

I want to review a few things we saw last week, and then bring a conclusion to our study of the book of Colossians.

Paul is giving final exhortations, which will make them fruitful and abundant in their Christian lives if they are faithful.

- I. vs. 2-4: I would emphasize Paul's general exhortation to pray. A Christian prays. Prayer is the most important manifestation of new life in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit rises to God. We find this throughout Paul's writings. There are several important things here.
- A. Continue: Men ought always to pray and not to faint. Don't give up. Keep on praying. Pray always.
  - B. Watch: Fervor and energy in prayer--not in coldness or listlessness, as Calvin says.
  - C. Thanksgiving: Men would not think that they could live without God if thanklessness did not rule their hearts. Thanksgiving for past blessings stirs our faith to new heights, and gives us confidence that He will provide for our present needs.
  - D. Specific prayers for Paul: How humble is the Apostle! He knows the magnitude of the work that Christ has laid upon him. He also offers humble Christians a share in the work and in the rewards. His work would become their work also if they prayed for him. He does not ask for safety or prosperity, but for opportunity and effectiveness.

"Make it manifest" Be able to speak it clearly so that people can understand. To uncover, to lay bare. See Colossians 1:26; See also Colossians 3:3,4. Our true life is manifest when Christ is manifest. "As I ought." The mystery is beyond human power. This is why a "door of opportunity" must be opened. This manifestation cannot be made by human wisdom and energy, but by the power of the Holy Spirit--to break through a bolted and barred door, as Calvin has it.

- II. vs. 5, 6. There are three things that go together. I spoke of two of them last week: wisdom and Time.
- A. Walk in Wisdom: "Walk around" Signifies the whole range of the activities of life. Every thing the Christian does is bound to Jesus Christ.
    - 1. Col. 3:17 "Whatsoever you do in word or deed, to all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
    - 2. Calvin gives three reasons:
      - a) We are forbidden to cast a stumblingblock in the way of the blind. Lev. 19:14.
      - b) We must not do anything that takes away from the honor of the Gospel--to make Christ a laughingstock or His truth to be defamed. Could become a cause for persecutions. Make friends for the Gospel--not enemies.
    - 3. Beware of defilement: (not of meats and drinks, etc. but in profane and sinful behavior and speech.)

- B. "in wisdom" Few unbelievers will read the Bible; all of them will read you and me. You can refute the slanders of the ungodly simply by the manner of your life. In the long run, the reputation of the Gospel depends upon the conduct of those who profess it. You cannot make too many friends. You cannot have too many people think well of you. "As much as lieth within you, live peaceably with all men." "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."
- C. "Redeeming the time." "Buying up the opportunity. Ephesians 5:16 "for the days are evil." There are many incentives for you to waste opportunity. To let the days drift by. To let time pass you by. The means are available: God has given them to you. If an unjust steward who was just about to get fired, could find a way to survive, then you can be a blessing and abundant in your service for Christ. The only thing that will hold you back will be the misuse of your opportunities and means. It is not your circumstances; it is your lack of wisdom.

Love finds a way to do the good thing. Absalom and David. See 2Samuel 14:14. Wisdom can find a way. Love can find a way. God is his wisdom was able to make peace between his justice and his mercy: you can find a way to solve the dilemmas of your life: in love and in wisdom.

- D. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. He uses two terms here which are to rule the speech of a Christian.
1. with Grace: There is to be nothing hurtful in our speech. "Look not everyman on his own things."
    - a) There is a reference here to paganism, which valued witty, clever, trifling speech.
    - b) Have the other fellow in view. How will your victim take what you say. Is our speech a slap in the face; it is a poke in the eye; is it degrading, like a spit in the face?
    - c) Speech that is gracious:
      - (1) What it is not:
        - not abusive: II Cor. 12:19-20; READ;
        - Gal. 5:19-21 works of the flesh: so much is of the tongue
        - Gal. 5:26: "Not desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.
        - Eph. 4:31: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another.
        - Titus 3:2: "Speak evil of no man, be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior....." It is of his mercy; his wonderful

words of life; His kind and gracious words; that brought healing to our souls and eternal life and peace.

--Not Vindictive: to get revenge. To lash back. I Pet. 2:23 "When he was reviled, reviled not back" Did not answer back in wrath and bitterness.

--Scripture: Eph. 4:15: "Speaking the truth in love...."

--Example: Jesus Christ, for all things are found in Him: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

(2) What Gracious speech is:

- (a) Gracious Speech is ruled by the new man; not the old man. The flesh is filled with wrath, strife, bitterness, hatred--that tree will bring forth nothing good, for the root in Adam is defiled and ruined.
- (b) Gracious Speech is from the new man, from Jesus Christ, who is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. This stalk is a good tree; and there is nothing defiled or unclean in it.
- (c) How gracious were His words. How kind to the poor, the weak, the sinners. They flocked to hear Him, because He spoke the words of life, words of peace, works of charity and kindness. Even the children flocked into His presence
- (d) No man can have gracious speech who does not have grace in the heart. The words we speak reveal the condition of the heart. If the peace of God rules our hearts; if the grace of God with thankfulness rules our heart, they are softened and melted--not hard and stony, and this will be reflected in our speech.
  - (i) We are defiled by what comes from the mouth, not because words can defile us, but because they reveal what is in the heart: Mark 7:23
  - (ii) Matthew 12:33-37: Your words reveal your heart;
  - (iii) Romans 10:8,9: We are called to confess Christ.
  - (iv) Matt 10: 32,33: We must confess publicly

2. Seasoned with salt. This is the second idea that must rule our speech.

- a) This protects us from blandness. Sugar and spice and everything nice is not Christian speech. We are the salt of the earth, and are to make manifest the truth.
- b) To know how to answer every man: Study the man. It is not enough to give information, but to study how this individual will learn; how he will receive the truth. The only reason to speak is for the other guy. You don't speak to inform yourself. So what do you want the other guy to know: about yourself, or about Christ. About your accomplishments, or about the accomplishments of Christ. Benjamin Franklin:

(1) Three reasons to open your mouth:

- (a) To inform

- (b) To entertain
- (c) To persuade
- (2) Selfishness and self-centeredness--a know-it-all attitude, and an instructive and quarellsome attitude and nature will defeat each of these ends.  
**REMEMBER: YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH FOR THE OTHER GUY. NOT TO ENHANCE YOUR REPUTATION, TO GET A CHEAP LAUGH AT OTHERS' EXPENSE; TO PUT SOMEONE DOWN.**
- c) The Christian is to speak the truth in love. These are the two things that Paul commends here. It takes wisdom to do that. Illustration: Stonewall Jackson: What a great general, and what a lousy teacher. Said it the same way every time. Wisdom will teach us to speak the right word at the right time to the right person.
- d) Salt preserves: Eph. 4:29: READ
- e) Salt is pungent and flavorful, brings out the flavor: Gracious speech is thought-provoking and worthwhile. It is not a waste of time. Christian speech is not to be banal and useless.
- f) Salt makes food more attractive: Humbleness of mind. Spiritual charm; Does not repel. It is distinctive and sets the Christian apart.

III. Finally, Paul closes with greetings.

- A. Tychicus. verse 7: Strengthen your hearts. What a wonderful example of the kind of speech Paul had been commending.
- B. Onesimus: "Faithful and beloved brother" An unprofitable slave is now a faithful and beloved brother.
- C. Epaphras: vs. 12. Always striving in prayers. A faithful minister. Faithfully praying for the people: Prayer is hard work.
- D. Demus: vs. 14. Later was to abandon the gospel: "loving the present world."
- E. Archippus: vs. 17: Attend to the ministry: fulfill it. Do it, complete it, be faithful. We are for you. God bless you. Do not be discouraged.

This is a good note on which to end this study. God bless you.