

Slide 1

We are all in this together

Colossians 4:7-18

This is already again the last sermon on the letter to the Colossians.
Time really goes so fast, isn't it?

In these last 12 verses Paul still brings up quite a few things, telling the disciples in Colossae his reason for sending this letter through a specific person.

And next to greetings to several people he also continues to give some instructions as well as encouragements.

Let's go and look at these verses.

Colossians 4:7

- Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.
- Al mijn omstandigheden zal Tychikus, de geliefde broeder, trouwe dienaar en mededienstknecht in de Heere, u bekendmaken.

In this single verse Paul makes it already clear that he didn't write everything about his own situation in this letter.

From the later verses we know that he was imprisoned at the time he was writing this letter and some other letters as well.

One of the reasons to send Tychicus to Colossae was to inform the disciples there about his personal circumstances.

But that was not the only reason why he sent him. We will see that in the next verses.

Colossians 4:8-9

- I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here.
- Hem heb ik met dit doel naar u toe gestuurd, opdat hij uw omstandigheden zou kennen en uw hart zou bemoedigen, met Onesimus, de trouwe en geliefde broeder, die er een van u is; zij zullen u alles bekendmaken wat hier gebeurt.

Paul sent Tychicus also to Colossae, so he might get a firsthand experience about their situation, and thus he would be able to comfort them and build them up.

And as we see Paul was not sending Tychicus just by himself, but he sent Onesimus with him.

Onesimus is also mentioned in the letter to Philemon. Apparently, he was a run-away slave of Philemon and in that letter, Paul writes Philemon that he is sending Onesimus back to him.

Taylor will speak about this letter next week.

Colossians 4:10-11

- Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

Obviously, Paul was not the only one imprisoned at that time. So, in his greetings he includes also greetings from several other people, as we can see in these verses.

Paul mentions also that he will send Mark and Justus, some of his co-workers and he specifically mentions them as being from a Jewish background, referring to them being from the circumcision. And he also points out that they were not just co-workers, but that they also were able to comfort him.

This Mark may have been the writer of the Gospel according to Mark.

But let's continue!

Colossians 4:12-13

- Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.
- For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

In Colossians 1:9-11 Paul speaks of the prayers that he and Timothy offer on behalf of the disciples in Colossae.

But they were not the only ones struggling in prayer on behalf of the disciples there and in these other places, that are mentioned here.

Reading about these people laboring in prayer on behalf of several churches should encourage us to do the same, especially for the various missions and persons involved in those missions that we support.

And we definitely should not limit it to those items only.

Taylor reminded us 2 weeks ago already about the importance of prayer in the church.

Let's take those things serious!

Colossians 4:14-15

- Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.
- Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house.

- Lukas, de arts, de geliefde, groet u, en Demas.
- Groet de broeders die in Laodicea zijn, en Nymfas en de gemeente in zijn huis.

Obviously, Luke was also there with him and even Demas was with him at this point in time.

In 2 Timothy 4:9-12 Paul also refers to various people he mentions in this letter.

From that letter we learn that Demas at a certain point in time left Paul and, as Paul writes there, he did that out of love for the world.

Luke, however, stayed with him in his difficult circumstances at that point in time.

After writing of the greetings of several other people Paul now mentions his own greetings to several people.

And then he continues with some additional instructions.

Colossians 4:16-17

- Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."
- En wanneer deze brief door u gelezen zal zijn, zorg er dan voor dat hij ook in de gemeente van de Laodicezen gelezen wordt, en dat ook u die uit Laodicea leest. En zeg tegen Archippus: Let op de bediening die u aangenomen hebt in de Heere, dat u die vervult.

In the early church these letters from apostles were read in the assembly, just as they did read from the Old Testament Scriptures. They did not have the New Testament yet!

Paul also tells them to remind Archippus to continue in the ministry that has been entrusted by God to him.

In 2 Timothy 4:1-2 he also encourages Timothy to continue faithfully in His ministry.

When God entrusts us with a ministry we cannot just decide that at a certain point in time it is time to stop. Only God has the right to tell us so and therefore we must continue until He tells us to hand it over to somebody else.

These things are big responsibilities and not always easy. But God will give us the strength and wisdom we need to go on.

Let's have a quick look at some verses from Ephesians.

Ephesians 4:1-3

- I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- Zo roep ik, de gevangene in de Heere, u op tot een wandel die de roeping waarmee u geroepen bent, waardig is, in alle nederigheid en zachtmoedigheid, met geduld, door elkaar in liefde te verdragen, en u te beijveren om de eenheid van de Geest te bewaren door de band van de vrede.

Again, these things are not easy, and we cannot do them in our own strength.

One of the problems we will always encounter is the fact that different churches/denominations will interpret various parts of the Scriptures in a different way.

There's no church nor any denomination that has it all correct.

But we must be careful not to look down on other churches that are faithfully proclaiming the Gospel, just because they interpret some minor things in a different way. We might be the ones that are wrong! Of course, we will never agree with interpretations that disagree with the very heart of the Gospel. Those are unacceptable. But there are many things of which a different interpretation does not touch the heart of the Gospel.

Those should not cause division.

Colossians 4:18

- This salutation by my own hand — Paul. Remember my chains. Grace *be* with you. Amen.
- Een eigenhandige groet van mij, Paulus. Denk aan mijn gevangenschap. De genade zij met u. Amen.

Most of the time Paul would just dictate his letters to somebody else to write them.

But here we see that he wrote this greeting himself.

Again, we see basically a request for prayer for himself as he is imprisoned.

From the very beginning the church has experienced persecution.

While we still have a lot of freedom to exercise our faith as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, many of our brothers and sisters in Christ do not have that.

Do we often take time to remember them in our prayers?

They too are members of the Body of Christ!

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul also says a lot regarding the Body of Christ.

Let's look at a couple of verses from that chapter.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

- For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.
- Want zoals het lichaam één is en veel leden heeft, en al de leden van dit ene lichaam, hoewel het er veel zijn, één lichaam zijn, zo is het ook met Christus. Ook wij allen immers zijn door één Geest tot één lichaam gedoopt, hetzij dat wij Joden zijn, hetzij Grieken, hetzij slaven, hetzij vrijen; en wij allen zijn van één Geest doordrenkt.

All disciples of Christ worldwide are members of the one Body of Christ. We learn that especially from the second verse on this sheet.

That gives us, as members of the worldwide Body of Christ, a specific responsibility towards all the other members of that Body.

We see that clearly pointed out in the verses on the next sheet,

1 Corinthians 24b-25

- But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another.
- Maar God heeft het lichaam zo samengesteld, dat Hij aan het lid dat tekortkomt, groter eer gaf, opdat er geen verdeeldheid in het lichaam zou zijn, maar de leden voor elkaar gelijke zorg zouden dragen.

This is how God planned it and how He wants to see it!

No schism, no divisions in the Body of Christ, but mutually caring for one another.

Should this not be one of our most important prayer points: that this would become true in the Body of Christ in this world?

Unity, not just in our small local community of disciples of Christ, but across the whole Body of Christ!

Do we dare to pray earnestly for that?

Shall we pray?