

Colossians, Chapter Four, Lesson Two

RECOGNIZING HIS SERVANTS Colossians 4:7-11

STIMULATE

** At the conclusion of last week's study, we listened to King David while he was "**Remembering Our Master**". In Psalm 19:14 David said, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." How have you done in your efforts to live each day "**Remembering Our Master**"?

It has been an encouragement to my own heart to be continually mindful of our gracious Lord, no matter what each day may bring.

** What were the four areas of a Christian's life which can be impacted for the glory of God as he or she is "**Remembering Our Master**"?

- 1) Our prayer life becomes devoted and alert.
- 2) We speak forth the mystery of Christ.
- 3) We conduct ourselves with wisdom.
- 4) We speak with grace and "salt".

I hope that you were able to see growth in your own life, in these specific areas, as you were faithful to remember Him each day.

MOTIVATE

** One of the ironies of the Christian life is that even though we all strive to live for the glory of God (1Corinthians 10:31), once we have established a God glorifying pattern in our lives (totally by His grace) we become shy or embarrassed if anyone says something about that which we have done that was designed to bring Him glory! Instead of praising God publicly for what He has accomplished in our own hearts, we say, "Oh, please do not say anything - I'm not worthy".

Well, that is true. We are not worthy, but His is! And we should be willing to put His glory on display. In our passage for today the apostle Paul will demonstrate this principle by "**Recognizing His Servants**" in this closing portion of his letter to the Colossians. Paul is going to list five different individuals who bring glory to God by their lifestyle and we would do well to learn from their example.

Read Passage (V.7-9) (V.10-11)

Opening Prayer

Recognizing His Servants

INVESTIGATE

V. 7 ** As Paul concludes this great letter, he wants to inform the Colossians regarding eight specific individuals. Today we will look at the first five and then next week, the final three. To whom does Paul first refer?

Tychicus - His name meant "fortuitous" or "fortunate". This godly young man had learned much from the apostle during his four years as a faithful traveling companion up to this point in the life of Paul and was indeed "fortunate" for the experience.

** How much did Tychicus know about the current life of Paul?

Everything! "As to *all my affairs*...[he] will bring you information"

The first example for us from these men is that **God's servants are selfless.**

Tychicus knew all about Paul, because he served him sacrificially.
cf. Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, 2Timothy 4:12 and Titus 3:12

** How did Paul feel about Tychicus? What three things does he point out regarding this amazing servant of God?

1) He was Paul's "beloved brother". A Christian of course, but more than that - his selflessness had made him "beloved" to the apostle Paul.

2) He was a faithful servant - Paul uses the word diakonos here to describe how Tychicus served him. Paul places the word "faithful" in front of diakonos for us to understand the importance of doing the job well. cf. 1Corinthians 4:1-2

3) Besides being Paul's servant, Tychicus was also a "fellow bondservant" in the Lord. Sundoulos means that Tychicus was a willing co-servant along with Paul, in service to the Lord.
cf. Romans 1:1, Galatians 1:10 and Philippians 1:1

V. 8 ** What were the two reasons for which Paul sent Tychicus to Colossae?

- 1) "...that you may know about our circumstances.."
- 2) "...that he may encourage your hearts.."

Paul knew how much the Colossians were concerned for him in his imprisonment and wanted Tychicus to answer all of their questions. In addition, he would be able to encourage their hearts!
cf. Colossians 1:4,8 and Ephesians 6:21-22

V. 9 ** Was Tychicus going to Colossae alone?

No - Onesimus was to go with him.

** This introduces the second example set by these godly men

God's servants are truly repentant sinners! How does Paul describe Onesimus?

He is "...our faithful and beloved brother..."
His name means "useful" and in Christ he had become so.

** Was he always this kind of God glorifying individual?

No - He was a thief and a runaway slave. He had been previously owned by Philemon.
cf. Philemon 1:18

** What phrase does Paul use to lift the reputation of Onesimus to the same level as the rest of those in the Colossian church (including Philemon)?

Onesimus had become "...one of your number." Even though he was once a sinful, runaway slave, by the grace of God he had gained eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ and the playing field was now level. cf. 2Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 3:28

** How do we know that Onesimus had truly changed and was now more concerned for others than himself?

"**They** will inform you about the whole situation here." Onesimus had learned to sacrificially serve just like Tychicus!

V.10 ** Our third example comes from Aristarchus, as Paul continues the practice of "**Recognizing His Servants**". What is different about the way the Paul recognizes Aristarchus?

He calls him his "fellow prisoner". That term is translated from "sunaichmalotos" and literally means "one caught with a spear". It refers to war captives, or prisoners.

While it is unlikely that Aristarchus had been arrested, he voluntarily shared in Paul's prison experience by giving up his freedom to be with the apostle.
cf. Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2 (59 A.D.)

This third example is that **God's servants are willing to suffer for His name.**

** Our fourth example comes from a relative of Barnabas, who is he?

This is John Mark, close associate of Peter and the writer of the gospel of Mark. His name was Mark in the Greek-speaking Roman world; spelled Markos in Greek and Marcus in Latin. His Jewish name was John. cf. Acts 12:12, 15:37

** What do we know about Paul's earlier relationship with John Mark?

John Mark had left Paul and Barnabas while they were on their first missionary journey. That displeased Paul to the point of "sharp disagreement" with Barnabas.
cf. Acts 13:13, Acts 15:38-39

** What do you suppose is the example to be learned from the life of this godly man?

God's servants are always willing to reconcile!

** Did Paul's view of Mark change?

Yes! "...if he comes to you, welcome him..." Paul had benefitted from a restored relationship to this dear brother. cf. Romans 12:18, 2Timothy 4:11

Shortly after this first imprisonment for Paul, Mark would write his gospel under the direction of the apostle Peter.

V.11 ** Our fifth example for today comes from someone whose given name was Jesus. Who was that?

The man...Jesus Justus - Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, which means "savior". His Latin surname, Justus, means "righteous".

** What can we glean from the fact that this individual was always "called Justus"?

He was a man who lived his faith righteously. Herein lies our fifth and final example.

God's servants seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

We should have a burning preoccupation to live righteously for the sake of our Savior.
cf. Matthew 5:6, 6:33, Ephesians 6:14, 1Timothy 6:11

** What is the unique distinction shared by Aristarchus, John Mark and Jesus Justus?

"...these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision..."

It was very expensive to declare yourself a follower of Jesus Christ if you had a Jewish heritage, and these men were more than willing to count the cost.

** How did their strength in the faith impact the heart of the apostle during his two years in prison?

"...they have proved to be an encouragement to me."

Encouragement translates paregoria, which is used only here in all of Scripture and could be translated "comfort". These dear saints were providing comfort and encouragement for Paul.
cf. 1Thessalonians 5:11 and 14

EXTRICATE

** Why would Paul close out this wonderful letter by describing these godly men? Or to put it another way, how is the name of God impacted by "**Recognizing His Servants**"?

It is all "**to God be the glory**". cf. 1Corinthians 10:31 When ruined sinners repent, are born again and then spend their lives serving in righteousness, God is truly glorified.

DELINEATE

** What were the five examples given to us through the pen of the apostle Paul while he was "**Recognizing His Servants**"?

God's servants are selfless.

God's servants are truly repentant sinners!

God's servants are willing to suffer for His name.

God's servants are always willing to reconcile!

God's servants seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

EVALUATE

** What should be the driving force behind our actions and our words, knowing that we will be "recognized" as God's servants?

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and **glorify your Father** who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

** How should you respond the next time someone recognizes your service to the Lord and praises Him for it?

Join them in giving glory to God for His grace. cf. 1Corinthians 15:10

** What should you do when you see brothers or sisters in the Lord honoring Him and His word?

Spend time "**Recognizing His Servants**", for His glory! cf. Philippians 1:6

ACTIVATE

** This is not an easy adjustment. We must understand that God is worth the glory that our redeemed lives generate as we turn from idols to serve the living and true God. May He grant us the grace to recognize what He is doing in our lives.

Closing prayer