

Jesus Over Everything - The Results

If you've ever watched any kind of competition show on TV, after weeks of seeing what they have gone through and how they trained, persevered, and made it to the end...they have a big finale called The Results Show.

As we've worked through the letter to the Colossians in this series "Jesus Over Everything", Paul has taught us the importance of knowing our hope is in Christ alone, He is our foundation, He frees us from legalism, gives us a new life, and the importance of sharing about all of this with others.

When King Jesus rules in our lives in these ways, the impact is transformational. It changes us. We begin to look more like Him. And today in the conclusion of this letter and series...Paul reveals the results of a life that proclaims Jesus Over Everything.

Colossians 4:7-13 (NKJV)

Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9 with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here.

10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. 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.

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. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

When we read sections of scripture like this, it's easy to skim over it and think it doesn't really apply to us. But if you believe that every bit of the bible is present for our spiritual benefit then we can learn from even a closing of a letter to a church.

The first thing we can draw from these men Paul mentions is:

Faithfulness

Paul speaks of the faithfulness of these men, a faithfulness to him but even more so a faithfulness to serving the Lord.

Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord is mentioned in 5 different books of the bible and each time it speaks of his working, serving, and laboring with Paul and for the Lord.

Tychicus was faithful. To be faithful is to be reliable, to be able to be counted on.

Whether to like it or not, God works through people, and in the NT (church age) He almost exclusively works through GROUPS of people...the church.

We (believers) collectively are the church. You by yourself are not the church.

It requires us to be faithful to Jesus, but also to be faithful to serve together.

Can you be counted on? Are you reliable? Christianity is NOT a spectator sport, we're a team...a team with an owner and a coach. If you belong to Jesus, then the Holy Spirit will remind you of the game plan and call the plays. But can you be counted on to 1) show up, 2) obey?

Tychicus was faithful. Do you know some "Tychicuses" around here? Some people that every time you see them, hear about them or think of them, it is in the context of faithful service? Every church has a few and every church needs a few more.

Onesimus is called faithful as well. If you don't know much about him, he's the subject of the book of Philemon which is a letter Paul wrote to a slave owner named Philemon because one of his slaves named Onesimus had run away, came to Paul and found a new Master in Jesus Christ.

The name Onesimus means "useful". Paul told Philemon, "formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me."

What happened is a runaway slave had become a servant of Jesus...faithful to Jesus and His church!

What an example of what we see in churches all across the world: people whose lives were aimless and who became most useful when the Lord captured their hearts and they became faithful in service to Him.

It doesn't matter what your past is, Jesus says you have value and worth to the Kingdom of God...if you'll be faithful!

Jesus who is called Justus or JJ as I call him...is a fellow worker for the kingdom of God.

We're all expected to share in the work of the kingdom! But it requires faithfulness. We need to know who we can count on so we know what work we can do!

Aristarchus you can read about in Acts 19 and beyond. Paul says he's a fellow prisoner, he'd been captured with Paul and shipwrecked in the process. Yet he remained faithful even in the midst of persecution.

Epaphras who many say planted the church in Colossae, Paul says is a fellow servant. But not just a fellow servant...one who is always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God

From these men we can put together a pretty complete picture of the kind of faithfulness that God finds pleasing:

- Working serving laboring
- Useful
- Kingdom minded
- Stays through persecution
- Prays for the church

THAT is what it means to be faithful. It's not just showing up, it's following the spiritual game plan that leads us to overcome the enemy.

Faithfulness is a result of a life changed by Jesus. Are you faithful?

Fellowship

Colossians 4:9 (NKJV)

with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.

Onesimus is not only faithful...but a beloved brother.

There's a reason why Christians call each other brother and sister. We say it's a spiritual family. It's because in Christ, all our differences that would otherwise divide us, are overshadowed by our relationship with Jesus Christ.

That becomes the focus and what unites us (the love of Christ) is so great that we have fellowship with one another.

I know that's a churchy word, fellowship, but it means association and community. Because of our association with Jesus, we come together as a community of faithful believers.

This is why attending church is important. Out there you may feel like you're alone...but in here, you can find a brother or a sister...as Paul says "who is one of you."

This is why we do ladies events, men's events, potlucks, etc. If you choose not to attend you're cheating yourself and those who need you.

Fellowship is a result of a life changed by Jesus.

Forgiveness

Colossians 4:7-13 (NKJV)

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

Paul had been taking Barnabas on his missionary journeys and Barnabus brings his cousin Mark to help. But Mark left in the middle of a trip and goes home.

Paul and Barnabus complete the mission and as they are preparing for another journey, Barnabus wants to bring Mark again but Paul says "no" because Mark had deserted them previously.

Paul and Barnabus disagreed. One can assume they were not on the best of terms, upset with one another because their differences became so great that they split ways. Paul took Silas with him and Barnabus took Mark and they went their separate ways.

But here in Colossians, about 12 years after the split, Paul says Mark is with him. We don't know the story of their reconciliation, we just know it happened. We know forgiveness was extended and a pardon was received. We know a relationship was restored and the Kingdom of God was advanced because of it.

Isn't that what the gospel is all about? Forgiveness and reconciliation? We are to do it because it was done for us. We are to do it for the glory of God.

Forgiveness is a result of a life changed by Jesus.

Friendship

Colossians 4:14 (NKJV)

Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

Some translations say "dear friend" instead of beloved...but the idea is the same. Someone who is dear to you, your favorite, highly thought of.

Luke became a friend of Paul, a doctor who traveled with Paul off and on, leaving his family behind for long missionary journeys...shows how friendship leads people to do sacrificial things. Luke was a friend for the long haul.

Demas on the other hand was a friend to Paul here, and when he wrote to Philemon, but in 2 Timothy, Paul says “Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica”.

Demas was a friend, until he had completely abandoned Paul, and the work of the Lord...because he loved this world.

It's that reminder that there are many Demas' in our lives. People who are there for the highs but not for the lows. People that are for you when they like what's happening and against you when they don't. People who are faithful until they aren't. People who love you but not as much as they love this world. People who love the world more than they love the church. People who love the world more than they love Jesus. And at the end of the day, they will be loyal to what they love.

Today you might wonder how people get there. Or maybe you've been there. Paul gives us a warning.

WARNING

Colossians 4:15-18 (NKJV)

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

16 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. 17 And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”

18 This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

Archippus, “See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord.”

He was at Laodicea...the church that Jesus rebukes in Revelation 3 because they had become a lukewarm church and they made the Lord sick. Maybe it was because they followed their leader into complacency and laziness about the Lord's work.

This is a warning against being complacent and lazy in our spiritual walk. It's a warning that if we don't live a life that declares Jesus Over Everything...we'll find ourselves slipping and slipping leads to falling and falling gets you hurt.

Faithfulness
Fellowship
Forgiveness
Friendship

These are the results of a life changed by Jesus. Are these the results of your life? Today is the day to make a change, one that you can't but he can, if you're willing to surrender.

Jl Packer said " You don't need more of God, you need to give Him more of you."