

## MAINTAINING A GOOD CHRISTIAN TESTIMONY

### **TEXT: COLOSSIANS 4:2-6**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Colossians 4:5 says Christians are to, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without."
2. We are to be careful how we behave ourselves around "them that are without" (unsaved). We are to maintain a good Christian testimony.
3. According to Scripture, Christians are "in Christ" (cf. Col. 1:2).
4. According to Scripture, those "within" are saved, and those "without" are lost. For example:
5. In Mark 4:11, our Lord said to His disciples, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables."
6. In I Corinthians 5:12 and 13, the apostle Paul said to the church of Corinth, "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth."
7. First Thessalonians 4:11 says, "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without."
8. In I Timothy 3, Paul gives qualifications for bishops and deacons. One of the qualifications, found in I Timothy 3:7, is: "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without..."
9. In other words, he must have a good testimony.
10. This evening I would like to speak on the importance of maintaining a good Christian testimony.

#### **I. CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE PRAYERFUL (4:2-4).**

1. The idea behind, "Continue in prayer" (4:2) is to keep at it. Romans 12:12 says: "continuing instant in prayer."
2. Our Lord said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9, 10).
3. Our Lord said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).
4. Ephesians 6:18 and 19 is similar: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that

- utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel."
5. George Muller said, "Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His willingness."
  6. J. Vernon McGee said, "Prayer is not to persuade God to do something that He didn't intend to do; prayer is to get you and me in line with the program of God."
  7. The poet Tennyson said, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."
  8. Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."
  9. The hymnwriter wrote, "Oh what peace we often forfeit, Oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer."
  10. Paul commended Epaphras as a "a servant of Christ...always labouring fervently for you in prayers" (Col. 4:12).
  11. Colossians 4:2 says, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Our Lord said to "Watch and pray" (Matt. 26:41). It is easy to get distracted and careless.
  12. Our prayers should be "with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2; cf. 1:12; 3:15).
  13. Daniel 6:10 says Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God."
  14. We should pray for pastors and missionaries and evangelists and all those in leadership (Col. 4:3, 4).
  15. We should pray that God would give boldness, and open doors, and that many souls would be saved (Eph. 6:19).
  16. First Timothy 2:1 and 2 says, "that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."
  11. When people asked Spurgeon the secret to his success he replied that his members prayed for him. When visitors would come to Spurgeon's church he would take them to the basement prayer room where people were on their knees praying. Then Spurgeon would say, "Here is the powerhouse of this church."
  12. We are to maintain a good Christian testimony, and there is no greater testimony than this -- that a Christian is a man or woman of prayer.
  17. When D. L. Moody returned to the U.S. after his first visit to England, he was asked, "Did you hear Spurgeon preach?" Moody replied, "Yes, but better still I heard him pray."

18. In Luke 11:1, one of our Lord's disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."
19. Even "in bonds" (Col. 4:3), Paul was looking for opportunities to preach the Gospel and win souls. He was arrested in Jerusalem, and brought before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa.
20. He preached the Gospel to Roman officials and soldiers, prison guards, fellow prisoners, visitors, and everyone and anyone.

## **II. CHRISTIANS SHOULD WALK IN WISDOM (4:5).**

1. The Bible has much to say about walking "in wisdom toward them that are without" (4:5).
2. First Samuel 18:5 says that David "behaved himself wisely."
3. First Samuel 18:14 and 15 says, "David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him."
4. First Samuel 18:30 says, "David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by."
5. These Scriptures remind us how important it is to, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Col. 4:5).
6. Ephesians 5:15-17 says, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
7. Worldly people are watching us. They observe our conduct. They mark our words.
8. First Peter 3 deals with Christian wives and their unsaved husbands. Verse 2 says, "While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." Notice: "behold" and "with fear."
9. When King Saul saw that David behaved himself very wisely, "he was afraid of him." This is the fear of God.
10. Worldly friends and relatives and coworkers are watching us. Our behaviour helps to shape their opinion of God, and the Gospel, and our church, etc.

## **III. CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE GRACIOUS (4:6).**

1. "Let your speech be always with grace..." The Lord is our great example. Luke 4:22 says the people "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."
2. Referring to Jesus, Psalm 45:2 (a Messianic Psalm) says, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips."

3. Worldly people are often vulgar and profane (cf. Col. 3:8). But God's people should always be gracious.
4. Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
5. Warren Wiersbe said, "With grace in our hearts and on our lips we will be faithful witnesses and not judges or prosecuting attorneys!"
6. This does not mean we do not condemn sin. It means we are to do it graciously. Ephesians 4:15 says, "But speaking the truth in love."
7. "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt..." (Col. 4:6). Salt adds flavor. Salt adds pungency to our speech. That is why people still read sermons and books by great preachers of the past like Charles Haddon Spurgeon.
8. Salt arrests corruption. The Christian's speech should be in sharp contrast to that of the profane worldly man.
9. Salt also creates thirst. The woman at the well said to our Lord, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not" (John 4:15).
10. The temple officers said this about Jesus to the chief priests and Pharisees, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).
11. If our speech is gracious, it will attract unsaved people to the Gospel - "that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6b).
12. First Peter 3:5 says we are to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The expression, "redeeming the time" (4:5) literally means, "buying up the opportunity."
2. We must not allow any fleeting moments pass by. We should be looking for opportunities to witness to lost sinners -- "them that are without" (4:5).
3. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "Our witness must have no weakness or failure in it such as the unconverted might use as a reason for continuing to neglect or to reject the gospel. It can only be when we pray with perseverance, walk in wisdom, and talk with grace that we shall be of any use to them or show whose we are and whom we serve (Acts 27:23 -- Paul said, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve"). This is only possible by the grace of God in response to trust and obedience" (*Studies in Colossians and Philemon*).

