

## *Effectiveness through Witness*

*5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (ESV)*

What is Paul talking about in those verses? He is talking about witnessing - testifying to others of the saving work of Christ. An effective church is willing to share God's Word with the people they rub shoulders with.

### **AN EFFECTIVE CHURCH IS A WITNESSING CHURCH.**

Would you like to be part of an effective church? I do, but the question we need to ask is:

- What does it look like to be a witnessing church? What characterizes a witnessing church?

I see 2 characteristics of a witnessing church that are described by Paul in verses 5 and 6.

**Characteristic #1** - A witnessing church knows how to live.  
**4:5**

“Your actions speak louder than your words.”

*Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.*

The word walk refers to our daily life - our daily actions - how we live. The word outsiders refers to non-Christians.

- How does a witnessing church live to be effective for the Lord? I see 2 ways in verse 5.

**(Way #1)** Make wise choices every day.

*Walk in wisdom toward outsiders*

According to the Bible, wisdom means skill (Exodus 35:31; Prov. 2:6) Wisdom is the skill God gives you to live life His way. And how can you know what way God wants you to live? It's found in His Word.

**(Way #2)** View every day as an opportunity.

*making the best use of the time.*

The wording of “making the best use” is to redeem the time or to purchase back the time that can slip away so fast. I think that buying back time has to do with investing in eternity. If you don't use your time to invest in eternity, that time will ultimately be lost time. Are you using your time wisely? The word time has to do with just the right moment - “strike while the iron is hot.”

A witnessing church views every day as an opportunity. Every day when you spend time around your family, your friends, your co-workers, and your acquaintances, you have an opportunity before you to be a witness for Christ.

**Characteristic #2** - A witnessing church knows how to talk.  
**4:6**

*Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

It's our life and our lips, our walk and our talk, our lifestyle, and our words. I want you to notice, it's not what to say, and how to say it. I believe this is the attitude we are to have in everyday conversations with people.

- How do I talk to be effective for the Lord? In verse 6, we get 2 ways.

**(Way #1)** Talk gracefully.

*Let your speech always be gracious.*

Grace means unmerited favor - unearned favor. Grace is getting what you don't deserve.

Talk to people with undeserved favor. I think we can use the term goodwill toward someone, loving, using kind phrases,

speaking with gentleness, being sensitive to their feelings, and being respectful. Even if they don't deserve it, you speak to them with respect, because that's grace. God was gracious to us. He treated us better than we deserve.

**(Way #2) Talk flavorfully.**

*seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

Salt is tasteful. A Christian's words should leave a good taste in people's mouths. Salt is a preservative. A Christian should seek to preserve the discussion and conversation about the gospel with others. Salt can help heal. God's Words may sting, but His Word also heals.

Salt makes you thirsty for more. This is how a Christian is to talk - with good flavor in his or her choice of words.

An effective church is a witnessing church. A witnessing church knows how to live: making wise choices every day, and viewing every day as an opportunity. And a witnessing church knows how to talk: gracefully and flavorfully.