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God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing
Colossians: Christ - Our Lord, Our Life, Our Love
Part 6: The Church's Closing Charge

Today we continue our series in the Book of Colossians. Paul writes Colossians, probably around 60-62 AD. While he was under house arrest in Rome. Colossians is labeled as one of Paul's 'Prison Epistles,' along with Philemon, Ephesians and Philippians. Colossians is described as a spiritual "chart and compass," reminding believers that Christ alone is our true North—our Supreme Lord and sufficient Savior. Below is an overview chart by Dr. Charles Swindoll.

When the Apostle Paul was imprisoned in Rome, he was not alone. Surrounding him was a faithful team: Timothy, his trusted companion; Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Demas, and Luke, each offering support and encouragement. Among them was Epaphras, a devoted servant from Colossae who had founded the church there and continued to labor for his people through fervent prayer and concern, even becoming a fellow prisoner for the sake of Christ. As Paul wrote his letters to the Colossians and to Philemon, he entrusted their delivery to Tychicus, a beloved and reliable messenger, and Onesimus, a runaway slave who had come to faith in Christ and was now returning home as a brother. These men were more than names—they were a network of believers, each connected by faith, friendship, and mission. Epaphras's deep love for his church inspired Paul's words of encouragement and correction, reminding us that the early church was built not just on doctrine, but on courageous leadership, sacrificial relationships, and the willingness to carry the gospel wherever God called.

Colossians 4:2-18...² Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. ³ Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. ⁴ Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. ⁵ Live wisely among those who are not believers and make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. ⁷ Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. ⁹ I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here. ¹⁰ Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. ¹¹ Jesus (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are working with me here for the Kingdom of God. And what a comfort they have been! ¹² Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. ¹³ I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke, the beloved doctor, sends his greetings, and so does Demas.

¹⁵ Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. ¹⁶ After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, “Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you.” ¹⁸ HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING—PAUL. Remember my chains. May God’s grace be with you.

The Church’s Closing Charge

Colossians 4:2–18

1. Be Devoted to Prayer

Paul’s final instructions begin with a call to persistent, purposeful prayer - not as a passive ritual, but as the active engine of a vibrant Christian life. For Paul, prayer is inseparably linked to service and witness: when we pray with alert minds and thankful hearts, we become watchful for God’s opportunities, empowered to serve, and ready to share Christ boldly and wisely in every conversation. A praying church is a witnessing church, and through prayer, our lives and words become a testimony that draws others to Jesus.

(a) For Alert Minds & Thankful Hearts (v. 2):

“Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”

Paul urges us not to drift through our spiritual lives on

autopilot, but to pray with eyes wide open—watchful for God’s work and grateful for His grace.

- *A church that prays with alertness is a church that sees God’s opportunities and avoids the enemy’s traps.*
- *Thankfulness keeps our prayers from becoming complaints and our hearts from growing cold.*

(b) For Witnessing Opportunities (vv. 3–4):

“Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ... Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should.”

Paul, even in chains, asks for prayer—not for comfort, but for open doors to share Christ.

- *A praying church is a witnessing church, always looking for the next open door to share the gospel.*
- *Pray for clarity and boldness in every gospel conversation.*

(c) For Wisdom in Living as a Testimony (v. 5):

“Live wisely among those who are not believers and make the most of every opportunity.”

Wiersbe writes, *“Any doctrine that isolates the believer from the needs of the world around him is not spiritual doctrine.”*

- *Our lives are often the first gospel others will read.*
- *Pray for wisdom to walk in a way that draws others to Christ.*

d) For Gracious, Appropriate Conversation (v. 6):

“Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.”

- *Words matter. Gracious speech opens hearts; harsh words close doors.*
- *Pray that every conversation reflects the love and wisdom of Christ.*

2. Be Attentive to Servants of the Gospel

Paul's closing words are filled with names and stories—reminders that the gospel advances through people, relationships, and teamwork. These closing words remind us that the gospel never advances through isolated individuals, but through a network of faithful servants—each playing a vital role in God's mission. Warren Wiersbe notes, *“The New Testament does not teach the kind of ‘individual Christianity’ that is so prevalent today... The fellowship of the local church is all about teaching, growing, and serving together.”* Paul gives us insight into the fact that by staying attentive to those who serve—listening to their reports, receiving their encouragement, learning their stories, and supporting their prayers—we keep the church united, informed, and inspired. When we honor both the joys and sacrifices of gospel ministry, we not only strengthen the body, but also model the unity, diversity, and perseverance that flow from Christ's preeminence in His church.

(a) To Gain Godly Information (vv. 7, 8a):

“Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along... I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing...”

- Godly communication keeps the church informed, united, and focused on the mission.
- Stay connected to what God is doing through His servants.

(b) To Be Encouraged (v. 8):

“...and to encourage you.”

- Gospel ministry is hard; encouragement is essential.
- Let's be a church that lifts each other up, especially those serving on the front lines.

(c) To Become Aware of Fellow Servants and Their Ministry (vv. 9–11):

“Onesimus... Mark... Aristarchus... Justus...”

- Every servant matters—those up front and those behind the scenes.
- Celebrate the diversity and unity of Christ's body at work.

(d) To Aid You in Following God's Will (vv. 12–13):

“Epaphras... prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God.”

- Faithful leaders pray for your growth and maturity.
- Let's support and learn from those who labor for our spiritual good.

(e) To Remind Ourselves of the Joy and Sacrifice of Ministry (vv. 14–18):

“Luke... Demas... Nympha... Archippus... Remember my chains.”

- Gospel ministry involves both joy and sacrifice—friendship, hardship, and perseverance.
- Remember those who serve, pray for them, and join them in the work.

Paul's closing charge is not just a farewell—it's a call to action.

- Be a church that prays with passion and purpose.
- Be a church that values, encourages, and supports every servant of the gospel.
- Be a church that lives wisely, speaks graciously, and makes Christ preeminent in all things.

Let's imagine that Paul is writing to us here at FBC Broussard and see what he may would say to us:

Dear Church in Broussard
Hear this charge and heed my passionate plea,
Not with a whisper, but with a call, clarion clear.

Be devoted—

Devoted to prayer, with eyes wide open and hearts full of thanks,
Praying for doors to open, for words to be clear,
For wisdom to walk and for grace in every conversation—
Because the world is watching, and Christ is worth seeing.

Be attentive—

Attentive to the servants God sends your way,
To the stories of faithfulness and sacrifice,
To the Onesimus and Tychicus, the Epaphras who prays,
To the Mark who once stumbled but now stands restored,
To the Luke who heals, the Nympha who opens her home,
To the Archippus who needs a word to keep going—
Because the gospel is a team effort,
And every name matters in the story God is writing.

Remember—The joy and the cost, the chains and the grace,
The call to finish well, to encourage, to support,
Be A Church alive in Christ,
Our Lord, our Life, our Love.

So here's the invitation—

First, to every believer:

Will you devote yourself afresh to prayer,
To wise living, to gracious speech,
To encouraging and supporting the servants around you?
Will you be the church that Paul dreamed of,
Alive, alert, united, and on mission for Christ?

Second, to any who have not yet trusted Jesus—
You've heard about a Savior who reconciles,
Who brings peace through the blood of His cross,
Who offers fullness, forgiveness, and a place in His family.

Today, He invites you to step out of darkness and into His marvelous light,
To receive the grace that changes everything,
To find your name written in the story of redemption.

Church, this is our closing charge—

Let's live purely, let's share passionately, let's love faithfully.
For the glory of Christ, our Lord, our Life, our Love.