Examples of How to Live Your Faith

Colossians 4:7-17

# I. v9 - Onesimus: the Servant Life

A. His character.

1. He is called a “faithful & dear brother”.

2. He had been Philemon’s slave (Philemon 16).

a. Philemon was a leader of one of the churches in Colossae.

b. The church may have met in his home.

c. Onesimus ran away & probably robbed Philemon in the process.

3. He found Paul in prison in Rome & was converted by him.

4. As a new Christian, he did what he decided was the right thing - return to his old master.

a. A master had the power of life & death over a slave - this was a scary decision!

b. Paul had never been to Colossae but met & converted Philemon somewhere else.

c. The relationship between Onesimus & Philemon now was that of brothers in Christ!

d. The Letter to Philemon, delivered with this letter, was Paul’s appeal to his former convert to do the right thing with Onesimus - hinting that freedom & return to Rome to help Paul might be the right thing.

e. Paul’s fellow prisoners & companions - Epaphras, Demos, Luke, Aristarchus & Mark - are mentioned in the Letter to Philemon as well as here.

5. This the story of obedience to what is right in the face of terrible possible consequences!

B. Onesimus’ later ministry.

1. He may have actually become Ignatius of Antioch.

2. Ignatius was one of the “Church Fathers” of the 2nd Century.

3. Ignatius became the Bishop of Ephesus.

# II. v10 - Mark: the Reformed Life

A. His character.

1. Background history.

a. He was Barnabus’ cousin.

b. Act 12:12 - His house, shared with his mother Mary, was the location of one of the churches in Jerusalem.

c. Act 13:5 - Mark was Paul’s assistant on his 1st mission journey.

d. Act 13:13 - Mark chickens out about half way through the mission journey & goes home.

e. Act 15:37ff - Paul & Barnabus, Paul’s best buddy, have a falling out over Mark’s desertion.

2. v10 - About 10 years later, Mark is reinstated in Paul’s affection & is now with him in Rome.

a. Philemon 24 & II Tim 4:11 - Mark is now a fellow laborer & very useful in Paul’s ministry.

b. I Pet 5:13 - Peter calls Mark his son.

c. This is the story of genuine repentance & restoration to Christian fellowship!

B. Mark’s later ministry.

1. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD) quoted Papias (60-130 AD):

a. Mark was Peter’s interpreter when they were in Rome.

b. Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark using Peter as his primary source.

2. Eusebius (325 AD).

a. Mark founded the churches in Alexandria, Egypt.

b. Mark made so many converts that it amazed the Jewish philosopher Philo.

# III. v12-13 - Epaphras: The Prayer Life

A. His character.

1. Col 1:7 - “A dear fellow servant” & “faithful minister of Christ”.

2. v13 - “A hard worker”.

3. v12 - “Always wrestling in prayer”. ILL: Jacob wrestling for the blessing (Gen 32:24-29).

4. This is the story of a prayer warrior - hours of prayer & a lot of emotional energy involved!

5. ILL: The Story of Paul Yonggi-Cho & the Yoido Church in Seoul, Korea.

B. Epaphras’ later ministry.

1. He may have founded the churches at Colossae, Hierapolis & Laodicea.

2. He evangelized the cities of the Lycus valley in Phrygia.

# IV. v14 - Luke: the Faithful Life

A. His character.

1. He was a physician who came from Antioch of Syria.

2. Philemon 24 says that he labored with Paul.

a. He went with Paul on his 2nd, 3rd & final mission journeys.

b. He stayed with Paul for 2 years when Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea.

c. He was shipwrecked with Paul on their last journey to Rome.

3. II Tim 4:9-11 - He remained faithful to Paul when the others left.

4. This is the story of faithfulness to the ministry under great adversity!

B. Luke’s later ministry.

1. He wrote the Gospel of Luke & the Book of Acts.

2. This is the story of humbleness as a Christian servant!

a. He was a physician - a medical doctor - yet gave up his practice to serve the Lord.

b. In volume, he wrote 1/4 of the whole NT & yet never mentioned himself.

We have such a great heritage in Christ to live up to. These disciples became great heroes of the faith. Look to their examples. Develop the obedient servant life; the genuine repentant life; the consistency in prayer life & the life of faithfulness so that one day you could be considered a hero!

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