

**The Mission of Eternal, Continued:
Prayer and Evangelizing, Colossians 4:2-6
September 14, 2008 - Skip MacMillan**

Prayer

v. 2 "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."

Ephesians 6:18 "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

Prayer: for God to move and for the church to respond and be missional (Worship, Evangelism, Community and Discipleship).

Being watchful or keep alert (NAS) – for answers to prayer, persecution, and the coming of the LORD.

Thankful or with an attitude of thanksgiving (NAS): when prayers are answered.

Thankfulness is one of the trademarks of the Christian faith.

Thankfulness is "acknowledgment of having received something good from another".

Thankfulness to God for who He is and what He has done, is doing, and will do.

Lack of appreciation has no place in Christianity.

"Men and women of persistent prayer are those who are constantly on the alert, alive to the will of God and the need of the world, and ready to give an account of themselves and their stewardship" -FF Bruce.

v. 3 "And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message . . . "

God

We pray to God because it is God who is at work in the world.

God opens doors for His message.

God "reconciled you through Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation" (Colossians 1:22).

God gifts and empowers his followers to effectively fulfill His mission.

God graciously calls His Church to speak His message to those without hope and without God.

God and Man

Intertwining of God and His people communicating His message.

God the Spirit enables us to speak the message while He is speaking directly to the person.

God brings us into what He is doing.

God brings His followers into the redemptive work by using our words, attitudes and behaviors.

God enables you to be a part of this eternal work of God.

- Ephesians 6:19

- Acts 14:27--God opens doors for the gospel to take effect in the heart of man.

- Ephesians 3:7-13

God's plan: "Through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."

". . . Open a door. . ."

"Open door" that allows the word of God into the hearts, minds and lives of individuals and communities (cf. Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12).

“. . . for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ”

Mystery of Christ = God for the salvation of the whole world through Christ (1 Tim. 2:3-6).

Ephesians 3:6 - “This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.”

World wide, recognizing no race, no boundaries, no country, nothing; all are included.

1 John 4:9-10 - “This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

“Pray that I may proclaim it (Gospel/mystery of Christ) clearly, as I should.”

You need to know the Gospel.

Ephesians 2:1-10, John 3:16-18, Romans 3:22-26, Romans 10:9-13, Acts 16:30-31

Speak the gospel with clarity

1. Your personal experience with Christ, your story.
2. Take and memorize one passage of Scripture that speaks the Gospel.

Eternal

Paul writes to the church in Colossae as well as to Eternal:

Devote yourselves to prayer and be alert and thankful.

Prayer and Fasting times, Sundays 9:15 am, Small Groups, Worship

Pray for the gospel message to take hold of our church and community; for God to: open doors, empower, gift, speak through and use His church to make known the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; for God the Spirit to convict, encourage, and redeem; to use our efforts to bring glory to His name.

For us to do this with boldness, gentleness, love and respect.

Outsiders

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (Colossians 4:5-6).

“Outsiders”

Who: Outsiders are those who are without hope and without God, the world, non-believers.

General respect and concern for outsiders

1 Timothy 3:7 - an elder “must also have a good reputation with outsiders...”.

1 Cor. 5 - “what business is it of mine to judge those outside the church?”

1 Thess. 4:11-12 - “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders . . .”.

Be wise (NAS) Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders.

Wise = intelligence, use common sense; don't give someone a reason to blow off Christianity.

“Make the most of every opportunity”

Literally “redeem the time”; “implies a critical epoch, a special opportunity, which may soon pass; ‘grasp it’ says the apostle; buy it up while it lasts” -FF Bruce.

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt . . .”

Grace

1 Peter 3:15 – gentleness and respect.

Virtues of God in Colossians 3:12-17 or Philipians 2:1-11.

Salt

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst” (1 Timothy 1:15).
The Truth: Creation, The Fall, Redemption through Jesus Christ’s atonement, and new Life eternal.

Christ Jesus is Savior and God; you and I are sinners in need of a savior; we are dying, God is life, believe in Him. John 3:16-19.

Grace of Paul: he is consistently self-deprecating, but salty in proclaiming the acts and heart of God.

“It remains true that the reputation of the gospel is bound up with the behavior of those who claim to have experienced its saving power. People who do not read the Bible for themselves or listen to the preaching of the word of God can see the lives of those who do, and can form their judgment accordingly. Let Christians make full use, then, of the present season of opportunity. . . ‘redeem the time’ seems to have special application to their duty to unbelieving neighbors. . . each Christian has a special opportunity of witness and should make the most of it while it lasts” -FF Bruce.

**Do you have conversations with non-believers? Seek them out.
How do we view “outsiders?”**

As the enemy? Or as real people with real issues trying to figure out this life on their own.

The Mission of the Church:

The glorification of God and the salvation of people.

How did Jesus view Outsiders?

He took a genuine interest, spent time, listened and had compassion on us.

He did not let culture or religion dictate how he should treat another human being (i.e. woman at the well).

He did not determine a person’s worth based on their income or position but spent time with people from all walks of life.

He spoke truth in love to us. Not becoming like us but calling us to become like Him (John 4).

God says be:

1. gracious, wise, gentle, respectful.
2. They are people made in My image; My sons and daughters for whom I died.
3. Be wise in how you speak and act with people who do not believe.
4. Paul: “I become all things to all people so that I may save some”; adapting style but not message.

Do you have the hope that God is calling them, He is speaking into their heart, that God is doing a supernatural work in their life? That God is doing a supernatural work in you to speak to them?

Have faith that God is at work in the conversation, that God the Spirit is at work in the person with whom you are speaking and He will use your gracious and truthful words to strike their heart.

Biblical View of Evangelism

GOD

God is the one who made atonement for your sin, by dying on a tree.

God alone saves a person.

God the Spirit is the One who opens the door of a person's heart and soul for His message of the gospel to enter.

God gifts and empowers this same person to fulfill His mission of speaking the gospel into others' lives.

God brings you into the process, enabling you to have a role, speaking the message and being gentle and respectful.

Mission of God's Church: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Same mission Jesus left us with, "go into all the world making disciples . . ." (Matthew 28).

God will open doors and God's message is going forward with power and clarity.

So let us be wise in how we live before the world.

Let our conversations with those who do not believe in Christ be full of grace and truth.

Our Mission is the privilege of glorifying God expressed in loving a lost world, speaking the one real message of hope, the gospel; and to do so with clarity and passion that some may believe.

Eternal, this is our calling, our mission.

Pray that God will use our efforts as a church to fulfill His mission.

Remember, "It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

This is a life-long mission, from the moment you are saved to your last breath:

Speak His name and His message!

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).