

RELATED SCRIPTURES

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 11.13.22

Acts 15:39 | Philemon 1 | Romans 12:4-5

SUMMARY

When reading through the letters (epistles) of the New Testament, it might be tempting to skip over the final greetings and list of names believing there's nothing of substance to be drawn from the passage. However, each of the names listed in the greetings may not tell a complete story, but it gives us insights. The names Paul lists tell us that the Body of Christ is composed of many people and that the Lord sovereignly allows those people to cross paths to achieve his divine purposes. To name a few, Tychicus was the one who carried this letter to the Colossian church—an innocuous task at the moment—used by God to give us a portion of holy scripture. Paul mentions Onesimus, the subject of his letter to Philemon, which tells us he was once “useless” but now lives to serve the advancement of the gospel. Paul also instructs the church to welcome Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. This mention, a seemingly insignificant detail, reveals to us the work and reconciliatory power of the Holy Spirit. Mark accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey yet parted ways over a sharp disagreement (Acts 15:39). But Paul's inclusion of Mark in his final greeting tells us they have reconciled and now labor together in the proclamation of the gospel. The inclusion of Luke's name validates that both Luke and Paul's New Testament writings—likely written independently of one another—work in harmony with each other. These names, along with the others, provide the believer—hundreds of years after its writing—encouragement in that we do not pursue our sanctification alone. Instead, Jesus accompanies us with his very presence; this is the church, the Body of Christ.

GROUP QUESTIONS

From the sermon or your direct reading of Colossians 4:7-18, share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you.

Who are some people in your faith journey that have been instrumental in your development as a Christian? Are there any people whose influence at the time seemed insignificant but later proved invaluable?

Does Paul's interaction with these different people affect your perspective on your interactions with the people you encounter?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.