

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 7, Closing (Col. 4)

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 7, Closing (Col. 4), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Darko's lecture, the seventh session on Paul's Prison Epistles, specifically examines the concluding chapter of Colossians. The session analyzes Paul's shift from internal church matters to outward focus, emphasizing continuous prayer with watchfulness and thanksgiving. **It highlights Paul's unusual request to share the letter and the significance of his personal greetings in affirming his authorship.** The lecture also explores Paul's concluding admonitions on wise conduct towards outsiders, the importance of time, and gracious speech. **Furthermore, Dr. Darko discusses the individuals Paul mentions in his closing, including those delivering the letter and fellow laborers, underscoring their trustworthiness.** The session concludes by reinforcing the central themes of Colossians and encouraging continued Christian growth.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 7 – Double click icon to play
in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org
[BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New
Testament → Pauline Epistles → Prison Epistles).**



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3. Briefing Document: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 7, Closing (Col. 4)

Briefing Document: Dr. Daniel K. Darko on Colossians 4 ("The Closing")

Overview:

In this seventh session of his lecture series on the Prison Epistles, Dr. Daniel K. Darko focuses on the closing chapter of Colossians (Chapter 4). He highlights a significant shift in Paul's focus from internal church issues (addressed in Chapters 2 and 3) to looking outward. Darko emphasizes three key aspects to observe in Colossians 4: the unusual appeal for the letter to be shared with another church, the detailed and personal greetings, and Paul's emphasis on spiritual discipline and relationships. Ultimately, Darko argues that the personal details within this chapter strongly support Paul's authorship of the letter.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. Shift to Outward Focus and Prayer (Verses 2-4):

- Paul transitions from addressing internal issues within the Colossian church to outward concerns as he concludes his letter.
- The connecting link between the internal and external focus is the emphasis on **prayer**. Paul urges the Colossians to "**continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving**" (Colossians 4:2).
- Darko clarifies that "continue steadfastly" can also be translated as "devote yourselves to prayer," highlighting its ongoing nature.
- He emphasizes the importance of **vigilance** in prayer, possibly due to the presence of false teachers and the need for believers to be on guard against ungodly influences.
- "In Paul, the language of being watchful or alert usually has the implication of being watchful because of the end time or the eschatological season. Here, he seemed to be leaving that open to suggest that you want to be watchful, you want to be vigilant because, in the first place, there are false teachers in the church, there is possible infiltration of false teaching..."
- **Gratitude** is another crucial element of their prayer life. Darko reminds the audience of Paul's consistent emphasis on thankfulness throughout Colossians (Colossians 1:3-4, 1:11-12, 2:6-7, 3:15, 3:17).

- "Paul in Colossians would say that for a Christian living, this is an attitude that should be part of how life is lived. This is the attitude that we should bring when we come before God in prayer."
- Paul specifically requests their prayers for himself and his ministry, asking 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"** (Colossians 4:3).
- He also asks for prayer that he may **"make it clear which is how I ought to speak"** (Colossians 4:4), emphasizing his desire for clarity and boldness in proclaiming the gospel despite his imprisonment.

2. Concluding Admonitions (Verses 5-6):

- Paul provides key concluding instructions for the Colossians regarding their conduct towards outsiders:
- **Wisdom: "Walk in wisdom toward outsiders"** (Colossians 4:5). Darko explains that "walk" signifies conduct and that wisdom involves making wise choices in life, impacting how outsiders perceive Christians.
- "Being wise is not just an intellectual activity in ancient Greek understanding. Being wise is being able to make wise choices in life. And so, the wise person is not only wise intellectually but applies wisdom in the way they conduct themselves."
- **Time Management: "Make the best use of the time"** (Colossians 4:5). Darko notes the Greek term used is a business term meaning to "buy out the time," emphasizing the importance of seizing opportunities and not wasting time.
- "Paul tells the Christians to make use of every time, every opportunity...Buy time out, buy out the time. Don't seize the time. Don't let the time, the opportunity...seize the time, make good use of all the time. And don't play around with time."
- **Speech: "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone"** (Colossians 4:6). Darko connects this to Jesus' teachings on being the salt of the earth, highlighting the need for edifying, encouraging, and appropriately responsive speech.

3. Personal Greetings and Commendations (Verses 7-15):

- Paul includes detailed personal greetings, which Darko argues are crucial for understanding the letter's authenticity.
- He introduces **Tychicus** as the bearer of the letter, describing him as "**a dear brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord**" (Colossians 4:7).
- Darko emphasizes Paul's trust in Tychicus, noting his repeated mention in other letters (Ephesians 6:21-22, Titus 3:12, 2 Timothy 4:12) as someone Paul "loves to send." The parallel passages in Ephesians further strengthen Darko's belief in Paul's authorship of both letters around the same time.
- **Onesimus**, described as "**our faithful and dear brother who is one of you**" (Colossians 4:9), is also traveling with Tychicus. Darko identifies him as the slave mentioned in Philemon and highlights Paul's positive commendation of him to the Colossian church who knew him.
- "Paul is the kind of person that would like you to know the true quality of the people who have served with him...These are the guys carrying the letter, to let them know how you perceive them and the qualities you know they possess."
- Other individuals sending greetings include:
 - **Aristarchus**: Paul's "**fellow prisoner**" (Colossians 4:10).
 - **Mark**: The "**cousin of Barnabas**," about whom they have received instructions and should welcome if he comes (Colossians 4:10).
 - **Jesus (also called Justus)**: One of the few Jewish co-workers for the kingdom of God who have been a comfort to Paul (Colossians 4:11). Darko finds the use of his Latin name "Justus" in a Greek-speaking context interesting.
 - **Epaphras**: "**One of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, always wrestling in prayer for you**" (Colossians 4:12), praying for their spiritual maturity and assurance.
 - **Luke**: "**The beloved physician**" (Colossians 4:14). This verse provides key information about Luke's profession.
 - **Demas**: Sends greetings (Colossians 4:14), though Darko notes his later desertion of Paul (2 Timothy 4:10).

4. Appeal for Letter Circulation and Final Instructions (Verses 16-17):

- Paul makes an unusual request: "**And after 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**" (Colossians 4:16).
- The "letter from Laodicea" is not extant, leading to scholarly speculation. Darko suggests it's a topic of little significance for most people.
- Paul instructs them to "**Tell Archippus, 'See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord'**" (Colossians 4:17).

5. Final Signature and Authorship (Verse 18):

- Paul's concluding remark, "**I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand**" (Colossians 4:18), is significant for the question of authorship.
- Darko suggests this could indicate Paul personally adding the closing to a letter written by an amanuensis, a common practice.
- He strongly argues that the specific and personal details throughout Chapter 4 make it highly unlikely that someone other than Paul wrote the letter, especially considering that many in the early church knew Paul and his associates.
- "As you observe the personal details that he brings in chapter four, you may want to ask, if Paul was not writing this letter, was someone putting this information out to convince or persuade a church that has people who knew Paul or who knew about Paul's ministry, to make them believe that somehow Paul was writing this? Is it likely that the specifics that Paul brings into this discussion, if Paul were not writing, will actually betray the one hiding behind Paul to put this letter forward? Or, think through the fact that, and this is what I hold, these details further affirm the fact that no one could be writing this letter except Paul."

Conclusion:

Dr. Darko concludes that Colossians was indeed written by Paul to address false teachings by centering everything around Christ and emphasizing Christian living. The final chapter underscores the importance of prayer, wise conduct towards outsiders, responsible use of time, gracious speech, and strong relationships within the Christian community. The personal greetings and final signature serve not only as closing remarks but also as powerful evidence supporting Pauline authorship.

4. Study Guide: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 7, Closing (Col. 4)

Colossians 4 Study Guide: The Closing

Key Concepts and Themes

- **Outward Focus:** Chapter 4 marks a shift in Paul's letter from internal church issues to the church's relationship with the outside world.
- **Steadfast Prayer:** Paul emphasizes the importance of persistent, vigilant, and thankful prayer as a foundational aspect of Christian living.
- **Open Doors for the Gospel:** Paul specifically requests prayer for opportunities to proclaim the mystery of Christ boldly and clearly, even in his imprisonment.
- **Wise Conduct Towards Outsiders:** Christians are called to live with wisdom in their interactions with non-believers, setting a positive example.
- **Redeeming the Time:** Believers should make the most of every opportunity, recognizing the value of the time God has given them.
- **Gracious Speech:** Christian communication should be characterized by grace and be "seasoned with salt," enabling them to answer those who inquire.
- **Personal Greetings and Commendations:** Paul includes detailed personal greetings, highlighting the character and contributions of his colleagues, reinforcing his authorship and demonstrating care for his relationships.
- **Letter Circulation:** Paul's unusual request for the Colossians to share their letter with the Laodiceans and to read the letter from Laodicea emphasizes inter-church connection and shared learning.
- **Importance of Ministry Fulfillment:** Paul's exhortation to Archippus underscores the significance of completing the work God has given.
- **Authorship Affirmation:** The personal details and signature in the closing chapter serve as strong evidence for Paul's authorship of the letter.

Quiz

1. What is the main shift in focus that occurs in Colossians chapter 4 compared to the preceding chapters?

2. According to Paul in Colossians 4:2, what three qualities should mark the believers' approach to prayer?
3. What specific request does Paul make regarding prayer in Colossians 4:3-4, and what does this reveal about his priorities while in prison?
4. Explain what Paul means by urging the Colossians to "walk in wisdom toward outsiders" (Colossians 4:5).
5. What does Paul mean by the admonition to "make the best use of time" (Colossians 4:5), and what analogy does the lecturer use to illustrate the importance of time?
6. Describe the characteristics Paul encourages for Christian conversation in Colossians 4:6.
7. Name two individuals who are mentioned as carrying the letter to Colossae, and briefly describe a key characteristic Paul attributes to each.
8. What unusual request does Paul make concerning the circulation of his letter in Colossians 4:16, and what might be the significance of this request?
9. What specific exhortation does Paul give to Archippus in Colossians 4:17?
10. How does the lecturer argue that the personal details and Paul's signature in Colossians 4:18 support the claim that Paul authored the letter?

Quiz Answer Key

1. In Colossians 4, the focus shifts from addressing internal issues and false teachings within the Colossian church (as seen in chapters 2 and 3) to the church's outward-facing relationships and responsibilities towards those outside the Christian community.
2. Paul urges believers to continue steadfastly (devote themselves) in prayer, being watchful or vigilant in their prayer, and offering their prayers with thanksgiving or gratitude.
3. Paul asks for prayer that God would open to them a door for the word, so that they could clearly declare the mystery of Christ, highlighting his unwavering commitment to gospel proclamation even amidst imprisonment.

4. By "walk in wisdom toward outsiders," Paul means that Christians should conduct themselves with discernment and good judgment in their interactions with non-believers, making wise choices that reflect well on their faith and the gospel.
5. Paul urges believers to "make the best use of time" or "buy out the time," meaning they should seize every opportunity to live for Christ and advance the gospel, recognizing time as a valuable resource from God. The lecturer uses the analogy of accounting for one's time before God to emphasize its importance.
6. Paul encourages Christian conversation to be always full of grace and seasoned with salt, meaning their speech should be kind, edifying, and have a positive impact, enabling them to effectively communicate and answer those who inquire.
7. Tychicus is described as a dear brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord, emphasizing his trustworthiness and shared mission. Onesimus is called a faithful and dear brother who is one of the Colossians, highlighting his connection to the church and Paul's positive view of him.
8. Paul requests that after the letter to the Colossians is read, it should also be read in the church of the Laodiceans, and that the Colossians should in turn read the letter from Laodicea, suggesting a desire for shared instruction and connection between these nearby churches.
9. Paul tells the Colossians to tell Archippus to see to it that he completes the ministry he has received in the Lord, underscoring the importance of faithfulness in fulfilling one's God-given tasks.
10. The lecturer argues that the specific names, relationships, and personal details mentioned in the greetings, along with Paul's direct signature, would be difficult for a forger to accurately and convincingly fabricate for an audience who likely knew some of the individuals mentioned, thus supporting Paul's genuine authorship.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the significance of Paul's emphasis on prayer in the closing of his letter to the Colossians. How does this connect to the themes addressed in earlier chapters, and what does it reveal about Paul's understanding of Christian life and ministry?
2. Discuss the implications of Paul's instructions regarding conduct towards outsiders and the use of time in Colossians 4:5. How do these admonitions challenge believers in both the first century and today, and what practical steps might they involve?
3. Examine the role and importance of personal relationships as reflected in Paul's greetings and commendations in Colossians 4:7-15. What insights do these personal touches offer regarding Paul's character, his ministry approach, and the nature of the early Christian community?
4. Evaluate the significance of Paul's request for the circulation of his letter and the exhortation to Archippus in Colossians 4:16-17. What do these instructions suggest about Paul's vision for the early church and the responsibilities of its members?
5. Critically assess the arguments presented in the lecture regarding the authorship of Colossians, particularly focusing on the evidence found in the closing chapter (Colossians 4). What makes this chapter a significant point of discussion in the debate over Pauline authorship?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Haustafel:** A German word meaning "household codes." Scholars use this term to refer to the New Testament passages that discuss household relationships and roles (e.g., Colossians 3:18-4:1).
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the "end times" or the final events in the history of the world, often associated with the return of Christ and the establishment of God's kingdom.
- **Mystery of Christ:** A key theme in Paul's letters, referring to God's plan, now revealed in Christ, to unite Jews and Gentiles into one body, the church, and to the indwelling of Christ in believers.
- **Grace (in speech):** Kindness, goodwill, and favor expressed through words, aiming to edify, encourage, and show love.
- **Seasoned with salt (in speech):** Language that is flavorful, wholesome, and has a preserving or purifying effect, able to provide answers and understanding.
- **Doulos:** A Greek word meaning "slave" or "servant." Paul often uses this term to describe his relationship to Christ and the role of believers.
- **Beloved Brother:** A term of endearment and spiritual kinship used by Paul to describe fellow Christians whom he deeply cared for and respected.
- **Faithful Minister:** One who is trustworthy, reliable, and committed to serving in the work of the gospel.
- **Fellow Servant (in the Lord):** Someone who shares in the same mission and work of serving Jesus Christ and building His kingdom.
- **Exhortation:** An earnest attempt to persuade or encourage someone to do what is right or commendable.

5. FAQs on Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 7, Closing (Col. 4), Biblelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Colossians 4 Based on Dr. Darko's Lecture

1. What is the main shift in focus that occurs in Colossians chapter 4, and why is it significant?

In Colossians chapter 4, there is a significant shift in focus from internal issues within the Colossian church, which Paul addressed in chapters 2 and 3 (including false teachings and household relationships), to an outward focus as Paul brings his letter to a close. This shift is significant because it demonstrates that while the internal health and conduct of the Christian community are vital, their engagement with the outside world, including prayer for the spread of the gospel and wise conduct towards non-believers, is equally important in Paul's view.

2. What key elements does Dr. Darko emphasize in Paul's admonition to "continue steadfastly in prayer" (Colossians 4:2)?

Dr. Darko emphasizes that "continue steadfastly in prayer" implies a devotion and persistence in prayer that is not a one-time event but an ongoing aspect of the Christian life. He highlights two crucial attitudes that should accompany this prayer: watchfulness (vigilance against false teachings and ungodly influences) and thanksgiving (a constant sense of gratitude to God for His grace and salvation). He connects this call to prayer with the beginning of Colossians, where Paul also emphasizes prayer and thanksgiving, as well as the example of Jesus Christ who frequently prayed.

3. What specific prayer request does Paul make of the Colossians, and what does this reveal about his priorities while in prison?

Paul specifically asks the Colossians to pray that God would open a door for the word, so that he and his companions could clearly declare the mystery of Christ, which is the reason for his imprisonment. This reveals that even in confinement, Paul's paramount priority remains the advancement of the gospel. His request is not for personal comfort or release, but for opportunities and clarity in proclaiming Christ to others.

4. According to Dr. Darko, what three key concluding admonitions does Paul give to the Colossians regarding their outward conduct?

Paul gives three key concluding admonitions regarding their outward conduct: * **Walk in wisdom toward outsiders:** Christians are called to be wise in their behavior and choices when interacting with those outside the faith, ensuring that their lives serve as a positive testimony and do not cause offense. * **Make use of every opportunity (redeem the time):** Believers should value and utilize their time wisely, recognizing the opportunities they have to live out their faith and impact the world around them. * **Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt:** Christian speech should be gracious, edifying, encouraging, and have a positive impact, enabling them to answer those who inquire about their faith effectively.

5. Why does Paul provide so many personal greetings at the end of Colossians, and what can we learn from his descriptions of his colleagues?

Paul provides many personal greetings to affirm the authenticity of the letter and to connect the Colossian church with his ministry network. His detailed descriptions of colleagues like Tychicus (dear brother, faithful minister, fellow servant), Onesimus (faithful and dear brother, one of you), Aristarchus (fellow prisoner), Mark (cousin of Barnabas, about whom they had received instructions), and Epaphras (one of you, servant of Christ Jesus, always wrestling in prayer for you) highlight their valued roles, trustworthiness, and dedication to the gospel. We learn the importance of recognizing and commending those who serve alongside us in ministry.

6. What is the significance of Paul's instruction for the Colossians to share their letter with the church in Laodicea and to read the letter from Laodicea?

Paul's instruction to share the letter with the Laodiceans and to read their letter (which is now lost) underscores the interconnectedness of the early Christian communities in the region. It suggests a sense of partnership and mutual encouragement among the churches, highlighting that the challenges and teachings relevant to one community could also benefit others in close proximity. This practice of sharing letters was unusual for Paul and emphasizes the importance of the messages contained within them.

7. What does Dr. Darko suggest is the purpose of Paul's personal signature at the end of the letter (Colossians 4:18) in relation to the authorship debate?

Dr. Darko suggests that Paul's personal signature in Colossians 4:18 supports the authenticity of his authorship. He posits that if the letter were a forgery, including such specific personal details and a direct signature would be a significant risk for the imposter, especially considering that there were people in the churches who knew Paul and his associates. The personal touch and the challenge to remember his chains further authenticate the letter as genuinely coming from Paul.

8. What were the main issues Paul was addressing in the letter to the Colossians as a whole, and how does the closing section in chapter 4 relate to these overarching themes?

The main issues Paul was addressing in Colossians were the infiltration or emergence of false teachings that threatened to undermine the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. He emphasized Christ's preeminence, the fullness found in Him, and warned against deceptive philosophies and legalistic practices. The closing section in chapter 4 reinforces these themes by calling for a life of prayer centered on the gospel, wise and gracious conduct that reflects Christ to the outside world, and acknowledging faithful individuals who are dedicated to serving Christ. It serves as a practical application of the theological truths Paul laid out earlier in the letter, urging the Colossians to live out their faith in tangible ways within their community and beyond.