

COLOSSIANS: STABILITY BY CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY AND SUPREMACY

Part XVII: Stability In Impartially Interacting With Fellow Believers

(Colossians 4:7-18)

I. Introduction

- A. Today's unsettling, insecure world has tempted and influenced many believers to be unsettled and insecure.
- B. Colossians presents Christ's all-sufficiency and supremacy in ways that settle and supply security, and one way it does is by exemplifying in Colossians 4:7-18 the believer's righteously impartial interaction with others.
- C. Impartiality is often a difficult attitude to achieve, for, due to sin, our thinking is often affected by personal bias, so Paul's example in impartially interacting with fellow believers is instructive for us (as follows):

II. Stability In Impartially Interacting With Fellow Believers, Colossians 4:7-18.

- A. Paul impartially relied on Tychicus, a proven servant of Christ, to be his main messenger, Colossians 4:7-8:
 - 1. Tychicus had bravely accompanied Paul on his travels since his ministry at Ephesus where a city uprising occurred led by idol craftsmen who opposed Paul (Acts 19:23-20:4), so he was a proven servant of Christ.
 - 2. Later in Paul's first Roman imprisonment in Acts 28:30 (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Acts 28:30) Paul had written this Colossians epistle and sent Tychicus from Rome to Colossae as his main messenger, noting Tychicus was a faithful fellowservant in the Lord capable of handling the spiritual welfare of the Colossian readers so as to comfort their hearts regarding Paul's affairs, Colossians 4:7-8.
- B. Paul impartially helped Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who was overcoming a sinful past, Col. 4:9:
 - 1. Onesimus had been a slave who had committed the great crime of running away to Rome from his owner Philemon at Colossae. In meeting Paul in Rome in Paul's first Roman imprisonment, the apostle had led Onesimus to faith in Christ, Ibid., 1727, "Introduction to The letter of Paul to Philemon."
 - 2. Regardless of Onesimus's sinful past, now that he was saved, Paul was sending him back to Philemon with a letter that Philemon receive him now as a dear brother (Phm. 1-25) along with the more mature, proven fellowservant Tychicus who could supervise the initially tense meeting of the runaway slave to his master.
 - 3. Accordingly, Paul was impartially fostering an attitude of forgiveness toward a man Christ had forgiven.
- C. Paul impartially shared greetings from encouraging fellow Hebrew brethren in Christ, Colossians 4:10-11:
 - 1. Paul's greetings sent from Aristarchus, Marcus (Mark) and Justus were greetings from three fellow Hebrews ("of the circumcision") who had been converted to Christ out of Judaism, Colossians 4:10-11a,b.
 - 2. These Hebrew believers would have been a great encouragement to Paul because many of his countrymen had rejected the Christian faith and persecuted Paul in his ministry. (Acts 13:44-45; 14:1-6, 6-20, et al.)
 - 3. Paul thus impartially took great encouragement from fellow Hebrews who supported him in his ministry.
- D. Paul impartially helped Marcus (Mark) who was overcoming ministry failure, Colossians 4:10b et al.:
 - 1. The instructions that had been sent to Paul's readers regarding Marcus (Mark) the nephew of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10b) dealt with instructions about Mark's rebound from having abandoned Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, cf. Acts 13:13 with Acts 15:36-38.
 - 2. Mark's defection from the ministry had led to a great division between Paul and Barnabas on whether Mark could accompany them on their second missionary journey. Paul had decided to take Silas as his partner while Barnabas had taken his nephew Mark to his homeland of Cyprus (Acts 4:36) further to disciple him so that Mark might rebound from his ministry failure and serve Christ again, Acts 15:39-40.
 - 3. Paul was thus impartially helping a man he had once rejected since he was now rebounding from failure.
- E. Paul impartially sent greetings from the very dedicated believer Epaphras, telling of his good works, v. 12-13:
- F. Paul impartially shared greetings from other believers who were with him, Colossians 4:14-15:
- G. Paul impartially directed various churches to read each other's epistles from him, indicating Paul's epistles were intended to be wide in application to the Church universal (what applies also to **us**), Colossians 4:16:
- H. Paul impartially admonished a special charge be made to Archippus, a faltering servant of Christ, Col. 4:17:
 - 1. Though Paul complimented Archippus as a fellowsoldier in his letter to Philemon (Phm. 2), Archippus was then faltering in his service for the Lord in his ministry assignment at Colossae. (Colossians 4:17b)
 - 2. Paul thus impartially directed that Archippus be admonished to fulfill his service in the Lord, Col. 4:17.

Lesson: Paul impartially relied on the reliable, he impartially helped rebounders, he impartially admonished the faltering, he impartially took encouragement from the encouraging and he impartially sent greetings from the rest.

Application: May we follow Paul's example in relating impartially to all believers in the Lord.