

sermon study summary

March 15 /16, 2025

Community

Pastor Jared Harrison

There's a spiritual danger when our faith is only inward, private, and focused on personal benefit. We will miss Christ's calling in our lives if we're not actively engaged in the community of Christ. In Colossians 4:7-18 Paul taught through his words and modelled through his actions the importance of community. Through community we can fulfill our calling to be God's representatives to the world around us and to impact our families, our workplaces, our neighbourhoods and our church community.

1. In community we are known and encouraged (vs. 7-9).

Paul had a community in which he was invested. He knew Tychicus as a dear brother and trusted friend, as a faithful minister, and as a fellow servant in the Lord. Onesimus, a slave, was no longer seen as a slave but as a brother in Christ. These people were spiritual family to Paul. He knew them, their character, and their stories.

Paul also wanted to be known. He asked Tychicus and Onesimus to deliver his letter (the book of Colossians) to the Colossian church to encourage them and to tell them about Paul's circumstances.

2. Community keeps us grounded in our faith (vs.10-14). False teaching was creeping into the church at Colossae, trying to get them to follow strict, harsh rules and to give undue attention to angels (v.18). So Paul introduced them to his community, people like Mark and Luke, authors of the books of Mark, Luke and Acts, as though saying, "If you don't believe me, talk to Mark, talk to Luke." These two men had faithfully recorded their eyewitness accounts of Jesus' words, works, life, death and resurrection, ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the movement of the early church.

For those who needed prayer, Paul introduced them to his prayer warrior friend Epaphras (v.12), who was "always wrestling in prayer." When faced with doubts and temptations and false teaching, we need people in our life who will pray for us and point us back to the foundations of our faith.

Community at times is messy and painful. Mark and Barnabas had a severe disagreement with Paul and went their separate ways for a time. Demas, a few years later, deserted Paul. Paul knew what it was like to be in genuine, raw, imperfect community. So does Jesus. He experienced betrayal, denial, and abandonment at the hands of his closest community. Yet He still calls us to not give up on it.

3. In community we find our calling.

Our calling in Christ springs from being in community. Paul encouraged the Colossians to lift up their eyes, to get the bigger picture. God was actively at work in other churches and in cities around them like Laodicea and Hierapolis. Nymphas (v. 15) found his role by hosting a church in his home. Paul admonished Archippus, "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord." In other words, "Stop messing around and get it done!" -Love Paul (v.17)

Community spurs us on to find and fulfill the calling that God has for us in each season. When we see the bigger picture of the kingdom of God on earth, we can then ask, what's my role in that picture? Community doesn't happen by accident. Be intentional, take initiative. Explore the opportunities that are available. Start with prayer, have courageous conversations to explore the possibilities. It's in community that we become mature in the faith. In community we are better able to step out and accomplish what God is calling us to. God didn't create us to do life alone.

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is your favorite activity to do with friends?
2. Where have you experienced a strong sense of community? What made it meaningful?

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read *Colossians 4:7-18*.

3. From these verses, how do Paul and his friends exemplify the value of community?
4. In this passage, how did community help keep believers grounded in their faith? Why was it important for Paul to know and be known?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Pastor Jared said, “We can miss Christ’s calling in our lives if we are not actively engaged in Christian community.” Discuss this statement.
6. Take a moment to encourage one another by sharing what you see as God’s calling on each other’s lives. How have they been a blessing?
7. Who do you know who might be experiencing loneliness? How can you invite them to be a part of a Christian community?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Colossians 4:12 speaks of Epaphras, who prays earnestly for others. Do you have someone praying for you like this? If yes, thank them. Are you praying for someone else in the same way? If not, ask God to guide you to someone to pray for.

Consider memorizing Colossians 4:12.

If you are part of a community, thank God for one blessing within it. If you are seeking community, email communitygroups@cschurch.ca for assistance.

THE WORD (NIV)

Colossians 4:7-18

⁷Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

¹⁰My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) ¹¹Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. ¹²Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. ¹³I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. ¹⁵Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

¹⁶After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

¹⁷Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.”

¹⁸I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

This week’s writers: Elsa Henderson, Gene and Karen Gibbs, Jem Ong, Jorel Quemuel