

## Are You A Warrior For Christ?

**Colossians 4:11 and also Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.**

**and also Jesus who is called Justus;** Jesus was a common name among the Jews, they often picked a surname for a specific birthplace, quality or achievement. Jesus is a Greek name from the Hebrew Jeshua or Joshua and means “whose help Jehovah is,” deliverance, safety, salvation; savior; deliverer.

**Justus** is more Latin and means just; upright; righteous.

**and also Jesus, who is called Justus these.** Mark and this Justus.

**are the only fellow workers.** What a beautiful designation for the team concept. This compound Greek word is made up of the prefix *sun* with or together with, plus *ergon* to work, and means to work with or fellow worker. When Paul uses this word, he has a double meaning in mind. First, these named men are fellow workers with Paul, but they are all fellow workers of the Lord. In 1 Corinthians chapter 3 he uses this term to refer to himself, Peter and Apollos. These fellow workers are not to be admired so as to divide the church but they are all helpers of God, workers in God’s vineyard. Do not use them to divide, but to unite. The term carries the idea of working alongside another for a like cause. They worked closely with God.

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**For.** this preposition is used to introduce the purpose of their working together.

**the kingdom of God.** This reference is used in any number of ways and most of them incorrectly by modern day theologians.

***The Kingdom of God***

1. This title does not refer to the Kingdom as a reality now, but refers to the future.
2. In his ‘Dispensational Truth,’ Clarence Larkin writes, “Christ is the Head of His Church (Ephesians 1:22, 4:15; Colossians 1:18), but He is never spoken of as its King.” Jesus does not rule over the Church as it’s king but it’s head.
3. We are not the Kingdom of God, we are His Church, His body and His bride. But in the Church Age, Christ is never referred to as a King nor is the Church referred to as His Kingdom. L. S. Chafer notes several figures that are used to depict the Church, such as shepherd and sheep, vine and branches, temple stone and cornerstone, high priest and priesthood, head and body, and bride and groom. But never King!
4. In his book ‘The Coming Kingdom,’ Andrew M. Woods writes “there is a lack of correspondence between what Scripture predicts concerning the coming kingdom and the present spiritual realities in the Church Age. For example, during the kingdom, Christ will rule the world with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 12:5) resulting in immediate justice against any sin or wrong doing (Zech.14:16-18;

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Rev. 20:7-10). The Church Age by contrast, is often characterized by carnality and a low standard of Christian living (1 Cor.3:1-3).”

5. Paul’s ministry is to proclaim the Gospel.

**Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.**

He does not preach kingdom now as the gospel. The Kingdom will come when Jesus returns as its King and sets up the Millennial Kingdom. The Jews look forward to this blessed event and often confuse this with the Gospel of Salvation. This is one of the very reasons they rejected and crucified Jesus. They were and still are looking for the King of the Jews who will make Israel the Kingdom on earth. We must never confuse the offering of the Kingdom with the offering of eternal life. The offering of the Kingdom is a future event, not to be confused with the Church. Christ promises the Kingdom, but not as part of our gospel, but as the guarantee of the future.

**2 Timothy 4:1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is in the future to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:**

So, the presentation of His Kingdom is future. So, a Jew who understands the truth of the gospel, understands who Jesus is and believes in Him as Savior and properly understands ‘end time’ scenario

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would never confuse the present gospel with the future Kingdom. But he understands that the promised Kingdom of the King ruling in Jerusalem is future. This is why it is so important to properly understand end times. It is so unfortunate that in order to attract more people the EFCA (efca.org) has dropped end times statement:

The Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) changed its position on end times theology, voting this summer to drop the word “premillennial” from the denomination’s statement of faith. I hope that you can now see and understand from this study how important this is to correctly understand the gospel and not get it confused with the coming Kingdom, or the Kingdom Now theology. People that do not correctly divide the Word of God, get the proclamation ‘repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand’ (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:5-7 & 24:14) wrong. Notice they are all in the book of Matthew, who in his gospel, presents Jesus as the King, rejected by His people. But such a proclamation is not the gospel presented in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament where, as King, He will come for the Jews. But, as Savior, He will come for the entire human race, to save them from eternal damnation to eternal life! When we present the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, we do not ask people to repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.

**Col. 4:11 ...who are from the circumcision,  
and they have proved to be an encouragement  
to me.**

**who are ‘out’ from the circumcision**, this refers to Jewish converts. Paul combines here ‘out of the circumcision’ with the Jewish hope of the Kingdom. Once a Jew believes in Jesus as the promised Messiah, he

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becomes a member of the universal church. One is not a Jewish Christian, nor a Gentile Christian. It is most revealing of a person's attitude about America when they refer to themselves as 'African-American,' or 'Mexican-American' etc. What a shame they are not just 'Americans.' In time past, Italians, Greeks, Germans were so proud to be Americans, not a hyphenated American. And people, please know that you are not a hyphenated Christian. You are a Christian, saved by Christ, belonging to Christ. Your citizenship is in heaven, for you are born from above (John 3:3)! When you were 'born again' (1 Peter 1:23), you were born from above and that is where you are from. That is why we are aliens on this earth and our citizenship is in heaven, which is one of the reasons we use the wonderful statement when a believer has died that they have 'gone home.'

What is interesting here is that Paul is a Jewish convert. The Church Age began with total Jewish converts. But now, some 30 years later, Gentile converts are in the majority. Some ask about Luke. Why didn't Paul include Luke here? It is believed that Luke was a Gentile.

**and they have proved to be.** or more accurately have become or simply are.

**an encouragement to me.** This is an interesting Greek word: *paregoria*. And yes, this is where we get the English word paregoric which refers to a medicine containing opium and therefore refers to a really soothing comfort. In Greek, it refers to some people that just have the knack of giving comfort. It is used only once in the New Testament. It came to be used of words that give comfort to the soul, that consoles. This word emphasizes tenderness, understanding in the manner and words used in

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comforting someone. Paregoric is a soothing medication. That is what this word communicates that one believer gives to another believer who is in some form of turmoil.

Here we come to the heart of Spiritual Love.

Remember the fundamental aspect of spiritual love is that this love sees a need and then meets that need. For this love to see a need means this love is always looking and thinking, anticipating what others might need and how I can meet that need. This love sees when one is in some turmoil, loneliness, heartbroken. The love of most people (human love as opposed to spiritual love) is about themselves. What they need, what they want, and why are others not fulfilling their needs and wants. But not Spiritual Love. It looks at the needs of others. This is the love of God the Father. He looked at mankind, lost in judgment of sins and unrighteous. He knew what was needed: a Savior who would take the punishment for sins off the people and provide a way for them to be righteous. Therefore, out of His Love, Divine Love, God sent His Son to the earth to bear the judgment for all the sins of the world and then provide perfect righteousness to anyone, everyone who believes in His Son. Then, we have the Love of Jesus Christ. A love that saw the needs of mankind and met that need by becoming man and lowering Himself to be the servant of mankind, dying for all mankind on the cross. Here is Love. Here is comfort.

**Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit (Holy Spirit) of the Lord  
God (God the Father) is upon me, (incarnate  
Christ) Because the Lord (God the Father) has**

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**anointed me** (sanctified or set Him apart for the specific service, now declared) **To bring good news to the afflicted** (by sin); **He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted** (grief-stricken by sin and the despair it brings to life), **To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;**

This is the medical soothing of the love of Jesus Christ when one responds to this love. Please remember the great issue with God's love, the love of Jesus or the love of almost anyone is not just being loved but benefiting from that love. Many die with a brokenheart because they refuse to believe in Jesus as their Savior. Yes, people, love sees a need and meets that need but you have to receive the benefit of that love.

### ***Comfort***

1. The foundation of comfort is seeing the need of the soul.
2. To properly understand comfort is to grasp how you feel no matter how wonderful your trip was, or how unfortunate it was. When you enter your own home, there is an inner comfort. We may find pleasure in this world but only in those things related to Christ can we find comfort.
3. Comfort is what the Holy Spirit gives when someone close has been promoted home. It is not pleasure, it does not remove the hurt, but it removes the hopelessness.
4. In life, comfort in the soul is more important than pleasure.

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5. Comfort is the positive side of consoling someone. To console denotes the relieving of some form of pain. But comfort denotes the giving of a positive element to a situation. Perhaps, while Paul was in prison, someone brought him something nice to eat. This would relieve his hunger. But when one comes and offers companionship, encouragement in Christ, this is what renders comfort. We may console someone by doing something for them while they are in afflictions, but we offer comfort by what we say or by just being there with them. We offer comfort when one is heavy with pressures by offering the hope, the confidence of relief and the assurance that God is in control and God is there with them and God does indeed love them.
6. While consoling relieves pressure, comfort is characterized by invigorating or strengthening one who is weak in their soul.
7. Throughout the Word of God, we find the need to be comforted, encouraged in the spiritual conflict.

**Psalm 94:19 When my anxious thoughts multiply within me,...**

Stop! Do you see it? Where is the battle? In our minds, our thoughts! The battle is over our souls. Satan wants to control them, the flesh wants to control them. The Holy Spirit is given to us to control them. It is up to each individual person to decide who is going to control your thoughts. This is the message of

**Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the**



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**flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you wish.**

And people, what you think is under your control. You make the decision to think what you think. There is no Calvinism in God's gracious and wonderful plan.

**Psalm 94:19 When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul.**

What Psalm 94 is saying is that there are numerous thoughts running through his mind. He is overwhelmed! But look where he will gain control of his thoughts: **Your consolations or comforts.** Ok, what is this? In the first book God gave to man, the book of Job, He declares that His Word is given to give comfort to our souls when we are in turmoil.

**Job 15:11 Are the consolations of God too small for you, Even the Word spoken gently with you?**

It is amazing how many people prefer to go to the bottle or drugs etc., than to sit down and open the Word of God and just read it. Sit down, open the Bible to Psalm 7 and start reading...and see if after a while, maybe up to the 18th Psalm your soul does not start calming down—supernaturally!

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**Psalm 94:19 When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your comforts delight my soul.**

**delights my soul.** Not just consoles but actually delights the soul or encourages me.

One of the most beautiful Psalms for comfort and encouragement is

**Psalm 63:1 O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.**

**Psalm 63:2 Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary To see Your power and Your glory.**

**Psalm 63:3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life My lips will praise You.**

**Psalm 63:4 So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.**

**Psalm 63:5 My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.**

**Psalm 63:6 When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches,**

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**Psalm 63:7 For You have been my help, And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy.**

**Psalm 63:8 My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me.**

8. The Church Age began with believers comforting and encouraging one another.

**Acts 14:21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,**

**Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”**

Here the Church is viewed as an heir of the Kingdom rather than residing in a present existing Kingdom. Please note that believers, especially new believers need to be strengthened by the Word of God and encouraged to continue to walk by faith not by sight. Another interesting passage is

**1 Thessalonians 3:2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,**

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Here it is the believers in Thessalonica that are strengthened and encouraged. But look down at

**1 Thessalonians 3:8 for now we *really* live, if you stand firm in the Lord.**

Here it is Paul who is encouraged by their walking in faith. Faith is the battle. So often believers wonder what is wrong with them? Well, it is simply a matter of not trusting God.

9. One final point. People, you will make it through any catastrophe that occurs in your life. You will make it. The issue is not just making it through. Unbelievers make it through the most horrible of catastrophes in life. The objective is not just to make it through but to glorify God. To make it through because we rely on His divine provisions of the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God and the encouragements from other believers.

**2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure ...**

**But we have this treasure** the Holy Spirit and the Knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 4:7 ...in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;**

Every time you have tribulation in your life, regardless of the source, it is an opportunity for you to glorify God. But many believers are like unbelievers. They make it through by their own strength plus time. Oh, and then they like to say, God got me through it...Yes, He did, but not

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unlike He gets unbelievers through tribulations, not because you trusted in Him, not because you were strengthened by His Spirit and encouraged by His Word. People, please understand that you have the greatest privilege when you are under suffering, the privilege of glorifying God! Don't waste that opportunity to glorify God and Jesus Christ in your life.

**Epaphras**, we have already been introduced to this great believer of the early church in Colossians 1:7

**Colossians 1:7 Just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on your behalf.**

**just as you learned it.** the gospel

So here we learn several things about this believer. He most likely was the first and founding pastor-teacher of the assembly in Colossae, grounding them in the gospel. His name means lovely or impassionate. Paul considered him a beloved fellow bond-servant and faithful servant of Christ; on their behalf.

**Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.**

**Epaphras who is one of your number**, of your assembly

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**a bonds slave of Jesus Christ,** And he is faithful as a bonds slave. In Colossians 1:7 he is *a faithful servant of Christ: diakonos*, a minister, servant or deacon. Here in Colossians 4:12 he is a bonds slave of Jesus Christ: *doulos* “a slave, one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will being altogether consumed in the will of the other.” (The Complete Wordstudy Dictionary of the New Testament).

**sends you his greetings,**

The next identification of this man is to be covered in length, so we will cover it next.

Let's close this morning with the sobering question: do you comfort others in life? Do you encourage believers whom God has caused to cross you in your life? Remember spiritual love is a supernatural love from God the Holy Spirit, that enables you to help heal the broken hearted in life.