

SUCCESS IN THE DAILY CHRISTIAN LIFE

COLOSSIANS 4:2-18

Text:

Introduction:

If you knew your time was short on this earth and you wanted to give final instructions or advice to loved ones what would you say? It would be difficult but important. You would focus on essential matters rather than incidental things, wouldn't you?

Paul finishes his letter to the church at Colosse with certain admonitions, requests and reminders. Paul was in prison for the last time and I believe he knew the end was near. He wanted to leave them with a few essentials for life and ministry. Two of these he spells out and the third he describes in his final greetings.

There are three things we must do if we're to be successful in the Christian life.

These are:

1. PRAY TO GOD (VS. 2-3)

Colossians 4:2-3

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:

Paul began his letter talking about prayer (1:3, 9) and now finishes his letter with admonition to pray.

Colossians 1:3

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

Colossians 1:9

⁹ For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Nothing is more important than prayer.

Someone once said about prayer, “Prayer is not designed as an intercom between us and God to serve the domestic comforts of the saints. It’s designed as a walkie-talkie for the spiritual battlefields. It’s the link between active soldiers and their command headquarters, with its unlimited fire-power and air cover and strategic wisdom.”

There are four aspects of prayer that Paul gives in quick fashion:

A. Faithful Praying – “Continue in prayer” (vs.2)

Colossians 4:2

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

We are to live in a perpetual state of prayer?

1 Thessalonians 5:17

¹⁷ Pray without ceasing.

Ephesians 6:18

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

What does it mean to faithfully pray? Does it mean we must be whispering prayers to God every moment? No, but we are to be ready to break into prayer at any time.

Illustration:

Prayer is like a muscle, the more you use it the stronger it gets and when you don't use it atrophy sets in. It is awfully hard to get a muscle to work after atrophy has set in.

B. Watchful Praying – “and watch” (vs. 2)

Colossians 4:2

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

Note what Nehemiah did:

Nehemiah 4:9

⁹ Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

Note what the Lord said:

Matthew 26:41

⁴¹ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

We must be watchful (on the alert) in our prayers.

The danger of not being alert is that the enemy will sow tares among the wheat.

Matthew 13:25

²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

C. Thankful Praying – “with thanksgiving” (vs. 2)

Colossians 4:2

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

Six times Paul stresses this in this short letter.

Colossians 1:3

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

Colossians 1:12

¹² Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be

partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Colossians 2:7

⁷ Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Colossians 3:15

¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Colossians 3:17

¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Colossians 4:2

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

Probably half of our time in prayer should be taken up in thanksgiving. We overlook the many ways God blesses us.

Being thankful in prayer takes away from our tendency to pray selfishly.

D. Purposeful Praying – “praying also for us”
(vs. 3)

Colossians 4:3

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:

Too often our prayers are too vague and general. We pray, “Lord, bless the missionaries.” It’s better to know

the missionary personally and pray for specific needs he has.

2. PROCLAIMING THE WORD (vs. 3-6)

Colossians 4:3-6

³Withal 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: ⁴That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. ⁵Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. ⁶Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

This is the responsibility of the:

A. Leaders – “for us” and “I” (vs. 3-4)

Paul ask that they pray for

1. The Opportunity to Speak (“open unto us a door”)
2. To speak clearly (“make it manifest”)

I have a responsibility to preach clearly the Word to the world. I need your prayers.

B. Laity

1. In Your Walk – Walk in wisdom (vs. 5)

Colossians 4:5

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

Carefully redeem the time (buy opportunity) to influence others toward Christ. Everything you say and do influences others.

Be careful.

Someone once said, “Proclaim the gospel at all times, and if you must, use words.”

2. In Your Talk – “let your speech be always with grace” (vs. 6)

Colossians 4:6

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

Walking alone is not enough. We must also talk the talk.

Note the two elements of our speech:

Love – “let your speech be always with grace”

Longing – “seasoned with salt” Salt creates thirst and is also a flavor that most people enjoy.

3. PARTNERING WITH OTHERS (VS. 7-18)

Eleven people are mentioned by name in these 12 verses, Jews and Gentiles. They were partners of Paul's.

Paul names more than 100 partners through the Book of Acts and in his letters. There is a principle here.

No matter how good we are alone we are much better when we partner with others. He lists three kinds of partners in this passage:

A. Those Who Stay (vs. 7-11)

Colossians 4:7-11

⁷ All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: ⁸ Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; ⁹ With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here. ¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) ¹¹ And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only *are my* fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Justus. These were faithful men who stuck through thick and thin. Some of you are like that in this church. You stay faithful to the Lord and His church no matter what happens.

B. Those Who Pray (vs. 12-13)

Colossians 4:12-13

¹² Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Epaphras, a prayer warrior. Some of you pray diligently for me and this church and I thank God for you.

C. Those Who Stray (vs 14-18)

Colossians 4:14-18

¹⁴ Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. ¹⁵ Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. ¹⁶ And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. ¹⁸ The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

- John Mark

Acts 13:13

¹³ Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

Acts 15:37-38

³⁷ And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. ³⁸ But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

Mark ran from the work. Why? Maybe he didn't like how Paul was leading. Maybe he was afraid or homesick? But later he came back and was useful to Paul until the end of his life.

Demas (vs. 14)

Colossians 4:14

¹⁴ Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

Demas is mentioned only three times in Scripture; first, in Philemon 24.

Philemon 1:24

²⁴ Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

Then he is mentioned here in verse 14.

Note he is named with no comment at all.

The third reference we see what become of Demas.

2 Timothy 4:10

¹⁰ For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

The Bible says that the world entices us with these things:

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵ Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If

any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶
For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.
¹⁷ And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Certainly Demas fell to one or more of these traps.

Close:

Are you in partnership with others for the gospel's sake?

There are many opportunities to be or get involved in the Lord's work here, are you partnering with others in the work?

Maybe you were once involved in the work and now have strayed. You can return like Mark or die in your rebellion like Demas. The choice is yours.

May God Help us today.