



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Colossians: Rescued. Redeemed. Rooted.

Week 12 - Inner Circle

QUESTION 1

This week we studied the final section of Colossians. In Colossians 4:7-18, Paul discusses who was with him in prison and shares some personal details about those he's sending to the Colossians and those who will stay with him. This section might at first glance feel irrelevant 2000 or so years later, but I believe it contains truths and treasures for us to explore. Please read this section out loud, and then, each group member, highlight one thing from this section that stands out to you. **Colossians 4:7-18 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord.** ⁸ I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹ He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. ¹⁰ My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) ¹¹ Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. ¹³ I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶ After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord." I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

QUESTION 2

The first person Paul highlights is Tychicus. **Colossians 4:7-8 says, "Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you so that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts."** Tychicus was a Christian companion of the Apostle Paul, mentioned five times in the New Testament (Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12). He was a trusted **"dear brother, a faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord,"** who served as a messenger and delegate for Paul, carrying important letters like those to Ephesus and Colossae. Paul sent him to encourage churches and assist leaders, such as Titus. What I find interesting about Tychicus is that he is unknown to most Christians. However, his role was essential. Since the start of the Christian church, many men and women have been like Tychicus—people willing to do whatever it takes so God's will can be fulfilled. They're happy to stay out of the spotlight, serving God and loving others in His name.

Take some time to discuss Tychicus. What about his story stands out to you? Name anyone in your group who serves faithfully and stays out of the spotlight.

QUESTION 3

For this question, I want to highlight something that might not be obvious as you read this Scripture. Here in Rome, under house arrest, we see the apostle Paul, **Mark—the cousin of Barnabas**—and **our dear friend Luke, the doctor**. This is the same Mark who writes the Gospel of Mark, Luke, who writes the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, and Paul, who authors 13 books in the New Testament. So, the authors who will eventually write 70% of the New Testament are sitting together, praying together, encouraging each other, and influencing one another. Paul writes Colossians around 61 A.D.; Mark will not write the Gospel of Mark until 65 A.D., and the earliest dates for Luke and Acts are 70 A.D. This highlights two important points for me: those who surround you will shape you. We should pay close attention to the people we let into our inner circle because they will affect us. The second point is that mentoring is important. The apostle Paul was much older than Mark and Luke. They are being personally mentored by his words and his example.

Please discuss as a group your thoughts about Mark, Luke, and Paul all being together in Rome. Do you agree that those who surround you will shape you? What do you think about mentoring? Is it time for you to ask someone to mentor you? Is it time for you to look towards mentoring others?

QUESTION 4

In our final question, we will discuss verse 17. **¹⁷Tell Archippus, “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.”** Paul mentions Archippus both here in Colossians and in the book of Philemon. He refers to him as a **"fellow soldier"** (Philemon 1:2), indicating his active involvement in Christian service. He is included in the greeting of the letter to Philemon, along with Philemon and Apphia, suggesting he was part of their family or had a close connection to them and to a church in their home. Many believe he is the son of Philemon and Apphia. The Bible never reveals to us what ministry Archippus is to complete, but it is crucial enough here for Paul to include this personal encouragement. It's possible that Archippus is neglecting the call God has placed on his life, or he may be faithfully carrying out the ministry God has given him. I believe many of us have a ministry God has given us to complete. Think for a moment about a ministry that God has given to you. It may be a ministry with your family, such as raising children. It may be a ministry in the church or in the community. It may even be a ministry that you have not yet begun.

Discuss with your group a ministry that you know God has given you. Are you working to complete that ministry? Do you ever doubt the importance of the ministry? Do you ever struggle to give consistent effort to that ministry that God has given to you?