

The Priority of People

Colossians 4:2-17

September 3, 2017

We finish the book of Colossians this week.

DAY 1: Prayer, for what?

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

³ *And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.*

⁴ *Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.*

1. When you think about your prayer requests, what comes to your mind first?

2. Paul tells them to pray in three areas:

a. “Be watchful.”

Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

--Jesus told the disciples the same thing. About what were they to be watchful? Why would prayer be a necessity?

b. “Be thankful.” Why reasons can you think of as to the importance of praying your gratitude?

c. “For the gospel to outsiders.” What three requests does Paul make regarding the gospel?

4. What’s “missing” from this prayer list in Col. 4:2-6?

5. Notice the first word in v. 2. What does this say to you about your own prayer life? What adjustments are needed to your prayer life?

DAY 2: How you relate to “outsiders”

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

1. When we think about sharing our faith, we usually go in the wrong direction right at the beginning, torpedoing our best laid intentions. We usually think “message-first.”

2. Instead, Paul tells us, “person-first!”

3. Paul gives them person-centered “signposts” to help make it possible to get to the gospel. Let’s look at these four sign-posts.

a. “*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders.*” Paul tells them to think about the way they act around their lost friends. He tells them to *be wise*. Someone has said that lost people may not want to read about the gospel but they will certainly be “reading” you!

b. “*Make the most of every opportunity.*” Trying to share our faith is usually a process of many small steps. Some days you take one step with someone. Other days, you are allowed to take five or six steps. It all depends on the person, AND your willingness to keep moving forward as your lost friend allows you.

c. “*Let your conversation ALWAYS be full of grace.*” No one has ever been badgered into the kingdom of God. Why do you think Paul said that our conversation was to be full of grace?

As we share the gospel of grace, we give them
a taste of grace by the way we relate to them!

d. “*So that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.*” Paul is not expecting you to give a memorized speech to someone. He tells us to be “person-centered, person-focused.” Remember you are talking to a person, not your spiritual “project.”

4. It seems that these instructions would make the Christian who wants to share his faith more relaxed and more caring!

5. What strikes you from today’s verses? What would you like to remember or do as you think about some of the lost people God has placed in your life?

DAY 3: All-Stars of the faith, part 1

Colossians 4:7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

⁸ I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.

⁹ He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

1. Growing in Christ-likeness is that for which we're striving. It really helps to have examples in our lives that give us "pictures" of what that looks like. Paul does this in the bulk of chapter 4.

2. What does Paul say about Tychicus? What is he like? What character qualities are evident in Tychicus?

3. What does it say about Tychicus that he was willing to be sent by Paul to them?

4. What was Tychicus supposed to do when he arrived with the Colossians?

5. What does Paul say about Onesimus?

6. Which of the qualities that Paul mentions about these special men strikes you most? Why?

7. How can you demonstrate one of these qualities to those around you, either with family, friends, work or fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?

DAY 4: All-Stars of the faith, part 2

Colossians 4:10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)

¹¹ Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me.

¹² Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.

¹³ I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

1. Jot down the qualities Paul extols in each of these men:

a. Aristarchus:

b. Jesus, called Justus:

c. Epaphras:

2. Mark, the cousin of Barnabas is mentioned in v. 10. Mark had been with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. However, when the going got rough, Mark deserted them. It was a bitter pill for Paul to swallow, apparently not only leaving them in a physical quandary for their overland journey, but also a stinging blow of discouragement.

3. What does Paul say to the Colossians about Mark? Why is this significant?

4. What character quality stands out to you the most from these men's example? Why?

5. Ask God to build this quality in you. Think about how you can demonstrate this in your life.

DAY 5: All-Stars of the faith, part 3

Colossians 4:14 Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

¹⁵ *Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.*

¹⁶ *After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.*

¹⁷ *Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord."*

¹⁸ *I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.*

1. What does Paul say about each of these people ...

a. Luke:

b. Demas:

c. Nympha:

d. Archippus:

2. Let's do a quick review of Colossians:

a. Colossians 1 and 2 are devoted to the supremacy of Christ.

b. Colossians 3 is devoted to living out the supremacy of Christ in your:

- (1) Inner life,
- (2) Church community and relationships,
- (3) Marriage,
- (4) Parenting, and
- (5) Work.

c. Colossians 4 is devoted to people!

- (1) Lost people
- (2) Examples of devoted Christians.

3. When studying the bible, it's easy to focus just on theology, "new" insights, etc. In Colossians that was only half the story. The other half was how to live out the gospel, and the priority of people. He publicly honored these leaders and encouraged them.

4. If Paul was to have a "sit down" with you, which of those sub-points would he highlight with you? As you think about your life which of the above sub-points needs your attention?