

COLOSSIANS: STABILITY BY CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY AND SUPREMACY

Part XVIII: Stability In Fulfilling God's Ministry Assignments For Us

(Colossians 4:17)

I. Introduction

- A. Today's unsettling, insecure world has tempted and influenced many believers to be unsettled and insecure.
- B. Colossians presents Christ's all-sufficiency and supremacy in ways that settle and supply security, and one way it does is by teaching in Colossians 4:17 the believer's stability in fulfilling God's ministry assignments.
- C. Various temptations in the forms of a loss of motivation or hardships or frustrations faced in one's service can influence a believer to leave his ministry incomplete, so we view Colossians 4:17 for our edification:

II. Stability In Fulfilling God's Ministry Assignments For Us, Colossians 4:17.

- A. The Apostle Paul directed that the leaders of the Church at Colossae tell Archippus to "Take heed" to the ministry he had been assigned in the Lord, Colossians 4:17a, a directive with a very important application:
 1. "Take heed" (KJV) translates the present imperative verb *blepe* (from *blepo*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 703; The Analy. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 71) that means here, "keep [present tense] taking care" (J. G. Machen, N. T. Grk. for Beg., 1966, p. 180; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 142-143).
 2. This verb is used in Mark 13:33 (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich) where the disciples were to watch that they maintain a godly life because of the unknown date of the return of Christ and their accountability to Him.
 3. Thus, Archippus was responsible to continue to take care that he function acceptably before the Lord in view of his accounting to the Lord regarding such action at the Judgment Seat of Christ, cf. 2 Cor. 5:10-11.
- B. Paul noted Archippus' care was to be exercised relative to the "ministry" (*diakonian*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) he had, and this word, *diakonia*, is used of a ministry God assigns believers in 1 Corinthians 12:4. (Col. 4:17b) Archippus had an accounting to give regarding a specific service that was important to the Lord!
- C. Archippus had "received" (*parelabes*) this ministry, making him **doubly accountable** to perform it, Col. 4:17c:
 1. For Archippus to have "received" (from *paralambano*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p 624-625) this ministry, a church leader (or leaders) to whom he was accountable before God (Hebrews 13:17a) had assign it to him, which assignment thus made him obliged to fulfill it both to the leader and ultimately to the Lord Himself!
 2. This was no self-assigned ministry, but one assigned to him by leaders he was to heed in accountability to Christ, so Archippus was **doubly** accountable to perform it both as unto the leader and also as unto Christ!
- D. Paul added that Archippus had been assigned this ministry **in the Lord**, that he was responsible to the One Who created him (Psa. 139:13-16) and appointed him before creating him to the ministry he was to perform (Jer. 1:4-5), which ministry was given him in Christ before the beginning of time (2 Tim. 1:9 NIV) that Archippus view his functioning in that ministry as a key purpose behind his very existence! (Colossians 4:17d)
- E. The Apostle Paul directed that Archippus be told to "carry out to the full" (*plerois*, from *pleroo*, Abbott-Smith, Man. Grk. Lex. of the N. T., 1968, p. 365-366) his assigned ministry in Christ, Colossians 4:17e. We explain:
 1. As implied in the present form of the imperative *blepe* (Col 4:17a) and its similar use in Mark 13:33 of the need for disciples to remain vigilant in living for and serving Christ in view of His unknown time of return and their accountability to Him at that time, Archippus was tempted to **cease performing** his ministry.
 2. We are not told what issue tempted Archippus, but this epistle was applicable to other churches (Col. 4:16) where there might be a host of causes for a lapse in service **other** than what Archippus faced, so, **regardless** of the **reason** for his temptation, Archippus was to minister until his work was completed.

Lesson: Archippus was directed of the Lord to keep on taking care that the ministry he had been assigned by duly recognized Church leadership, which ministry thus made him accountable before the Lord to perform and for which he would give an account at the Judgment Seat of Christ, was to be carried out to the full regardless what circumstances to the contrary he faced, be it a loss of personal motivation, hardships, frustrations or anything else.

Application: (1) If we have been assigned a ministry by duly recognized, Biblical Church leadership, may we understand that Christ holds us responsible to fulfill that assignment in view of our accountability to Him at His Judgment Seat. (2) May we also realize that God views our origin, formation in the womb and thus our very existence as being intricately interwoven with that ministry, a ministry given us in Christ before the beginning of time, that we then fulfill it regardless what contrary issues we face, be it a waning of motivation, hardships, frustration, etc. (3) May we tell other believers who are tempted fail to complete God-assigned ministries to realize they will be held accountable at the Judgment Seat of Christ to have fulfilled the ministries God assigned them.