

By Kim Riley

OVERVIEW

We have seen throughout our study of Colossians that Jesus is the core, the center, the pre-eminent One. Paul just finished a section on living a Christ-centered life at home and at work. And now this passage turns our attention outward, beyond ourselves and into the world. Paul admonishes the Colossians to be devoted to prayer, to be watchful in how they act towards outsiders, and to speak graciously.

READ COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

² 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.

DISCUSS

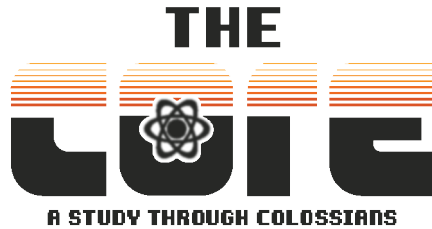
1. What does it mean to continue steadfastly in prayer? What do these two words suggest?
2. Why do you think that Paul instructs them to pray in a way that is both watchful and with thanksgiving?
3. What does it look like to walk in wisdom toward outsiders in your context, whether that is in your work, school, neighborhood, family, university, or other setting?
4. What do you think Paul means by "making the best use of time"? How can you do that practically?
5. Paul says that our words should be gracious and seasoned with salt. Look up the following passages which also give instruction and warning about our speech. What do these verses say about the power of our words?
 - James 3:5-6
 - Proverbs 16:24
 - Ephesians 4:29
 - James 1:26
 - Proverbs 12:18
 - Matthew 12:36-37

PRAY

1. Pray for boldness, clarity, and open doors to share the gospel with specific people in your life.
2. Pray for wisdom in how you live and that you may make the best use of your time.
3. Confess times when your speech has not been gracious and ask for the Spirit's help to grow.

PREPARE

Before next Sunday, read Colossians 4:7-18, the text of the final sermon in this series. If you have time, read the whole book of Colossians one more time and give thanks to Jesus for who he is.



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OVERVIEW

Our journey together in Colossians has ended. We have seen how Jesus is the center of everything and have marveled at his sufficiency and supremacy. This book gave us practical instruction on living out our identity in Christ and walking as those who belong to Jesus. This book ends with Paul wrapping up his last thoughts and concluding his letter with a list of people who were meaningful to him and the church at Colossae.

READ COLOSSIANS 4:7-18

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹ and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here. ¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions— if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶ And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord." ¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

DISCUSS

1. Tychicus, Epaphras, Justus, Aristarchus, and Luke were all men incredibly important to Paul. They were life-giving to him personally and to his ministry. What sort of character qualities did these men possess? Are you this kind of friend to people in your life?
2. Both Mark and Onesimus had some things in their past. Mark and Paul had a falling out years prior. Onesimus was a runaway-slave-turned Christian, who needed to make things right with his former master, Philemon. We all have things in our past. How does the gospel speak into our past and give us hope for the future?
3. Demas is mentioned in another letter Paul wrote, in 2 Timothy 4: 9-10. In that letter, we see that Demas had deserted Paul and fallen in love with the world. How could this serve as both a warning and an encouragement to us?

4. Zoom out and think back to the whole book of Colossians and our time studying this book these last months. What things stand out to you?

PRAY

1. Praise Jesus for who he is and the attributes ascribed to him in the book of Colossians.
2. Pray that we would be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.
3. Pray that we would walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

PREPARE

In our next sermon series, we will be studying the minor prophets. Prepare by reading through these books, starting in Hosea.