

Pray privately, Witness publicly!

Scripture: Col 4:2-6;

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. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.
Col 4:2-6(TNIV)

Here the apostle Paul is giving the final instructions to the Colossian Church, and his instructions comprises of 3 parts,

- How to pray? Col 4:2
- What to Pray? Col 4:3-4
- How to witness? Col 4:5-6

Now Paul is writing this letter from the prison. This Church was probably planted by Epaphras (4:12). There is another prisoner with Paul called Aristarchus (4:10), who has been imprisoned for sharing the Gospel and also Timothy.

In the four verses we are going to meditate this morning, Paul is encouraging us to devote ourselves to prayer and in public be a godly witness for Jesus Christ.

- **HOW TO PRAY?** Col 4:2
 - **Pray persistently.**
 - Whenever the word devote yourself occurs, it means pray persistently.
 - Acts 1:14 (constantly); Acts 2:42 (devoted); Acts 6:4 (overcame distraction of waiting on tables and devoted themselves to prayer and teaching of the word)
 - The key to effective evangelism is prayer that is constant and ongoing.
 - Paul uses his own example in constant, continual prayer. Col 1:3; Col 1:9(since the day we heard about you we have not stopped praying for you.
 - Paul also talks about his fellow prisoner, Aristarchus (4:14), he is always wrestling in prayer for you.
 - When Paul says in 1 Thess 5:17, pray without ceasing, he does not mean praying nonstop, but returning to prayer again and again.
 - We all have our own commitments, but we also have enough time as well to do what we want

to do, if you want to see a revival then the only way is to return back to prayer again and again.

- Jesus taught us two parables on persistent praying, the petition of the widow to an unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8), a friend coming in the midnight in search of bread for his friend (Luke 11:5-8)
- Illus: George Muller. Salvation of 5 friends) (53 years)
- **Pray watchfully:**
 - Watchful against whom? Enemy. 1 Pet 5:8
 - Jesus said, in Matt 25:13, Keep watch and pray.
 - Mat 24:42; watch and pray because you don't know the time of His return.
 - Praying is staying alert against the unseen. Fighting enemy. Eph 6:10-18
- **Pray thankfully:**
 - Col 1:3, this is Paul's way of praying.
 - No matter how difficult the people were, Paul pattern of praying always began with thanksgiving.
 - He had never been to Colossae, but still he was connected to the people there closer through prayer.
 - We need to get closer to God and to people in prayer.
 - Thank God for each of the people you want to reach out to and pray for their needs, in this way your faith will increase remembering the faithfulness of God in the lives of the people and also to see them totally being transformed into the image of Christ.
 - The devil can never dwell in the heart of a thankful person, because a thankful person has tasted God in his life and knows that God is faithful, no matter what happens!
- **WHAT TO PRAY?** Col 4:3-4

Remember that Paul and his companions are put in the jail with false accusations for sharing the gospel, but look at what are Paul prayer requests. Normally if it was me in the prison, I would send a prayer request to be released from the prison at the earliest.

 - **Workers of the Gospel:** vs3, ³ *And pray for us,*
 - Pray for those who are in the frontlines in the ministry in spreading the Gospel.
 - They are vulnerable to the attack of the enemy, because the enemy knows if he can finish them off, then the mission can be stopped.

- Many of us here are safe and secure and we are singing, I'm so glad Jesus set me free; I'm on my way to heaven! But there are people in the unsafe terrains, struggling and yet pressing on hard for the master.
- Let us remember them in our prayer regularly.
- **Open doors for the Gospel: vs.3**
 - *That God may open a door for our message,*
 - Only God can open doors for our message, remember, Paul was a very anointed and a gifted speaker.
 - He could stand before anybody and preach the gospel to anyone, but then he says, pray that God would open a door for our message.
 - He totally relied upon God for open doors in the mission field. That's why when you read the book of Acts; he says time and again, God opened a door. Acts 14:27(God opened a door to the gentiles); Acts 16:14(God opened Lydia's heart); 1 Cor 16:9(Great and effective door was opened for me)
 - When God opens a door, then we share the Gospel, then the sinners are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Only the Lord Can open doors for us and when He opens a door we need to walk into those open doors and share the Gospel.
 - Illus: Hudson Taylor who saw an effectiveness in a particular mission field compared to the rest.
- **Clarity in preaching of the Gospel: ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.**
 - Paul has written almost two third of the NT. He knows the scripture through and through for any issue pertaining to this life and yet he asks the people to pay for him.
 - Then how much more we need to ask God for wisdom to proclaim the gospel.
 - The needs of the people are varied, though all of us need salvation, and need to share the gospel appropriately with them.
 - The Gospel is preached through word, works and wonders. And we need to understand the needs of the people that we minister to and share the gospel clearly to them.
 - The mystery of Christ that Paul is talking about is not very difficult for us to fathom. What is a mystery? Something that was hidden all these days has now been revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.
 - There is no standard format in sharing the gospel.
 - We need to study the scriptures and depend on the precious Holy Spirit to speak clearly as

possible when we share the Gospel.

- **HOW TO WITNESS?** Col 4:5-6
- **A godly walk:** ⁵ *Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders;*
 - To act in wisdom towards outsiders means to base our lives on the Living Word of God in our daily lives.
 - Paul Prays for the Colossians in Col 1:9-10; that the Lord would give them wisdom and understanding to walk worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way.
 - Col 3:16-17;
 - To act wisely towards outsiders means to let the beauty of Jesus be seen in you, all His wonders, compassion and purity...
 - When the people look at your life they should see Jesus manifested through your life, there should not be any disparity between our life and our message.
 - Our life should be our message.
 - A godly life is s foundation for effective witness.
- **Make use of every opportunity:** *make the most of every opportunity.*
 - When God opens the door, make the most of that opportunity.
 - Time and tide waits for none.
 - You need to grab every opportunity to share the gospel.
 - John Chap 4. Jesus made use of the opportunity to share the gospel with the Samaritan woman, while his disciples went out to buy food.
 - He saying his food was to do the will of His father. And as a result that day, not just the Samaritan lady but the village heard the gospel.
 - There are enough and more opportunities that the Lord gives us every day, only we need to priorities our life to make the most of them
- **Use winsome words:** ⁶ *Let your conversation always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*
 - The beauty of Jesus was full of grace and full of truth. John 1:14
 - John 1:17, says, Law came through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

- Everyday Jesus learnt from his Father, what to say and how to say.
- We need to speak the truth with grace.
- The purpose of the salt was to bring the flavor of the other ingredients and also it was used as a preservative.
- When we share the gospel our purpose is to bring back flavor in the lives of the people who are lost and to preserve their souls for eternity.

May the Lord help all of us to this very end. God bless you!