

A Good Example to Follow in 2026

Text:

II Corinthians 4:1–12; Colossians 1:7–8; Colossians 4:12–13; Philemon 23

II Corinthians 4:1–12 – (Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you)

Colossians 1:7–8 – (As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit)

Colossians 4:12–13 – (Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis)

Philemon 23 – (There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus)

Introduction:

How would you define faithfulness?

Is it possible to stay faithful going into 2026?

Is faithfulness hard?

Sometimes, we need good godly examples from the Bible to help encourage us to stay faithful and committed to the Lord. Our church needs faithful and committed servants to be ministers, especially now that things are a little different from our normal routine in the church.

In our text, it describes a person named Epaphras as a “servant of Christ”.

His name is only mentioned three times in the Bible – Colossians 1:7,8; 4:12,13 and Philemon 23.

So let us look at some things about Epaphras.

Lesson:

Epaphras was a beloved fellow-worker – Colossians 1:7

Colossians 1:7 – (As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ)

A fellow-worker by visiting Paul while in prison – Paul wrote this epistle while he was in prison and Epaphras was considered beloved by Paul as he was there for him.

Lesson to learn –

Oh how we need to be there for our brothers and sisters in the Lord. To help encourage and support them as much as we can. Even the Lord Jesus mentioned this in the Gospel – Matthew 25:35-40

Matthew 25:35–40 – (For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me)

Epaphras was a faithful minister of Christ – Colossians 1:7

Colossians 1:7 – (As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ)

Yes, I am sure that it meant a lot to Paul having a visitor inside the prison, but Paul emphasized that he was a “faithful minister of Christ”. What a great recognition.

The Bible tells us to remain faithful in His Work – I Corinthians 4:2; I Timothy 1:12; II Timothy 2:2

I Corinthians 4:2 – (Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful)

I Timothy 1:12 – (And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry)

II Timothy 2:2 – (And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also)

Epaphras was a bearer of good things – Colossians 1:8

Colossians 1:8 – (Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit)

He declared unto Paul their love in the spirit. It is amazing that Epaphras did not look at the church’s short-comings or faults. You notice that it says, that he was not only “of” the church at Colosse; but he was “for” the church at Colosse.

If you are “of” our church (belong to it), be sure you are always “for” it as well, for the Lord’s sake and for the sake of your fellow-believers. Acts 2:47; Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 3:17

Acts 2:47 – (Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved)

Romans 12:5 – (So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another)

I Corinthians 3:17 – (If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are)

Epaphras was a man of prayer – Colossians 4:12

Colossians 4:12 – (Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God)

Now and even going into a new year, we need to be men and women of prayer!

Notice his prayers:

- Were persistent – it said, “always” – not to quit – Luke 18:1; I Thessalonians 5:18

Luke 18:1 – (And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint)

I Thessalonians 5:18 – (In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you)

- Were piercing – it said, “labored fervently” – the intensity of his prayers – James 5:16

James 5:16 – (Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much)

- Were perceptive – it said, “that ye may...” – Matthew 7:7-11

Matthew 7:7-11 – (Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?)

Not only did he pray, but he prayed for a specific purpose for the church:

That they may stand perfect (matured) – vrs. 12c

That they may be complete in “all” the will of God – vrs. 12d

Epaphras was a true missionary – Colossians 4:13

Colossians 4:13 – (For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis)

Not did he have a deep concern for those at Colosse, but also for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Do we have a concern to reach the lost – Matthew 9:37,38. May the Lord give us a burden and vision for the lost souls.

Matthew 9:37–38 – (Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest)

Conclusion:

I guess one of the best illustration of faithfulness is found in the story of the “Tortoise and Hare”. No matter fast the hare went, the hare teasing him and when seem hopeless, that tortoise stayed on his course and persevered until he reached the end. The Bible us this in II Timothy 4:6-8

II Timothy 4:6–8 – (For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing)