

# Colossians 11 – Pray for us, Take care of us, Remember us

Howdy Ya'll. This is Redemption Church of Plano Tx. My name is Chris Fluitt and I am glad to share the Word of God with you today.

What kind of Church is Redemption Church? We are a Jesus centered Church. We are saved BY Jesus and FOR Jesus. Jesus is the name we lift above every other. Every song sung, should be about Jesus. Every sermon preached, ought to be about Jesus. If you love Jesus, you came to the right Church today.

Colossians 4:2 (NIV2011) Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Colossians 4:3 (NIV2011) And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Colossians 4:4 (NIV2011) Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Colossians 4:5 (NIV2011) Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Colossians 4:6 (NIV2011) Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Colossians 4:7 (NIV2011) Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

Colossians 4:8 (NIV2011) I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.

Colossians 4:9 (NIV2011) He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

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Colossians 4:10 (NIV2011) 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.)

Colossians 4:11 (NIV2011) 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.

Colossians 4:12 (NIV2011) 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.

Colossians 4:13 (NIV2011) I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Colossians 4:14 (NIV2011) Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

Colossians 4:15 (NIV2011) Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

Colossians 4:16 (NIV2011) 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.

Colossians 4:17 (NIV2011) Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord."

Colossians 4:18 (NIV2011) I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Clap your hands if you are thankful for the Word of God.

After Paul's command to be devoted to prayer, watchful & thankful, Paul then asks the Colossians to "pray for us."

Colossians 4:3 (NIV2011) And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Paul chooses the word US. "That God may open a door for OUR message." He chooses the word OUR. "So that WE may proclaim the mystery of Christ." He chooses the word WE.

Paul could have said “I and My” but Paul requested that Colossae pray for “us and our.”

#1 It is important for Colossae to not just focus on their own problems in prayer. The Church needs to pray for the rest of the body of Christ both near and far.

Redemption Church we need to pray beyond our self. We need to remember to pray for the rest of the body of Christ. We need that reminder to pray for others. We need to remember to pray for the missions that we are connected to. When we see the tragedies in the news we need to cover those situations with prayer. When someone is struggling we should be close enough to them to realize their struggle, and pray for them.

#2 It is important for Paul to remember the “us” that was around him.

Redemption Church, it is so easy for us to only think about our self. Our prayer lives are often secluded and only focus on what we want or need. We need to recognize the “us” that is around us.

And what should we pray for? “That God may open a door for our message (Logos)...” Paul is referencing something He said earlier.

Colossians 3:16 (NIV2011) Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

This is the message that Paul is referencing to pray for. Do we pray for each other, that God would open doors for us to share the message of Jesus Christ?

Colossians 4:3 (NIV2011) And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

The Paul says “I” for the first time. “For which I am in chains.”

We too often forget the sacrifices of others. We do not think about the hardships that others are going through near enough.

The Apostle Paul from His jail cell asked... “Pray for us.”

**Pray for us**

Gut check time...

We had a Pastor from Maykop Russia with us a few months ago. Are you praying for them?

We have connections with a ministry planting churches in Lebanon. Are we praying that God would open doors for their message?

We will have a Pastor from Cuba with us in November. Are we praying beyond ourselves? Are we praying for our brothers & sisters?

Don't forget to pray for "US."

Colossians 4:4 (NIV2011) Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Paul's personal pray request is to proclaim the message of Jesus clearly.

Speaking for myself... this calls into question how I have spent the majority of my time praying.

Paul didn't say... "Pray that I get out of Jail... that I don't die... That I come into big money..." Paul placed the message of Christ as SUPERIOR to all those other things.

We need to pray for each other, that we would proclaim the message of our savior CLEARLY.

## Take care of us

Paul gives a 2 verse instruction on taking care of the US that is not within the body of Christ.

Colossians 4:5 (NIV2011) Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Colossians 4:6 (NIV2011) Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Outsiders are those outside the body of Christ. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity.

Redemption we need to STOP missing opportunities to share Jesus with people. We need to make the most of these opportunities. Take the opportunity to invite them to Church, connect group, or to just hang out and talk. Look for the opportunity to share Jesus!

Be careful about how you talk. Let your conversation be full of the things of Christ! Full of Grace!

Seasoned with salt is an idea that comes straight from the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:13. Jesus said "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything..."

Jesus says we are salt and that we need to stay salty. If we don't stay salty... then we are no longer useful. (Salt is used to flavor and to preserve from rot.)

Church we need USEFUL CONVERSATION and to be able to answer everyone.

We need less conversations about futile politics... and more conversations about Jesus.

We need fewer conversations about sports... and more conversations filled with grace.

We need to stop conversations about hatred, greed, and hollow topics like celebrity gossip... and more conversations filled with the Message of Jesus.

We need to pray for us. We need to take care of us... even the us that is outside the body.

## Remember Us

Paul then spends time remembering "us." Paul was not alone. He had people with him. Some of them were fellow prisoners and some were their attending to Paul and visiting him.

Colossians 4:7 (NIV2011) Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

We can assume that Paul is sending this Colossian letter with 2 people. One of them is Tychicus. Paul wants the Colossians to know and trust this man, because Paul knows and trusts this man.

Colossians 4:9 (NIV2011) He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

Onesimus will accompany Tychicus with the letter. Onesimus is "one of you." This means that He is Colossian.

Onesimus, we know is a slave. Paul speaks about him, to his master in the book of Philemon!

Philemon 1:10 (NIV2011) that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains.

The ancient world would have looked down on a slave, but Paul includes Onesimus in "US." Paul says he is a faithful and dear brother and a son! Onesimus is still remembered to this day. Paul says that Onesimus became his son while he was in chains... during this time in a jail cell.

Colossians 4:10 (NIV2011) 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.)

Now you may not recognize the name of Aristarchus, but Paul wanted Colossae to recognize the name. If you have read the book of Acts you will recognize Aristarchus. He is met in Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary journey. His life was put in danger when he was grabbed by an angry mob in Ephesus (Acts 20). Now Aristarchus is in a Roman jail, prisoner alongside the Apostle Paul.

And then we have mention of Mark. Who is Mark? He is the writer of the Gospel of Mark. He is called John Mark through the book of Acts. He accompanies Paul & Barnabas on the 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey, but was younger and grew homesick and left the missionary team in the middle of their journey. Now Paul didn't take to kindly to Mark leaving them and Paul refused to go on the next missionary journey with Mark... this split up the Paul & Barnabas missionary team... Mark & Barnabas became a missionary team and Paul & Silas became a 2nd missionary team.

That said.. Paul includes Mark in "US." Paul & Mark put their feud aside and here they are together. Mark is visiting Paul in prison. Paul tells Colossae to welcome Mark.

Do you have a feud with someone? Paul would tell you to put that aside and include them in "US." IS THERE SOMEONE THAT BECAUSE OF SOMETHING IN THE PAST, YOU DO NOT ALLOW THEM IN "US?"

Then Paul mentions a man named Jesus that they called Justus... probably to keep from confusing people as they talked about Jesus Christ.

Colossians 4:11 (NIV2011) 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.

All we know about Justus is that he sends his greetings, was a comfort to Paul, and was a Jew. But Paul counted him among US.

Paul mentions that Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, & Justus are the only Jews among his Kingdom co-workers. Paul is Jewish but perhaps feels removed from the "us" back in Jerusalem. But rather than name people that are a disappointment to him, he honors those that stand by him.

Then Paul mention Epaphras...

Colossians 4:12 (NIV2011) 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.

In the first week of this series, we studied Epaphras. He likely started the church in Colossae and was in jail with Paul.

Colossians 4:14 (NIV2011) Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

Luke, the doctor, wrote the Gospel of Luke and also the book of Acts. He was with Paul through his missionary journeys and was still by his side through this hardship.

Demas is mentioned 2 other times in scripture. Here is he is with Paul sending his greetings. In Philemon Paul calls Demas a “fellow worker.” And later.. the last thing we know is what Paul writes about him in 2 Timothy 4:10. Paul says “Demas, because he loved this world, he has deserted me.”

The juxtaposition of Mark & Demas is amazing. Mark was with Paul ‘til the very end, and Demas fell in love with worldly things.

Colossians 4:15 (NIV2011) Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

From his jail cell he asks Colossae to greet the brothers & sisters in the nearby city of Laodicea. By asking Colossae to greet Laodicea, it ensures that they will be brother & sisters as well. These 2 bodies of believers will understand that they are both a part of “US.”

Paul even mentions a woman named Nympha who hosts the church within her house. She is a person of leadership within Laodicea. There are some people who believe that women can’t be leaders within the Church... Paul let’s us know that women are a part of “US.”

Colossians 4:16 (NIV2011) 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.

The idea of “US” is not just limited to what you are experiencing right now. I think we could do a better job of that. From a jail cell, Paul was concerned with the “US” in Colossae... and the “US” in Laodicea. In fact Paul wrote a letter to Laodicea... We don’t have that letter, but one was written.

(We receive letters from our brothers & sisters and we print them out for you to read. They are at the information table in the lobby. WE OUGHT TO READ THESE LETTERS AND CARE ABOUT THIS NEWS!)

Colossians 4:17 (NIV2011) Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.”

Tell Archippus! He is mentioned in Philemon 1:2 as a beloved fellow soldier who hosts a church in his house. The only other verse that mentions Archippus is this 2<sup>nd</sup> to last verse of Colossians. Paul encourages Archippus to “SEE TO IT” the Greek here says “Perceive, understand, visualize” and complete, the ministry you have received from the Lord.

What was this ministry? We aren't completely sure. That is not what is so important about this verse. What we have here is the Apostle Paul remembering someone else's ministry calling, and encouraging them in it.

How encouraging it must have been for Archippus to read those words from Paul.

I believe the Church of Jesus could do a better job of encouraging each other in ministry. I believe we could do a better job of seeing the Kingdom potential in each other.

When was the last time you encouraged a brother or sister in their Kingdom calling?

Colossians 4:18 (NIV2011) I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Paul asked for Colossae to PRAY FOR US, that we would present the message of Jesus. He then commanded Colossae to TAKE CARE OF US, in our conversation and treatment of others... even those outside the body.

Now Paul asks Remember Us.

## **Remember Us**

Remember my chains. Do not forget me.

Paul was in the middle of a struggle. He hardly ever mentions his struggle in this letter... it might become easy to forget his struggle. “Remember my chains.”

Let's apply this scripture...

We go through struggle, but the struggle should not become our headline. Every conversation does not need to become about our struggle. The struggle does not need to become the defining feature about us.



Paul was in chains... yet his chains were not the theme of the book. The chains were only mentioned as he signed off his letter.

This week our family spent the night in the Hospital after our oldest son had the worst seizure he had ever had. I drove my son to the ER trying to hear if he was still breathing. I watched as a team of ER workers tried to give him medicine to stop the seizure.

I had very little control in this struggle. I had a front row seat to the show. I was not the one directing this show. All I could do was pray, hold his hand, and speak love into his ear...

I was in the struggle, but the real headline was the peace of God I felt. The real focus, looking back, was on the faithfulness of God to help us in that time of struggle. The workers in that ER and everyone who was praying for us is what I can't stop thinking about. People asked us how were doing in the days following the struggle and we honestly said... "It was a messy struggle, but we are doing great. God is good. We are thankful."

YOU HAVE A STRUGGLE. I HAVE A STRUGGLE. But the struggle does not define US. The chains did not define Paul.

We should not display our struggle like it is what defines US... yet at the same time we need to remember the struggle of others.

Paul says... remember my chains. Without the chains becoming the headline... they do need to be remembered.

We need to remember the struggles of US.

Perhaps the reason we make our struggles the headline of our life is that we don't trust others to remember our struggle... We feel like we have to make a big deal of it in order to have others remember. IT SHOULD NOT BE THIS WAY.

You are a part of US. Your struggle is remembered by US.

## **Musician**

We need an US mentality. We need to spend some time praying for US. We need to take care of US in this altar today. Can we remember the problems that are facing US?

We are the body of Christ. We need to be Jesus people. We need to love others like Christ loves us. We need to care for others like Christ cares for us.

Only through Jesus can we have an US mentality. (Come pray, come receive prayer)

