

COLOSSIANS 4:1-6

*At the end of Chapter 3, Paul gave his Colossian believers encouraging words to be good servants in whatever they did in life. Paul starts in verse 1 of Chapter 4 to compliment those encouraging words by telling the masters they should give their servants the same fair and just treatment.

Colossians 4:1 - Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

1. This is addressed directly to the Christian employers.

*God hates the oppression of the poor and the gifts of a man who has grown rich through unfair labor practices. It would be easy for a master to be cruel, unfair, and harsh to his servants - particularly in Paul's day.

2. Paul is addressing believing masters and encourages them to treat all their servants with just and fair equality.

Ephesians 6:9 - And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

*Masters were encouraged to provide enough funds so that the slave/servant could eventually buy his freedom one day. It is good to note that the teaching and preaching of equality in Christ actually changed the atmosphere of the Roman Empire, with slaves being set free.

3. [*ye also have a Master in heaven*] They were to treat servants the same way they would want their heavenly Master to treat them.
 - a. The masters were to treat any servant like a person and if the servant was saved, then they were to treat the servant as a brother or sister in Christ. Look at Paul's letter to Philemon.

Philemon 1:10, 16 - I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:
Phlm. 1:16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?
 - b. Servants were to put on Christ and the masters were to put on Christ in relationship with one another.
4. Masters were to give what is just and marked by fairness.

- a. Just because one is the boss does not give them the right to be unkind or cruel at work.

Why? Because they will ultimately answer to the Master in heaven.

- b. Paul wanted the master to realize the fact that he and his servants were both ransomed and redeemed by the same blood of Christ. One day they both will receive equally, regardless of their social status here on earth.

Romans 3:25 - Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

**Paul, now in the next few verses, presents three more areas of Christian conduct for the believer - which are important: our prayer life, our public walk, and our speech.

Colossians 4:2 - Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

1. Question - How do we live today in our daily circumstances in a world given over to false values, conflict, and shameful practices? The Answer: PRAYER!
 - a. It is important that we are aware that we live in a dangerous world. We get attacked all the time - robbing us of our joy and peace.
 - b. Paul never tires of encouraging the believer in Christ to be diligent in their prayer life. I believe that one of the regrets we will all have when we get to heaven will be that we did not spend more time in prayer.
2. Paul teaches the Colossians to "Continue in prayer", which has the meaning to give constant attention to pray and watch. Do not stop the practice of prayer or quit. The prophet Nehemiah gave us an example to pray and watch in Nehemiah 4:9 - Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.
3. Not only are we to continue in prayer, but our prayers are to be "with thanksgiving".

Philippians 4:6 - Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

- a. Not only are we to be thankful for past answers to prayer, but in faith, we can also thank the Lord for prayers He has not answered.
- b. "With thanksgiving" signifies that gratitude is the attitude we are to have in which our prayers are offered. Because of what the Lord has done for us and to us, we should never pray without giving thanks.

I Thessalonians 5:18 - In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

- c. We need to thank God always, because He is going to hear and answer our prayer. Maybe it won't be the answer you want, but He will answer prayer.

Isaiah 55:8-9 - For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. Isa. 55:9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Colossians 4:3 - Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

1. This verse coincides with Paul's letter to the believers in Ephesus to open a door proclaiming his mystery gospel.

Ephesians 6:19-20 - And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, Eph. 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

*Paul says, "Don't forget to pray for us" - meaning to pray also for him and for the servants of the Lord who are with him in Rome.

2. Notice that Paul does not ask to be released from prison, but rather that God would open a door to be able to preach the gospel of grace - this Mystery program.

3. It is clear from this verse that the preaching of the mystery message was the cause of Paul's imprisonment and his being put in chains.

*It was because Paul dared to suggest that Gentiles could be saved and not go through Israel's program that led to the Jewish leaders finally sending Paul to Rome as a prisoner.

Colossians 1:27-28 - To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Col. 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Colossians 4:4 - That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

1. Paul was anxious to make it manifest, by preaching this grace gospel in such a clear manner that it would be understood by the people.

*There is no virtue in talking over anyone's head (being deep). The message must be presented simply and clearly, so all can understand it.
2. As we begin to understand the importance of right division, then we begin to realize that taking verses out of their context becomes confusing - particularly in prayer requests.
 - a. Many preachers present prayer promises from the four gospels, or the Old Testament, as their proof texts. What they fail to do is see Who is speaking and to Whom they are speaking.
 - b. We, as with all Scripture, have to examine these prayer promises in their context. Christians have to stop claiming promises that are not given to them today. They have to stop telling and demanding God to do what we want and to trust in God's will in our lives.
3. See the difference between the Kingdom Program and the Body of Christ Mystery Program for today.

The Kingdom Program:

Matthew 21:22 - And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Mark 11:24 - Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

The Body of Christ Program:

Romans 8:26-27 - Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Rom. 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

Philippians 4:6-7 - Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanks giving let your requests be made known unto God. Php. 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

4. Bottom line is, God may say no, or not right now, or maybe later, or yes. That is up to God and what He wants to accomplish in our lives and others.

Our Walk

Colossians 4:5 - Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

1. The child of God has a responsibility before the world today. "Walk in wisdom" to those who are lost and on the outside.

*In our everyday behavior, the child of God should realize that they are being watched by the world of unbelievers. We should not be doing foolish things that would jeopardize our testimony.
2. [*redeeming the time*] means "buying up opportunities". When you see an opportunity to witness, pray that the Lord will lead you and open that door. We should be ready to take that opportunity to witness on the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Don't make the mistake of misleading someone that is looking for direction in seeing Christ for Who He is. Use your wisdom in sound doctrine, redeeming the time.

Ephesians 5:15-16 - See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Eph. 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

4. We should be ready to share our precious Savior Jesus Christ with those who do not know Him.

Our Speech

Colossians 4:6 - Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

1. If our conversation is to be always with grace, it must be courteous, humble and Christ-like. It should be free of gossip, uncleanness and bitterness. Some people think this verse says: "Let your speech be salt", using sarcastic remarks.
2. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:31 that our conversation should be to deter evil.
Ephesians 4:31 - Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
Ephesians 4:32 - And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you
3. The expression "seasoned with salt" has the thought of salt enhancing the flavor. Paul is saying that our conversation should never be dull, flat, or lacking in character. But it should always be worthwhile and profitable to living a godly life.
I Timothy 4:8 - For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.
4. [that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.] Paul could be thinking about the Gnostics here, who came to the Colossian believers with their false teachings and doctrine.

*They shall be ready to answer these false teachers with the words of wisdom and their faithfulness they have in Christ.
I Corinthians 1:30 - But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

5. Wisdom is not the acquisition of intelligent skills, but the gaining of spiritual discernment based on the wisdom of God's Word.

I Peter 3:15 - But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

****Next Week:** Paul closes out his letter to the Colossians, recognizing again some of his faithful co-workers that had helped Paul accomplish his gospel of grace ministry.