

# THROUGH THE BIBLE

## COLOSSIANS 3-4

After you commit your all to Jesus - and get really excited about living for Him - don't be surprised if someone approaches you with some errant advice...

A jaded friend - or a lukewarm family member - will say, "Now be careful, don't become too spiritual. You can be so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good."

The second half of Colossians refutes this notion once and for all. Paul assures us this is no real danger!

He encourages you and I in the opposite direction.

He instructs us in verse 2, "*set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*" Our true north should be God's truth - our bearings fixed on Him - our focus heavenward - our ambitions spiritual and godly.

I like what CS Lewis once wrote on this subject... "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one."

It's true, the more heavenly-minded and spiritually-minded you really are the more earthly good you'll do.

This is what tonight's chapters teach us...

Paul writes in Colossians 3:1, "*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*"

The old comedian, Jack Benny, was known as a penny-pincher. The joke is told about him walking down the street and getting accosted by a robber. He stuck a gun in Jack's face, "your money or your life?"

After a long pause by Jack the robber grew impatient. He growled, "Well, your money or your life?"

Benny replied, "Don't rush me I'm thinking about it?"

Its sad, but for many people their money is their life.

Their mind is set on material concerns - money and the happiness they hope it can buy. Paul is saying don't be so shallow - so earth-bound in your thoughts.

Set your mind - fixate your thoughts - preoccupy your passions - direct your desires - on the wonders of God.

Here's another CS Lewis quote, "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like the ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased..."

Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak." We settle for earthy stuff and momentary happiness, instead of reaching higher for the spiritual realities that provide eternal joy and soul satisfaction.

I love verse 3, "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." The Christian life is the hidden life.

The world looks at the Christian, and doesn't get our devotion. They scoff, "She's committed herself completely to Christ, and has nothing to show for it!"

And to a degree the world is right... Our God is invisible... Our home is over the horizon, out-of-sight, off-the-map... Our greatest rewards are future...

Our Savior is seen only through eyes of faith... Our helper, the Holy Spirit, is like the wind - He's spiritual rather than tangible - sensed rather than seen...

Our treasure is buried in our hearts... Our source of joy and love and power and peace is accessed from the inside of our lives rather than from the outside...

In short, our *"life is hidden with Christ in God..."*

One day the Pharisees approached Jesus, "You talk so much about the Kingdom of God, where is it?"

Jesus answered, "The kingdom does not come with observation (its not visible, or tangible, or earthly); nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' (you can't point to it...) For indeed, the kingdom of God is **within you.**"

Our lives are hid with Christ in God.

We're like an iceberg – the largest part of *who we are* and *what we have* is out-of-sight, below the surface. All the world sees is the tip of the iceberg. This is why we're laughed at, ridiculed, misunderstood. We have given our all to a Kingdom other folks can't see.

But verse 4, *"When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."*

People may be mocking you at the moment - but one day the follower of Jesus is going to get the last laugh.

When Jesus appears - *visibly and tangibly* - the whole world will stand in awe. With jaws dropped and tongues tied - they'll stand in fear of His majesty.

Suddenly your life - and what the world thought was a strange devotion - will be instantly explained. You'll stand beside the Christ, clothed in His glory. In that moment, *the hidden life will become the envied life.*

I read of an avid duck hunter named, Dean Gooden.

When Dean died a friend placed his ashes inside a pair of two-foot long, mallard decoys. His buddy made the statement, "He has a good place here. He goes hunting with me. I even put bows on him at Christmas."

Well it's pretty sad, when that's all you've got to look forward to when you die. People who live only for this life end up *quacks*. In Christ, we live for eternity!

It's so true... only after you've become heavenly minded, do you understand what's of value here below.

Verse 5, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth..." Paul is speaking figuratively.

Our members are the sinful habits we cultivated before we knew Jesus. Now that you're a new you in Christ you need to put to death those sinful practices.

And he lists the activities he's talking about...

First is "fornication" or sex outside of marriage.

The Greek word is "pornea." It's a catch-all phrase for all kinds of illicit sexual activities - pornography, homosexuality, adultery - shacking up, hooking up, friends-with-benefits, all the varieties of pre-marital sex.

The buzz word today is **safe sex**, but God's Word says **save sex**. God designed sex for marriage. Sex before or outside marriage is never blessed by God. It might seem right to you, but God disapproves.

Several years ago a USA Today report stated there's a 50% greater chance of divorce for couples who live together before marriage than for couples who didn't.

I've heard couples justify their sin by saying they just want to take a test drive before they actually buy.

Well, when it comes to sex before marriage that test drive can be a demolition derby. When you're done the car is all banged up, and no longer runs properly.

God says put to death **"fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness (or envy), which is idolatry."** Notice, lusting after somebody else's stuff is considered by God a modern-day form of idolatry.

He continues, **"Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them."**

Thankfully, this is how we once walked. But the grace of God *has* and *is* changing us. Before we came to Christ we were marching straight to hell. But now we've broken cadence. We're marching to a different drummer. We're getting in step with heaven...

Verse 8, **"But now you yourselves are to put off all these..."** In the next few verses Paul is going to teach us how to dress for success... *spiritually speaking...*

When you become a Christian the Holy Spirit creates a new you! But afterwards it's up to you to build a new wardrobe. There're attitudes you need to *“put off”* and *“put on.”* He starts with the threads we should shed...

First is *“anger.”* The Greek word implies a simmering, festering kind of animosity... Of course, not all anger is sin. There is a proper anger. We can get angry over sin or injustice. But when we sit on our anger, and let it stew seldom does it result in anything good.

We need to deal with anger before it becomes a sin.

This is what Paul told the Ephesians, *“Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath...”*

Second on Paul's list of off-attitudes is *“wrath.”* The Greek word is *“thumos”* or *“a hot, volcanic anger.”*

Learn to diffuse *an explosive temper* - *“put it off.”*

As well as, *“malice”* - or taking pleasure in someone else's misfortune. And *“blasphemy”* - or any contempt for God or the things of God. And *“filthy language out of your mouth”* - insulting or disrespectful speech.

In verse 9 Paul writes, *“Do not lie to one another...”*

Remember how Ananias and Sapphira dropped dead when they lied to the Holy Spirit. God dealt with lying and hypocrisy so severely in the early church because He knew there could be no meaningful fellowship if there wasn't a truthfulness and honesty.

He says *“Do not lie... since you have put off the old man with his deeds...”* But putting off is only half the challenge. Verse 10 tells us we should also *“put on the new man who is renewed in*

knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...”  
Again, here’s how you live the Christian life – “*put off*” and “*put on*.”

According to Colossians 2, we’re complete in Christ. We’re new creations. We were circumcised spiritually. God cut off the fleshly fold. He made us new inside.

But in the outer man we still have issues.

Residual habits, tendencies, reactions - betray our identity in Christ. Thus, it’s our job to “*put off*” and “*put on*” - reprogram my thoughts and develop new habits. I’ve got to see myself in Christ and live accordingly.

One year, my son Mack, played soccer, and on his team were two kids with the same name “*Casey*.” One Casey was male, and the other Casey was female.

In their first game the coach barked instructions to Casey - but there was confusion. *Which Casey did he mean?* It didn’t take long for the coach to solve the problem. He started shouting, “*Pass it, Casey boy,*” or “*Clear it, Casey girl*” The smart coach differentiated the two Caseys by calling “*Casey boy*” and “*Casey girl.*”

And this is how we can win in the Christian life.

I’ve got to differentiate between the *new me* and the *old me*. When temptation raises its ugly head, and the world calls my name, it’s calling for the “*Old Sandy.*”

In those moments, I’ve got to remember I’m the “*New Sandy.*” The *Old Sandy* was crucified with Christ, and now a *New Sandy* has risen to new life with Jesus.

And I’ve got to discern the difference, so that I can forsake the old, and synchronize my life with the new.

For we're told in verse 11, in Christ, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all." Recall, the false teachers in Colosse, the early Gnostics, developed a spiritual elitism. They had a special knowledge of God that everyone else lacked.

Here Paul assures the Colossians that "*in Christ*" there is no such thing as spiritual exclusivity. In Christ all distinctions - *racial, cultural, social* - are abolished.

As Christians we're all one. At the foot of the cross, we're all on equal footing before the Father in Heaven.

"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved..."

Notice, how Paul refers to all believers - as the "*elect of God.*" There is no elitism within the ranks of Christianity - but all Christians together form a pretty elite group. We're the "*elect*" - "*the chosen of God.*" In Christ God considers each of us "*holy and beloved.*"

For God to consider you special you don't have to climb a mountain, or swim an ocean, or work a miracle, or receive a vision, or evangelize a country. If you're in Christ, God considers you special - "*holy and beloved.*"

God has no **elite**, only the "**elect.**"

And since you're the "*elect of God*" dress like it, "*put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering...*" Let's treat each other as special!

*Did you know that God has a dress code?* God cares about what you wear to church! It's a big deal to Him.

As a kid my parents told me God deserves my very best. So whenever I went to church that translated into my best clothes...



a white dress shirt you didn't dare get dirty - a starched collar that felt like a hangman's noose - a tie with a choking knot - a stifling coat - itchy pants - and stiff shoes designed by the devil himself.

It all made a young boy not want to go to church!

Well, I still believe we're suppose to wear *our best* to church – *but the best God desires has nothing to do with clothes*. God is concerned about our attitudes.

When we come to church He wants us to dress up in our very best character, and conduct, and courtesies.

*“Put on tender mercies...”* - compassion, empathy.

And *“kindness...”* I love Mark Twain's quote. He said of an acquaintance, *“he was a good man, in the worst sort of a way.”* I've met a folks who fit that description.

You can be moral - but harsh, hypocritical, a real jerk. We need to be loving and good at the same time.

*“Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness...”* This is *“strength under control.”*

Here's a gracious winner. The meek person doesn't get penalized 15 yards for excessive celebration. His goal is to *win the person* not just *win the argument*.

And *“put on longsuffering”* - or patience. Its been said, *“Patience is the virtue you admire in the driver behind you, and despise in the driver ahead of you.”*

Patience is the ability to wait on God to move.

Verse 13, “bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” We should treat others, just as Jesus treats us.

“But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.” Dress up a Christian in love, and he’ll be “a good man, in the best sort of way.”

Verse 15, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.” The Greek word translated “*rule*” referred to the judge at an athletic competition - *the ump*.

Paul is saying when a decision is too close to call - when it’s a bang-bang choice - let God’s peace make the call... If it feels right and godly - then you’re safe.

But if you’re uneasy about it - if there’s something you can’t quite put your finger on - then punch it out!

The problem though with *the peace approach* is its subjectivity. There are times when we can deceive our own hearts. So along with God’s peace, verse 16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...”

Say a guy comes up to me and says, “Sandy, I’ve been praying about it for some time now, and God has finally given me a peace about not paying my taxes.”

Wait a minute! Your peace is a piece of garbage - it’s a deception – the work of the devil. God isn’t going to give you a peace to do what’s forbidden in His Word.

That’s why the word of Christ should also dwell in our hearts. *Go through the Word, and let the Word go through you.* Let God’s Word dwell in you richly, fully, comprehensively – altering

attitudes, shaping values, challenging assumptions, changing perspectives.

Paul adds, “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” I love Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase, “Let the Word of Christ... have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God.”

**Look for peace, learn the Word, love the Lord** and you’ll live smack dab in the center of the will of God!

Verse 17, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Notice, “*in word or deed.*”

That’s pretty all-encompassing... run every thought, every desire, every attitude, every comment, every action - through the filter, “**what would Jesus do?**”

As we said at the outset tonight, the more heavenly minded you are, the more earthly good you’ll be.

And in the next few verses Paul describes how *a heavenly perspective* will effect *human relationships*...

Verse 18, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” Biblical marriage is **an ordered equality** - the man and the woman are equal in value, but distinct in the roles that God has assigned them.

God calls the woman to “**submit**” - or arrange her life around the man - and the man to be her loving leader.

Certainly, the wife should never be dwarfed by her husband. A married couple should complement each other. Marriage is a dance, a tango... The husband leads. He doesn't step on her toes, or stifle his wife.

Yet he takes the lead as they dance together!

Notice two stipulations to this command in verse 18.

First, the wife submits to her *“own husband.”* Thus, if you've got a problem with Kathy you go through me.

We once had a guy who cornered my wife one Sunday and jumped down her throat about some nonsense. I was on his doorstep Monday morning letting him know I didn't appreciate his approach. A wife submits to her *“own husband”* - not *any husband*.

And notice the second stipulation, *“as is fitting in the Lord.”* A woman is under no obligation to obey her husband if his demand is immoral, illegal, or unbiblical.

A wife doesn't belong to her husband. She belongs to the Lord, so husbands be careful how you treat her!

And then *“Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.”* A husband's job is to love his wife, and cover her, and encourage her spiritual growth.

He's responsible for his wife's welfare - *even for the stuff that's not his fault*. He helps her heal, and is sensitive to her feelings, and points her toward Jesus.

I think part of our responsibility as the head of our home is to protect our marriage from stalemate. It's the leader's role to keep *wedlock* from becoming *deadlock*.

“Well, I’m not going to tell her I’m sorry for what I did, until she tells me she’s sorry for what she did. She caused the problem...” And maybe she did, but don’t tell me you didn’t pour gas on the fire. A leader takes initiative. Says he’s sorry. He re-opens communication.

As the leader in his home God wants the husband to be first to seek reconciliation, even when your wife is in the wrong. *Jesus showed grace!* Romans 5:8 reminds us, “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Jesus takes the initiative - and so should husbands. Let’s die to our pride, and never give in to *bitterness...*

Verse 20, “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”

Notice the reciprocal responsibilities in the Christian ethic. Paul’s command for children to obey their parents was nothing new for Jews and Romans - but the responsibility for parents to avoid needlessly agitating and frustrating their kids, was revolutionary.

A Roman legal code known as the *Patria Potestas*, or “the power of the father,” stated that the Roman father could do anything he wanted with his kids. He could sell his kids into slavery - even take their lives.

Some of us who were wild bucks better be glad we grew up in the Christian era, rather than ancient Rome.

God wants kids to obey their parents, and God wants parents to show their kids love and encouragement.

Dad, don't aggravate your kids... Don't berate them or discipline them harshly. Rather than a *critic*, be their biggest *cheerleader*. Encourage and get behind them.

And kids need to listen to their parents. All parents are a lot smarter than their kids are prone to think.

If it's tough for a kid to submit to the father you can see, how will they submit to the Father Who's invisible?

Verse 22, “**Bondservants** (or *employees*) “obey in all things **your masters according to the flesh** (or your *employer*), **not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers** (not just when the boss is on the job-site observing what you're doing), **but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.**”

Never forget, *our boss is always watching us!*

When a Christian goes to work each morning he or she isn't working for the company, we work for the Lord. How we do our job is a big part of our witness.

For “**whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.**” Right now the boss signs your paycheck.

But the paycheck that really counts - you're eternal reward - will have God's signature at the bottom!

A man saw Mother Teresa washing the open sores and bandaging the puss-filled wounds of Calcutta's sick. He remarked, “**I wouldn't do that for a million dollars.**” Teresa answered, “**And neither would I.**”

She too wasn't looking for an *earthly reward* - as much as she was an *eternal reward* from God!

“But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.” God is just! He will be fair with both *His prizes* and *His punishments*.

Chapter 4, “Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.” Every boss on earth has a boss in heaven.

And remember bosses, your boss wasn't bossy!

Jesus made Himself a servant. He humbled Himself and refused to throw His weight around. Rather than intimidate or manipulate, He served sacrificially.

This is how a Christian boss should behave toward those under him. He should love them and serve them.

If you're an employer and you bemoan the lack of loyalty you get from your employees, you should ask if you've given them a reason to be loyal? Treat an employee with kindness, and he'll work harder for you.

Verse 2, “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving...” Persevere in prayer – don't just pray once and give up – continue to pray...

Verse 3, “Meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains...”

Remember, Paul is in prison, but rather than praying *for him to get out* he asks the Colossians to pray that *the Word of God will get out!* Paul isn't concerned about himself, but about the advance of the Gospel.

He adds in verse 4, and “that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” Paul isn’t praying for *charity*, but for *clarity*. He wants to be an effective in His witness.

In verse 5 he says, “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.” This past week the editors of the Atlanta Journal website added a feature to their sports page. They had a countdown to the SEC championship game. How many days, hours, minutes, and seconds were left to the big kick-off!

It was strange to watch seconds click off, but it was a reminder that there are limits to a teams’ preparation.

Ready or not, when game time arrives you play! That means you need to make the most of your practice!

Did you know that somewhere right now there’s a clock that’s clicking... It’s posting the days, hours, minutes, seconds until you die and meet your Maker.

How sobering it would be to see the time we had left.

I’ll bet it would change our preparation. We’d put a lot more effort into practice. We need to realize that our days are numbered. We need to make our time count.

People say they don’t have time to pray, or read the Bible, or memorize Scripture. Yet, the average person spends six months of his life sitting at red lights. What if you prayed at each red light, or memorized Scripture. We need to redeem the time – seconds are ticking!

Verse 6, “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” Before you became a Christian, do you remember bellying up to



the bar and seeing the bowls of free peanuts and pretzels awaiting you.

You thought the bartender was just being nice.

But not so, bartenders know that salt makes you thirsty, so if he can keep you munching on peanuts, he'll keep you buying drinks, and spending money.

And its the thirst-producing quality of salt that Paul says should characterize our speech. When we interact with unbelievers we can sprinkle the conversation with *biblical truths, spiritual insights, thought-provoking statements, even praises to God...*

In natural ways we can let the guy we're speaking with know that Jesus is active in our lives. We can use casual conversations to make folks thirsty for Christ!

Paul closes his letter to the Colossians with some personal correspondence. Paul was not only a great *soul-winner*, he was also a great *friend-maker*.

It's been said, "I went out to find a friend, but could not find one there. I went out to be a friend, and friends were everywhere!" Paul had friends because he was a good friend to have. He took time to communicate – which is what he does here at the end of Colossians.

Beginning in verse 7 Paul addresses his pals...

"Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts..." Tychicus was Paul's mailman.

He delivered the letter to the Colossians, and he would bring back to Paul a report of their welfare.

He'll come “with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here.” We'll learn more about Onesimus in Paul's letter to Philemon.

“Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him)...”

Mark's name in Paul's letter is a wonderful gesture.

After their missionary journey Paul and Barnabas parted ways. It was an apostolic split - and it was caused by a disagreement over Barney's cousin Mark.

For some reason, Mark had abandoned the work in midstream. So when they started planning their second trip, Paul balked at bringing Mark along again.

Barnabas wanted to bring his cousin. Paul didn't. And both refused to budge. Paul ended up teaming with Silas. Barnabas and Mark formed their own duo.

Hard feelings had broken up church leaders.

Yet years later, by the time Paul writes Colossians whatever ill feelings there had been were now passed.

The fellowship between Paul and Mark had been restored. Evidently Mark had visited Paul in Rome, and Paul considered his fellowship refreshing and valuable.

In fact, Paul will later write to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:11, and say of Mark, “he is useful to me for ministry.”

It's comforting to know that Paul and Mark were *not so spiritual* that they never had a blow-up or a fall-out. But it's also comforting to know they were *spiritual enough* to get over it, and forgive, and rejoin forces.

Verse 11, “**And Jesus who is called Justus.**”

Three friends were with Paul in Rome - **Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus**. The surname “**Jesus**” was actually a common Jewish name in the first century. This is why the Gospels refer to Messiah as “**Jesus of Nazareth.**” It differentiated Him from other Jesus's like this one.

Paul says of these three men... “**These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.**” These men were the only Jews who stood with Paul.

Verse 12, “**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...**”

Epaphras was the leader of the church at Colosse. He was the concerned pastor who had rushed to Paul with news of the heresy brewing in the church.

He'd also been praying for the Colossians...

And notice how Paul describes Epaphras' prayer life, “***always laboring fervently.***” *When was the last time you labored in prayer? You worked at it? Have you ever prayed yourself up into a lather? You worked up a sweat? Do you passionately intercede for others?*

Epaphras did! He prayed for the Colossians and her two sister churches in the neighboring cities... “and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.”

“Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.”

Here we learn that Luke was not only a historian, and the author of the third Gospel, but he was a medical doctor... *perhaps Paul’s personal physician.*

In Paul’s letter to the Galatians he spoke of a reoccurring eye problem. Luke may’ve traveled with Paul to treat him at times when his illness was active.

At this point, Demas was also with Paul.

Sadly though, we’ll learn later, in 2 Timothy, that when the going got rough - Demas got going... He loved the world more Christ, and abandoned Paul.

Verse 15, “Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.”

Notice the church in Laodicea met in a house.

It wasn’t until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century that churches started meeting in designated buildings. For the first 300 years of church history churches fellowshipped in homes.

Nymphas was either the pastor, or host - or probably both - of the church in Laodecia. Later, in Revelation 3, Jesus Himself has stern words for the Laodecians.

“Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.”

Paul wanted both churches to share each other's letter. In fact, churches have been passing his letter to the Colossians around for the last 2000 years. Tonight, the church in SM is reading Paul's letter to Colossians.

Evidently, all the NT letters belong to all the NT churches. The application of the NT letters is universal.

Of course, this brings up the question, "where is Paul's letter to the Laodiceans?" And the answer is "*buried under the sands of time.*" It no longer exists.

Verse 17, "And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." We'll also meet Archippus again, with Onesimus, when we study Paul's letter to Philemon.

**"This salutation by my own hand - Paul."**

Remember, it was Paul's custom to dictate his letters to a stenographer, then at the end of the dictation he would sign the letter himself to signify its authenticity.

But as he reaches for the quill to sign his name the chains around his wrists clang together, and Paul is reminded of his imprisonment for the cause of Christ.

So he closes his letter to Colosse with the request, "**Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.**"