

Lesson Text

I. **Be Devoted To Prayer (Colossians 4:2)**

II. **An Open Door For The Gospel (Colossians 4:3-4)**

III. **Salty Speech (Colossians 4:5-6)**

The Main Thought: And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfil it. (Colossians 4:17, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Once we commit ourselves to a new routine, it is helpful to have guides, partners, or mentors to strengthen our resolve. Where do we find mentors who will keep us faithful to our commitment? Paul names spiritual disciplines and faithful persons as examples of support for living a new life in Christ.

Lesson Aim: To help learners understand Paul's instructions about the need to be devoted to prayer and to speak and act wisely toward those who are not Christians.

Life Aim: To emphasize to students the importance of seasoning conversations as well as actions with salt.

4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

4:3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

4:4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

HISTORY:

Chapter 3:22-25 Earlier, Paul had given instruction of being servants (workman) to their masters. ¹In the early church slavery was an established institution and the Christian owed complete obedience to his master. In fact, servants were to strive to do a better job because they were Christians (v.22). At least half of the people were slaves. Servants were to obey and please God, not just to avoid punishment. Even if their master didn't commend them they knew that their reward would come from the Lord. A Christian worker ought to be the best worker on the job. "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord" (v. 23). We can be sure that we "will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward" (v. 24). But Christ has no favorites! He will punish evil people, just as they deserve (v. 25). There is to be no partiality, no matter what a person's position may be, whether he is the slave or the master.

4:1 MASTER, give unto your servants that which is just and equal: knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Now Paul turns around and instructs the masters. ²Paul is reminding these masters that they have a Master up in heaven, who is watching the way they deal with their subordinates here. To have a really good servant, you must be a good, honest master. Give them a job to do, and when they have done a good job, let them know that you are pleased with them. The way we measure to the people here on the earth is the same way God will measure to us in heaven. We should never take advantage of someone, just because they are working for us. Masters and servants are brothers, if they are both believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. God is not a respecter of persons. We are all one in Christ. Whatever position you are filling here on the earth, do it to the best of your ability. Be kind to all people, and especially those you are over.

LESSON:

Colossians 4:2 Be Devoted To Prayer

4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;— These passages will cover two of the most important subjects for the believer—that of his prayer life and his witness. Paul gives this instruction that the Christians, whether slaves or masters must persist in prayer.

1. **First, continue steadfastly in prayer.** The word "*continue*" (*proskartereite*), means to be constant, persevering, and unwearied in prayer. "*Steadfastly*" means consistent with conviction; unfaltering; firm and steady. It means to be in constant and unbroken fellowship and communion with God. It means to never face a moment when we are not in prayer. How is this possible? It means to:

- develop an attitude of prayer
- walk in a spirit of prayer
- take a mental break from our work

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/colossians-322/>

² <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/colossians/06.html>

- and spend a moment in prayer
- pray always when our minds are not upon some duty
- arise early and pray before daily activities begin
- pray before going to bed

Although there are many things that compete for our time, we are to make all of these a continual practice. If we would learn to captivate useless daydreaming and wandering thoughts to use as minutes for prayer; communing with God, we would discover what it is to walk and live in prayer. We are the ones who have to discipline ourselves to pray. If we do not pray, then prayer never gets done. The scripture says:

- *"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" 2Cor.10:5.*
- *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" Matt.7:7.*
- *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" Phil.4:6.*
- *"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" Jam.5:16.*

2. **Second, watch in prayer.** The word "watch" (*gregorountes*) means to stay awake, be alert, be sleepless, be active, concentrate. It means to fight against distractions, drowsiness, sluggishness, wandering thoughts, and useless daydreaming. It means to discipline our minds and control our thoughts as we pray. We are responsible for watching and concentrating. We continue to remain alert and sensitive when situations arise in our lives and then we take those concerns to the Lord.
3. **Third, pray with thanksgiving.** When someone does something for us, we thank that person. The One Person who has done more for us than anyone else is God. His hand is constantly upon our lives, looking after and caring for us, therefore, we continually thank Him. Throughout the day, praise should be lifted up to Him as we go about our daily affairs. We should never forget His Son—that He actually took our sins upon Himself and bore the judgment and punishment of them for us. This alone should continually fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise in our prayers. *"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" 1Cor.15:57.* Prayers are prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus.

Our prayer life is to be constant and steady, not casual fellowship with the Master. We are to watch, being sensitive to His Will as we give Him thanks for all He has already done and is about to do.

Colossians 4:3-4 An Open Door For The Gospel

4:3 **Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:**— *"Withal"* means at the same time. There was Paul and others who needed prayer.

4. **Fourth, pray for others,** in particular for their ministry. Be an intercessor for God's ministers. Remember Paul was in prison, but he had also requested prayer. Paul could have asked that the church pray for his release, for a not guilty verdict in his upcoming trial (he was not guilty), or for a peaceful end to his life. But this is not what he requested. He requested prayer for his ministry. He wanted the believers praying that God would give him: opportunities for witnessing—for sharing the mystery or salvation of Christ, and to witness boldly.

As Paul ministered to others, he also needed prayer. God has established the spiritual law that He works in response to prayer. Whether we believe it or not, God clearly says that prayer is a law of the universe. Prayer is the law by which He works and moves in behalf of men and their world. Therefore, if we want the blessings of God upon our lives and ministries; if we want the work of God going forth in power and bearing fruit, we must pray for the ministers of the gospel. We must intercede in prayer.

Only God can open the right door—a door for the Word, not the door of the prison. *"The mystery of Christ"* is the Gospel of Jesus Christ revealed at the proper time. It revealed that salvation is offered to the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Eph.3:2-6). It was a mystery to them that had not heard the truth. God is able to open that person's heart to receive the gospel at the right time. Paul being in bonds or chains really didn't stop him.

- Some of Caesar's household was saved.
- Paul, also, preached in the home where he was under house arrest.

³Paul was in bonds, because he would not compromise the Word of God. Wherever you are, God will open a door for you to minister. Are you willing if there is just one person there?

4:4 **That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.** There was a burning desire to speak the Word that even a child could understand it. It was real in him and therefore, he wanted it to be real in others, that they could not say that they

³ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/colossians/06.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

didn't understand it. As the power of the Holy Spirit spoke through Paul, it had clear and free utterance. There might have been some that wanted to hinder his speech, but they could not. As the saints pray, he would speak with boldness as he ought, and God would have His way.

Colossians 4:5-6 Salty Speech

4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Note three significant points:

1. Believers are to walk in wisdom, meaning walk wisely, meaning;
 - that we walk thoughtfully, figuring out how to live for Christ before the world.
 - that we walk righteously and godly. • that we walk guarding every step. • that we walk doing good works.

Believers are to be wise in how they act toward outsiders or unbelievers, which comes to our next point.

2. Unbelievers need your witness. The phrase "*them that are without*" refers to the unbelievers of the world, those walking through life without Christ and God.
 - without hope beyond this life. • without assurance of life hereafter with God. • without peace.
 - without help in facing the trials and traumas of this life. • without God's care and deliverance.
 - without security. • without fellowship with God and His family of believers. • without freedom from guilt—no assurance of forgiveness of sins. • without light—no freedom from the darkness of death and the grave.

Scripture (Eph.2:12-13) paints a sharp contrast between unbelievers who are without Christ and believers who are within Christ. We might resent unbelievers for their ungodly lifestyle, and have as little to do with them as possible, but God loves the lost and so must His children who have His nature. Jesus braved criticism in order to relate to outcasts and sinners. It becomes very important how we relate to them, if we think about their souls.

3. Believers are to redeem the time. That means make the most of every opportunity; seek to grasp every moment to live for Christ, looking for opportunities to bear witness especially by the way we live. Live every moment for Christ in our behavior and our speech to witness. "*The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few*" Matt.9:37.

There is the price of self-denial and strenuous work to be paid as we use the time allotted to us.

4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

How we talk with unbelievers is important, for that is one of the main ways they will see Christ in us. One of the secrets of Jesus' success with people was that they knew almost instantly how much he valued and loved them in spite of their failings. Christ was full of grace and truth.

- *Let your speech be always with grace*— we must do it in love and gentleness. Be pleasant and hold their interest when you speak the message with kindness, courtesy, and graciousness.
- Let your conversation be *seasoned with salt*— our conversation is to be exciting, enjoyable, and drawing the unbeliever to Christ. That's what flavor does, it gets the senses palate; the appetite excited for more of your witness. Instead of turning from you, they would be turning toward you being thirsty and hungry for more of God's Word. They will begin to reach out for this Jesus you're talking about because you know how to answer every man as you ought! It is the power of the Holy Spirit who gives you the utterance and the power of the Holy Spirit who draws them as seen in your life.

SUMMARY:

Pray diligently. Stay alert, with your eyes wide open in gratitude (2).

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 (3-4).

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 (5-6). —The Message Bible.

APPLICATION:

As Paul has given the spiritual disciplines for new life in Christ, it gives us opportunities to act accordingly. The task of acting as a mentor to someone is best supported through prayer and cautious speech.