

“FAITHFUL MEN AND PERFECT PEOPLE”

COLOSSIANS 4:10-14

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INTRODUCTION

How much do you know about Aristarchus? About Jesus Justus? About Epaphras? About Demas? True, you may know more about Mark and Luke, but other than the fact that they wrote two Gospels, what do you know about them? Yet these men go down in God’s **Hall of Fame** as faithful supporters and co-workers with the Apostle Paul while imprisoned in Rome. I don’t think that anyone wishes to be in God’s **Hall of Shame**, and yet one of these men made it into that hall at the end of Paul’s life during his second imprisonment—Demas: “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world” (II Tim 4:10).

God will always have His Faithful Workers; yet, there will always be those who disappoint us. Thank God for one like Epaphras who will be devoted to prayer for the perfection of the saints. The goal of all faithful service is that you, the child of God, might stand complete, fully assured in all the will of God.

YOU MUST STAND PERFECTED AND FULLY ASSURED IN ALL OF GOD’S WILL.

- I. DILIGENT WORKERS (10-14)—they all send greetings
 - A. Aristarchus: captured in the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:29); traveled with Paul to Jerusalem with the offering (20:4); Sailed with Paul to Rome (27:2); here with Paul in his imprisonment
 1. There when Paul needed him most.
 2. His “fellow-prisoner”
 - B. Mark (v. 10)
 1. Son of Mary—Acts 12:12, 25; cousin of Barnabas (not nephew; “sons of sisters”, not “sister’s son”)
 2. Went with Barnabas & Paul on 1st missionary journey as far as Perga—then abandoned them (acts 12:25; 13:13)
 3. Conflict over Mark at beginning of 2nd missionary trip (15:37-39)
 4. Now ministered to Paul in Rome—see Philemon 24 also
 5. II Tim. 4:11—requests Mark—“valuable to me”!
 6. Later with Peter in Rome (I Pet. 5:13)
 7. Author of Second Gospel
 8. Instructions sent about Mark-if he comes, receive him cordially.
 - C. Jesus called Justus—We know nothing else about him (v. 11)
 - D. Epaphras—the pastor of Colossae (v. 12; see 1:7)
 1. One of them
 2. A “bond-slave of Jesus Christ”
 3. Always working hard in prayers.
 - E. Luke (14)

We know from the “we” sections of the Book of Acts that he accompanied Paul extensively during his missionary journeys (Macedonia—16:8-17; trip back to Judea after the 3rd missionary journey—20:5-15; 21:1-18), and even on his voyage to Rome (27:1-28:16). It is likely that Luke stayed with Paul during his entire imprisonment in Rome and ministered to his physical, and spiritual, needs

 1. A Gentile
 2. A physician
 3. Beloved
 - F. Demas (14)—cf. Philemon 24; II Tim. 4:10.

- II. DISAPPOINTMENT (11)
 - A. The only fellow-workers from the circumcision—cf. Phil. 1:14-18; 2:20-21.
 - B. Working for the kingdom—cf. 1:13.
 - C. Being an encouragement and **comfort**—used as a medical term for alleviating pain; thus comfort.

- III. DEVOTED PRAYER (12-13)
 - A. Praying Like an Athlete—agonizing, hard, strenuous effort
 - 1. To firmly stand
 - 2. To be complete/perfect
 - 3. To be fully assured
 - 4. To be in all the will of God (all that God wills for us to be and do for him)
 - B. Painful labor—outward—but especially inward (v. 13; stronger than “zeal”)
 - 1. For Colossae
 - 2. For Laodicea
 - 3. For Hierapolis

CONCLUSION

Yes, God does want faithful “men”—faithful workers! But, for what do these faithful workers labor? That you and I might stand; be mature/complete/perfect; that we might be fully assured; in all the will of God.

Do you realize that this is what your life is about: Knowing what it is that God expects of you—**fully assured in all of His will!** First understand and then focus on finding and keeping what pleases God so as to live according to divine desires and plans.

It is this burden that a good pastor has for his “flock”! Note that what Epaphras wanted is what Paul wanted:

- 1) “Always in prayer” for them (cf. Col. 1:3).
- 2) “Wrestling, earnestly contending” for them (see 1:29).
- 3) Seeks their completion/perfection (see 1:28).
- 4) Wants their confirmation “in all the will of God” (see 1:9) and their “full assurance” and “true knowledge” (2:2).

Here the task involves the prayers of Epaphras, as well as other ministry labors. This same term is used for the labors of the god Hercules; thus we speak of “Herculean labors” or efforts of someone. Oh that our prayers and labors might be of such Herculean quality! Epaphras was toiling heavily and even painfully on behalf of these believers; surely involved would have been the “emotional distress” connected with such ministry and threats faced by Christians. As Moo notes, **“Ministers who are faced with threats to the spiritual well-being of their charges have to devote great energy to the defense of the gospel, and such work brings great stress, out of concern for the spiritual health of the community and because of attacks from opponents”** (346).

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