still exhibiting the light, love, and truth of Christ.

So when we see Luke like that, known as the beloved physician, it just kind of reminds me of the importance of knowing that you can have an occupation and serve the Lord. Some of us are called into full-time ministry.

Some of us are called to bivocational ministry. Some of us are called to be a prayer warrior. Some of us are called to exhibit the love of Christ in our everyday dealings, in our businesses, in our professions, whatever that may be.

[19 : 14] It may look different from the one person to the next. Let's go to Demas. He greets the Colossians. And if you look in your Bible, you see on there, there's the mentioning of Luke, right?

What's it say about Demas? I'm curious if anyone still has a Bible open. Right? That's it.

So it's just a real brief mentioning of Demas here. And he greets the Colossians, right? We come to Demas who, we only find this person three times in Scripture.

And this is one person that we can, you see a lot of positive, seeing a lot of the good work that they're doing, the prayers, right?

The hard work and being the beloved physician. But here you find someone in the negative light. You may not see it specifically here in Colossians, but if you're looking at the bulk of Scripture, you have the story of Demas.

[20 : 16] It's a person who is referred to as a fellow worker in Philemon. He's briefly mentioned as greeting the Colossians. And he's mentioned in a negative way in the corresponding verse of 2 Timothy chapter 4, verse 10.

And I want to make it very clear that when you're seeing Demas here, this is a person who was serving in the ministry. And then slowly it seemed like it kind of was going off the deep end, so to speak.

It's someone who served the Lord and served for the cause of Christ, but eventually fell away. It's a person who fell in love with this present world. And that kind of begs the question, well, what ended up happening to Demas?

I can tell you that based on the Scriptures, it looks like that he made a decision to turn away from the Lord and to be active and to be in love with the present world. And we hear that.

Is that focusing on the things that are higher or the things that are lower, the things of the earth? And it seems to me that this person, only God knows. Did he turn it around after the fact?

[21 : 23] We don't know. Did he repent? Did he? All we know is that this man served the Lord and he fell into the ways of the world.

That is enough for us to be reminded that we stay strong in the Word of God. And when we meet and we find people who are struggling with their faith, maybe they've been hurt, you pray for them.

You encourage them. I know that's a very, I can imagine for someone like the Apostle Paul, having someone serving for the cause of Christ, feeling that sort of betrayal, that sense of loss of someone falling into the ways of the world.

And so if you know someone who is like Demas, by all means pray for them. Pray for their return. Pray that they know the Lord, for there is salvation in him.

Was Demas like the prodigal son? We don't know. But what we do know is he was not on a good trajectory in that. To be in love with the present world, it indicates right someone who is in love with the former life or maybe they never came to believe in the Lord to begin with.

[22 : 41] There is some debate for that. But in any case, let this be a reminder for us to not get caught up in the ways of the world, not to be caught up in living in sin, living in doing the wrong thing.

If you walk away from sin and your former life and you put on the new self, why would you set aside the new life and go back to the way in which you came?

Why would you do that? So even though it's such a small passage, right, it's part of a greater story in knowing of how important it is to remain faithful to God and faithful to his word.

It reminds me again of a great deal of people who have fallen away. And I pray that for each and every one of us that we know who Jesus Christ is as the son of the living God, I pray that all of us will grow in faith.

And even should we stumble or sin or falter or fail, maybe we remain in Christ. Look, we're never going to be perfect in this life, but that's very different than I'm going to intentionally choose to live a life of sin.

[23 : 51] So I pray for all of us that we know the Lord, we grow in him and we are moved to do good in the name of Christ. Let's go to Nympha, the hostess of a house church, also not mentioned anywhere else in scripture.

Theologians and pastors and historians, non canonical books, nothing on Nympha, just like how there's nothing on Jesus called justice.

But what is important is that Nympha is mentioned in scripture. The hostess of a church at her house, when we think of the early church, we think of someone who, we think of early Christianity.

We don't always think of church buildings like this. We think of people who gathered in homes. And if you had a large enough home with many rooms in it, you could have church service in it. So this person, Nympha, she played a pretty big role in being a hostess and having the early Christians, the early church gather at her house.

That's something to be, it's hospitality. I mean, I want to, how many of you want to be known for your hospitality? You don't have to raise your hand here, but it's very different.

[25 : 13] House churches were more common in early Christianity. And in the case of Nympha, we don't have anything else. I'd like to know more about who she was, more about her hospitality.

But all we have is what God has given us in His word. Not only was it important for the Colossian church back then to recognize people that are hospitable. But we too should be encouraged to be hospitable and ask yourself the question, are you a hospitable person?

That's a wonderful question to think about. We go next to Archipous, or Archipous, the minister. He is called to fulfill the ministry of the fellow soldier.

Now this one hits home. He is called by Paul to fulfill the ministry that he received from the Lord. And in Philemon, we find that he was someone who was referred to as the fellow soldier, very military-like language.

And it's because, most likely, he suffered many spiritual battles, spiritual warfare, perhaps attacked from the enemy. I wish I could know more details of what that looked like.

[26 : 21] But what we do know is that he did struggle in that way. That's what the language is implying here. Perhaps he was suffering, continuing to suffer from spiritual battles.

Maybe he needed encouragement from the apostle Paul. And Paul is giving his word, Archipous, remain focused and fixated on the ministry.

You keep doing what you're doing. And what a great encouragement. Should any of us ever have a spiritual battle, or an attack from the evil one, or discouraging words from the world, how powerful are words to continue doing what you're doing?

Remain in the Lord and continue on your trajectory in him. Unfortunately, we don't know much more about what happened. And so finally, we go to the apostle Paul.

And that's found in numerous references throughout Scripture. It's in your notes as well. Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and so on.

[27 : 26] But what's really nice is at the ending, Paul is saying that he is writing with his own hand. And at this time, Paul, he most likely dictated the words that were to be written down to describe, right, to someone who would take notes to write down the letter here.

Well, with the exception of verse 18, he is saying he is writing it with his own hand. Perhaps he was weak, perhaps he maybe something happened to his hand.

But how wonderful, it's kind of like how we would look at signatures today, right? How many of us hand write letters anymore? You don't have to raise your hand, right?

Some of us hand write letters, I know for a lot of us we might print out letters, right? Writing with your own hand, that's a very similar idea here, right? I, Paul, am writing with my own hand just to kind of verify this is me, right?

So that's something that's really great. He's letting the Colossians know to remember his chains and to remember that he is in prison and he finishes off by saying, the grace of God our Father be with them always.

[28 : 39] And it's such a powerful ending to this, to know that the apostle Paul was somehow unable to write this letter, but at the end he wrote with his own hand.

And that's something that is wonderful to see. And I want, as we conclude with all of these people, all of these people, they came from different backgrounds, right?

They had their own backstory and how they came to know the Lord and their own capacity in which they served, right? One of the most significant things that we can take away from these verses is that God had a plan for every single one of these people.

I want you to think about that. God calls each and every one of us, right? He calls us to know him, to have that relationship with him and to be transformed by the renewal of our mind, the transformation of our heart, right?

A renewed spirit. Be saved by believing in the Lord. The wonderful thing is here, the different backgrounds, the different people, all parts of the body of Christ.

[29 : 50] Think about it. God calls everyday people for extraordinary purpose. God knew us before the foundation of the world and he gives us this very life.

Every day is an opportunity for us to come to know him, to believe in him, to be baptized, to live the former life and to be on a trajectory, a path of holiness becoming more like Jesus Christ.

With the exception of Demis and here unfortunately, we can see that all of these people were on a path and a trajectory to live out their faith. And I'm reminded of that famous verse that faith without deeds is dead, that we are called to be doers of the word to have an active faith and not a dead faith.

And as you can see from all of these people, some of them exhibited hospitality, some of them opened up their home to minister in one capacity or another, some of them were encouragers of hearts, some of them were known for lifting up people's spirits.

And some of these people, they came from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Are we all from the same, are we all the same heights? Are we all the same skin color?

[31 : 06] Are we all from the same socioeconomic background? Or do we have the same education level? The answer is no. And if we were all the same, I'd be a little terrified at that, you know.

But the reality is, we are all different. We all come from different backgrounds. And it reminds me that we are all to be on a path and a spiritual walk in the Lord.

The most important thing that you can do is to come to know Jesus Christ and be on this path of living out your faith. What God has called for you is to be in that relationship with Him.

Now what your ministry, how you minister, how you reach out and communicate with people, that may be different, right? I always think of the language of the body of the Christ, right?

You might be an ear and you know, someone else might be a tooth. You have different parts, but they all are of equal importance in the eyes of God. Maybe your calling is to be a prayer warrior.

[32 : 06] Maybe you're called to be a doctor or a business person and to serve the Lord in your everyday dealings. It is a great reminder and a great encouragement. Again, know the Lord, grow in Him and do good in the name of Jesus Christ.

May you be encouraged by these people to know that the work that you do, right, we're saved by grace through faith, right? But the things that we do in the name of Christ, they matter in the eyes of God.

It doesn't matter what your skin color is. It doesn't matter how old you are or how young you are. It doesn't matter if you're tall or short. It doesn't even matter what your theology or how you view revelation is.

What matters is that you grow in the Lord, right? And you do good in the name of Christ. Hear the preaching and teaching of the word. Repent, change your mind about Christ and believe in Him.

Maybe you identify with one of these people. Maybe you even identify with someone like Demas. Maybe you've come to know the Lord and you decided or you fell into sin and you've been living a life of sin.

[33 : 20] Maybe this is a call for you to turn it around, come back to the Lord and be restored and be healed.

Maybe that's a call for you. Sometimes we have our own spiritual battles. Sometimes we face attacks from the evil one or sometimes even attacks from each other.

Let's be honest. Sometimes we've had that. Maybe this message is a call for you to come to know Jesus. Maybe it's a call for you to return to Jesus.

Maybe it's a call for you to set aside the sinful life in which you live in. In other words, put to death the former life. Maybe it's a call for you to put on the new life.

Maybe it's a call for you to live out your faith in all that you say and all that you do. Maybe it's a call. I hope that as we are closing the sermon series that you're encouraged by the letter of Colossians.

[34 : 19] Just as God called ordinary people in Colossians for His divine plan and His divine purpose, He calls for all of us for His purpose.

God has a plan for you. God called Ezra and the Israelites to rebuild the temple despite adversity.

And I would encourage us to come together as the body of Christ to be united on the things that matter and not the things that divide us. As we have learned and we've studied in Colossians that Jesus Christ is all that we need.

And He is in everything. Our next sermon series is going to be from the book of Ezra. It's titled, Stronger Together.

It's our biblical exposition of the book of Ezra. We'll learn about the building of the temple and the adversity that these people faced. Much like how when we are building community, we will face adversity at times.

[35 : 22] When we become a Christian and we grow in faith, we will face adversity. Sometimes people are just completely in shock about what you believe in. Maybe they just don't understand or they don't get it.

And that's okay. Because just as we're learning here at the end of Colossians and as we're shifting over to Ezra, which will start on July 7th, remain in the Lord despite adversity.

What a wonderful parallel and connection we can see about rebuilding the temple, but also for building church community despite adversity and opposition.

So as we close, let us remember when you think of Colossians that Jesus Christ is all that we need and is in everything.

Can we say that together? Jesus Christ is all that we need and is in everything. That's how you remember Colossians. So with that, let's pray together.

[36 : 31] Dear Jesuses, we are closing this sermon series and our time here together. We ask that you remain in our hearts. We ask that we can be encouraged by the lives of these people and learn the lessons from them who were in the book of Colossians.

May we be like the Colossian church that was faithful to you and exhibited the love of Christ to others. May we believe and live for you. May we follow in your footsteps.

We thank you so much for our friends and our families and our children and this church community. We pray that as we go from this place and we sing this song, we pray that may we be encouraged by the book of Ezra to build a church community despite any opposition that we may face.

It is in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God that we pray and we all say together, Amen. Thank you for tuning in to the Ontario Community Church Sermon Podcast.

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