

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 119 – Colossians 3:15-4:18

Day 591: Colossians 3:15-17

Verse 15

καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβεύετω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἐνὶ σωματι· καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε.

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

Cf. Eph 2:2-3. "Here once more we should be ready to recognise something of a more titular force in the name 'Christ' ('the Christ'), since in prophetic perspective the peace promised to God's covenant people was a hope for the future new age (Isa 9:6-7; 54:10; Ezek 34:25-31; 37:26; Mic 5:4; Hag 2:9; Zech 8:12...). The peace the Colossian believers could experience in their hearts was further proof that they belonged to the people of the Messiah in the age of the Messiah already come." Dunn

βραβεύω act as judge or umpire, rule

"The metaphor is an attractive one: of the knowledge of what Christ has achieved and the inward calm tranquility which believers can enjoy in consequence, determining what courses should be followed in difficult decisions and how the tensions of community relations (cf. 3:13) may be resolved (cf. Rom 14:17, 19; 1 Cor 14:33)." Dunn

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνός, μιας, ἑνός one
σωμα, τος n body

"The one body is also the arena within which the peace of Christ comes to effect." Dunn

εὐχάριστος, ον thankful, grateful

Verse 16

ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικεῖτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νοουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ψαλμοῖς, ὕμνοις, ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν [τῇ] χάριτι ἄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ·

Instead of the unusual expression 'the word of Christ,' which nowhere else occurs in the NT, several witnesses substitute the more customary 'the word of God' or 'the word of the Lord.'

At the heart of corporate worship is the 'word of Christ' – the gospel in all its fullness centring in Christ, who is himself the source of all teaching and instruction.

ἐνοικεω live in

"In this context the ἐν ὑμῖν may also signify 'among you,' indicating an element of preaching/teaching in the communal gatherings of the Colossian Christians for worship and instruction." Dunn

πλουσίως adv richly, in full measure
σοφία, ας f wisdom, insight, intelligence
διδάσκω teach
νουθετέω instruct, teach, warn

Cf. 1:28.

ἑαυτός, ἑαυτή, ἑαυτόν see v.13

"It is a striking feature of the Pauline corpus how much Paul insisted that the members of the churches to which he wrote should recognise their mutual responsibility to instruct and admonish (JB/NJB's 'advise' is too weak) each other (Rom 12:7; 15:14; 1 Cor 14:26; 1 Thess 5:14; 2 Thess 3:15; note also Gal 6:1-3)." Dunn

ψαλμος, ου m psalm, song
ὕμνος, ου m hymn
ᾠδή, ης f song, song of praise
πνευματικός, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to the spirit

"Their relation to the preceding clause is unclear ... but the possibility that such hymns were vehicles of instruction cannot be ruled out. Prior to the invention of printing, hymns and songs were a necessary and invaluable means of implanting Christian teaching – and even after (it is often said that Methodism's distinctive theology is to be found primarily in the hymns of Charles Wesley)." Dunn

χάριτι Noun, dat s χάρις, ιτος f grace, gratitude

ᾄδω sing

Verse 17

καὶ πᾶν ὃ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ διὰ αὐτοῦ.

ἐὰν if, even if

Here equivalent to ἂν particle indicating contingency and introducing subjunctive. ὃ τι ἐὰν 'whatever'. "There is no discontinuity envisaged between worship and daily living; on the contrary, the whole of daily life should be lived out in the same spirit – 'your spiritual worship' (Rom 12:1-2). The attitude is thoroughly Jewish." Dunn

ὄνομα, τος n name

"Both here and in Eph 5:20 the thought is of those who have put themselves under the name of Jesus as Lord and who seek to do everything in consciousness of his commissioning and enabling. In this way an effective *inclusio* with the thematic of 2:6-7 is achieved: to walk in Christ Jesus as Lord is to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. This is what should mark out the Colossian Christians, in life as in worship, not a hankering for worship with often unnamed angels (2:18)." Dunn

εὐχαριστεῶ thank, give thanks
πατήρ, πατήρ m father

"The very unusual collocation τῷ θεῷ πατρί, which is widely supported was emended by copyists who inserted καί, thus imitating Eph 5:20 and similar passages." Metzger

Day 592: Colossians 3:18-4:1

3:18-4:1

For similar sections of household rules cf. Eph 5:22-6:9; 1 Pet 2:18-3:7 and with less close parallels 1 Tim 2:8-15; 6:1-2; Titus 2:1-10. The framework reflects traditional concern for 'household management' in the Greco-Roman world and has parallels particularly in Stoicism. At the same time, Dunn notes, "there are clearly Jewish features, particularly in the extent of the concern for the weaker members of the three pairings... There are also distinctively Christian features, most notably the sevenfold reference to 'the Lord,' that is, Christ (3:18,20,22-24; 4:1), not as a separate part of the code (duties towards God), but as providing the orientation of the whole, and even the possibility of some dependence on some tradition of Jesus' own teaching (see on 3:20)." He concludes, "To become a member of the new family of Jesus (cf., e.g., Rom 8:16-17,29) did not involve displacement or justify neglect of household responsibilities, whether the believer belonged to a Christian or non-Christian household; Christian discipleship was not disruptive of society's basic structure... Relationships within the family and household were themselves part of Christian vocation and the first place where responsibility to the Lord should come to expression and be put to the test."

Verse 18

Αἱ γυναῖκες, ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν, ὡς ἀνῆκεν ἐν κυρίῳ.

γυνή, ἀκος f woman, wife

ὑποτάσσεσθε Verb, pres midd imperat, 2 pl
ὑποτασσω subordinate; pass. be
subject, submit to, obey

ἀνῆρ, ἀνδρὸς m man, husband

ἀνῆκεν Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s

ἀνήκει impers. it is proper, it is right

Verse 19

Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς αὐτάς.

ἀγαπαῶ love, show love for

"The corresponding responsibility of the husband is to love his wife. The ideal of a husband being tenderly solicitous for his wife was not distinctively Christian... But again a distinctive Christian note comes through in the use of the verb ἀγαπαῶ, which, as elsewhere in the Paulines (Rom 8:37; Gal 2:20; Eph 2:4; 5:2,25), gains its characteristic emphasis from Christ's self-giving on the cross (see on 1:4 and 3:14). Thus ἀγαπαῶ plays the role in 3:19 of 'in the Lord' in 3:18 and 20 and is itself sufficient to refer the reader back to traditions of Jesus as the Christ and Lord (2:6-7)." Dunn

γυνή, ἀκος f woman, wife

πικραίνεσθε Verb, pres pass imperat, 2 pl

πικραίνω make bitter

"Most translate 'Do not be harsh with them' (RSV,NEB/REB,NIV,GNB). But the passive voice here presumably implies that the bitterness is experienced by the husbands. What is in view, therefore, is probably the feeling of the dominant partner who can legally enforce his will on his wife but who will not thereby win her love and respect and can thus feel cheated and embittered as not receiving what he regards as his due." Dunn.

Verse 20

Τὰ τέκνα, ὑπακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν κατὰ πάντα, τοῦτο γὰρ εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν ἐν κυρίῳ.

τέκνον, οὐ n child

"The legal status of children under Roman law was still more disadvantaged. Technically speaking, they were the property of the father... The child under age in fact was no better off than a slave (a point Paul had been able to put to good effect in Gal 4:1-7)... In view of all this it is worth noting that children who presumably were still minors (cf. Eph 6:4) are directly addressed; evidently they are thought of as both present in the Christian meeting where the letter would be read out and as responsible agents despite their youth." Dunn

ὑπακούω obey, be subject to

γονεὺς, εὼς m parent
εὐαρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing

Cf. Eph 6:1-2 which makes the point explicitly by quoting the fifth commandment.

Verse 21

Οἱ πατέρες, μὴ ἐρεθίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν,
ἵνα μὴ ἀθυμώσιν.

πατήρ, πατήρ m father
ἐρεθίζω stir up, make resentful, embitter
ἀθυμεῶ become discouraged or
disheartened

"To belong to a strange sect, a religion without a cult centre, without priest and sacrifice, must have exposed the younger members of the Christian families at Colossae to some abuse from their fellows in the marketplace. Without strong parental encouragement they could easily become 'discouraged' (RSV). The psychological sensitivity displayed here is remarkably modern." Dunn

Verse 22

Οἱ δούλοι, ὑπακούετε κατὰ πάντα τοῖς
κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις, μὴ ἐν
ὀφθαλμοδουλίᾳ ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι, ἀλλ'
ἐν ἀπλότῃ καρδίᾳ, φοβούμενοι τὸν
κύριον.

δούλος, ου m slave, servant

Part of the household in the ancient world. Again they are part of the Christian congregation being addressed and treated as responsible individuals.

ὑπακούω see v.20

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature
ὀφθαλμοδουλία, ας f service rendered
merely to impress others

The Greek word is found only here and in Eph 6:6.

ἀνθρωπάρεσκος, ον one who acts merely
to please men

ἀπλοτης, ητος f generosity, sincerity

"It indicates a singleness of intention, a focus of purpose, springing from the centre of motivation and concern (see on 2:2), so 'wholeheartedly and without reservation.'" Dunn

φοβεομαι trans fear, reverence

"The main motivation for such single-minded obedience is *not* the human relationship of slave to master (a servile fear, as in Rom 8:15), but the obligation that, whatever one's position in human society, one should live as before the Lord and for the Lord (cf. 1 Cor 7:17-24)." Dunn

Verse 23

ὃ ἐὰν ποιήτε, ἐκ ψυχῆς ἐργάζεσθε, ὡς τῷ
κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις,

ἐὰν if; often equivalent to ἂν

ὃ ἐὰν 'whatever' cf. v.18

ψυχή, ης f self, inmost being, 'soul'

'put every part of your being into the work you do,' 'put your whole heart into it.'

ἐργάζομαι work, do, perform

Verse 24

εἰδότες ὅτι ἀπὸ κυρίου ἀπολήμψεσθε τὴν
ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας. τῷ κυρίῳ
Χριστῷ δουλεύετε·

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα
(verb perf in form but with present
meaning) know, understand

ἀπολήμψεσθε Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 pl
ἀπολαμβάνω receive back, get back
ἀνταποδοσις, εως f compensation

Here alone in the NT.

κληρονομία, ας f inheritance, what is
promised

"The paradox of slaves becoming heirs of God's kingdom would not be lost on the Colossians. Under Roman law slaves could not inherit anything." Dunn

δουλεύω serve, be a slave

"The triple repetition suggests that slaves would need to keep reminding themselves that their loyalty to Christ transcended their loyalty to their masters, thus making it easier to bear the harsher features of their enslavement." Dunn

Verse 25

ὃ γὰρ ἀδικῶν κομίσεται ὃ ἠδίκησεν, καὶ
οὐκ ἔστιν προσωποληψία.

ἀδικεῶ wrong, treat unjustly, harm
κομιζῶ buy; midd receive, be paid back

Cf. 2 Peter 2:13. "The force of this warning or reassurance is twofold: it encouraged harshly treated slaves that their masters could not escape due judgment, in the final judgment if not in this life, and it warned the slaves themselves to maintain their own high standards of integrity so far as possible. The teaching is not antithetical to the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, but echoes Paul's own earlier teaching (Rom 2:6-11; 1 Cor 3:13-15; 2 Cor 5:10)." Dunn

προσωποληψία, ας f favouritism,
treating one person better than another

Cf. Lev 19:15; Deut 1:17; 16:19 and in respect of God Deut 10:17; 2 Chron 19:7.

Verse 1

Οἱ κύριοι, τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα
τοῖς δούλοις παρέχετε, εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ
ὑμεῖς ἔχετε κύριον ἐν οὐρανῷ.

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
ἰσοτητος, ητος f equality, fairness
παρεχω act & midd cause, bring about,
do, offer

Here, 'grant'

εἰδότες see 3:24

Day 593: Colossians 4:2-6**Verse 2**

Τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτερεῖτε,
γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ,
προσκαρτερεω devote oneself to,
continue in

"The note is of perseverance and tenaciousness... The thought is obviously of a piece with the idea of unceasing prayer (Rom 1:9-10; 1 Thess 5:17; Eph 6:18)." Dunn

γρηγορεω be or keep awake, be alert

Drawn from the imagery of guard duty. "It's metaphorical usage seems to be almost wholly Christian. The inspiration was almost certainly Christianity's sense of imminent expectation, which can be traced back to Jesus himself (Mark 13:35,37; Matt 24:42; 25:13; 1 Thess 5:6; Rev 3:3; 16:15) and which here still retains something of its earlier freshness. Moreover, the link with prayer may echo the scene in the garden of Gethsemane from the passion narrative, which would no doubt be familiar in all the early Christian churches (Mark 14:38/Matt 26:41)." Dunn

εὐχαριστια, ας f thanksgiving

Cf. 1:3,12; 2:7; 3:17.

Verse 3

προσευχόμενοι ἅμα καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ
θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου,
λαλήσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, διὸ
καὶ δέδεμαι,

προσευχομαι pray
ἅμα adv. at the same time, together

"Paul had no embarrassment in understanding prayer as asking for things on behalf of people (Jesus has so taught, e.g., Matt 7:7-11/Luke 11:9-13). Such prayer expressed not a selfishness or acquisitiveness, but a recognition of dependence on God for the opportunities to serve him and the enabling to do so. So Paul does not hesitate, rather is eager to ask for prayer for himself and his work (as in Rom 15:30-32; 2 Cor 1:11; Phil 1:19; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1-2; Phm 22; the parallel with Eph 6:19-20 becomes very close for these two verses)." Dunn

ἀνοίξῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀνοιγω
open

θύρα, ας f door, gate

λαλεω speak, talk

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery (of something formerly unknown but now revealed)

Cf. 1:26-27; 2:2.

δέδεμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s δεω
bind, tie

Verse 4

ἵνα φανερωσω αὐτὸ ὡς δεῖ με λαλήσαι.

φανερωσω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s φανερωω
make known, reveal, make evident

"This verse underlines Paul's own conviction that he has been given the primary privilege, as apostle to the Gentiles, to disclose the secret of God's overarching design in creation and salvation (Rom 11:25-26; 1 Cor 2:7; 4:1; Col 1:27-29; Eph 3:7-13)." Dunn

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary,
should, ought

λαλεω speak, talk

Verse 5

Ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς ἕξω, τὸν
καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι.

σοφια, ας f wisdom, insight, intelligence
περιπατεω walk, live

Cf. 1:9-10.

ἕξω adv. outside; ὁ ἕξω outsider,
unbeliever

"To hold a balance between maintaining distinctive commitment and promoting genuine communication with others is never easy.

καιρος, ου m time

ἐξαγοραζω set free, redeem; midd make
the most of

i.e. reclaim time that might otherwise be lost or slip away. The use of καιρος meaning 'significant time' adds a sense of eschatological urgency.

Verse 6

ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι, ἅλατι ἠρτυμένος, εἰδέναι πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἑκάστῳ ἀποκρίνεσθαι.

Envisages a church in communication with those around it, not cut off in a 'holy huddle.'

παντοτε always

χάριτι Noun, dat s χάρις, ιτος f grace; thanks, gratitude

ἅλας, ατος n salt

ἠρτυμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s ἄρτω season, restore flavour

Cf. Eph 5:29. "Christian speech is not to be insipid, far less to be corrupt, but it is to possess that hallowed pungency which shall excite interest in the enquirer, and that preservative flavour which may influence for good the mind and heart of those who, being without, are disposed to put questions to the members of the church." Eadie

εἰδέναι Verb, perf act infin οἶδα see 3:24 δεῖ see v.4

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

ἐνὶ ἑκάστῳ 'one to another'

ἀποκρίνομαι answer, reply, say

"Here, evidently, was a church not on the defensive against powerful forces organised against it, but expected to hold its own in the social setting of marketplace, baths, and mealtable and to win attention by the attractiveness of its life and speech." Dunn

Day 594: Colossians 4:7-12

Verses 7-18

Paul commonly rounds off his letters with personal messages such as travel plans, greetings, final instructions, a personal note and final benediction.

Verse 7

Τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ πάντα γνωρίσει ὑμῖν Τυχικός ὁ ἀγαπητός ἀδελφός καὶ πιστός διάκονος καὶ σύνδουλος ἐν κυρίῳ,

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγώ

γνωρίζω make known, disclose

ἀγαπητός, η, ον beloved

πιστός, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable

διακονος, ου m & f servant, helper, minister

σύνδουλος, ου m fellow-slave, fellow-servant

Tychicus was an Asian (perhaps from Ephesus) who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem with the collection (Acts 20:4, cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4). He would have been a delegate from one of the churches. Now, perhaps 4 years later, he is sent as Paul's personal representative with the letter to the Colossians and the Ephesians (Eph 6:21,22) and Philemon. Paul was ready to consider him a suitable substitute for Titus in Crete (Titus 3:12) and to send him to Ephesus (bearing the letter 2 Timothy?) just when Timothy was needed elsewhere (2 Tim 4:12).

Verse 8

ὄν ἔπεμψα πρὸς ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ παρακαλέση τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν,

πεμπω send

A good example of an epistolary aorist.

γνῶτε Verb, aor pass subj, 2 pl γινωσκω

παρακαλέση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

Verse 9

σὺν Οησιμῷ τῷ πιστῷ καὶ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ, ὅς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν· πάντα ὑμῖν γνωρίσουσιν τὰ ὧδε.

ὧδε adv here, in this place

Onesimus was a slave from Colossae who had run away from his master, Philemon (see letter to Philemon). He had become a Christian through Paul's influence. Once of little value to his master, he is now of great value and is to be recognised not only as a slave but also as a brother.

Verse 10

Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου, καὶ Μάρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ (περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολὰς, ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς δέξασθε αὐτόν),

ἀσπάζομαι greet, welcome, say goodbye

Aristarchus seems to have been from Thessalonica. He was with Paul during the latter's lengthy ministry at Ephesus. He travelled with Paul to Jerusalem and seems to have accompanied him to Rome (Acts 20:4; 27:2).

It may be that Aristarchus and Epaphras (see Philemon 23) were not literally prisoners with Paul but had volunteered to stay with him during his house arrest.

συναιχμαλωτος, ου m fellow-prisoner
ἀνεψιος, ου m cousin

This **Mark** was the same as wrote the second Gospel and had been a helper of Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. Mark had deserted his senior partners and had returned home. Paul had refused to take him on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-41), and this had resulted in Paul and Barnabas going their separate ways.

Mark seems now to have redeemed himself and is valued by Paul (see also 2 Tim 4:11). The encouragement of Barnabas had doubtless been an important factor in Mark's restoration, as, in all probability, had been the influence of Peter (see 1 Peter 5:13): Peter had known what it was to fail and to be restored.

ἐλάβετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl λαμβανω
ἐντολη, ης f command, instruction
ἐαν if
δέξασθε Verb, aor midd dep imperat, 2 pl
δεχομαι receive, accept, welcome

Verse 11

καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰουδοῦς, οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς οὗτοι μόνοι συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, οἵτινες ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία.

περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those
circumcised, Jews
μονος, η, ον only, alone

Implies a disappointment that so few Jews were helping Paul in his work.

συνεργος, ου m fellow-worker
οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ
τι who, which, whoever, whichever,
anyone, someone
ἐγενήθησάν Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 pl
γίνομαι
παρηγορια, ας f comfort

Verse 12

ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἐπαφράς ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν, δούλος Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ], πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς, ἵνα σταθῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἀσπαζομαι see v.10
Ἐπαφρας, α m Epaphras

Epaphras, converted through the instrumentality of Paul, was, in all probability, the actual founder of the churches in the Lycus Valley (Col 1:7). He was from Colossae and was a hard worker in the three neighbouring churches. He seems, in some sense, also to have shared for a while in Paul's imprisonment (Phm 22).

δουλος, ου m slave, servant
παντοτε always
ἀγωνιζομαι struggle, fight, compete
προσευχη, ης f prayer
σταθῆτε Verb, 2 aor act subj, 2 pl ἴστημι
and ἵστανω stand, stand firm
τελειος, α, ον complete, perfect, mature
πεπληροφορημένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m
nom pl πληροφορεω convince fully,
assure fully
θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

Epaphras' concern for the Colossians mirrors Paul's own concern for the churches.

Day 595: Colossians 4:13-18

Verse 13

μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτῷ ὅτι ἔχει πολὺν πόνον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεραπόλει.

μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify
πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου i)
much, many
πονος, ου m pain, suffering; hard work

Cf. 2:1. Epaphras' concern again reflects that of Paul himself.

Verse 14

ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Λουκᾶς ὁ ἰατρός ὁ ἀγαπητὸς καὶ Δημᾶς.

ἀσπαζομαι see v.10

Luke was a Gentile Christian. Note that he was here in Rome with Mark: doubtless Luke learned and took much from Mark which he later incorporated into the third Gospel. Later, Luke is the only one remaining with Paul in Rome (2 Tim 4:11a).

ἰατρος, ου m physician, doctor
ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

Demas was one who later deserted Paul and the work of the Gospel (see 2 Tim. 4:10).

Verse 15

Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἀδελφοὺς
καὶ Νύμφαν καὶ τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῆς
ἐκκλησίαν.

There appear to have been close links between the churches of Colossians and Laodicea.

οἶκος, ου m house, home, household

"Νύμφαν can be accented Νύμφαν, from the feminine nominative Νύμφα, or Νύμφαν, from the masculine nominative Νύμφας. The uncertainty of the gender of the name led to a variation in the following possessive pronoun between αὐτῆς and αὐτοῦ. On the basis chiefly of the weight of mss evidence the Committee preferred Νύμφαν ... αὐτῆς." Metzger, *Textual Commentary*.

ἐκκλησία, ας f congregation, church

"Almost all churches met in private homes for the first two centuries of Christianity's existence (explicitly indicated in Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Phm 2, as well as here; see also Acts 2:46; 5:42; 12:12; 16:15, 40; 18:7-8; 20:8,20; Rom 16:14-15,23)." Dunn

Verse 16

καὶ ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῇ παρ' ὑμῖν ἡ
ἐπιστολή, ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ
Λαοδικέῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῇ, καὶ τὴν
ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε.

ὅταν when

ἀναγνωσθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s
ἀναγιγνωσκω read, read in public
worship

παρὰ preposition with dat with, in the
presence of

ἐπιστολή, ης f letter

Λαοδικεὺς, εως m Laodicean

ἀναγνῶτε Verb, 2nd aor act subj, 2 pl
ἀναγιγνωσκω

"The current letter would be read among the Colossians, that is, read aloud (by Tychicus or Onesimus) at meetings of each of the house churches in Colossae (cf. 1 Thess 5:27) or perhaps at a single (open-air?) meeting of the whole church called for the purpose...

Without further delay, presumably (the cities were so close that any threat to the church in one would almost certainly be a threat to the other), it should be taken to Laodicea (again by Tychicus and Onesimus?), with the greetings of the Colossians (4:15), and read to a (single) gathering of the Laodicean church. Again, presumably on their return, the party from Colossae would bring back a different letter sent initially to the Laodiceans, to be read to the Colossians.

"How general was this practice with Paul's letters? We should hesitate to generalise too quickly from the case in point, since the cities of Colossae and Laodicea were so close. Nevertheless, it is significant that a letter written for a particular church should be regarded as of sufficiently wider relevance as to be read elsewhere. That suggests an awareness on the part of the author(s) that Paul's teaching, even in specific letters, was of not merely occasional or passing significance. In other words, we see here already that beginning of the sense of the letters' importance that thereafter developed over the decades into an acknowledgement of their canonical status. Moreover we begin to see something of the process by which, presumably, Paul's letters gained growing influence as a group; that is, by increasingly widespread circulation, different letters would not only gain wider recognition but also be put together with other letters." Dunn

Some think that the 'letter from Laodicea' is the letter we know as 'Ephesians' and that it had been intended by Paul to be a circular or general letter. Others are of the view that this letter (like some of those to Corinth – see 1 Cor. 5:9) has been lost.

Verse 17

καὶ εἶπατε Ἀρχίππῳ, Βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν
ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν κυρίῳ, ἵνα αὐτὴν
πληροῖς.

εἶπατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl λεγω

On Archippus cf. Phm 2, which suggests he was one of Paul's fellow workers and, in context, that he may have been a member of Philemon's family, perhaps a son.

βλεπω see, look, look to

διακονία, ας f ministry, service

παρέλαβες Verb, aor act indic, 2 s

παραλαμβάνω receive, accept

πληροῖς Verb, pres act subj, 2 s πληροω
fulfill, accomplish

The exact nature of this ministry or task cannot be known, but Dunn Comments, "That the whole community (all the recipients) have the responsibility of recalling Archippus to this task (particularly if he was a member of an important household in the community) conforms to Paul's concept of mutual responsibility and shared authority within the community, to which all, including the more important members, are to be subject (cf. particularly 3:16 and 1 Thess 5:20-21...)." Dunn

Verse 18

Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῆ ἐμῆ χειρὶ Παύλου.
μνημονεύετε μου τῶν δεσμῶν. ἡ χάρις
μεθ' ὑμῶν.

ἄσπασμος, ου m greeting
ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my,
mine

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

Cf. 1 Cor 16:21; 2 Thess 3:17.

μνημονεω remember, keep in mind
δεσμος, ου m (& n) bond, chain,
imprisonment, prison

"Perhaps it was the fetters themselves which
made it difficult for Paul to add more than this
brief scrawl." Dunn

χάρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour