

UNION BETHEL AME CHURCH BIBLE STUDY
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Tuesday, December 1, 2020 6:30 – 7:30 PM
An Exposition of the Epistle of St Paul to
THE COLOSSIANS

Introduction

Apostle Paul continues his account of the duty of masters, from the close of the former chapter. He exhorts to the duty of prayer, and to a prudent and decent conduct towards those with whom we converse. He closes the epistle with the mention of several of his friends, of whom he gives honorable testimony.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

Give unto your servants that which is just and equal, not only strict justice, but equity and kindness. Be faithful to your promises to them, and perform your agreements; not defrauding them of their dues, nor keeping back by fraud the hire of laborers. Require no more of them than they are able to perform; and do not lay unreasonable burdens upon them and beyond their strength. Provide for them what is fit. Supply proper food and allow them such liberties as may be fit for the better, for cheerful service and make it the easier to them. Do this though they be employed in the meanest and lowest offices, and of another country and a different religion from yourselves. Knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. You who are masters of others have a Master yourself, and are servants of another Lord. You are not lords of yourselves, and are accountable to one above you. Deal with your servants as you expect God should deal with you, and as those who believe they must give an account. You are both servants of the same Lord in the different relations in which you stand, and equally accountable to him at last. Knowing your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him.

Verses 2-4

If this be considered as connected with the foregoing verse, then we may observe that it is part of the duty which masters owe their servants to pray with them and to pray daily with them, or continue in prayer that they must not only do justly and kindly by them, but act a Christian who is concerned for their souls as well as their bodies. As parts of your charge, and under your influence, be concerned for the blessing of God upon them, as well as the success of your affairs in their hands. This is the duty of every one – to continue in prayer. Keep up your constant times of prayer, without being diverted from it by other business; keep your hearts close to the duty, without wandering or deadness, and even to the end of it. Christians should lay hold of all opportunities for prayer, and choose the fittest seasons, which are least liable to disturbance from other things, and keep their minds lively in the duty of prayer. With thanksgiving, or solemn acknowledgment of the mercies received. Thanks giving must have a part in every prayer. The saints must pray particularly for their ministers and bear them upon their hearts at all times at the throne of grace. Do not forget us, whenever you pray for yourselves, that God would open to us a door of utterance, that is, either afford opportunity to preach the gospel, and give me ability and courage, and enable me with freedom and faithfulness. Paul was a prisoner at Rome, by the violent opposition of the malicious Jews. He would have them to pray for him, that he might not be discouraged in his work, nor driven from it by his sufferings. That I may make this mystery known to those who have not heard of it, and make it plain to their understanding in such a manner as I ought to do. In chapter 1 Paul tells them that he is praying for them, and now he asks the church to pray for him. As with Paul the best and most eminent Christians need the prayers of other Christians. The chief speakers need prayer, that God would give them a door of utterance, and that they may speak as they ought to speak.

Why did Paul emphasize the proper treatment of masters to their servants?

Verses: 5-6

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye out to answer every man.

The apostle exhorts them further to a prudent and decent conduct towards all those with whom they converse, towards the heathen world, or those of the Christian church among whom they lived. Walk in wisdom towards those who are without. Be careful, in all your conversations, to receive no hurt by them, or contract any of their customs, for evil communications corrupt good manners. Do not hurt to them, or increase their prejudices against religion, and give them an occasion of dislike. Do to them all the good you can, and by all the fittest means and in the proper seasons recommend religion to them. Redeeming the time, that is, either “improving every opportunity of doing them good, and making the best use of your time in proper duty”. Walk cautiously and give to them no advantage against you, nor expose yourselves to their malice and ill-will. Let your speech be always with grace. Let all your discourse be as becomes Christians, suitable to your profession, discreet and seasonable. Grace is the salt which seasons our speech, and keeps it from corrupting. In order that you may know how to answer every man. Be ready always to give an answer to every man who ask you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness.

Verses 7-18

Various Salutations

All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord; Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts. With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner salutes you, and Mark, Barnabas’ nephew (his sister’s son); if he come unto you, receive him. And Justus, these are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow servants unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. Epaphras, who is one of you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers,

that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he had a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans. And say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou has received in the Lord that you fulfill it. The salutation by my hand, Paul is, remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

Why was it necessary that Paul introduce his fellow servants in ministry to the Colossians and Laodiceans churches?