

Colossians
“A Worthy Walk”
III. Main Teaching: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:22 – 4:6 Presence of Christ

4:2-6

“Prayer, has it come to that?”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 2 It's come to prayer

III. Vs. 3-6 What to pray for

I. Intro.

In July of 1994, Cindy Hartman a pastor's wife from Conway, Arkansas was confronted in her home by a pistol-wielding burglar who surprised her when she came in to answer the phone. He ripped the cord from the wall and ordered her into a closet. To the shock of the gunman, Cindy fell to her knees and began to pray for God's Help. The robber was even more stunned when she asked if she could pray for him! She proceeded to tell him about Christ's love and expressed her forgiveness for his actions. This was more than the robber bargained for he broke into tears and knelt beside her to pray. What happened next surprised Cindy as, the man yelled out the window to a woman in a pickup: *“We've got to unload all of this stuff. This is a Christian home and we can't do this to them.”* She remained in prayer, while her furniture was being returned and robber then used a shirt to wipe off his fingerprints, apologized and departed, leaving his gun behind! Friend,

“Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His willingness.”

Prayer is asking God for that which He wants to do and give, according to His will.

II. Vs. 2 It's come to prayer

Vs. 2 This section (verses 2-6) gives us great solutions on how to live as a Christian in a world completely given over to false values, where our senses are under a complete bombardment of every kind of evil and pursuit that directly opposes our faith and virtue. Paul starts off with one word that tells every Christian throughout the ages what to do when they are faced with such corruption...**PRAY!** One version interprets verse 2 by saying “*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*” Jesus had similar words for His disciples on the night of His betrayal in Matthew 26:40 as He told them to “*watch and pray*” while He was in the garden called Gethsemane. You might recall that those men had a similar obedience problem as we do as they “*fell asleep*”. *Is that not indicative of our struggle? **We fail to rest in His presence when we should and a fall asleep when we should be on guard!*** The outcome of this is seen in the garden that fateful night as we note:

- **Peter denied the Lord**
- **John fled in the darkness**
- **And all the others abandoned Jesus**

I have noticed how little I'm prepared for the dangers of daily living as it takes a very little thief to **rob** my joy, **ransack** my peace and **restrict** my love! How better prepared I could have been if I would have just heeded Paul's words to “*Devote my self to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*” In light of my confession my greatest need is to “*continue earnestly in prayer*”. *Why must I wait for the tsunami in life, the inevitable avalanche of catastrophes before I believe that the events have reached **the level** that warrants prayer?* Paul's counsel is to be “*vigilant*” in prayer with thanksgiving. I love that word “*vigilant*” also rendered “*watchful*” as it conveys the thought of being aggressively going

after something or someone. We need to be a “*vigilante*” with regards to the pursuit of prayer life. When the seas of life are calm except for the infrequent ripple we ought to be praying for the strength to endure what may come at any moment. That’s the surest way to not be taken off guard or drift away during the storm. What are we to do in the times when the waves don’t come? Paul tells us that such vigilant prayer is covered with “*thanksgiving*”. I’ve listened to a lot of prayers (*especially my own*) and I’ve noticed that much of what I call conversation with God is:

- Long in *explaining to God what my particular situation* is. It’s as if I act like He is senile, absent minded or hard of hearing. **None of which is true!** He knows me a far off, is everywhere present and doesn’t need to have me explain to Him what is going on to help me. After all think of how *illogical* it would be to come to a being for help that you first have to explain the what and how of the help? If I’ve I got to wax on to God about my situation and how “this time” I need it to be just so and right on time, then I’m praying to someone that can’t help me in the first place!
- Next my prayers are often spent in *reminding Him what He has already promised* to do. I do this “*reminding*”, at least in part to convince myself of the hope I have in my relationship with Him. *A way of checking my wallet to reassure me that I really do have enough in my account of grace to handle what life is throwing at me.* The other reason I do this (*and I’m ashamed of saying this*) is *just in case He has forgotten the deal He made with me, which was to bless me in spite of me.* Again this is *illogical* because *what good is the promise if the One who had promised can’t be trusted in the first place to remember that He promised me.*
- Finally, ***I thank Him!*** Usually this happens a good deal after my prayer has been answered *satisfactory to my expectations*, as a brief post script I say... “*Oh and thanks*”. As if to say, “*Well it’s the thought that counts!*”

I believe that my prayer is a look at a heart that struggles with believing that God only knows how to give good gifts to His children. Perhaps we all should start with thanks giving: “*Lord I thank you that you only know how to give good gifts to your children. I thank you that your love for me never fails. I thank you that you never leave me or forsake me.*” Then we could move to the petition: “*Lord, I just realized that in thanking*

you for who you are and what you always do on my behalf that my request has been answered.... so thank you for answering my request!"

III. Vs. 3-6 What to pray for

Vs. 3-6 You may be thinking, “*Well if I prayed like that I’d have little to pray for with regards to myself.....so what would I talk to God about?*” Paul has a suggestion in verse 3 “*meanwhile **praying for us also.***” Since you will be spending less time on yourself in prayer as you will have moved to thanking Him for what He has already promised to do, you might as well fill what you would have spent on yourself, on **OTHERS!** And it’s just like **Paul to suggest four things that he would like us to pray for as it relates to others.**

1. Vs. 3 “*That God would open to us a door for the word*”: One Christian web site listed the top ten prayer requests and this one of Paul’s wasn’t even on the list. Here was the top 10, all of which are great things to pray for, just not the request that Paul asked for:

- a. Health of others
- b. strength to get through grief
- c. guidance and wisdom
- d. personal love, peace and happiness
- e. finances, jobs or help with exams
- f. personal health
- g. salvation of others
- h. family issues, marriage and divorce
- i. protection for children
- j. the needy, hungry and poor

Paul under house arrest in Rome and the prayer he wants the most from others is for an **OPEN DOOR** for the Word. Before I asked for a door I’d be asking for a place to

live instead of a prison cell! But the open door was not to escape but for the Word of God that others may escape! Paul's situation left restrictions upon his opportunities to share the Word of God but what I find interesting is *Paul doesn't limit the work of God by suggesting his freedom as the sole means to answering the prayer.* *Instead he prays not for his freedom but the Word of God's freedom which was the reason why he was imprisoned to start with.* Saints I pray that you continue to pray for "open doors" for the word as currently our radio program is on 5 stations and we would love to see is spread to other opportunities. Our weekly words is being sent out via email's that you are passing on and our website and phone app is being picked up all the time. These are opportunities for the Word that we may not know the results until we are in His presence. The mystery that Paul refers to here was what he had described earlier as "*Christ in you the hope of glory.*" We are in desperate times and what we are in need of is a *revolutionary* that is capable of changing the world in which we live in and it just so happens that we have in the Word of God empowered by the Spirit of God just such a revolutionary.

2. Vs. 4 "*That I may make IT..(the mystery of Christ in verse 3) manifest.*" The Message renders this phrase as "*Pray that every time I open my mouth I'll be able to make Christ plain as day to them.*" This is closely linked to what Paul wanted them to pray for above only here he realized that the only restriction that the Word of God empowered by the Spirit of God has is the instrument that God choses to use. Oh saint's pray for me and for others who have been given the great blessings and responsibility to be able to make "*Christ plain as day*".

3. Vs. 5 That I might “*Walk in wisdom towards those who are outside, redeeming the time*”: Paul wants prayer for the way he lives and speaks among those who don’t yet know Christ. That’s the definition that Paul applies to “*walking in wisdom....redeeming the time.*” The greatest limitation that I have to the power of the Word of God by the Spirit of God is the way I live and act among those I’m called to reach. I know of no greater need in my life, that I won’t be a hindrance to the Word of God.
4. Vs. 6 That our “*Speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you might know how you ought to answer each one*”: Along those same lines Paul asks for prayer that the way he generally spoke and conducted himself be “*always full of grace*” **pleasant and courteous...easy to be around.** **What we have to say may indeed make folks mad but the way we say it should not!** The idea behind salty isn’t provocative language but rather language that stimulates a person’s spiritual appetite arousing their curiosity.