



MT. SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

DEEP DIVE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Colossians 3:16-4:18

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

SCRIPTURE READING — COLOSSIANS 3 (ESV)

■ Put On the New Self (Colossians 3:1–17)

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. **3** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. **5** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **6** On account of these the wrath of God is coming. **7** In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. **8** But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. **11** Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. **12** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

■ Rules for Christian Households & Servants (Colossians 3:18–25)

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. **19** Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. **20** Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. **21** Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. **22** Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. **23** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. **25** For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

SCRIPTURE READING — COLOSSIANS 4 (ESV)

■ Masters & Further Instructions for Prayer and Outsiders (Colossians 4:1–6)

1 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. **2** Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. **3** At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— **4** that I may make it

clear, which is how I ought to speak. **5** Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. **6** Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

■ Final Greetings & Co-Laborers in the Kingdom (Colossians 4:7–18)

7 Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. **8** I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, **9** and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here. **10** Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), **11** and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. **12** Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. **13** For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. **14** Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. **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.

✦ PART 1: THE DWELLING WORD & ORDER IN THE CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD (COL. 3:16–21)

The Indwelling Word & Spiritual Reflex (Colossians 3:16)

The Vital Question: Does the Word of God dwell—literally feel at home and take up permanent residence—in you richly?

Spiritual Reflex: We must be so saturated with Scripture that when sudden adversity, temptation, or conflict occurs, the Word of God is our immediate, instinctual response.

Daily Nourishment: The only Bible we receive cannot simply be on Sunday morning! Believers must cultivate a daily feeding upon Scripture to be spiritually equipped.

God's Design for the Christian Home (Colossians 3:18–21)

The Husband as Cultivator (v. 18–19; John 15:1): The husband is called to be the tiller of the marital ground, intentionally cultivating love, tenderness, and spiritual health. 'A happy man marries the girl he loves, but a happier man loves the girl he marries'—the latter is an active cultivator!

Order, Not Superiority (1 Cor. 11): Biblical headship is about functional order, never ontological superiority. God the Father is head of Christ, yet Christ is fully God and equal in essence. Christ voluntarily submitted to the Father's will. Similarly, marital submission is a willing reflection of divine harmony.

The Biblical Qualifier — 'As is Fitting in the Lord': If a husband ever asks his wife to do something unbiblical, sinful, or immoral, the wife has a sacred duty to say no. A wife's primary allegiance is always to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Foundation of Children's Obedience (v. 20): Obedience is learned in the home. The Greek word 'hupakouo' (ὑπακούω) literally means 'to hear under'—painting the picture of someone standing submissively under authority, listening intently to carry out instruction immediately. If a child is not taught to obey at home, they will struggle with authority everywhere.

How Fathers Provoke Children to Discouragement (v. 21): Paul specifically charges fathers because the spiritual climate and functionality of the home rises and falls on them. Three primary provocations: (1) Hypocrisy (professing faith but living contradiction), (2) Favoritism among siblings, and (3) Hyper-criticism (demanding perfection without offering grace).

✦ PART 2: VOCATION, ROMAN CONTEXT & THE CHAPTER DIVISION (COL. 3:22–4:1)

Slavery in the Roman Empire & The Gospel of Transformed Hearts

Historical Realities: Roughly 1 out of 3 people (nearly 40%) of the Roman Empire were enslaved. It was a massive social structure predating the Church. The early church held zero political clout.

Why No Political Rebellion? Had the apostles urged armed slave insurrection, Christianity would have been reduced to a temporary political social gospel and robbed of its supernatural power to save souls for eternity.

Hearts Over Systems: Paul recognized that the core problem lies in sinful human hearts, not merely political structures. A righteous system fails under wicked leaders, while an unjust environment is transformed from within by regenerated believers. When masters like Philemon were converted, Christ reordered the master-servant dynamic completely.

Your Vocation as Your Pulpit: Earthly slaves had no legal right to an inheritance, yet Paul promised them an eternal inheritance from King Jesus! For today's believer: work heartily with integrity, not just when the supervisor is looking. The best witness for Jesus Christ in the marketplace is to be the most faithful, diligent, and trustworthy worker in the company!

The Bridging of Chapter 3 & Chapter 4: Historical Chapter Divisions

Chapter 3 Should End with 4:1: The warning and instruction to masters in Colossians 4:1 ('Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven') is the natural completion of the household section in Colossians 3:18–25.

The Origin of Chapter & Verse Divisions: The Bible was written over 1,000–1,500 years. Modern chapter divisions were introduced around A.D. 1227 by Stephen Langton (Archbishop of Canterbury and professor at the University of Paris). Numbered verses were added by Robert Estienne in 1551/1555.

Hermeneutical Principle: Never assume that a chapter break signifies the conclusion of an inspired argument! Thoughts frequently continue across chapter headings, as seen directly between Colossians 3:25 and 4:1.

Master Under Authority: Christian masters were reminded that they too answer to an ultimate Master in heaven. Earthly authority must always be exercised under the righteous standard of Christ.

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✦ PART 3: WATCHFUL PRAYER & GRACIOUS WITNESS TO OUTSIDERS (COLOSSIANS 4:2–6)

Steadfast Prayer & Paul's Prison Ministry (Colossians 4:2–4)

Steadfast & Watchful with Thanksgiving (v. 2): Paul began Colossians 1 praying for the saints; now he asks the saints to pray for him. Despite hardship, his prayer life is marked by deep thanksgiving (echoing Acts 27:35 in the midst of shipwreck).

Paul's Imprisonment Journey: Arrested in Jerusalem after being falsely accused of defiling the temple (Acts 21:27–36), imprisoned in Caesarea for two years across three trials, shipwrecked, and held under house arrest in Rome for two years.

The Open Door in Chains: What door could possibly open for a chained prisoner? From prison, Paul wrote Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians! Non-believing Jewish leaders came to hear him, and elite Roman Praetorian guards chained to him were converted.

Ministry Perspective: Prison did not end Paul's ministry—it merely changed its format! Whenever life shifts—through relocation, sickness, aging, or trial—never mistake a change in circumstances for the end of your ministry. It is simply a new platform for the Gospel.

Walking in Wisdom & Speech Seasoned with Salt (Colossians 4:5–6)

Wisdom Toward 'Outsiders' (v. 5): 'Outsiders' are unbelievers outside the household of faith. They are observing, evaluating, and judging believers. We must be circumspect in our conduct, words, and locations.

Redeeming the Time: Make the best use of every fleeting moment—turn the watchful scrutiny of the world into a powerful testimony proving that your faith is genuine.

Speech Seasoned with Salt (v. 6): Our words must be gracious, just as God has shown us unmerited grace. Salt served two ancient purposes: (1) A preservative against decay and corruption, and (2) An antiseptic rubbed into wounds to cleanse (which stung, yet brought healing).

Creating Spiritual Thirst: Salt induces thirst! Our conversation, purity, and Christlike demeanor should make unbelievers spiritually thirsty to know the God we serve.

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✦ PART 4: PAUL'S FELLOWSHIP OF CO-LABORERS & TEXTUAL INSIGHTS (COL. 4:7–18)

JEWISH CO-WORKERS ('OF THE CIRCUMCISION')

- Aristarchus (v. 10): Paul's faithful 'fellow prisoner' from Thessalonica.
- Mark / John Mark (v. 10): Cousin of Barnabas. Mark deserted Paul on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13), causing sharp contention between Paul & Barnabas (Acts 15:37–39). Yet here we see a glorious story of restoration! Paul now vouches for Mark as a comfort and later calls him 'useful for ministry' (2 Tim. 4:11). Past failure did not disqualify his future calling!
- Jesus Called Justus (v. 11): A Jewish believer sharing Christ's Hebrew name (Yeshua), standing faithfully with Paul.

GENTILE CO-WORKERS & MINISTERS

- Tychicus (v. 7): Trusted courier carrying letters to Colossae and Ephesus; an encourager of hearts.
- Onesimus (v. 9): The runaway slave from Philemon who met Paul in Rome, was led to Christ, and returned not just as a bondservant, but as a beloved brother in the Lord!
- Epaphras (v. 12–13): Founder of the church in Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea; a fervent prayer warrior struggling on their knees for their maturity.
- Luke (v. 14): 'The beloved physician', loyal companion and author of the Gospel and Acts.
- Demas (v. 14): Fellow worker who sadly later deserted Paul, 'in love with this present world' (2 Tim. 4:10). A sober warning against spiritual drift.
- Archippus (v. 17): Stepped up to lead the Colossian church while Epaphras was with Paul in Rome.

[HISTORICAL & MANUSCRIPT INSIGHT] House Churches & The Textual Variant of Nympha (Colossians 4:15–16)

Worship in House Churches: Under Nero, before widespread state persecution peaked, Christians gathered in domestic homes for fellowship, teaching, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and mutual care. In Colossae they met in Philemon's home; in Laodicea they gathered in the house of Nympha or Nymphas.

The Nympha Textual Variant: In modern translations (ESV, NIV, NASB, CSB, NLT, NRSV), Nympha is identified as a woman ('and the church in her house'). In the KJV and NKJV, it reads 'Nymphas... and the church which is in his house.'

Why the Difference in Manuscripts? The accusative forms of the two names share identical Greek letters (ΝΥΜΦΑΝ). The oldest Greek uncial manuscripts lacked accent marks. Accent marks were added centuries later by scribes: a circumflex (Νυμφῶν) designates a masculine name, while an acute accent on the penult (Νύμφαν) designates a feminine name. Modern textual scholars conclude that 'her house' is the earliest and most authentic reading.

Circular Letters & The 'Letter from Laodicea': Paul instructed the Colossians to read his letter publicly and exchange it with the Laodicean epistle. Scholars widely identify the letter from Laodicea as the Epistle to the Ephesians—originally a circular letter meant for multiple congregations across Asia Minor (the words 'at Ephesus' in Eph. 1:1 are absent from the earliest papyri).

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