

Colossians 4:12–13

¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers in order 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.

Epaphras the Slave of Christ Colossians 4:12-13

INTRO:

As Paul closes his letter to the Colossians he mentions several people who seemed to be a part of his ministry team. Last Sunday we met two of them, Tychicus and Onesimus. Today we meet perhaps the most significant of these folks from the Colossian point of view. Epaphras was the man who started the church to which Paul wrote.

Epaphras bore a good testimony of the Colossians to Paul, but most of all Epaphras was a good testimony because of who he was. He had put on that new man Paul wrote about in this book.

- I. The Testimony He bore (1:3-8)*
- II. The Testimony He Wore (4:12-13)*

I. The Testimony He bore (1:3-8)

Colossians 1:3–8 *“We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; as you learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.”*

A. Do you remember all the nice words the Apostle Paul wrote about the Colossian church in the opening chapter of this letter? Paul wrote he prayed for them, **vs.4-5** *“since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.”*

In the end of the first paragraph of **Colossians 1**, we discovered Paul heard that from Epaphras. Epaphras was eager to bear testimony to all the good things God had done in the

lives of the Colossians. He wanted to glorify God by underlining what God had done in the hearts of the people.

B. Not only did Epaphras bear witness to what God had done in the Colossian believers, he was the one who originally brought the Gospel to the Colossians.

Colossians 4:5-8 *“of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; as you learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.”*

Epaphras was a committed communicator of the truth. It is crucial to note Epaphras did not just evangelize, he planted local churches. We have not fulfilled the great commission if churches are not the product.

C. Epaphras bore testimony to the work God did in the believers. He exhibited his own testimony of faithfulness in that he planted the church and brought these folks the gospel. Finally, he also carried the love of the Colossians for the Apostle Paul, whom they had not met, to him. Epaphras was a clear testimony for others.

II. The Testimony He Wore (4:12-13)

Colossians 4:12–13 *“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. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.”*

A. Epaphras bore witness to the blessing of God on the people of God in Colossi. He also was a testimony to those who knew him. He was a testimony in that he ministered among those who knew him.

v.12 *“Epaphras, who is one of you.”*

Sometimes the hardest place to work for the Lord is with those who know you well.

Remember Jesus noted,

Mark 6:4 *“A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.”*

B. The second testimony that Epaphras wore was that he was, *“a slave of Christ.”*

Everything Epaphras did, he did to please the Lord Jesus Christ his master. He followed Paul’s pattern for ministry.

2 Corinthians 4:5 *“For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your slaves for Jesus’ sake.”*

C. The third part of the testimony that described Epaphras was that he was, *“always laboring fervently for you in prayers.”* (v.12) Epaphras practiced what Paul commanded the Colossians to do. He was devoted and persistent in prayer. He made it a

point to pray often for the Colossians. Because he loved them so dearly, he prayed for them the more earnestly. The word translated *“fervently”* is a word that describes the efforts of athletes in an area. They are really putting out the effort. Epaphras put great effort into his praying.

D. What did Epaphras pray for? His requests say volumes about Epaphras real love for the people of God because he loved God Himself. Epaphras was,

v.12 *“Always laboring fervently for you in prayers [in order] that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”*

He did not pray for their evangelism, he prayed for their spiritual growth and maturity. He prayed that they might be complete or mature, completely filled with the assurance of the will of God. He prayed that they might be committed to doing God’s will every moment of every day. Do you remember what Paul prayed for them and we need to pray for each other?

Colossians 1:9–10 *“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*

Epaphras prayer request was also the Apostle Paul’s request for them.

Two notes. First, we need to realize Epaphras did great work for the Colossian believers even though he was in Rome. Praying for others is important work. Praying is also hard work. Paul tells us to be devoted, committed to pray continually because Satan works against us to keep us from serving God by praying.

Second, our spiritual growth is vital to God. Paul wrote this because the Lord wants us to be mature and complete, filled with the full assurance we are doing the will of God. Or as Paul prayed, (1) we might be filled with the knowledge of His will (know the Bible); (2) that we might walk worthy of the Lord fully pleasing Him in everything we do; (3)and that we might increase in our knowledge of Him.

Does that describe us? Is this how we pray for one another?