



Prayer and Proclamation

Colossians 4:2-6

Sermon Outline

^{ESV} **Colossians 4:2-6** Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison-- ⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Note the similarity:

^{ESV} **Ephesians 6:18-20** praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

1. A Call to Pray (2)

- Steadfastly (“continue steadfastly in prayer”)
 - **Continue** - *regularly, routinely, consistently, perseveringly, with discipline*
 - **Steadfast** - *earnestly, seriously, lively, energetically*

- Watchfully (“being watchful in it”)
 - Contrasted with *forgetfulness*, with *sleep*, and with *being unprepared*
 - Watching *ourselves*
 - Luke 21:34** *But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life*
 - 1 Timothy 4:16** *Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching.*
 - Watching for *sin and temptation*
 - Matthew 26:41** *Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.*
 - 1 Peter 5:8** *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*
 - Watching yourself specifically for *self-righteousness*
 - Matthew 16:6** *Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*
 - Watching out for *false teaching*
 - Romans 16:17** *watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught*

- Watching for the *needs of others* – how to **help**; how to **pray**; what to **say**
- Watching for *Jesus' return* (this is this most frequent way “watch” is used in NT).

Mark 13:33-37 *Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning - lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.*

Mt 25:13 – “keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour”

Ref.--Predictions of the rapture yesterday May 21

- Watching for *open doors* (note where he’s going in the letter here ...)

➤ Thankfully (“with thanksgiving”)

1:3 We always **thank** God...when we pray for you...

1:12 ...**giving thanks** to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance

2:7 [we should be] ...abounding in **thanksgiving**.

3:15-17 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts... And **be thankful**. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **with thankfulness** in your hearts to God. And whatever you do,...do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks** to God the Father...

4:2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with **thanksgiving**.

2. A Call to Pray for the Gospel Spreading (3-4)

➤ Freely (“an open door for the word” – v 3)

- Open door for the Word

Acts 14:27 *they declared all that God had done...and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.*

1 Corinthians 16:8-9 *But I will stay in Ephesus...for a wide door for effective work has opened to me...*

- Not every open door...

2 Corinthians 2:12-13 *When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there.*

➤ Accurately (“the mystery of Christ” – v 3)

Lit. “*the mystery which is Christ*”

- Paul is saying that what we proclaim was once hidden and is now right out in the open

- He knows this message, but he wants to get it right in his proclamation
- Boldly (“for which I am in prison” - v 3)
 - Open doors don’t mean no opposition
 - 1 Cor 16:8-9** *But I will stay in Ephesus...for a wide door for effective work has opened to me ...and there are many adversaries.*
 - Eph 6:20** – Pray that I may proclaim it **fearlessly** as I should (NIV)
 - Eph 6:20** – that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (ESV)
- Clearly (“that I may make it clear” - v 4)

3. A Call to Portray and Proclaim the Gospel (5-6)

- Wisely (“walk in wisdom toward outsiders” - v 5)
 - Outsiders = non-Christians
 - He expects we will be around outsiders
 - He also expects that we can’t do it thoughtlessly
 - *Thoughtfully*
 - *Carefully*
 - *Purposefully*
 - Pray for wisdom (James 1:5)
- Urgently (“making the best use of the time” - v 5)
 - Lit. *“redeem the time”* - buy it up and use it.
 - Essentially... “as you pray for such open doors yourselves, and then are presented with those open doors, *you must walk through them.*”
- Graciously (“let your speech always be gracious” - v 6)
 - Sam Storms: “...as charming as possible without crossing the line into compromise.”
 - Graciousness without the gospel, might win friends, but it gives no eternal saving hope. -- it’s ultimately unloving
 - Gospel without graciousness is hypocrisy; it undermines the message.
- Thoughtfully (“that you may know how you ought to answer” - v 6)
 - 1 Peter 3:15-16** *...in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.*
 - We shouldn’t speak of Christ in canned, rigid, cool, calculating ways

Discussion 1: Praying “Steadfastly” with Thanksgiving

How easy would it be for us to pour on the guilt trip here? None of us is satisfied with our prayer lives--all of us sinfully negligent to varying degrees. Keeping mind the forest of logs sticking out of each of our eyes, let's encourage one another in each of the areas listed in the sermon notes.

- *How can we encourage each other in steadfastness?*

- *Discuss some areas of watchfulness where prayer is needed*
 - *personally (in your personal growth as a disciple and ambassador)*
 - *corporately (health of the Body in general)*

- *Remind and exhort one another of the importance of gratitude. How do we grow in gratitude?*

[Gratitude is not only encouraged, such as in these texts, but ingratitude is exposed as sinful--even listed among some of the worst sins: 2 Tim 3:2-5. Our sanctification (growth in holiness/humility) draws us ever more aware of two stark realities: the Holiness of God, and our own sinfulness. As we grow in these we cannot help but grow in our thankfulness for God's mercy and in awe of his grace. When you realize you don't deserve the very next breath you draw, you are starting to grasp the distance between God's holiness and our sinfulness.]

Discussion 2: Mission--A Call to Faithful Ambassadorship

The second two major points of the sermon are *prayer for* and a *call to* the faithful proclamation of the gospel.

- *Paul asks for prayer from others for opportunity, boldness, and clarity in gospel proclamation. What's the significance?*

[This is not just Paul praying for these things for himself, this is Paul asking for others to pray for him in these respects. Shouldn't we be doing the same? Discuss your need to do so. Is this yet another evidence of the importance of "one another" in body life?]

- *Are you feeling overwhelmed/ill-equipped? What are you doing to prepare yourself for faithful ambassadorship?*

[This question draws heavily from the currently running Ambassador III class.]

^{ESV} **1 Peter 3:15** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always **being prepared** to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

➤ *What does “being prepared” here include?*

[Knowledge is our first thought, but is it limited to that? See what Peter says in his second letter.]

^{ESV} **2 Peter 1:3-8** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice **these qualities** you will never fall.

Brief notes:

- This fruit bearing is divinely powered (v. 3--you cannot do this by your own charisma and awesomeness.... but ...)
- Effort is required (v. 5)
- Faith is assumed (v. 5 -- he’s talking to believers...)
- “these qualities” -- are tightly linked to the fruit of the Spirit, will be growing in the believer, and carry two great promises: effectiveness and assurance

➤ *What are you doing to prepare yourself?*

[Are you studying? Living in gospel community and growing in humility? Are you on mission in your community (making mistakes and taking your lumps)? **Are you taking advantage of the Ambassador series of courses at DSC?** The Ambassador courses are designed for precisely this purpose-- developing the knowledge, wisdom, and character of a faithful and effective ambassador. More info? Contact your local missions pastor Tim Ragsdale at: tim@objectivegospel.org; or your missions director Clint Moore at: clint@desertspringschurch.org]



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- *Remind and exhort one another of the importance of gratitude. How do we grow in gratitude?*

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- *Are you feeling overwhelmed/ill-equipped? What are you doing to prepare yourself for faithful ambassadorship? 1 Peter 3:15-16; 2 Peter 1:3-8*
 - *What does "being prepared" here include?*

 - *What are you doing to prepare yourself?*