

## Behind the Scenes (Colossians 4:7-18)

Ever been behind the scenes of a play? Actors rushing into place, stage hands preparing the next scene, sound and light technicians ensuring all is in place, a flurry of activity we don't ever think about. As we read the closing comments of Colossians we're brought behind the scenes, where we're reminded real people are working together with single-mindedness towards a set goal – the Colossian's encouragement and maturity. Now, thousands of years later, your encouragement and your maturity is the goal.

### 1. Concern for all (Colossians 4:7-16)

**VV 7-9** Tychicus and Onesimus are being sent **“for your encouragement”**

We're behind the scenes. Getting an idea of the team that stood with Paul.

YOU can't do this alone.

Regardless of how long you've been in the faith, regardless of how strong others think you are, regardless of how much knowledge you have – YOU need others in your life that bring comfort.

**VV 12-13** Epaphras is always praying **for your maturity**

*“he is always wrestling in prayer for you”* = grk verb “agonizomai” – to struggle, literally to compete for a prize - figuratively (to contend with an adversary) — fight, labor fervently, strive.

that they might **“STAND FIRM in all the will of God. Mature and fully assured.”** It echoes Paul's concern / desire in 1:28-2:3

### 2. Concern for one (Colossians 4:17-18)

Archippus is singled out.

The same concern for all is now expressed for one: encouragement and maturity.

We don't know what Archippus' “work” was. Called to teach / preach, called to step out and start a new church? We don't know.

Paul says one sentence. Like a mother bird pushing her chick out the nest I imagine it was all Archippus needed!

V18 *“Remember my chains. Grace be with you.”*

Colossians is one of my “go to” books. I go there when I don't know where else to go. I go there when I need to remember what faith in Jesus is all about. I need it to remind, encourage, instruct and correct me and that was its purpose for its original hearers.

We're all tempted to try and earn, add to or pursue something beyond Jesus. What happens when we begin to believe Jesus isn't enough? The temptation is to look to other things to satisfy.

Colossians reminds us Jesus' supremacy and sufficiency is the best protection against this error and the greatest remedy to our seemingly endless search for meaning and hope. Overflowing with encouragement and care, Colossians puts Jesus front and center – right where he needs to be.

## QUESTIONS

1. Read Colossians 4:7-18. What stands out to you?
2. Tychicus and Onesimus were sent to update the Colossians AND encourage them. How has someone's personal presence encouraged you? Where have you / could you bring encouragement through your presence and the use of God's Word?
3. Paul's own vulnerability emerges in his comments about Aristarchus, Mark and Jesus Justus. At difficult times in your life, how have other Christians been a comfort and support to you?
4. In 4:12-13 it says Epaphras “is always wrestling in prayer for you.” His prayers were strenuous and a lot of work! Why do you think? What's behind that?
5. What did Epaphras pray specifically? How does this teach you to pray for others?
6. What does Paul singling out Archippus tell you? Does the challenge given to Archippus speak to your own life in a specific way? If so, how?
7. Take time to pray Epaphras' prayer (with people of Local Church St. Pete in your heart).
8. How has the series in Colossians served you? How has it put Jesus front and center?