

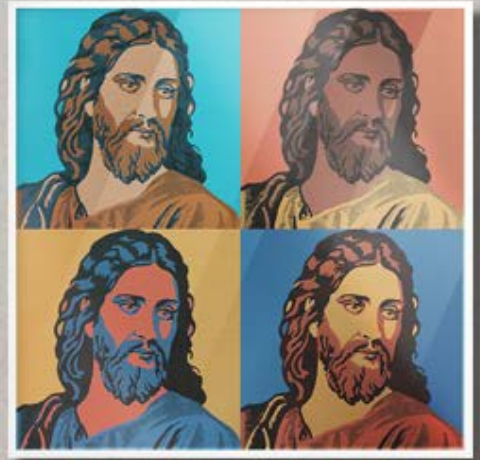
BAND OF BROTHERS

No Other Jesus

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

Rediscovering the Sufficiency and Superiority of Christ

SUMMER 2025



Summer Series Teaching Schedule

May 6, 7, 8 – WEEK 1: **Colossians 1:1-23**

The supremacy of Christ

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 5-24

May 13, 14, 15 – WEEK 2: **Colossians 1:24-2:7**

The mysterious ministry of spiritual maturity

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 25-32

May 20, 21, 22 – WEEK 3: **Colossians 2:8-23**

The sufficiency of the gospel and the allure of self-made religion

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 33-40

May 27, 28, 29 – WEEK 4: **Colossians 3:1-17**

Live like who you are

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 41-52

June 3, 4, 5 – WEEK 5: **Colossians 3:18-4:6**

Let's get practical

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 53-62

June 10, 11, 12 – WEEK 6: **Colossians 4:7-18**

A prisoner of Christ

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 63-66

4 Masters, treat your bondservants^[a] justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Further Instructions

2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Final Greetings

7 Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant^[b] in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, 9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. 14 Luke the beloved physician greets

you, as does Demas. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers^[c] at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶ And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord."

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

Footnotes

- a) Colossians 4:1 For the contextual rendering of the Greek word *doulos*, see Preface; likewise for *servant* in verse 12
- b) Colossians 4:7 For the contextual rendering of the Greek word *sundoulos*, see Preface
- c) Colossians 4:15 Or *brothers and sisters*

A Prisoner of Christ

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹ and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶ And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. — Colossians 4:7-18 ESV

As Paul prepares to wrap up his letter to the Colossian church, he mentions the names of eight different men. Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Jesus (Justus), Epaphras, Luke, Demas, and Archippus. Each of them had played a vital role in Paul’s life and ministry. Two of them, Tychicus and Onesimus, had been chosen by Paul to deliver the letter once he had completed it. The first mention of Tychicus in the Scriptures is found in Acts 20, where Luke records his name, as well as that of Aristarchus, among those who accompanied Paul as he left Greece and made his way to Syria.

*...he [Paul] decided to return through Macedonia. Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, **Aristarchus** and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, **Tychicus** and Trophimus. These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days. — Acts 20:3-6 ESV*

Tychicus, like the rest of these men, had become a disciple of Paul and had aided him in his ministry. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul refers to Tychicus as his “beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord” (Ephesians 6:21 ESV). Paul had instructed Tychicus to deliver his letter to the Ephesian believers and bring them up to speed on his current situation (Ephesians 6:22). And Paul had entrusted Tychicus with the same responsibility when it came to the congregation in Colossae.

Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here. – Colossians 4:7-9 ESV

He was accompanied by Onesimus, another disciple of Paul who, at one time, had been a runaway slave. Paul had befriended Onesimus in Rome, where Paul was imprisoned and the young man was hiding from his former master, a man named Philemon. While it is unclear how Paul and Onesimus met, we do know that Paul had the privilege of leading Onesimus to Christ. And after discipling his young friend for a period of time, he determined to send Onesimus back to his master. What makes this situation rather strange is that Paul knew Onesimus' master well. He was a man named Philemon and the church in Colossae met in his home. Paul wrote a letter to Philemon, asking him to receive Onesimus back, not as a runaway slave, but as a brother in Christ.

I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison. Onesimus hasn't been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us. I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart.

I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf. But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced. It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. – Philemon 1:10-16 NLT

According to Colossian 4:9, Onesimus accompanied Tychicus back to Colossae. Tychicus was to deliver Onesimus and the letter from Paul to Philemon. We are not told how this reunion turned out, but it seems likely that Philemon heeded Paul's advice and treated Onesimus as a "beloved brother" (Philemon 1:16).

Paul also mentions Aristarchus, a Greek who hailed from the city of Thessalonica (Acts 20:4). Paul refers to Aristarchus as his "fellow prisoner" (Colossians 4:10), but it seems unlikely that Paul was inferring that Aristarchus was also under house arrest in Rome. Paul used the term "fellow prisoner" when referring to several of his co-workers in the ministry.

*Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my **fellow prisoners**. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. – Romans 16:7 ESV*

*Epaphras, my **fellow prisoner** in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers. – Philemon 1:23-24 ESV*

It appears that Paul used this term to refer to their shared captivity to the will of God. Paul opened up his letter to Philemon by describing himself as “a prisoner for Christ Jesus” (Philemon 1:1 ESV). He used the same phrase when writing to the church in Ephesus, another Gentile community.

I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you... – Ephesians 3:1-2 ESV

Paul didn’t consider himself a prisoner of the Roman government but of Jesus Christ. He was where he was because he had been faithfully fulfilling the will of Christ. And he viewed these other men as fellow captives, who shared his commitment to carrying the good news of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.

In a sense, Paul was name-dropping, providing his readers with a list of individuals whom they knew well and whose reputations would further enhance and support the content of Paul’s letter. The believers in Colossae had never met Paul. They were probably familiar with his name and had likely heard about his miraculous salvation story and prolific ministry. But he was a stranger to them. Paul used the names of these men to assure the Colossians that his words could be trusted. Over time, the various churches had heard about the travels of Paul and the assistance he had received from various individuals, including John Mark and his cousin, Barnabas. That is why Paul mentions their names. John Mark had accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey. And Barnabas had been a part of the church since its earliest days in Jerusalem. Luke mentions his name in Acts 4.

*Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles **Barnabas** (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet. – Acts 4:36-37 ESV*

Jesus Justus was one of several Jewish Christians (“men of the circumcision”) who made up Paul’s ethnically diverse ministerial team. Paul wanted the Colossians to know that when he wrote, “In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free” (Colossians 3:11 NLT), he meant it. Paul practiced what he preached.

Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. – Colossians 3:11 NLT

Epaphras, a citizen of Colossae, had played a major role in the founding of the church there (Colossians 1:7). But he had left his hometown in order to minister alongside Paul. It seems that Paul had a small contingent of co-workers who had accompanied him to Rome and remained by his side while he was under house arrest and awaiting trial. This included Luke, the author of the gospel that bears his name as well as the book of Acts. Luke was Paul’s “beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14 ESV) and remained by the apostle’s side throughout his confinement in Rome.

Demas was also at Paul's side in Rome, but the day would come when he would allow his love for the world to replace his commitment to Paul and the gospel ministry.

Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. – 2 Timothy 4:10 ESV

Paul closes out his letter by asking that it be shared with the church in Laodicea. And evidently, there was a letter he had written to the Laodicean congregation that he wished to be read by the Colossians as well. All of these congregations were in close proximity to one another and the letters Paul wrote to them were intended to be shared among them. The messages they contained were universal in nature and applicable in every one of the communities where local congregations were attempting to live out their faith in hostile surroundings. Remaining faithful in the midst of a fallen and often antagonistic world was not easy. And nobody knew that better than Paul. That is why he closes out his letter by calling on his children in the faith to "Remember my chains" (Colossians 4:18 ESV). He wanted them to know that he had been imprisoned because of the gospel. He was not oblivious to their situation but was well acquainted with the suffering that accompanied the Christian life. And he rejoiced in the fact that God had deemed him worthy of the privilege of suffering as Christ had suffered – on behalf of His body, the church.

I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church. – Colossians 1:24 NLT