ADORN & ADVANCE

GRATITUDE INSIDE • WITNESS OUTSIDE

ADVANCE: STEADFAST IN PRAYER, SEASONED WITH SALT

A 5-Day Devotional • Colossians 4:2–6

Church family,

This devotional goes with Sunday's Thanksgiving message from Colossians 4. Each day takes about five minutes: read the Scripture, read the reflection, answer the question, and pray. You can do it on your own, with your family, or with your Small Group.

Our theme verse for the week is Colossians 4:2: "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."

My prayer is that this Thanksgiving week, God would make us a people who are thankful, prayerful, and ready to share the good news.

Grateful for you,
Pastor Josh

DAY 1

Devote Yourselves to Prayer

> **TODAY'S READING: Colossians 4:2** *"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."*

When Paul wraps up this letter, the first thing he tells the church to do is pray. The word translated "continue steadfastly" is rare in Paul's writings, and it means to persist, to stay devoted, to keep at it. There is something honest in that. If the church has to be told to keep praying, it must be easy to quit.

Paul adds two more things. Be "watchful," which means stay awake and pay attention to what God is doing. And pray "with thanksgiving." This is where gratitude and prayer meet. We do not come to God as people who have forgotten what he has done. We come remembering, with thanks in one hand and requests in the other.

Prayer is often the first thing to go when life gets busy, and it is the thing we need most.

REFLECT: *What most often crowds out your prayer time? What is one small, steady habit you could start this week?*

PRAY: *Father, thank you that I can come to you. Teach me to persevere in prayer, to pay attention to what you are doing, and to come with a thankful heart. Amen.*

DAY 2

A Door for the Word

> **TODAY'S READING: Colossians 4:3–4** *"At the same time pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak."*

Paul is in prison, and he does not ask the church to pray for his release. He asks them to pray that God would open a door for the message about Christ. Paul's deepest concern is not his comfort but the gospel.

Notice who opens the door: God does. This is what the commentators call the mission of God. We do not have to manufacture opportunities. We ask him to open doors, and then we walk through the ones he opens.

And notice Paul's humility. He asks for prayer that he would "make it clear." Even Paul needed God's help to speak plainly about Jesus. If he needed that prayer, so do we.

REFLECT: *Write down the names of two or three people who need Jesus. Ask God this week to open a door for you to speak with them.*

PRAY: *Lord, open doors for the gospel in Pomeroy and give me the courage and clarity to walk through them. Help me to speak of Jesus plainly and with love. Amen.*

DAY 3

Walk in Wisdom

> **TODAY'S READING: Colossians 4:5** *"Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time."*

Paul now turns from the inside of the church to the outside. "Walk" in his language means your whole way of life. And the wisdom he has in mind is not just knowledge; it is a gift from God. James tells us that if any of us lacks wisdom, we can ask God, and he gives generously.

Notice the people Paul has in mind: outsiders, those who do not yet follow Christ. For most of us, that is our neighbors, coworkers, and the people we see in the other 166 hours of the week. Before we ever say a word about Jesus, our lives are already saying something.

And Paul adds, "making the best use of the time." The word describes buying up the opportune moments. Do not let them slip by.

REFLECT: *Where in your 166 hours is someone watching how you live? What is one way you could make the best use of a moment this week?*

PRAY: *Father, give me wisdom for how I live among people who do not know you. Help me notice the opportunities you put in front of me. Amen.*

DAY 4

Seasoned with Salt

> **TODAY'S READING: Colossians 4:6** *"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."*

We often think of salt as a preservative, but the commentators point out that in this verse salt means flavor. It makes food taste good. Gracious speech makes the gospel easier to hear. We are not watering down the truth; we are making it possible for people to receive it.

Notice the last phrase: "how you ought to answer each person." Each one. There is no single speech for everybody. That means we listen first, ask questions, and answer people where they are. Peter says something similar: be ready to give a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and respect.

You do not have to be a preacher. Pray for the person, be kind, ask about their life, and share what Jesus has done for you.

REFLECT: *Who is one person you could listen to this week before you say anything? What question could you ask?*

PRAY: *Lord Jesus, season my words with grace. Help me to listen well, to speak the truth with kindness, and to answer each person with love. Amen.*

DAY 5

Thankful for Those Who Serve, Mindful of Those in Chains

> **TODAY'S READING: Colossians 4:12 and 4:18** *"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God... I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you."*

The end of Colossians is a long list of names, and it is not filler. Paul thanks the people who served with him. The commentators note that his grateful appreciation for his co-workers, expressed to them and to others, was a significant part of his ministry.

Epaphras is a good example. He is "always struggling" in prayer for the church. Someone is probably praying for you like that today, and someone may need you to pray for them.

And Paul ends with "Remember my chains." That is a call to remember believers who suffer for their faith. This Thanksgiving week, as we count our blessings, let us thank those who have served us and pray for those who are in chains.

REFLECT: *Who has served alongside you whom you could thank this week? And what is one way you could pray for believers who suffer for their faith?*

PRAY: *Father, thank you for the people who have served me and for your church around the world. Be near to believers who are suffering, and make us a thankful, praying, witnessing church. Amen.*

Advent begins next Sunday, November 29, and our Christmas Banquet and Annual Meeting is Wednesday, December 2. Join us at 6pm.