

“Remember My Chains” **Colossians 4:18, ESV**

To contemplate the life and work of the apostle Paul is to contemplate greatness. However, Paul would quickly tell us that he was not great, but that God was good to him and that anything he did worthwhile was due to the grace of God (1 Corinthians 15:10; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21). It is in such an attitude that Paul mentions one of his life circumstances as he writes his epistle to the Colossians.

Remember Paul’s chains...

When you are tempted to criticize Paul. In these days when people are attempting to impose modern opinions of gender roles upon the church, Paul is seen as a prime target. Because of the restrictions placed upon women in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, Paul is labeled a male chauvinist. However, we must remember that Paul was writing the will of God (1 Corinthians 14:37) and he is to be understood within the proper context. Restriction of anyone, including women, does not equal hatred or bigotry. No matter how severely he is viewed by some, his commitment to the Lord is unquestioned.

When you begin to feel sorry for yourself. All Christians are tempted to feel, at some time or other, that they are alone in the struggle against evil, or that no one else goes through the same things they do. However, consideration of Paul’s imprisonment mentioned in Colossians 4:18, as well as his other sufferings (2 Corinthians 11:24-27), quickly remind us that most, if not all the discomforts related to our faith are minor in comparison.

When you need to be reminded of the price of commitment. Jesus said a man is to “take up his cross” and follow him (Matthew 16:24). That means we are to commit our lives totally to him. Just before Paul was executed, he described his actions as “being poured out as a drink offering” (2 Timothy 4:6). His life was forfeited the day he became a Christian, no matter how long he lived. We need to remember that our being a Christian may result in us paying an extreme price—but heaven will be worth it all (Romans 8:18; Revelation 2:10).

When you need to be reminded of the sacrifices of those who paved the way for us. Paul as well as many Christians through the years remained faithful to God and passed along the gospel (2 Timothy 2:2). Without their faithfulness, where would we be? Thank God—and remember Paul’s chains.

—Lance Cordle