

Communion Meditation – Colossians

Colossians 4.15-18

“Authenticity and Forgery”

Dec 18th, 2016

Two Communities / Two Epistles

- Paul was imprisoned in Rome when writing this letter to the Colossians
- He’s thought to have written Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon
- Tychicus delivered this epistle (**v7**) and the one to Ephesians (**Eph 6.21**)
- Colosse and Laodicea very close to one another – Ephesians 100 miles west

v16b ~ “read the epistle from Laodicea”

- Theories abound concerning this epistle
 - Letter from cong?; Apocryphal one; Lost letter; Circular letter (**Eph**)
- Strongly favor theories in which letter was written by Paul – not to Paul
 - Else, why would he want it read in other churches?

v17 ~ “Say to Archippus, ‘Take heed to the ministry ..”

- Archippus commended as “fellow soldier” in **Philemon 1.2**
- Yet this reads as a rebuke to me / Archippus neglecting ministry

v18a ~ “This salutation by my own hand”

- Paul relied upon his personal closing as a means of authentication
 - He already knew or suspected forgers to be at work
 - Signature is 1 of many clues used to authenticate a work (e.g., painting)

Authenticity and Forgery

- A forger attempts to deceive people / confuse between authentic and fake
- Experts are hired to distinguish them / **But can experts make mistakes?**
 - Of course they can / **III**: Oct 4th, 2016 article (\$255M cheated)

Authenticity of Books of the Bible

- Look at the broader truth proven by this concept of forgery
- An epistle belongs in Bible or not / Each is autographed original of God or not
- We puny humans can’t make a fake an original by declaring it so
- But that’s exactly what the Roman Catholic Church declares c/the Canon

Paul was concerned about authenticity / We should be too

We’re to be Bereans in this / We’re to “speak the truth in love”

Our being “in Christ” commits us to this as a way of life