

Epaphras – Caring, Passionate, Purposeful, Prayer Warrior

Colossians 4:12-13

NKJ ¹² Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

BGT ¹² ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἐπαφράς ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν, δοῦλος Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ], πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς, ἵνα σταθῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ. ¹³ μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅτι ἔχει πολὺν πόνον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεραπόλει.

I. The Caring Person – Epaphras (“lovely”)

Col 1:7-8 ⁷ as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant (συνδούλου), who is a faithful minister (διάκονος) of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

Philemon 1:23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner (συναιχμάλωτός) in Christ Jesus, greets you,

- A. His Origin – Home-grown – “who is [one] of you”
1. Possibly key leader (pastor?) or evangelist of his area.
 2. Possibly a “missionary” sent out with Paul?
 3. Possibly a helper who came to assist Paul?
 4. Seems to discount the misapplication of Matt 13:57: So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."
- B. His Owner – God-owned
1. A slave of Christ – “owned and operated by Jesus Christ”
 2. A prisoner in Christ (Philemon 23) – used of incarcerated

II. His Ongoing Practice - agonizing prayer for spiritual adulthood

- A. His Activity – in prayers
- B. His Intensity – agonizing
- C. His Constancy – always
- D. His Difficulty – many a pain (putting all one’s strength)

III. His Driving Passion

- A. That the Colossian believers would be complete
“that you might stand perfect”

Is that why you seek God? To become mature?

Are you seeking ease, or some program?

Are you missing God’s point? He wants you mature!

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- B. That the Colossian believers would be convinced
1. Fully understanding every aspect of the will of God
 2. Fully living by every aspect of the will of God
 3. Summarizes Paul’s prayer in 1:9-14

Is Christianity just a routine for you that yields no learning?

Do you listen to and engage yourself in the teaching times?

Do you seek to have your mind transformed by the truth?

Can you discuss what how you’ve changed your mind and actions as you have learned the Word?

Do you immerse yourself in the Word daily?

IV. His Praying Focus

- A. Locations of His Prayer Focus
1. Colosse (Colossians)
 - a) 107 mi east of Ephesus
 - b) “punishment”
 - c) Home of Epaphras and Onesimus
 - d) An assembly (“church”) existed there
 2. Laodicea (Laodiceans)
 - a) 10 miles west of Colossae
 - b) An assembly (“church”) existed there (4:15)
 - c) Has struggles similar to Colossian church (2:1)
 - d) Paul wrote a letter there too (4:16)
 - e) Seemingly became the prominent church in the area, and wrestled with mediocrity amidst wealth (Rev 1:11; 3:14).
 - f) “Subsequently, the church was flourishing, for it was at a council at Laodicea, A.D. 361, that the Scripture canon was defined.” – Faussett’s
 3. Hierapolis (Hierapolians?)
 - a) 14 miles north of Colossae
 - b) “the sacred city”
 - c) Seemingly believers, but maybe not an established assembly yet
- B. Lessons of His Prayer Focus
1. Pray big, for others beyond your own assembly.
 2. Pray eternal, beyond your daily bread. (bigger picture)
 3. Pray hard, beyond breakfast, lunch, & dinner.
 4. Pray always, using down time for eternal benefit.
 5. Pray, as if it makes all the difference (it does).