

Epaphras

Two weeks ago in our devotional we looked at Barnabas, the man of consolation, an encourager of those who served God. Tonight I want us to consider another fellow worker of Paul's, one not nearly as famous as Barnabas but one from whom we can glean examples of behavior just as important.

Paul wrote about this brother in Christ called Epaphras in both the book of Colossians and the book of Philemon. We learn six things about this man that would be good for us to use as our examples:

1.) Epaphras was a teacher of the word:

Colossians 1:5 "FOR THE HOPE WHICH IS LAID UP FOR YOU IN HEAVEN, WHEREOF YE HEARD BEFORE IN THE WORD OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL."

That teacher who taught the brethren at Colossae was none other than Epaphras. He sought out and exercised his opportunity to do exactly as Jesus said:

Mark 4:14 "THE SOWER SOWETH THE WORD."

He was definitely was not one who would "NEED THAT ONE TEACH YOU AGAIN WHICH **be** THE FIRST PRINCIPLES"

2.) Epaphras was Paul's "DEAR FELLOWSERVANT":

The brethren at Colossae "KNEW THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH" because they had "LEARNED" that truth "OF EPAPHRAS OUR DEAR FELLOW SERVANT." Epaphras and the Apostle Paul served together in the same Cause – a Cause far most important that any that ever graced the face of the earth.

3.) Epaphras was a "SERVANT OF CHRIST":

Colossians 4:12 calls Epaphras a "SERVANT OF CHRIST" but as we can see from **Colossians 1:7** he was more than just a servant:

Colossians 1:7 "WHO IS FOR YOU A FAITHFUL MINISTER OF CHRIST"

But isn't that what we are all striving to be; a faithful servant of the Lord? We either serve our Lord faithfully or we do not. We either are with our Lord are we are not. We are either obedient to him or we are not.

Epaphras

“KNOW YE NOT, THAT TO WHOM YE YIELD YOURSEVES SERVANTS TO OBEY, HIS SERVANTS YE ARE TO WHOM YE OBEY; WHETHER OF SIN UNTO DEATH, OR OF OBEDIENCE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS? **Romans 6:16**

4.) Epaphras was a greeter of the brethren:

“EPAPHRAS, WHO IS ONE OF YOU, A SERVANT OF CHRIST, SALUTEH YOU” **Colossians 4:12**

It may not sound like much, but to make the effort to meet someone, whether in person, by telephone, or by sending a written message, can really be a boost to that person. It can make that person feel noticed, remembered and appreciated. Most of us have been in situations where the thoughtful greetings of other saints were a source of encouragement to us.

5.) Epaphras prayed for the spiritual welfare of the brethren:

Colossians 4:12 “EPAPHRAS, WHO IS *one* OF YOU, A SERVANT OF CHRIST, SALUTEH YOU, ALWAYS LABORING FERVENTLY FOR YOU IN PRAYERS, THAT YE MAY STAND PERFECT AND COMPLETE IN ALL THE WILL OF GOD.”

Do we ever get caught up in our own little world and forget to pray, or forget to pray for others who need our prayers? When we do pray for them do we pray only for their physical needs; needs that may have been brought about by sickness or ill health? Epaphras prayed diligently for other saints. Epaphras prayed for their spiritual welfare. It wouldn't take much effort at all to add these sentiments to our own prayers. God so loved us that his son died for us. When we pray for the physical and spiritual welfare of our brethren we are expressing to God our love for our fellowman.

6.) Epaphras was a brother with a visible, active zeal:

Colossians 4:13 “FOR I BEAR HIM RECORD, THAT HE HATH A GREAT ZEAL FOR YOU, AND THEM *that are* IN LAODICEA, AND THEM IN HIERAPPLIS.”

What a reputation to have among the men who actually knew our Savior. Are we known for our zeal in the Lord's work? The Apostle Paul writes that we are to be”

“NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS; FERVENT IN SPIRIT, SERVING THE LORD.”
Romans 12:11

God knew Epaphras, God will know us as well if we follow his example.