

Purity, Prayer and Purpose
Hope Chapel Honolulu
Colossians 3:18-4:18

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 4:15-18, ESV)

Introduction

The Letter to the Church at Colossae addressed the issues of pantheism, pluralism and Gnosticism with the revelation that all knowing is relational and that therefore knowledge is best gained through relationship with the Word and Spirit of God. Colossians concludes with what appears to be rules for witness, but are actually expressions of submission and rest built upon the foundation of renewal and prayer. Our witness of Christ hinges upon relationship with Christ as expressed through renewal, prayer, submission and rest. Discipleship aids our resemblance and representation of Christ through an increasing fullness of grace and truth both shown and told in love and humility.

1. Resembling and representing Christ at home, work and play. (Colossians 3:18-4:1)

- a) Rules for living based upon mutual submission out of reverence for Christ.
- b) These instructions were not an endorsement but rather a remedy for society's ills.

2. Communion with God, community with people. (Colossians 4:2-6)

- a) While God is always close to us, we draw closer to God in prayer.
- b) "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt..." (v.6)

3. Celebration, connection and commission. (Colossians 4:7-18)

- a) Each of these men and women of God, a few Jews but mostly Gentiles, became Paul's partners in ministry.
- b) Their shared commitment to worship, community and witness changed the world.

Conclusion

How you and I think, feel, choose, speak, act and relate are all opportunities for us to bear witness to the grace and truth of God at work in our lives. Sinless perfection is not the goal of our faith, humble trust and obedience that shows and tells the grace and truth of God is. Will you commit to knowing God through renewal and prayer, and representing Christ through mutual submission in relationship and resembling Christ even in your rest?

For our prayerful study, discussion and application:

1. What do think about this and why: *we were made in the image and likeness of God to resemble and represent God.*
2. Examine your own practices of renewal, prayer, witness, submission and rest. Pray for and encourage one another.
3. What are the Word and Spirit of God saying to you about your rhythm of celebration, connection and commission?