

Col 4:3-6
“Witnessing with Wisdom and Grace”

Introduction

We are in the closing section of the book of Colossians, and Paul is making parting exhortations to the church.

In Hebrews he tells all of us to do this, in a humorous way:

Heb 10:23-25

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for **He who promised is faithful.**

24 And let us consider (Paroxoosmos) **one another in order to stir up love and good works,**

25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Consider:

The Greek word (Paroxoosmos) – Provoke, to be contentious, sharp, to irritate

So, today I am going to “Provoke or irritate all of us” to the good work of “Evangelism” or “Witnessing”:

Col 4:3-4

3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,

4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward those [who are] outside, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

4:3-4 Praying for leadership

Col 4:3-4

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A. Meanwhile: praying also for us:

Paul seems to say, “As long as we are on the subject of prayer, please pray **for us!**” But Paul didn’t ask for prayer for personal needs, but **that God would open to us a door for the word.**

1. That God would open to us a door for the word
2. To speak the mystery of Christ
3. That it would be clear on the way Paul should speak

B. Paul asked other churches at the same time for the same answered prayer and look what happened:

Even though Paul was **in chains** for his faithfulness to the gospel, he knew that he **ought to speak** it in a way that would **make it manifest** (clearly evident). Paul wanted prayer so that he could continue to make the gospel clear and evident, even if it meant more **chains**.

Eph 6:19-20

--19 **and for me**, that **utterance may be given to me**, that I may **open my mouth boldly** to make known **the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in** it I may speak boldly, **as I ought to speak**.

Rom 15:30

30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you **strive (i.e. agonizomi) together with me in prayers to God for me**,

Phil 1:19-20

19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance **through your prayer** and the **supply of the Spirit** of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, **but with all boldness, as always**, so now also **Christ will be magnified in my body**, whether by life or by death.

1Thes 5:25 Brethren, pray for us.

II Thes 3:1

1 Finally, brethren, **pray for us**, that the **word of the Lord may run swiftly** and be glorified, just as it is with you,

*****Then the last verse of the book of Acts shows God answered the saint's prayers:**

Acts 28:31

30 Then **Paul** dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and **received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching** the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ **with all confidence, NO ONE FORBIDDING HIM.**

Prayer works!

4:5 Walk in wisdom as we go about witnessing

Col 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.

A. "Walk" in wisdom toward those who are outside:

The Christian life isn't only lived in the prayer closet. There also must be "shoe-leather Christianity".

The Greatest witnessing tool, is **NOT** a tract or a booklet, **but "YOU"**.

A life in the will of God is, in the Spirit, filled with God's word, and over flowing of love, and lastly and most importantly, **filled with the Holy Spirit and Power**. (Eph 5:18c)

B. Witnessing is first something “you are”:

Jesus started it all by saying this to a group of 12 men:

Mark 1:17

17 Then Jesus said to them, "**Follow Me**, and **I WILL MAKE YOU** become **fishers of men.**"

Jesus made it clear to these guys, they first need the "**Power of the Holy Spirit**":

Acts 1:8

8 "But **you shall receive POWER when the HOLY SPIRIT has come UPON you**; and **YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

So, Now as we are daily filled with God’s word, ask for the “filling” of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18c), and then **walk in the Spirit**, and we will walk in the opportunities that God has laid before us.

Eph 2:10

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which **God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

Matt 5:13-16

13 "**You are the SALT of the earth**; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 **You are the LIGHT of the world.** A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 **Let your light so shine before men**, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

After we are “Filled with the Holy Spirit, then we can walk in spirit and wisdom:

We daily can experience God **leading** us, and filling us with the **power of the Holy Spirit**, and **Jesus will make us a witness.** **Eph 5:18c** ... but **be filled with the Spirit**,

Dan 12:3

3 **Those who are wise shall shine**

Like the brightness of the firmament,

And those who turn many to righteousness

Like the **stars forever and ever.**

C. Wisdom Toward Outsiders

Those outside are the "**unbelievers**", "**non-Christians**," or "**the unsaved**." Also, Paul uses the term "outsiders" for people who were **outside the church** (1Cor 5:12-13).

- You will have sensitivity toward them and their need for Christ, and will have a desire to make sure that you are a good witness to them.
- We are supposed to conduct ourselves with wisdom towards those who have not yet come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Here are some real practical ways the Bible tells us on how to walk in Wisdom:

1. Lead a quiet life and attend to your own business, and work hard:

1 Thess 4:11-12

11 **that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands,** as we commanded you, 12 **that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.**

1 Tim 2:2-4 (vs. 1, ...Be a prayerful person, with a prayerful church)

(Pray for)...2 for kings and all who are in authority, **that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.**

3 For **this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,** 4 **who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

- Lead a quiet life, do good works, and provide for your family.
- Outsiders are constantly "examining us as Christians", and we need to make sure that our lives are living up to the standards that we're imposing on others.

2. Living a pattern of good works:

Even Christian young people are supposed to be considering this:

Titus 2:6-8

6 Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 7 **in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in DOCTRINE SHOWING** integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 **sound speech that cannot be condemned,** that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, **having nothing evil to say of you.**

Note:

Notice each of the following: that a big part of being a "Witness, is being spoken evil against, that is, "**not if**" but "**when**" **they say evil about you**, it won't stand because of the believer's life and life-style are sound.

3. Keep our behavior excellent among the Gentiles:

1 Peter 2:12

12 **having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers,** they may, by your good works which they observe, **glorify God in the day of visitation.**

4. Submission to authority:

1 Peter 2:13-15

13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.¹⁵ For this is the will of God, **that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men** –

5. Keeping a good Conscience:**1 Peter 3:16**

16 having a good conscience, that **when they defame you as evildoers**, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

6. Especially for leaders in the church, (they) must have a Good reputation,

1 Tim 3:7 (speaking about potential leaders in the church)

7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Note:

- That doesn't mean that leaders must have perfection.
- I don't want to scare off those who desire to become leaders in the church.
- No one is expecting a leader to never fail or to be perfect.

D. Conclusion

- I pray that each of us will begin to consider our witness in this community.
- That we will be walking in the **fear of God** according to **the Word of God**, and that we might then have opportunity to be witnesses of the gospel of God.

4:5 Redeeming the time in witnessing

Col 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, **redeeming the time.**

A. redeeming the time:

This literally means, "Buying up the opportune moments", or "Making the most of the opportunity"

Every time we're seen or heard by non-Christians, is an opportunity to walk in God's way according to God's Word in front of them.

Eph 5:15-16

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,

16 **redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

17 Therefore do not be unwise, **but understand what the will of the Lord is.**

- The days are evil.
- The world is wicked.
- But if you simply behave like a Christian, you will stand out like a light on a hill.

Jesus said time is running out, or our time is short:

Matt 5:16

16 Let your light so shine before men, **that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**

For all of us, time is running out:

John 9:4 (as Jesus' ministry was ending, he said:)

4 I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; **the night is coming when no one can work.**

David by the Holy Spirit got it right:

Ps 90:12

12 So teach us to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

B. Conclusion:

Simply, we are to be living as a Christian

- whether it be as simple as, "rejoicing in our trials"
 - practicing honesty in our business,
 - or forgiving when we are wronged
- We will be shining a bright light in a dark world.

As Peter said, "The end of all things is at hand", let us wake up and realize that our days before the rapture are few:

1 Cor 15:34

34 **Awake to righteousness**, and do not sin; for **some do not have the knowledge of God.** I speak this to your shame.

Prov 10:5

5 He who gathers in summer is a wise son,
But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.

Prov 11:30

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
And **he who wins souls is wise.**

The most important point in Witnessing!!

4:6 Speaking "GRACE" in witnessing

Col 4:6

6 **Let your speech always be with grace**, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

A. Let your speech always be with grace:

Grace can mean the grace of God or in a **gracious manner**.

Without a loving, kind and/or gracious spirit we become clanging symbols or a blasting trumpet. (**1 Cor 13:1**)

The City of Nazareth spoke about Jesus witnessing to them:

Luke 4:22

22 So all bore witness to Him, and **marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth**. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

I love this Messianic prophesy of Jesus' ministry when He would come:

Ps 45:2

2 You are fairer than the sons of men;

Grace is poured upon Your lips;

Therefore God has blessed You forever.

...the **gracious words that poured out of His mouth...**

Listen to these verses and thoughts on Grace:

Act 20:24

24c...and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to **the gospel of the grace** of God.

Eph 2:8a **For by grace you have been saved** through faith, ..

John 1:12 (*listen to Jesus gracious invitation, so gracious, kind, simple, loving*)

12 **But as many as received Him**, to them **He gave the right to become children of God**, to those who believe in His name:

John 1:14

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and **we beheld His glory**, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, **full of grace and truth**.

John 1:16 And **of His fullness** we have all received, and **grace for grace**.

1 John 2:2 (*God's love and forgiveness is for all*)

2 And **Jesus Himself is the atoning sacrifice** for our **sins**, and not for ours only **but also for the whole world**.

Rom 5:20b ... But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

1 Peter 5:10

10 But **may THE GOD OF ALL GRACE**, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, **perfect**, **establish**, **strengthen**, and **settle you**.

Phil 1:6

6 being confident of this very thing, that **He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

Heb 12:2a looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, ...

Jude 1:24-25

24 **Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,**
 And **to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,**
 25 To God our Savior,
 Who alone is wise,
 Be glory and majesty,
 Dominion and power,
 Both now and forever. Amen.

“The Gospel is ALL about Grace, from the Start to the Finish!!!”
And God has given us so many loving words to share with the World of unbelievers!!!

4:6 Season with Salt in witnessing

Col 4:6

6 Let your speech always be with grace, **seasoned with salt**, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

A. seasoned with salt:

1. **Salt brings out the flavor of the food.**
 We as believers have life. We are not just merely existing, but have the most amount of joy, happiness, and peace in this world.
2. **Salt causes thirst.**
 Just being the Christian you are should cause the world to want to know what you know and to have what you have.
3. **Salt heals a wound.**
 Salt in a wound hurts, in the immediate very badly, but causes germs to be killed and brings about healing.
4. **Salt preserves flesh.**
 This world and all its corruption is quickly perishing. Salt prevents corruption. We as believers are preserving mankind upon this planet by our presence.

4:6 Know the right words for each person in witnessing

Col 4:6

6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, **that you may know how you ought to answer each one.**

A. that you may know how you ought to answer each one:

This assumes that we as Christians are seeking answers in God's Word, and then work at knowing how to communicate those answers to **those who are outside.**

1 Peter 3:15

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense **(Gk - apologia)** to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, **with meekness and fear**;

Do it as Jesus did it while in human flesh and lived as a man:

Isaiah 50:4

4 "The Lord GOD (*j.e. Father*) has given Me

The tongue of the learned (*LXX -"disciple"*),

That I should know how to speak

A word in season to him who is weary.

He awakens Me morning by morning,

He awakens My ear

To hear as the learned (*LXX -"disciple"*).

Conclusion

May we all have the intensity and heart to evangelize as Jesus did:

John 4:34-38

34 Jesus said to them, "**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.**

35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, **I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!** 36 And he

who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: **'One sows and another reaps.'**

38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."