**Of Great Service to the Gospel**

Colossians 4:7-11

**Introduction**

Most people want to be of great service to someone, whether it’s their community, their company, their country, or their own personal finances. God wants to use your life to be of great service to the gospel. It is through the gospel that your past is forgiven, you have a home in heaven, and your life is changed. Therefore, you should desire your life to be of great service in providing others access to the gospel. A Christian who provides access to the gospel is one who prays that others might have access to the gospel (v. 2-4), who lives above reproach (v. 5a), who views every interaction as an opportunity for the gospel (v. 5b), and whose speech helps others receive the gospel (v. 6). The way you live either provides reasons to receive the gospel or reject it. As Paul closed his letter to the Colossians, he listed the names of some Christians who were of great service to the gospel. They were an example and a source of encouragement to the Colossians. This was a real letter to real people. We will look at some traits of these people to see how our lives might also be of great service to the gospel.

1. **Paul made reference to fellow believers who were of great service to the gospel.** 
   1. *“Ministers are servants to Christ, and fellow-servants to one another. They have one Lord, though they have different stations and capacities of service…It adds much to the beauty and strength of the gospel ministry when ministers are thus loving …one to another, and by all just means support and advance one another's reputation…..Good ministers take great comfort in those who are their fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God. Their friendship and converse together are a great refreshment under the sufferings and difficulties in their way.”*(Matthew Henry)*.* Here we meet members of the ministry team of Paul.
   2. **Tychicus** was of great service to the gospel. (v.7-8)
      1. He was a native of Asia, who was with Paul in Greece, journeyed to Troas, and eventually went with Paul to Jerusalem to deliver the offering to the needy saints there. (Acts 20:4) He delivered this letter to the Colossians, as well as the one to Philemon (4:18) and to Ephesus (Ephesians 6:21, 24). Later he would be sent by Paul to Ephesus again and possibly to Crete. He traveled much for the gospel.
      2. Notice how Paul described this dear friend in the ministry: beloved (dear) brother, faithful (trustworthy) minister, and fellow servant (he belonged to the Lord).
      3. Tychicus let the Colossians know how Paul was doing during his Roman imprisonment. Churches should desire to know how things are going with godly ministers and missionaries.
      4. Paul also wanted to know how things were going with the Colossians. He sent Tychicus to encourage their hearts.
   3. **Onesimus** was of great service to the gospel. (v. 9)
      1. He was a slave to Philemon.
      2. He was “one of you”—not only a Colossian, but a faithful and beloved brother.
      3. He was of great service to the gospel through his testimony.
   4. **Aristarchus** was of great service to the gospel. (V.10)
2. He was a Macedonian, specifically a native of Thessalonica, and traveled with Paul in Asia, to Jerusalem, and with Paul and Luke on their voyage to Rome. (Acts 20:4; 27:2)
3. He was with Paul in Ephesus when the riot broke out over the goddess Diana (Acts 19:29). They dragged Aristarchus and Gauis into the theater to make them a public spectacle as tensions raced high. He knew what it was to be persecuted.
4. Paul called him his fellowprisoner; most likely he voluntarily went with Paul to Rome.
   1. **Marcus** (Mark) was of great service to the gospel. (v. 10)
5. Mark’s home was a center of gathering for the early church. (Acts 12:12)
6. He had a checkered career as a missionary. He went with Paul and his relative Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but later deserted them and returned to Jerusalem. As a result, Paul refused to take Mark on their second journey and this caused a rift between Paul and Barnabas. (Acts 13:5,13; Acts 15:36-41)
7. We don’t hear anything about Mark for 12 years. There is evidence, however, that he and Paul were reconciled. His simple mention of Mark as a fellow worker in Philemon 24, and in Colossians 4:10 indicate that others might have been skeptical of Mark. Paul instructed them to receive him.
8. In the latter years of his life, Paul will request the presence of Mark and comment that he is profitable. (2 Timothy 4:11). Mark will prove to be of great assistance to Peter in Rome. (1 Peter 5:13). Mark’s gospel has been of immeasurable help.
9. Mark was restored to a place of great service to the gospel because he and others responded properly to God’s work in his life. When it comes to the work of reconciliation, we must think bigger than just our personal relationships; we must think in terms of our service to the gospel. Forgiveness services the gospel. *“If men have been guilty of a fault, it must not be always remembered against them.” (Henry)*
   1. **Justus** was of great service to the gospel. (v. 11)
10. It is most likely that he took a different name out of honor for the Lord Jesus.
11. The reference to circumcision is most likely a reference to their nationality; they were Jewish believers. Paul said Justus and the others were fellow workers unto the advancement of the kingdom of God.
12. They were a comfort to Paul through their work for the Lord and their ministry to him.
13. **Central Idea: Those whom Paul mentioned were of great service to the gospel because they were faithful servants of the Lord.**
14. Faithful servants love the Lord and each other. They suffer with those who suffer. They do not give up in the face of danger and adversity. They get past their past through Christ. They do what they do from the heart; they go the extra mile.
15. People are special to God. We should serve in such a way that helps them to know that.
16. Someone once said, “It’s not how much you do, but how much love you put into what you are doing.”
17. **Faithful servants are of great service to the gospel.** 
    1. Faithful church members are of great service to the gospel by their attendance, their ministry, and their friendliness.
    2. A faithful marriage and family are of great service to the gospel.
    3. A faithful employer and employees are of great service to the gospel.
    4. Faithful teachers and students are of great service to the gospel.
    5. How can you be of great service to the gospel?
18. Appreciate fellow workers of the Lord.
19. Be a “100%-er.” Have an “and then some” mentality.
20. Be willing to serve in the various ministries of the church.
21. Serve on the mission field. Team missions is biblical. You could be a help to a missionary.

**Conclusion**

“If I had a thousand lives, I’d live them all for Jesus.” You have one. Are you living it for Jesus?