

## **Colossians 4:7-18**

7-9 Tychicus (Acts 20:4) and Onesimus (the runaway slave - called faithful and beloved brother) will carry the letter and fill in the details of personal things. (Ephesians 6:21) Paul did not bother to waste parchment complaining about his condition, illness, trials, etc. These people risk imprisonment themselves by visiting him. Encouragement – Paul is putting feet to his prayer of 2:2. We can pray, but then we need to act.

10 Aristarchus was in prison with Paul. (Acts 19:29, 27:2) It seems he was with Paul in several tough situations. A good brother sticks with you when the going gets tough.

Mark, called a son by Peter (1Peter 5:13); Gospel writer; secretary for the first missionary trip (Acts 13:5), but left early and went home (Acts 13:13) . Paul refused to take him a second time, and over this issue parted company with Barnabas. Traditions says he founded the Church of Alexandria. He was with Paul in his last imprisonment. (Philemon 1:24; 2Timothy 4:11) Perhaps Paul had to order his welcome because the church knew the story behind Mark.

11 Those of the circumcision are fellow fulfilled Jews. It sounds like Paul wishes there were more, as if some were not faithful to the call. It is a comfort when someone from our background sees the same truths we do to the extent that they will labor alongside you.

12-13 The evangelist that started the church, Epaphras, is staying there with Paul, perhaps jailed as Paul's servant. They use the prison time to "struggling on your behalf in prayers". The object of his prayers was mentioned in the first chapter, their maturity in the faith, and that they be fully assured in all the will of God. Something we need to pray for our church as well. (Colossians 1:9-12)

14 Luke was still with Paul, and with him to the end. (2Timothy 4:11) Here he is perhaps taking dictation and caring for Paul's thorn in the flesh.

Notice he does not make any mention of praise or appreciation for Demas. He's just there with him. Follow the story. First he is called a fellow laborer in the verse we read earlier, Philemon :24; here he's just Demas; (2Timothy 4:10) he forsook Paul because of his love for the world. His life is pictured in the parable of the seed that grew up among thorns. (Mark 4:18-19)

15 Church buildings began in the 3rd century. This church met in Nympha's home. Some manuscripts have it as feminine and others as masculine. (Romans 1:5; 1Corinthians 16:19; Philemon 1:2) The home and the church were the same. Shouldn't our homes be little Christian churches. Maybe if we thought of them that way we would make some changes?

16 They were to swap letters with the church in Laodicea. That letter must have been lost to history. That is unless it is the letter to the Ephesians - the name of the town was blank in many manuscripts, perhaps because it was a encyclical letter. Or it could be the letter to Philemon. There is a Latin version of a letter to Laodicea that may be a translation of the Greek letter. The first mention of it is by Jerome in the fifth century, and he declared it a forgery. It was made up of portions of Paul's other letters.

17-18 We don't know anything of Archippus' special assignment. He would have been chained to a soldier that kept watch over him. The mention of the chains is not for sympathy but rather claims to authority. He has the right to tell us to suffer for Christ and count it gain because he is living it. (Hebrews 13:3) Can we effectively tell others to carry the cross of Christ if we have not done so ourselves? He authenticated the letter with his closing and signature, probably in large print because of his eyesight. (Galatians 6:11)

### Questions

- 1 How did Paul put feet to his prayers? Should we do the same?
- 2 What kind of testimony did Aristarchus have? What about Demas?
- 3 What changes would you make if you thought of your home as a house church?
- 4 Why does Paul mention his chains?