

Two Essential Activities # 13

Colossians 4: 2-6

We are drawing near the end of Paul's letter to the Colossian church. He is beginning to wrap up his thoughts and leaves a stirring exhortation in the passage we've read. Prior to these words, Paul addressed the believer's obligation and relationships within society. Here the focus is on our everyday spiritual lives. Paul realized there were certain essentials within the Christian life. If the church was to prosper, seeing the lost come to Christ and the saints encouraged, the church must meet her obligations, living lives that honored the Lord and impacted the world.

As I studied this passage I was reminded of our obligations as well. These words were given directly to Colossae, but they certainly apply to our lives also. Being a part of the church isn't just an activity we engage in at various times throughout the week; it is a life we live. It isn't something we do; it is who we are. If we are to please our Lord and Savior, being effective in the ministry we've been given, we too must live as Paul admonished Colossae.

Our text reveals two basic and yet very important activities we are to engage in: Intercession and Interaction. I want to examine the [aspects](#) of each of these activities as we consider the thought: [Two Essential Activities](#).

I. The Intercession of Believers (2-4) – These verses deal with the first essential activity we are to engage in: Intercession, prayer unto the Lord. Paul speaks of:

A. Continual Prayer (2a) – [Continue in prayer](#). I know that seems elementary for one who has walked with the Lord for an extended period, but it is a needful and necessary reminder. We are to be a people of continual, consistent prayer. It is without doubt the greatest resource we have and likely the least used. There is power in prayer. We need to become a people of continual prayer.

- I am convinced Paul wasn't speaking of careless, casual, or mere repetitious prayer, but earnest, sincere prayer. John Butler states this carries the idea of *frequent, fervent, and faithful prayer*. Our world and lives would be much different if we would continue in prayer!

B. Cautious Prayer (2b) – [Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving](#); As we continue in prayer, we must be cautious in prayer. I do not say that to reflect we are to dread prayer or doubt its ability, but that we are to be aware of our surroundings and the needs we encounter. It is easy to become numb to the influences and activities of society. It is easy to grow complacent or feel as if there is nothing we can do to improve our situation. We must ensure that our prayer life doesn't suffer because of doubt or increased difficulty.

- Each day we live we have an obligation to pray. There are always needs that we should address in prayer. There are daily blessings that we should be thankful for. If we aren't careful, we will become so busy doing other things that we fail to pray. I heard someone quoted as saying, "I had so much to accomplish today that I had to take time to pray." That is the attitude we need to possess.

C. Considerate Prayer (2c) – Continue in prayer, and watch in the same **with thanksgiving**; Here we find a challenging reminder. As we pray, we must possess an attitude of thanksgiving and gratefulness. God has certainly been gracious in all our lives. We are blessed beyond measure. Providing a means of salvation and bringing conviction to our hearts concerning our need would be enough to thank Him for throughout eternity. As we pray, we must be thankful.

- I fear that much of our praying is greatly self-centered and self-serving. We tend to come before the Lord with our "grocery list" of requests, making sure we tell Him how difficult our lives are, and yet never take the time to thank Him for all His many blessings. We will have to admit that God has been good. He is definitely worthy of our praise. Every prayer should include thanksgiving for what we have already received. If He never gave another thing, we would still be obligated to praise Him!

D. Cooperative Prayer (3-4) – Here Paul addresses the need for cooperative prayer, praying with one another. Notice the aspects he speaks of. We see:

1. A Specific Object (3a) – **Withal praying also for us**. Paul knew the benefit of prayer and he earnestly desired the church to pray for him and others who were engaged in ministry. Paul sought to convey the importance of praying for one another. I know we all agree with the need for one another's prayers, but how often do we pray for each other? We have an obligation to lift one another up in prayer!

- I also recognized the need to be specific when we pray. Paul had needs and he desired the people to pray specifically about those needs. It is alright to be general at times when we pray, but we do not need to develop a generic prayer that is repeated over and over. There are specific people who have specific needs that we should pray about in a specific manner. Yes, God knows our needs and He knows our hearts, but we need to pray about the needs we face!

2. A Special Opportunity (3b) – **Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ**. Paul longed to share the gospel of Christ in order to reach

the lost. He knew God had the power to open doors of opportunity to share the gospel. He wanted the church on board praying for doors to be opened.

- We all have different gifts and abilities. We are not called to the same areas of service, but we are obligated to pray for one another in that regard. We ought to pray that God would open doors of opportunity for others to be used. I regularly pray for individuals to be used of God within their circle of influence.
- I desire your prayers, but it isn't enough just to pray for the pastor. Each of you have acquaintances and opportunities to speak to people I may never meet. Even if I did, you may have more influence with them than I would. We need to pray for doors of opportunity to be opened for individuals.

3. A Sovereign Objective (3c) – [Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ](#). Paul's ministry was very focused; it was centered on the gospel. He knew that is what he was called to do and he desired to fulfill his calling. He wanted to be effective in sharing the gospel, seeing folks respond to the Lord in salvation. This was the supreme objective, fulfilling the sovereign call upon his life.

- I approach this area with caution, but I feel it needs to be addressed. I do not make light of physical needs, but the modern church seems more concerned with physical needs than the eternal, spiritual needs. Paul didn't ask that they pray for financial opportunities or physical healing. He asked they pray that he be enabled to share the gospel. We cannot overlook the physical and social needs of our day, but we must not allow the spiritual needs to take a back seat. We need to be concerned with those who are dying without Christ! Most churches are focused on keeping the congregation comfortable rather than reaching the lost for Christ.

4. A Social Obstruction (3d) – [for which I am also in bonds](#). I don't feel that Paul is making a big deal out of his bondage, nor is he seeking their sympathy. He knows he is where he is because God had brought him to that place. Paul simply reminds them of the difficulties of ministry in that day. Many were opposed to the preaching of the gospel and sought to silence the voice of those who sought to share it. Paul was in essence asking the church to pray that he could be effective in ministry even while imprisoned. He wanted to reach those who stood opposed to his message.

- We do not face imprisonment for our faith yet, but you will have to agree that the American society is becoming much less tolerant of the Christian faith and the gospel message. We need to pray for those in places of leadership, those who make the laws and policies that affect us. We need to pray for those whose voices are trying to be silenced. We need to pray for boldness and

courage in this difficult day! Society will continue to deteriorate, and as it does, we need to maintain an effective witness. We must stand in prayer with those who face increased opposition. They need to be surrounded by the prayers of God's people!

5. A Submissive Obedience (4) – [That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak](#). Paul desired to share the gospel in a way that pleased the Lord and was consistent with Scripture. He wanted the fleshly desires and tendencies to take a back seat to the will of God. At the end of the day he wanted to have pleased the Lord in every aspect of ministry.

- Oh how we need a submissive obedience in our day as well. We need those who desire to serve the Lord and further the kingdom above all else. We need those with a genuine desire to be used of the Lord in whatever way He chooses. We need to pray for one another in that regard. Crucifying the flesh and submitting to the Lord goes against our carnal nature. We must be strong spiritually if we are to be all Christ desires us to be!

II. The Interaction of Believers (5-6) – Here we find instruction concerning our interaction with the world around us. Paul addresses:

A. Our Witness (5a) – [Walk in wisdom toward them that are without](#). This too seems elementary, but Paul understood the need for an effective witness if the church was to reach the world. They lived in a time where society offered much that appealed to individuals. The church stood in sharp contrast to what society offered and they needed to be mindful of their witness among the world. They may not have noticed, but the world was watching. They wanted to see if the believer's walk matched their message. Were they genuinely practicing what they preached?

- This is one of the greatest needs in our day. We have discussed the world's perception of the church and the average Christian. Often folks are skeptical of the church and our messages because so many church members are viewed as hypocrites. We have an obligation to walk in a way that honors the Lord, represents the church in a positive light, and is effective in reaching the lost. If we are not aware of the impact we have on those who watch our lives, we will not be effective in reaching them. As we identify with Christ, the world demands our actions match our message!

B. Our Wisdom (5b) – [Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time](#). Paul sought to instill a sense of urgency among the church. He charged them to redeem the time, to use their time wisely, knowing a wasted opportunity may not present itself again.

- I pray we sense the urgency of our day as well. The prophecies of Scripture are being fulfilled before our eyes. The return of Christ could happen at any moment. Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation. Lives, and more importantly, souls hang in the balance. We must approach each day with a genuine desire to be used of the Lord, seeking to fulfill the work we have been given. We can't bring back lost time and we are not promised tomorrow. Right now is the only time we are certain to have. We must use it wisely!

C. Our Words (6) – Finally Paul deals with our conversation, the words we speak. He reveals several aspects that should be present in our speech. They are to be:

1. Gracious (6a) – *Let your speech be always with grace.* The world offered enough misery, condemnation, and sarcasm. Believers were expected to engage in a different conversation. They were to treat others with respect, speaking with grace.

- We too need to be reminded of that. It is easy to get in a self-righteous manner of thought as we interact with others. We need to be reminded of the grace that was extended to us. We are nothing more than sinners saved by grace. There are none so wicked that Christ cannot save. We must not be presumptuous in regard to whom Christ would save and whom He wouldn't.

2. Genuine (6b) – *seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* Paul knew the church faced increasing pressure to conform to the ways of the world. They were expected to respond with grace, but they weren't expected to abandon biblical standards for the sake of getting along. They were to stand upon truth, with a willingness to share that truth, even if it wasn't well received.

- That is difficult at times, but we must be willing to stand for truth even if the world has chosen to reject it. We cannot compromise biblical convictions for the sake of popularity or convenience. The world needs the gospel even though they do not realize it, and are often determined to reject it.

3. Godly (6c) – *Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* Regardless of the circumstances surrounding the conversation, believers are expected to answer every man in a way that pleases the Lord. We must convey truth in a loving, gracious manner without compromise.

- We need wisdom as we interact with the world. This is only obtained through a close relationship with Christ. When caught in a controversial or divisive conversation is no time to get your heart right in order to obtain wisdom. Walk continually with the Lord and you will be able to answer everyone in a godly manner. [1 Peter 3:15 – But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and 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: This has been a practical study that deals with two very important aspects of our Christian lives. We desperately need those who are committed to prayer. Our individual lives and churches are dependent upon prayer. If we fail to pray, we become weak individually, and if enough of us are weak, it naturally leads to a weak congregation. I know that we believe in prayer, but do we pray as we should? Is your prayer life what it needs to be?

We do not live in a bubble. During our day to day activities we encounter people. We have to interact with others daily. Are we interacting in a positive way, one that brings honor to the Lord and impacts the world? If not, we need to be.

These two vitals aspects are only possible through Christ. One must have a personal relationship with Him to be effective in either. Do you know Christ as your personal Savior? If so, is your relationship what it needs to be?