

Why Variety?
Colossians 4.7-18

Well folks, this is it! I hope you've gleaned a lot from our fall sermon series. We've had eight lessons over the last eight weeks. Which were most meaningful to you? Before you break until 2027, here's one final and important lesson about why the church exists.

Pastor Eric

Paul closes Colossians with a list of names that we might be tempted to skip over. Why do you think Paul took the time to mention these individuals? What does this tell us about what matters to God? Think about the different people in this passage. Which person intrigues you most, and why? Is there something about his or her story that you find particularly encouraging or challenging?

It appears that Tychicus and Onesimus were entrusted with delivering Paul's letter. It probably seemed like a relatively ordinary assignment. What seemingly ordinary responsibilities in the church might have far greater significance than we realize? Jesus-Justus encouraged and comforted Paul, while Epaphras wrestled in prayer for the Colossians. Why are less-visible ministries like these so important to the health of a church?

First Peter 4:10 tells us to use whatever gifts we have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace. What gifts, abilities, experiences, or opportunities has God given you that could benefit others? Are you currently putting them to use? Think about the people who have encouraged, comforted, prayed for, or quietly served you in your Christian journey. What did their contribution mean to you?

The people Paul mentions came from different ethnic, social, and personal backgrounds. What do you think made it possible for these very different people to become one family in Christ? Read Colossians 3:11 and Galatians 3.28. What kinds of distinctions or divisions are most likely to interfere with Christian fellowship in our churches today?

Nympha is specifically mentioned as a woman who hosted a church. Onesimus was a runaway slave, yet Paul calls him a faithful and dear brother. What do these examples teach us about the way we should view people who might be marginalized or overlooked by society? Mark had previously abandoned Paul, and Demas would eventually abandon him. Yet Mark was welcomed back into Paul's circle. What does this tell us about failure, forgiveness, and second chances in the Christian community?

Why do people sometimes feel that their past mistakes, failures, or poor decisions make them less useful to God? How does the gospel speak to that fear?

For group discussion: If every person in our church genuinely believed that they had a vital role to play, and that everyone else belonged regardless of their background or baggage, what would be different about our church?