**BCM Bible Study – February 23-24, 2022**

**Colossians 3:18-4:18**

On Relationships – **Colossians 3:18-4:1**

* This is a passage that is often misunderstood: Christianity **does not** endorse slavery. Christianity **does not** endorse domineering husbands. Instead, a parallel passage like Ephesians 5:21-33 can add to this. Part of the confusion can stem from the word **submit** used here. Ultimately, Paul is calling for everyone to humble themselves and allow Christ the primary authority in all relationships.
* How does the background of Colossians 3:5-17 help you understand what kind of “submission” and “love” Paul expects wives and husbands to give to one another?
* In what ways does your relationship with your parents line up with what Paul teaches here? In what ways does it not?
* What reasoning does Paul give for his commands to slaves and masters? Why would these instructions be the longest and most detailed?
  + How do these commands and the reasons behind them apply to your life?
  + Paul tells the Colossians that Christ's Lordship extends into their family and work lives. How do you struggle to submit your family relationships to the Lord? Your work?
  + What might be steps you can take to better let Christ impact these areas of your life?

Paul’s Final Instructions – **Read Colossians 4:2-6**

* What does it mean to be “watchful” in prayer “with thanksgiving”?
  + How can we practice this watchfulness and awareness of what God is doing daily?
* Paul could have asked the church to pray for his release from prison. What requests does he make instead? Why do you feel Paul leaned towards those instead of his own release?
  + Who are you praying for, that God might open up “a door for the word” into their life?
  + How do you hope to grow so that the Kingdom of God becomes of greater concern than your own comfort?
* What strikes you about how Paul calls Christians to act toward “outsiders” in v5-6?
  + How confident are you that the way you speak about your faith is well-seasoned? What might you need to do to improve this?
* Paul makes a close connection between prayer and sharing the gospel in these verses. How closely are these things connected in your life?

Greetings and Conclusion – **Read Colossians 4:7-18**

* Why does Paul include this lengthy farewell here (and in many of his other letters)?
  + **Read Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21** As you think about your own life of service and following God, where might your service be? Is that comfortable to you?
* Which of these people that Paul mentions do you remember from the beginning of the letter and the background we looked at?
* What picture do you get of the Christian community around Paul and in Colossae from these verses?
  + Even though they weren’t written for them, Paul thoroughly recommends that the Colossian church read the letter he wrote to the Laodiceans and vice versa. What does this suggest about how we can learn/grow from words written for others? How can you apply this to how you understand and follow the teachings of the Bible?

Give your group a few minutes to just flip through and skim the entirety of the book of Colossians.

* Which verses, passages, or thoughts were the most impactful for you?
* How did Colossians impact the way that you think about Jesus Christ?
* What changed about your understanding of the daily life of a Christian?
  + How might this growth impact your future study of Scripture?

Extra Notes

Outlines of other NT “household” passages for comparison to Colossians 3:18-4:1:

* Ephesians 5:21-6:9 (also written by Paul)
  + 5:21 “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ”
  + 5:22-24 “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord”
  + 5:25-33 “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church”
  + 6:1-3 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord”
  + 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger”
  + 6:5-8 “Slaves, obey your earthly masters”
  + 6:9 “Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening”
* Titus 2:2-10 (also written by Paul)
  + 2:2 “Older men are to be ...”
  + 2:3-5 “Older women likewise are to be … and to teach younger women to be ...”
  + 2:6-8 “Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled”
  + 2:9-10 “Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything.”
* 1 Peter 2:13-3:7 (written by Peter)
  + 2:13-17 “Be subject to every human institution”
  + 2:18-25 “Servants, be subject to your masters”
  + 3:1-6 “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands”
  + 3:7 “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way”