

Title: Chain Gang – Colossians 4 1-18

Read:

¹ And masters, treat your servants considerately. Be fair with them. Don't forget for a minute that you, too, serve a Master—God in heaven. ²⁻⁴ Pray diligently. Stay alert, with your eyes wide open in gratitude. Don't forget to pray for us, that God will open doors for telling the mystery of Christ, even while I'm locked up in this jail. Pray that every time I open my mouth I'll be able to make Christ plain as day to them. ⁵⁻⁶ Use your heads as you live and work among outsiders. Don't miss a trick. Make the most of every opportunity. Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out. ⁷⁻⁹ My good friend Tychicus will tell you all about me. He's a trusted minister and companion in the service of the Master. I've sent him to you so that you would know how things are with us, and so he could encourage you in your faith. And I've sent Onesimus with him. Onesimus is one of you, and has become such a trusted and dear brother! Together they'll bring you up-to-date on everything that has been going on here. ¹⁰⁻¹¹ Aristarchus, who is in jail here with me, sends greetings; also Mark, cousin of Barnabas (you received a letter regarding him; if he shows up, welcome him); and also Jesus, the one they call Justus. These are the only ones left from the old crowd who have stuck with me in working for God's kingdom. Don't think they haven't been a big help! ¹²⁻¹³ Epaphras, who is one of you, says hello. What a trooper he has been! He's been tireless in his prayers for you, praying that you'll stand firm, mature and confident in everything God wants you to do. I've watched him closely, and can report on how hard he has worked for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke, good friend and physician, and Demas both send greetings. ¹⁵ Say hello to our friends in Laodicea; also to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. ¹⁶ After this letter has been read to you, make sure it gets read also in Laodicea. And get the letter that went to Laodicea and have it read to you. ¹⁷ And, oh, yes, tell Archippus, "Do your best in the job you received from the Master. Do your very best." ¹⁸ I'm signing off in my own handwriting—Paul. Remember to pray for me in this jail. Grace be with you.

Think:

Hold on a minute what's this all about. Paul is in jail? What's he doing worrying about other people when he is chained up in a stinking jail? There he is in the filth and disease that a jail of this would have had been, and he is saying, we always thank God for you in our prayers. Is this guy mad? I know what I would do. I would be moaning and groaning and writing letters saying get me out of here. I am pretty sure I would not be writing letters encouraging others and praying for them. But isn't that just the way of our world today? At school, college and work, are we not looking out for what is our right? It does seem to me sometimes that I am more worried about what I deserve or what I have a right to, rather than being thankful for what I have. Come to think about I am not sure who is chained up the most Paul, in his physical chains, or me in my mental ones. Maybe a little more thanks for the blessing God has given me, and a little less moaning about what I don't have, wouldn't go amiss. Yep get me out of this chain gang, I'm going to be thankful rather than ungrateful. How about you?

Pray:

Lord thanks for all that you have provided for me in my life. Amen.

Action:

What did you look at in your life yesterday and moan about? Is it possible you could be thankful about it today? Bye.