

PAUL'S MISSION AND CONCERN

Colossians 4:1-6

We continue this morning from the last Lords day when I began to bring you a message from the Book of Colossians in Chapter 3.

In chapter 2, Paul exposed the wrong reasons for self denial. In chapter 3, he explains true Christian behaviour – putting on the new nature by accepting Christ and regarding the old nature as dead.

Now in chapter 4 we see the inner life of prayer and the outer life of being a witness.

I realize that we have not finished chapter 3 of Colossians as we only got up to verse 17 last Lords day that I brought the message from Colossians. I feel that we will come back to it at a later date in more detail. As this is a vast subject to cover for us to really understand what Paul meant as he preached that message from Colossians 3:18-25. So we won't go there just yet.

But this morning I would like for us to consider chapter 4 in its opening message.

Colossians 4

¹ Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

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

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

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

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

Here is a great reminder from the apostle Paul that we need to remember that there is someone greater over us. In those days and even in these days alike we think that we can just rule over people with our large personalities and get away with it just because we think we can.

The apostle Paul reminds the Colossians and equally everyone today that those who think that they are masters over their servants need to remember that even they have a master in heaven over them.

1. So just because we can wield our power or personality and intimidate others is not a licence to do so.
2. The apostle Paul calls for them and us, as it does apply to us also to be just and equal.
3. Just because we have servants to help us, does not mean that we are to take advantage of them. We need to realize that even they are in need of salvation and are to be treated as another opportunity to witness to.
4. If they see a side of a Christian person that does not match up to his Christian speech do you really think that they will listen to the gospel message?
5. Hearts are won over by being just and equal which is what the bible calls us to be.

I. (Verse 2-4) THE INNER LIFE OF PRAYER

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

Continue in Prayer (verse2):

1. The apostle Paul supported the Colossian church through his prayers for them. (Colossians 1:3-8).

Colossians 1:3-8

³ We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

⁴ Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

⁵ For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

⁶ Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

⁷ As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

⁸ Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

2. His prayer for them was that their ministry would continue to prosper through continued prayer, including prayer on their part.
 - i. The Greek word translated continue is build on a root meaning “to be strong”. So here it implies to be persistent and passionate.
 - ii. This kind of prayer is not easy, if it’s not passionate. By that I mean that we have a zeal and LOVE for Christ, and to see how prayer can move the hand that created the world.

3. Sometimes we doubt whether the Lord is capable or willing to answer our prayer requests. But the scripture is clear in reminding us about watching for the outcome of that prayer. **Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving**;
4. It's called having faith in our Lord.
 - Paul also asked for prayer requests.
1. Anyone who is not willing to ask for prayer, is a person who satisfies himself that he or she can go it alone, and does not realize the power of prayer from true Christian warriors.
2. And they fail to see that God can use others in that time of prayer to help their needs.

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.

3. The bible is clear that we should be praying for each other.
 - If the apostle Paul could ask for prayer and he was far more spiritual than we are. How is it then that we don't ask for prayer?
 - Paul spoke of the same prayer to the Ephesian church.

In Ephesians 6:18-20

¹⁸ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication (prayer) for all saints;

¹⁹ And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

²⁰ For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

II. THE EFFECT OF PRAYER

- How do we know that prayer works?
- How can we know if prayer works if we never tried it?

(Colossians 4: Verse 3)

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:**

1. Well here is the answer. Paul asked everyone everywhere to pray for him. He did not request the prayer for selfish reasons but he asked everyone to pray for him that **“God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ.**

2. Paul was in jail at this time bound hand and foot, and was asking for prayer that his bonds would be loosed so that the gospel message could prosper.
3. The fact that he was in “bonds” was a wonderful picture for us to also show that those bonds however they may be were insufficient to stop him doing things for the Lord.
4. Paul was in bonds for Jesus Christ his Lord. That is what was important for him. To see the gospel message simply revealed to others.
5. He knew that any divine intervention needed to be put to prayer.
 - As we opened in verse one with that of a master knowing his servant and treating him fairly is a wonderful example as Paul opens up this verse in verse 3 stating that he is equally in bonds.
 - A bond servant is how Paul often refers to himself in serving God. It helps us also to realize as Paul said if we are over a servant don't forget that we are also a bond servant to God.

Are we treating others how we would like God to treat us?

1. The door of utterance Paul was speaking about was the opportunity that he was praying for; that God would give him to be able to share the gospel with the uncircumcised (unbelieving Jew) and the gentile unbeliever.
2. The door of utterance can sometimes be seen in the same way sales people would say if only they could only get “a foot in the door”.
3. It can be seen as Paul saw it first as the opportunity to engage the lost for the cause of the gospel. The mystery of Christ as the scripture puts it is the gospel message.

III. THE RESULT OF PRAYER

(Verse 4.)⁴ That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

The result of what Paul was expecting was the outcome of his prayer and the prayer of others for him.

1. Paul wanted to be released from prison so that he could continue the evangelism program of the Lord.
2. **That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.** This was related to how the message of the gospel should be delivered.
3. The manifestation was to make the world know in Paul's mind that there was something very important to say and that all people need to hear it.

Just like today the manifestation of God's Word is the most important message that can ever be delivered.

4. The term Paul used was “as I ought to speak”, was a term conveying the single most important message to deliver.
5. Paul did not speak for others here. He spoke for himself. The term he used was “I”. It shows his commitment to being that bondservant we so much see in the scriptures as he serves his Lord, and encourages others to do so also.

Galatians 1:10

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the **servant** of Christ.

Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timotheus, the **servants** of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Titus 1:1

Paul, a **servant** of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

➤ I am reassured when I read this verse that the scripture gives us below.

(Colossians 4:Verse 5&6).

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

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

1. The wisdom here is the wisdom of God's Word.
2. To exposit further it is to say that the wisdom here is referring to being that bond servant that Paul talks about. Walking in that wisdom of the Word.

When we meet or come into the presence of others, our focus in and during any conversation we have with them, should be that of trying to care for their spiritual well being.

By that I mean to try and find out about their spiritual status.

When the opportunity presents itself we should ask.

The scripture here in verse 5 & 6 reminds us of just that fact.

➤ It was evident that in the Colossian church that this was not the case.

It therefore required the apostle Paul to intervene to say how they ought to present themselves. So here we get a discourse of a Christian person's conduct, in being able to represent Christ as a servant.

Firstly. They are called to:

1. **Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.**
2. **Redeeming the time.**
3. **Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.**

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.

1. To walk in wisdom was an instruction Paul was giving them to do.

2. The church at Colossians were to conduct their lives in a manner that would naturally represent their walk with their Saviour Jesus Christ. This was obviously not the case with many of the church congregation there.
3. Their walk was to be such that they would identify those that were either unbelieving gentiles or the uncircumcision, referring to the Jewish unbeliever.

The instruction was to “walk toward them”. This is to make an effort to engage with the hope of converting them through the gospel message.

✓ **In which direction are you walking?**

Redeeming the time.

The next command they were given was to redeem the time. Something we should be doing.

1. The time here was not the time that they were to go out and enjoy life, but this was the time that they should spend actively using it for the Lord.

To redeem means to exchange one thing for another.

2. So in essence they were called to exchange their time for the time spent sharing the gospel message to others.
3. Redeeming the time was to count each second as precious as the next so that the time used was wisely spent and accounted for.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.

This terminology with grace and seasoned with salt, is twofold.

1. The grace is of knowing that they/we would be dealing with unsaved people.
2. Therefore they/we should be patient and caring handling the matter with grace because they the unsaved do not understand.
3. So we should be considerate.

The second is that of seasoned with salt. To be seasoned with salt is to be conscious that as Christians we should be that salt.

4. Because any salt that has lost its savour is worth nothing but to be cast away and trodden under foot.

A Christian with a bad attitude can easily fall into this category. His testimony is soon blown and what he has then to say to the unbeliever carries no weight and no truth to him.

Jesus described the believer in Matthew 5:13, as we can see below. This illustration of the reference to salt makes it very clear for even the very unlearned person of limited education to understand the need and the use for salt.

Matthew 5:13

Ye are **the salt of the earth**: but if **the salt** have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be **salted**? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

If a Christian cannot be a reliable witness then who can take his place?

The answer is nobody.

So a Christian needs to be like salt, who can change the life of the unbeliever by witnessing to them.

Let your speech be seasoned with salt.

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

PRAYER.....