

Colossians: In Christ Realities
Lesson 10 “How New Creation Continues”

I. Review

A. Background - We are finishing our study on the book of *Colossians*, which was a letter Paul wrote to the church in Colossae when he was imprisoned in Rome in 62 A.D.

1. Paul did not found this church. It was founded by one of his disciples, Epaphrus (who was from Colossae). He met Paul in the revival in Ephesus (which lasted from 52-55 A.D) and then he moved back to start a church and bring the hope of Jesus to his community.
2. Paul wrote this letter from Rome to strengthen this church and deal with some issues this church was facing. The main issue was **syncretism**, which is the mixing the worship of Jesus Christ with beliefs, values, practices, or worldviews that compete with Him.
 - a. In that day - legalism, gnosticism, mysticism, folk superstition, angel worship, and asceticism.
 - b. In our day - consumerism, politics, psychology, self-help, new age, and modern cultural values (ex: marriage) so Christianity is diluted.
 - c. Last week, in *Colossians 4:2-4:6* Paul wrote about the lifestyle of prayer, wisdom, grace, to influence the world around us.

B. Throughout *Colossians*, we learned what it means to be a new creation in Christ. The goal of our lives, though, is more than personal transformation; it is multiplication as we pour our lives into others. As Paul closes this letter, he gives us a glimpse into the people he poured his life into that helped advance the God's new creation project alongside him. Transformed people transform others!

II. How New Creation Continues

A. *Colossians 4:7-18*

1. **Verses 7-8** Tychius was one of Paul's most trusted disciples. He traveled with Paul, carried letters like *Colossians* and *Ephesians* to the churches, and often represented Paul when Paul couldn't be there himself. Paul calls him a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant. He wasn't a superstar preacher or church planter. He was known for being dependable. When something needed to get done and done well, Paul could count on Tychius.
 - a. **Identity lesson:** Not everyone is called to be the visionary. Some are called to faithfully carry and execute the vision. In the Kingdom, faithfulness is every bit as important as visibility.
 - b. **Scriptural references:** Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21-22, 2 Timothy 4:12

2. **Verse 9** Onesimus was a runaway slave who belonged to Philemon. While on the run, he met Paul, got saved, and became one of Paul's spiritual sons. Before Christ, he was known as a runaway slave. After Christ, Paul calls him a faithful and beloved brother and tells Philemon to receive him as family, not as a slave.

a. **Identity lesson:** Jesus changes our identity, not just our destination.

b. **Scriptural references: Philemon**

3. **Verse 10** Aristarchus was from Thessalonica and traveled with Paul through some of the hardest seasons of ministry. He was dragged into the riot at Ephesus, traveled with Paul to Rome, and eventually became Paul's fellow prisoner. He stayed with Paul through revival, persecution, and prison.

a. **Identity lesson:** Faithfulness/Loyalty isn't proven in the good times. It's proven when things get difficult.

b. **Scriptural references: Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2, Philemon 1:24**

4. **Verse 10** John Mark is proof that failure isn't final. Early in ministry, he quit on Paul and Barnabas and went home. Paul was so concerned about it that he refused to take Mark on the next trip, leading to a split with Barnabas. God wasn't finished with Mark. Years later, Paul recommends him and eventually says, "He is useful to me for ministry" - **2 Timothy 4:11**

a. **Identity lesson:** Failure doesn't define our future. Grace does.

b. **Scriptural References: Acts 13:5-13, Acts 15:37-39, 1 Peter 5:13**

5. **Verse 11** We don't know much about Jesus Justus, but we know this: Paul said he was a comfort to him. Imagine being remembered not for preaching, miracles, or planting churches, but because you consistently encouraged people. In a world full of critics, Jesus Justus was a source of strength.

a. **Identity lesson:** Encouragement is ministry. Some of the most impactful people in the Kingdom are the ones helping others keep going.

6. **Verse 12-13** Epaphras brought the Gospel back to Colossae after being impacted by Paul's ministry in Ephesus. He started the church in Colossae, and potentially also helped start the churches in Laodicea, and Hierapolis. He cared deeply about people's spiritual growth. Paul said he always labored fervently in prayer for them. He wasn't just teaching people; he was praying for them so they would come into maturity and into the will of God.

a. **Identity lesson:** Spiritual fathers don't just make converts. They help people grow up in Christ.

b. **Scriptural references: Colossians 1:7-8, Philemon 1:23**

7. **Verse 14** Luke was a physician and historian (wrote *Luke & Acts*) who traveled with Paul and stayed with him through some very difficult seasons. He wasn't just a ministry partner; he was a faithful friend.

a. **Identity lesson:** The Kingdom needs people who can preserve and communicate, what God is doing to the next generation.

b. **Scriptural references: Philemon 1:24, 2 Timothy 4:11**, multiple times in **Acts**.

8. **Verse 14** At this point, Demas is serving alongside Paul. Was at one point, in his inner circle, later Paul wrote that Demas forsook him because he loved this present world - **2 Timothy 4:10**

a. **Identity lesson:** It's not enough to start well. We need to stay close to Jesus and finish well. Also, Jesus will be faithful even when some friends are faithless.

b. **Scriptural references: Philemon 1:24**

9. **Verse 15** Nymphas opened his home for the church to meet. Before church buildings, people created space for discipleship, fellowship, and ministry to happen.

a. **Identity lesson:** Never underestimate the impact of hospitality and creating room for others to grow.

10. **Verse 16** Paul told the Colossians to share this letter with the church at Laodicea and read the letter coming from Laodicea. These were known as circular letters—letters that were passed from church to church so more believers could be strengthened by the truth. God's truth was never meant to stop with us; it's meant to be passed on to others.

11. **Verse 17** Paul gave Archippus a simple but powerful challenge: "Fulfill the ministry God has given you." He most probably had or led a home church. It's unclear whether he had gotten discouraged and stopped or if this was just an exhortation to push through a hard season.

a. **Identity lesson:** It's not enough to receive a calling. We have to stay faithful and finish what God has called us to do.

b. **Scriptural references: Philemon 1:2**

12. **Verse 18** Paul closes by signing the letter in his own handwriting to verify its authenticity, since false letters claiming to be from him were already circulating (**2 Thessalonians 2:2**). He then says, "Remember my chains"—a reminder to pray for him, but also to remember the cost of the Gospel and be willing to lay down our lives for Christ. He ends with a declaration of grace, reminding them that God's favor and ability are with them.

III. Conclusion - As Paul closes *Colossians*, we're reminded that God's new creation plan is bigger than us. The goal isn't just for us to be transformed—it's for us to help others be transformed too. Every person in this chapter is a picture of discipleship. The Kingdom advances when we pour into others and help them become who they are in Christ.

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What was your top takeaway from tonight's teaching?
2. Which person in *Colossians 4* do you most relate to right now (Tychicus, Onesimus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, etc.) and why?
3. Looking at the people Paul disciplined, what stands out to you about how God uses different gifts, personalities, and backgrounds to advance His Kingdom?
4. John Mark failed early in ministry but was later restored. How does his story encourage you in an area where you've experienced failure or disappointment?
5. Epaphras labored fervently in prayer for others to mature in Christ. Who are some people God has called you to pray for, encourage, and help grow spiritually?

6. Paul challenged Archippus to fulfill the ministry he had received from the Lord. What assignment or opportunity has God given you that requires renewed focus and faithfulness?
7. Throughout this chapter we see disciples making disciples. Who has poured into your life spiritually, and who are you intentionally investing in so God's work can continue through the next generation?