

FIVE-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Faithful Together, Sustained by Grace

Devotions from Colossians 4:7–18

**Christ builds His church through faithful servants, shared ministry,
responsible members, and sustaining grace.**

The names at the end of Colossians put visible faces on the theology of the letter: Christ transforms sinners, joins believers to His people, gives them meaningful work, and supplies the grace by which they endure.

Day 1 — Grace Produces Faithful Servants

Scripture Reading: Colossians 4:7–9; Philemon 8–16

Tychicus and Onesimus carried Paul’s letter to Colossae. Paul calls Tychicus a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord. He had been trusted repeatedly because he had proved faithful repeatedly. Onesimus receives equally warm words: “our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.” Yet his history was very different. He had left Philemon’s household under sinful circumstances. Now he was returning as a Christian brother.

Paul does not pretend that Onesimus’s failure never happened. Onesimus still had to return, face his past, and accept responsibility. But Paul also refuses to let that failure have the last word. Grace had changed an unfaithful man into a faithful servant. The one who left in disgrace returned as “one of you.”

This is what union with Christ does. Grace is more than a pardon for yesterday; it begins to transform who we are today. Sin may explain part of our history, but it does not determine our identity before God. In Christ, failure no longer owns us.

The church needs both kinds of testimonies represented by these men: long-proven faithfulness and newly produced faithfulness. Christ carries His gospel through ordinary people who keep their commitments, handle His Word carefully, and serve when no one notices. None of that faithfulness earns grace. It is the fruit of grace already received.

Reflection Questions

1. Where are you tempted to let a past failure define you more than your identity in Christ?
2. Would those who depend on you describe you as faithful and trustworthy? Why or why not?

Practical Application: Complete one neglected responsibility today. If your past has harmed someone, prayerfully identify one honest step toward confession, restitution, or reconciliation.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You that Your grace pardons sinners and changes them. Free me from shame that denies Your finished work, and from presumption that avoids responsibility. Make me faithful in the ordinary work You have given me. Help me keep my word, serve Your people, and carry the truth accurately. Amen.

Day 2 — The Gospel Is Personal, Never Private

Scripture Reading: Colossians 4:10–11, 14; Ephesians 4:11–16

Paul was an apostle, but he did not minister alone. Aristarchus stayed near Paul when partnership was costly. Mark, who once abandoned a missionary journey, had been restored to fellowship, trust, and usefulness. Justus is known to us only briefly, yet his quiet presence encouraged Paul. Luke served Christ with his vocational gifts. Demas was present then, though his later desertion warns us that a good beginning is not the same as a faithful finish.

These names expose the weakness of “Jesus and me” Christianity. Union with Christ creates communion with Christ’s people. Faith is personally received, but it is corporately lived. We need brothers and sisters who remain when life is hard, restore the repentant, encourage without recognition, use their abilities for the mission, and warn us by both good and sobering examples.

Church membership, then, is not merely attendance at a weekly event. Christ joins us to a body in which each part supplies something the others need. Paul needed comfort from fellow workers. We also need presence, prayer, correction, encouragement, and shared labor.

Gospel partnership is often wonderfully ordinary. It may look like staying through a difficult season, welcoming a restored believer, making a phone call, using professional skill to serve, or quietly showing up again. Christ builds His church through such people.

Reflection Questions

1. Which kind of gospel partner do you most need right now: a steady presence, a restorer, an encourager, or someone who shares the work?
2. Whose faithfulness could you strengthen this week?

Practical Application: Contact one person in your church today. Encourage them specifically, ask how you can pray, and follow through.

Prayer: Father, forgive me for treating the Christian life as private. Thank You for joining me to Your people. Make me willing to bear burdens, receive help, restore the repentant, and remain when ministry is costly. Use my presence and gifts for the good of Christ’s body. Keep me faithful to the end. Amen.

Day 3 — Struggle for the Church in Prayer

Scripture Reading: Colossians 4:12–13; Colossians 1:9–12, 28–29

Epaphras had brought the gospel to Colossae and now knew that false teaching threatened the church. He could identify the danger and report it to Paul. Paul could write apostolic truth to answer it. Yet Epaphras understood that only God could make the church mature. Therefore, he prayed.

Paul says Epaphras was “always struggling” on their behalf in prayer. The word describes strenuous effort—a contest, labor, or fight. His prayers were not occasional expressions of vague concern. He persistently asked God for something specific: that the believers would stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

That request gathers up the burden of Colossians. Epaphras wanted them to be stable in Christ rather than moved from the gospel; mature rather than vulnerable to deception; fully assured rather than unsettled by error; and obedient to God’s will. He prayed for what faithful preaching was intended to produce.

We rightly pray for health, relief, comfort, and provision. But our prayers for the church must reach further. We should ask God to make children stand in Christ, teenagers resist falsehood, families mature in grace, suffering believers gain assurance, leaders guard sound doctrine, and the whole church finish well. Such prayer is real ministry.

Christ intercedes for His people, and He invites us to join this hidden labor. We may not see immediate results, but God uses persevering prayer to establish His church.

Reflection Questions

1. Do your prayers focus mainly on changed circumstances, or also on mature and steadfast faith?
2. Who in your church is especially vulnerable to discouragement, error, or spiritual drift?

Practical Application: Write down three names. For the next seven days, pray specifically that each person will stand mature and fully assured in God’s will.

Prayer: Sovereign God, establish Your people in Christ. Protect us from error, deepen our assurance, and teach us willing obedience. Make our children, families, leaders, and suffering saints mature in grace. Give me perseverance to labor for others in prayer, trusting You to supply the growth. Amen.

Day 4 — Fulfill the Ministry You Received

Scripture Reading: Colossians 4:15–17; 1 Peter 4:8–11

Paul’s attention turns from his coworkers to the churches themselves. The believers must greet one another, receive and circulate apostolic teaching, and heed a public word to Archippus: “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

Archippus likely held a recognized pastoral responsibility, so the command has particular force for church leaders. Ministry is received, not self-invented. It is exercised “in the Lord,” under Christ’s authority and by Christ’s strength. Archippus must take heed so that he does not drift or neglect the work. Starting and giftedness are not enough. He must carry the stewardship through.

Not every member holds ordained office, but every member has Christ-given responsibility within the body. Consumer Christianity asks, “What did I receive? Did it suit my preferences? Was I noticed?” Biblical Christianity asks, “Whom am I encouraging? What gift am I using? What has Christ entrusted to me?”

Nympha’s home reminds us that ministry is not confined to church buildings. Our homes can become places of hospitality, discipleship, prayer, burden-bearing, and gospel witness. The exchanged letters remind us that God’s Word must govern the church. Private reading cannot replace gathering to hear, receive, and obey Scripture together.

Christ has not called His congregation to watch ministry from the sidelines. Leaders equip the saints, and the saints do the work of ministry so that the body builds itself up in love.

Reflection Questions

1. What responsibility, relationship, gift, or opportunity has Christ entrusted to you?
2. Where have you begun to act more like a consumer than a participating member of Christ’s body?

Practical Application: Choose one concrete act of participation this week: serve regularly, open your home, encourage a member, assist a ministry, or speak with a leader about where you can help.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are the Head of the church. Forgive my passivity and self-centered expectations. Show me what You have entrusted to me, and give me grace to fulfill it. Use my gifts, time, home, and relationships to strengthen Your people under the authority of Your Word. Amen.

Day 5 — Grace Will Sustain Christ's Church

Scripture Reading: Colossians 4:18; Colossians 1:12–14, 19–23

Paul closes personally: “Remember my chains. Grace be with you.” His chains remind the Colossians that following Christ can be costly. Opposition is real. They should pray for Paul, stand with him, refuse to be ashamed, and continue in the gospel. Yet the final word is not chains. It is grace.

Colossians begins with grace and ends with grace. Grace delivered us from darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of God's beloved Son. Grace reconciled us through Christ's cross, forgave our trespasses, canceled our debt, and united us to Christ in His death and resurrection. Grace creates a new people and forms compassion, kindness, humility, forgiveness, and love. Now Paul assures the church that the same grace will remain with them.

Faithfulness is necessary, but grace is its source. Responsibility is real, but grace is its strength. Perseverance is commanded, but grace is its hope.

The servants named in this chapter are not the heroes of the story. Christ is. Tychicus serves “in the Lord.” Onesimus is transformed because Christ reconciles sinners. Mark is restored because Christ gives grace to failures. Epaphras prays because Christ cares for His church. Archippus can fulfill his ministry because he received it from Christ. Paul can endure chains because Christ's kingdom cannot be stopped.

Your strength will falter, believers will disappoint you, and ministry will be costly. But Christ's supremacy and sufficiency do not change. The grace that saved His people will sustain them to the end.

Reflection Questions

1. Where are suffering, weakness, or disappointment tempting you to withdraw from faithfulness?
2. How does Christ's sufficiency change the way you view that burden?

Practical Application: Name your present burden before God. Then do the next faithful thing—not to earn His favor, but in dependence on grace already given.

Prayer: Gracious Father, keep me near Christ. When service is costly, strengthen me. When I fail, restore me. When I am weary, remind me that Christ is sufficient and His kingdom cannot be stopped. Sustain our church by grace, and bring us faithfully to the end. Amen.