

the Lord practically with his medical and writing skills.

- 3) Paul included him among his dearly loved friends. His life attests to the fact that if God has not called you to preach, you can still serve the Lord in many practical ways.

6. Demas – faithfulness

a. At this time in his life, Demas was Paul's faithful friend.

- 1) He sent greetings to the church at Colossae.
- 2) He was a blessing to Paul there in Rome.

b. Sadly, Demas did not finish well.

- 1) Nothing more is said of Demas here, but a few years later, just before Paul's execution, Paul wrote, **"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica ..."** (2 Timothy 4:10).
- 2) Today he is only remembered for that disgraceful choice. He lost his good reputation. As far as we know, he ended as a spiritual failure.
- 3) Let me paraphrase a quote I have heard. **"It's not enough to start well; it's more important to persevere and end well."**
- 4) Demas started well, but the last we hear of him, he was not ending well. Mark, on the other hand, started well, but then tripped and fell. However, he got back up, confessed his wrong, and ended well. If you are not doing as well in your walk with God, in your marriage, in your victory over sin, or in your witness for the Lord as you once were, the race is not over yet. Get up. Confess your failures. Set your eyes on God's goal and press toward the mark until the race is done. (Philippians 3:14) **"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."**

Conclusion: Paul's description of these friends gives us an idea of the kind of friends we need to be, as well as the kind of friends we need. Friendship is about sacrifice, confession, comfort, prayer, ministering, and faithfulness. If your friendship or choice of friends needs work, there is no better time than now to begin.

Song: Stand up for Jesus 378

Noteworthy Friends

19 November 2023 PM – Text: Colossians 4:10-14 – Topic: Friends

Introduction: During my school years, I had a few friends, but I have lost contact with nearly all of them. I have kept in occasional contact with a couple of my Bible College friends. However, I developed a close friendship with a noteworthy friend during my second year of Bible college. We got to know each other by working together in the school cafeteria. On the 11th of February 1978, I dated her for the first time, and we have been the best of friends ever since. She became my wife on 7 June 1980. I have never had a better human friend than Melody. For the past 43 + years, our friendship has deepened greatly.

It appears that the Apostle Paul never married, but he had several noteworthy, faithful, loyal friends. Friends are important in life. Having a close friend with whom you can share the secrets of your heart, with whom you can weep, and with whom you can pray is a precious treasure.

Transition: As Paul begins to wrap up his letter to the Colossian church, he names six noteworthy friends. His description of these friends gives us an idea of the kind of friends we need to be, as well as the kind of friends we need.

1. Aristarchus - Sacrifice

a. Paul calls him a fellow prisoner.

- 1) He was a man of Thessalonica (Acts 20:4).
- 2) He was nearly killed in the riot which Demetrius excited in Ephesus (Acts 19:29) The People's Dictionary.
- 3) He was shipwrecked with Paul on the way to Rome (Acts 27:2). He had sacrificed and suffered much for the cause of Christ.
- 4) He had travelled extensively with Paul during his missionary trips. Now it appears that he was voluntarily in prison with Paul to aid him. In Paul's letter to Philemon, he called him his fellow labourer (Phm 1:24). It is unlikely that other government prisoners would be lodged with Paul in his hired house.

b. He sent greetings to the church at Colossae.

- 1) To **salute** literally means to embrace. Thus, it implies here to a warm, loving greeting.
- 2) It appears that he was a Jew (v.11).
- 3) The words of verse 11 apply to Aristarchus, Marcus and Jesus. He was a **fellow worker** unto the kingdom of God.
- 4) He had been a comfort to Paul. This word “**comfort**” describes relief or assistance in time of need. He was a comforting help to Paul.

2. Marcus – Confession

a. This was the John Mark who had once been a quitter.

- 1) He had travelled with Paul and Barnabas, his uncle, on their first missionary trip, but quit prematurely (Ac 13:13).
- 2) Paul had sent special commandments concerning him. They were to receive him. Evidently, Mark had gotten right with Paul, and he had forgiven him. He did not want the Christians to reject him. Mark later wrote the Gospel of Mark. He is evidence that if we confess our sins and change our ways, God will forgive and use us again.

b. He sent greetings to the church at Colossae.

- 1) He was a Jew (v.11).
- 2) He was a **fellow worker** unto the kingdom of God (v.11)
- 3) He had been a comfort to Paul in his time of need.

3. Jesus – Comfort

a. This was a common Jewish name.

- 1) It is equivalent of the O.T. name Joshua.
- 2) His surname was Justus.

b. He sent greetings to the church at Colossae.

- 1) He also was a Jew (v.11).
- 2) He was a fellow worker unto the kingdom of God (v.11).
- 3) He had been a comfort to Paul. While this is all that we know about him, it is significant that Paul names him among his comforting helpers. He was a noteworthy friend!

4. Epaphras – Prayer

a. He was a native of Colossae.

- 1) It was Epaphras who had brought Paul news from Colossae (Col 1:7).
- 2) He was a servant of Christ. This identifies his complete devotion to Christ in heart and in deed.
- 3) He sent greetings to the church at Colossae.

b. He was a man of continual fervent prayer.

- 1) He laboured in prayer for the Colossian believers. The word “**laboured**” describes a struggle like an athletic competition. He put his **whole heart** into his prayers.
- 2) He so prayed in order that the Colossian believers may **stand perfect** (mature) and **complete** (fully furnished) in all the will of God. He had a great zeal (spiritual passion) for the Colossian believers, as well as those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. He prayed earnestly for their spiritual growth.
- 3) What would it take for you and me to pray like Epaphras? **It would take discipline, dedication, and devotion.** Parents, your children need your fervent prayers. Children, your parents need you to pray for them as well. We need to so pray passionately for each other. I urge you to pray for me.

5. Luke – ministering

a. He was frequently Paul’s travelling companion.

- 1) He wrote much of Paul’s travels in the book of Acts as an eyewitness.
- 2) He sent greetings to the church at Colossae. This is the same Greek word as translated salute in earlier verses.

b. Paul calls him the beloved physician.

- 1) He was a physician and was with Paul there in Rome. He used the skills that God gave him to be a help and blessing to the Apostle Paul.
- 2) Paul loved him. Luke was one of the silent heroes in Paul’s ministry. Nothing is said about him preaching, but he often travelled with Paul, perhaps to minister to his frequent physical needs. He also wrote the book of Acts, which documents for us many of Paul’s travels. He served