

Wenstrom Bible Ministries
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Sunday June 18, 2017
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Colossians: Colossians 4:18-Paul Authenticates Epistle, Makes a Request and Expresses a Spirit Inspired Desire

Lesson # 122

Colossians 4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you. (NASB95)

“**I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand**” is Paul’s apostolic signature which authenticates this epistle and signifies that he is the author of this epistle.

“**Remember my imprisonment**” is composed of the following: (1) verb *mnēmoneuō* (μνημονεύω), “**remember**” (2) personal pronoun *egō* (ἐγώ), “**my**” (3) the noun *desmos* (δεσμός), “**imprisonment.**”

The verb *mnēmoneuō* means “to remember, to keep thinking about, to recall again and again” since the word pertains to recalling information repeatedly from memory but without necessarily implying that the person has actually been forgotten.

Therefore, this verb indicates that Paul is requesting that the Colossian Christian community to continue making it their habit of remembering or recalling him for the purpose of interceding in prayer for him to the Father.

The second person plural form of this verb means “all of you” referring to the Colossian Christian community as a corporate unit and is used in a distributive sense emphasizing no exceptions indicating that Paul wants each of the Colossians to remember him in prayer to the Father for the purpose of interceding for him.

The present imperative form of the verb *mnēmoneuō* is a customary present imperative whose force is for the Colossians simply continue making it their habit of remembering Paul in prayer.

This interpretation of the present imperative is supported by Paul's teaching in Colossians 1:3-5 and 2:5 which affirm the Colossians were already obeying the commands in this epistle including this one in Colossians 4:18.

The imperative is an imperative of request indicating Paul is requesting rather than ordering the Colossians to remember to pray for him.

“**Grace be with you**” is composed of the following: (1) noun *charis* (χάρις), “**grace**” (2) preposition *meta* (μετά), “**with**” (3) personal pronoun *su* (σύ), “**you.**”

The noun *charis*, “**grace**” contains the figure of speech called metonymy meaning the effect is put for the cause or in other words, the thing effected for the instrument which effects it.

Here grace is put for the Word of God which effects grace.

Therefore, the Spirit of God speaking through the communication of the Word of God to the believer's human spirit in this epistle regarding the will of the Father for the Colossians Christian community is the means by which grace is received by them as believers.

The article also functions as a possessive pronoun and should be translated “His” referring to the Lord Jesus Christ.

That the Lord Jesus is in view and not the Father is indicated by the fact that in Paul's closing benedictions, the noun *charis* usually has as its adjunct the phrase “Lord Jesus Christ” or “Lord Jesus” (Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 16:23; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 6:18; Philippians 4:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:18; Philemon 25).

The only letters that do not have this adjunct like 1 Timothy 6:21 are Colossians 4:18, 2 Timothy 4:22 and Titus 3:15.

“**Be**” does not translate a word in the Greek text but is added by the translators since they interpret Paul as using the figure of ellipsis meaning that he deliberately omits the third person singular present active optative form of the verb *eimi* (εἶμι), which means “to exist in a particular location.”

This would indicate that Paul's Spirit inspired desire is that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, namely His doctrine or Spirit inspired teaching would exist among the individual members of the Colossian Christian community.

The optative mood of the verb is a voluntative optative expressing Paul's Spirit inspired desire that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in the form of His Spirit inspired teaching would exist among the individual members of the Colossian Christian community.

It was a Spirit inspired desire since Paul wrote this benediction like he did all of this epistle under the inspiration of the Spirit and it was a desire that he expressed in prayer to the Father.

The personal pronoun *su* is in the plural and means "all of you" referring to the Colossian Christian community as a corporate unit.

The word is used in a distributive sense meaning that there are no exceptions expressing Paul's concern for each member of the Colossian Christian community.

Therefore, Paul's Spirit inspired desire is that the grace of the Lord would exist among each and every one of them.

This word functions as the object of the preposition *meta*, which functions as a position within an area determined by others objects and distributed among such objects.

This prepositional phrase indicates that Paul's Spirit inspired desire is that the grace of God in the form of Paul's Spirit inspired teaching in this epistle to the Colossian Christian community would exist "among" all of them as a corporate unit when they obeyed this teaching.

Colossians 4:18 This greeting is by my very own hand, namely Paul. Each of you please continue to make it your habit of remembering my imprisonment. May His grace be present among each and every one of you. (My translation)

The Colossian epistle ends with Paul identifying himself as the author of this epistle.

He then requests that the Colossians remember his imprisonment in Rome for the purpose of interceding in prayer for him to the Father.

Lastly, he communicates his Spirit inspired desire that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ would be present or exist among each and every member of the Colossian Christian community.

By identifying himself as the author of the greeting in the final verse of this epistle, the apostle Paul is guaranteeing the authenticity of this epistle and that he is author of this epistle and indicates as well that he employed an amanuensis, who does not identify himself.

In the ancient world as well as in the apostolic correspondence with the Christian community throughout the Roman Empire, the final signature of endorsement authenticated the letter's contents and served as protection against fraudulent correspondence.

The final signature was also important because frequently an amanuensis was employed to write the letter.

An "amanuensis" is a secretary who assisted an employer by taking direct verbal dictation, copying, or writing on their behalf.

"Each of you please continue to make it your habit of remembering my imprisonment" is the apostle Paul's final request of the Colossian Christian community and specifically, it is another request for prayer.

He wants the Colossians to remember his imprisonment in Rome in order that they would enter into intercessory prayer to the Father on behalf of him.

Colossians 1:3-5 and 2:5 affirms that the Colossians were faithful to the gospel and were already obeying the commands in this epistle including this one in Colossians 4:18.

In Colossians 4:2-4, he identifies specifically what he wants them to pray for.

"May His grace be present among each and every one of you" is not merely a farewell from Paul but also a Spirit inspired desire that the Colossian Christian community would respond to the Spirit's teaching in this epistle regarding the will of the Father for each of them.

The apostle Paul under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit is appealing to the Colossian church to respond to his doctrinal teaching in this epistle, which originates from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit through Paul's doctrinal teaching, which originates from the Lord Jesus Christ, is requesting that the Colossian church feed their new nature so that more of the character of Christ would be manifested in their lives.

So Paul is revealing his Spirit inspired desire which is in agreement with the will of the Father that the Word of God would be manifested in their congregation as a result of applying its contents in their lives.

The objectives would be to conform them into the image of Christ and to maintain their fellowship with the Trinity which would result that they would be unified experientially.

With this final statement, Paul is not speaking of grace at salvation but the grace or God's provision for after conversion.

The grace of God is not only God's provision for justification but also a post-conversion fellowship with Him.

So in other words, in Colossians 4:18, Paul is referring to grace which sanctifies or sanctifying grace.

He wants the Colossians to experience sanctification by obeying the commands and prohibitions in this epistle.