

11. _____ together

I don't need to tell you that we all need encouragement. We all need a push from time to time. Some of us need it a bit more than others. But we all need at one point or another the call to keep going. Persevere! Don't give up! The Christ-centered church exhorts together.

12. _____ together

As Paul signs his name to the close of this powerful letter, he gives one more instruction. Remember my chains. Is that a call for the church to pray? Absolutely. A plea of "oh woe is me?" Absolutely not. Remember the struggle is worth it. For more to know and experience new life in Jesus, imprisonment is worth it.

"Grace be with you."

The supremacy of Jesus in all things, the centrality of Jesus in all of life, is at the very core the message of grace.

By grace, Jesus... tells, serves, encourages, cares, addresses our past, welcomes us, comforts us, intercedes for us, extends, exchanges, exhorts, and calls us to remember.

By your grace, Jesus, reign supreme in my life!

Colossians: The Supremacy of Christ

The Needlepoint of God

Colossians 4:7-18

The Big Picture?

Do you ever wish you could see the big picture of what God is doing?

How in the world are we getting from here to there?

What part does this current trial or difficulty play in the picture God is weaving together?

As we come to the close of our study in Colossians and the final part of Paul's letter let's ask these questions. What is going on here? What is God doing? And what does that mean for us?

12 Threads of The Jesus-Centered Church

1. _____ together

Throughout Paul's letters, we can see it's important to him that he tells the church what is happening in his ministry. We also know that the church shares with him what they are going through. That's why Paul is writing this letter. If we look back at chapter 1, verse 8, we see Epaphras had traveled to see Paul and has told him about what was happening in his home church.

We see Paul's telling here in our text today is not pointless. There is a reason. The reason we tell together is to encourage hearts.

2. _____ together

The Jesus-centered church serves together. Verses 7 and 11 indicate that these men are fellow servants with Paul in the ministry Jesus has called them. A common thread we see in the ministry of Jesus in the four gospels, the early church in Acts, and throughout Paul's letters is that our new life in Christ is done together.

3. _____ together

Paul cares greatly about encouraging the church. And he is encouraged by the church. We see this throughout this letter:

Col. 1:3

“We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints...”

Col. 2:1

“For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love...”

As you leave here today, or throughout this week, or as you arrive next week, how can you encourage the hearts of those sitting here with you this morning?

4. _____ together

Starting in verse 10 how many people does Paul lists as just wanting to say hi? As we read down through this do we see the great care Paul and his team have for the Colossian church?

5. _____ the past together

The church has been instructed already about Mark. There was something that needed to be addressed. We could deduct from the fallout recorded in Acts 13 and 15 that there is a past that needs addressing, a broken relationship but that now, however, appears to be restored or at least in process of restoration.

The Christ-centered church family addresses the past and learns together how to respond and treat each other as Christ would have us.

6. _____ together

Do you know what is so refreshing and encouraging about the parentheses in verse 10? It’s real life. The Colossian church and folks on Paul’s team had relational issues.

Paul told the church in Rome, **Romans 15:7**, “welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” **How has Christ welcomed you?**

7. _____ together

Paul’s fellow workers are a comfort to him. Seeing the fruit of the work of Jesus in their lives is a comfort. Let us seek out ways in our church family, as co-laborers in Christ to comfort one another.

8. _____ together

Paul spends a bit more time telling the Colossian church about the heart of Epaphras for them. It is thought that Epaphras perhaps is responsible for planting the Colossian church. Regardless of it is clear he cares deeply for the church, he is struggling, fighting, wrestling in prayer for them. **What a great prayer to pray!**

9. _____ together

Paul, in verse 15, gives a few more commands or instructions. After just writing about all of these who are greeting them and caring for them, now Paul says you extend the same care to the churches near you.

10. _____ together

Paul wants this letter about the centrality and supremacy of Jesus in all things to be read among the neighboring churches and then for the letter he wrote to the Laodiceans to be read by the Colossians. How can we here at Fresno extend and exchange with the body of Christ to encourage and build His church right here where we live?