

DON'T GO QUIET

WELCOME // ONLINE

Bad news ... this is the last sermon of our Colossians series. (?reaction?)

The good news is that we are going out with a bang!

Not promising the rapture ...

Paul ends the letter to the church with it's marching orders. Be on Mission!!!

So much Christian energy is spent on avoiding boredom.

Actually ... so much of anyone's life is spent on that.

We've lost living for a greater purpose.

We run around trying to find meaning, but like U2 "we still haven't found what we're looking for."

What is missing isn't more stuff ...

It's giving away our life for Jesus' mission.

Put Jesus and His mission first

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Now, if you are like me, you might object, “Mission ... that is for confident out-going people ... not me.”

Or, “That is the pastor’s work. I’m not qualified to do that.”

But as we will see the work of mission isn’t what we think it is ...

Colossians 4:2-4

2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 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— 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

The first big task of mission isn’t picking an Amazon tribe to go witness to, or a seminary to study at.

It’s prayer.

Prayer propels the mission forward

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I'm bad at calling my family.

Mainly b/c its a 2 hour commitment when I do.

Do you think of prayer that way?

I know I should do it ... [but 2 hour commitment!!]

So we save up prayers for 1 time a year ... 2 hour purge.

But we are told to continue steadfast in prayer ... this means consistent ... not consistently LONG.

Jesus taught his disciples his best prayer ... 1 minute long.
→ The first 1/3 that prayer is ALL MISSION ...

“God be glorified and worshipped everywhere ... Your kingdom come and will be done on earth like heaven.”

[20 second blast!]

[Short, but if you pray that consistently ... it gets into your heart.]

If you're like me ... good prayer is long and wordy.

Actually ... it's not about how long ... but how engaged and what we pray for.

2 hours of asking God for a Benz or Boat isn't prayer for the mission.

Mission-prayer is praying for souls to be saved, places closed to the Gospel to be opened, and lives transformed.

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That is prayer for the mission ... to propel it forward.

It not only changes things “out there” ... but it changes us “in here” [hearts].

Prayer opens our eyes to see God's activity

- It says,

Colossians 4:2

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, **being watchful in it ...**”

The Bible often gives us a picture of prayer as a watchman on a wall.

Back then ... people would have understood that.

Cities often had walls surrounding it.

→ Kept the good in, and the bad out.

On top of the walls were soldiers ... watchmen.

From their higher perspective ... they could see both far and near.

They were aware of the activity all around them.

That is what prayer does ... it opens our eyes to see what God is doing ... (aware / thoughtful)

Not just right in front of us ...

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But farther out.

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Prayer opens our eyes/ears to see/hear what God is doing ahead of us.

We don't pray to get God working for us.

We pray to find out where God is already at work and go there.

//

Which is another important reason we pray.

Prayer reminds us that it is God's mission and He propels it forward.

Colossians 4:3

3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God [not Paul] may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

The Bible teaches us that prayer seems to activate God's influence and power.

Church history confirms that.

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It's not just a "theological hope".

It is a confirmed promise, again and again.

The great revival moments over the past 2000 years were preceded with the church rediscovering the primacy and power of prayer.

So, if we don't pray what are we leaving on the table?

What are we foregoing?

What "birthright" might we be giving away to feast on the "stew" of prayerlessness or its twin brother "busyness to escape boredom"?

If the Bible is true and church history is right ...

Then I want to die on my knees praying for God to move in big ways ... here and all over the world.

Maybe I get to be a part of it ... maybe I prime it for the next generation ...

Either way I don't want to forego my chance to be used ... and that starts with prayer.

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In Tolkein's classic, Lord of the Rings, there is a moment when they first realize what they have to do to destroy the ring.

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Frodo (tiny hobbit) laments to Gandalf,

“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo. “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”

We don't get to choose when, where we live.

Acts 17:26 tells us that God allots when and where we live, and for how long.

All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.

Frodo and Gandalf recognize there is a mission to be done. They can't kick the can down the road and leave it for someone else to do.

That is what happens with praying people.

We realize what we have to do with the time GIVEN us.

There is a mission ... we got to get about doing it.

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One big danger of prayerlessness is we miss God's mission.

... we waste our life pursuing the wrong things.

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But ... there is, arguably, an even bigger danger to the church.

We can be on mission and see things happen and never pray // and we can start to think we did it.

We start to think we can do it without God.

Who cares about prayer ...

All we need is killer lighting // smoke machines // cool pastors in skinny jeans.

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There is nothing inherently wrong with those things ...

[maybe skinny jeans]

In fact a praying church can have all of that and recognize that God is the one doing the great things.

I'm just saying ... if we ditch prayer and put all our hope in style and methods ... We can start to think we don't need God.

That is crazy!

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You and me and our smoke machine can't change a person's heart.

We have to realize that we need God's power for the mission.

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Too often we think it's up to really talented people ... spiritual gurus ... PhD's that can teach apologetics ...

"Those guys do the mission work."

"Us simpleton's and nobodies, we just pray and pay and root them on."

NO!

Well, pray for them too /// But it's YOU TOO!!!

Mission is ordinary people doing ordinary things that make opportunity for an extraordinary Gospel

Colossians 4:5-6

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.

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Paul just doesn't say PRAY FOR ME! → "I do all the "REAL" missionary work."

He encourages us here ...

Does any of what he said sound impossible to you?

Does any of it sound extraordinary?

He says walk in wisdom ... NOT ... walk on water.

But we act like that is what mission takes ... "I have to walk on water."

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It's really unimpressive ...

Walk wisely so that "outsiders" ... those that don't follow Jesus ... can see Jesus in you.

That is ordinary Christian living ...

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Here are a few practicals of ordinary ways that make opportunity for an extraordinary gospel ...

1. Do life with people that aren't Christians

Outsiders can't see your life if you are locked up in a Christian bubble.

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(Enjoy the company of non-Christians // Jesus was called the friend of sinners).

Great side-effect ... it will make you less judgy & more gracious.

Those Christian folks that put mean slogans on picket signs ... they've been living in Christian echo chambers for too long.

So, enjoy friendships with non-Christians ... sometimes that means joining a club (Robin Rice) / hobby (Elliot ultimate frisbee) ...

And when you are with them make it count.

2. Be intentional with the time you have around others.

At work, school, grilling-out, birthday parties, etc.

Be a good witness for Jesus.

Now, I'm not saying come in with a 3 point sermon and altar call.

But don't be foolish (opposite of walking wisely): (gossip, getting drunk, playing candy-crush on your phone the whole time) → foolish ... not using the time well.

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Use the time well!

Seize the opportunity and prepare yourself.

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Don't be the guy at the party alone in the corner with all the chicken wings. //

Ask good questions ... get to know them ... allow them to get to know you.

Look for opportunities to serve.

[Hurricane Florence].

Unfortunately ... we may have that chance again.

“But Jesse, I’m still got PTSD from that last one.”

“I’m tired ... wore out ... don’t feel like I have anything to give.”

Totally get that ...

Tap into the strength of God’s grace.

He never gives us more than we can handle.

But that doesn’t mean he won’t put us in tough circumstances. (?Joseph?)

Jesus doesn’t save us into Club-Med.

We will still suffer, but now we get to lean into God’s grace.

Some of you are thinking ... “Bad sales pitch, dude.”

But that is the reality of life.

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To live is to experience suffering ...

Coming to Jesus doesn't mean a magic wand is waved to make it all go away.

But it does mean that when we suffer, it has a greater purpose, and we don't suffer alone.

Jesus is with us in that suffering ...

And

... so is the church.

Mission starts starts with prayer, its all of us, ordinary people doing ordinary things.

AND we don't do it in isolation.

Mission is a team sport

Colossians 4:7-17

7 Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts,9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is

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one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 12 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. 13 For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. 14 Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

What stands out to me when I read this are the variety of names and giftings and roles.

Each person has a unique God story behind them.

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We see Tychicus ... faithful bro, minister, (trustworthy guy ... coming to share the missionary stories Paul had)

Then Onesimus ... we talked about him last week. Formerly a runaway slave, given freedom b/c his master believed and lived the Gospel. Now he is doing ministry with Paul.

Aristarchus ... apparently a convert from Paul's prison ministry. → reminds me of song from Fulsom Prison album ... "Inside these walls of prison, my body may be, but the Lord has set my soul free."

Mark ... the fallout boy ... young, made some mistakes. Paul and him had a falling out, but now they are doing ministry together again.

Jesus [maybe *Jesús* // just saying // *wishing* :-)] → He and Mark were the only Jewish Christians ... aka ... "circumcised dudes". (TMI Paul!)

Epaphras ... a Colossian himself ...

Then there is Luke, the physician, well-educated, and the journalist ... church's first blogger.

Nympha ... wealthy lady ... opened her home for the church to meet there.

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And of course Paul, the apostle, in chains, imprisoned for the gospel.

The point is that Paul didn't do mission alone.

It probably would have been tempting ...

“All these guys slowing me down ... dealing with their problems ...”

“They don't know the gospel like I do ...”

But he didn't // he played team.

He could have stolen more credit himself by going solo.

But that wasn't his motivation.

He cared about the mission ... reaching as many as possible with the gospel.

And that only happens together in team.

(fingers vs. fist)

A variety of people, with a variety of gifting ...

A group with very different backgrounds, and very different stories of Jesus' salvation.

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I'm a PK ... delivered porn addict ... self-righteous jerk ...
Jesus saved me and is using me.

Maybe you're an addict, or recovering addict ... Jesus is
going to save you or has saved you ... join the team!

Maybe you're a Marine/Navy/Coastie, corp and country first,
God second.

Now, God's working in your heart ... flipping that around ...
GOD FIRST! His KINGDOM FIRST!

Maybe you're retired ... just want to cruise into eternal life.
Life is fishing/golfing, seeing the grandkids, collecting sea
shells.

You retired from your job AND God's mission.

John Piper (in his 70's) ... wrote a book "Don't Waste Your
Retirement" ...

→ Get back in the team ... you count ... you matter.

→ Carolyn Warner ... helping a friend who is
sick/bed-ridden ... takes food // spends time // made
sure she got her Alexa fixed ... [ordinary ways of
extraordinary gospel ministry] // [needed a tech nerd,
Jim, to come fix it ... team! together better!]

Maybe you think you're too young? Mark (young guy)

→ Mark went on missionary trips with Paul ... he served ...
he learned

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→ Join the team ... get on mission ...

A simple way is joining a community group, youth ministry, serve team.

All these groups are full of ordinary people doing ordinary things to make an opportunity for an extraordinary Gospel.

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The point for all of us is ...

We have one short life to live.

Gravestone: born “-” died → Little dash ... that’s our life.

It goes by so fast.

Let’s live a life praying to the Lord of the Mission that he would do something amazing in our lifetime.

[CALL UP BAND]

NOT A CHRISTIAN:

Don’t waste your life.

Jesus is LORD!

One day, you’ll realize this and it might be too late.

But today, it’s an invitation ... a call that Jesus, the King of Kings, is making to you.

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It's a call to come and surrender.

Renounce your sin, evil ... and confess him as your savior
and Lord.

Join us in His mission.

CHRISTIAN:

Don't Waste YOUR Life!

Pray ... Pray ... Pray

Pray for the mission ...

AND ... leverage your ordinary life for the extraordinary
Gospel ...

////

As we come to communion we see are reminded that
mission takes surrender.

Jesus, surrendered his will to the Team's will.

"Not my will, but yours be done."

We wouldn't be taking communion today if he didn't follow
through on that.

The mission's message is written into communion.

Jesus body broken, blood shed for sinners like us.

He came for us, he calls us, he died for us... to redeem us
to be on His team, under His Lordship.

B4 you come ... do business with God ... what adjustments
do you need to make?

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→ take a minute to pray and when you are ready come to the table grab the communion elements, and take it when you get back to your seat.

[NO PRAYER]

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