

The Words of a Christian

Col. 4:2-6

INTRODUCTION:

All Stand and Read Scripture

Colossians 4:2-6 (NASB)

² Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴ that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

⁵ Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Prayer

When we became a Christian, we made a pact with God that we would serve Him. We find a good description of how our new life in Christ occurred and what our new life should be like in the 6th chapter of Romans. I am going to read just a few verses.

Romans 6:2b-7 (NASB)

How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

Paul tells us that when we were baptized, we were baptized into His (Christ's) death. Just as Christ died on the cross and was buried, we were buried in the waters of baptism and **died** to our old worldly self. Just as Christ rose from the dead, we have also risen from the dead into a newness of life.

This is the "newness of life" that Paul was referring to in Col. 3:1-3 where he said,

Colossians 3:1-3 (NASB)

³ Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For **you have died** and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Then he tells us in Col. 3:17,

Colossians 3:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Paul tells us that as a Christian, we have died to the desire to sin or do worldly things. That our whole life should be focused on doing everything, in word or deed, to the glory of God.

Then starting in Col. 3:18 through Col. 4:6, which is our passage this morning, he starts providing detail on what that focused life should be like.

In Col. 3:18-21, he taught us about our family responsibilities as husband, wife, and children.

In Col. 3:22-4:1, he taught us how to serve the Lord in the workplace.

Now, he is going to show us how to use our words in our Christian life.

BODY:

I. Devoted Prayer.

Colossians 4:2-3a (NASB)

² Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word,

I want to seriously consider these things morning.

- Do you keep your mind on heavenly things all day long?
- Do you spend a lot of time with God in prayer?
- Do you pray for other people?
- Do you keep an attitude of thanksgiving throughout the day and thank God for your blessings?

How can you ever expect to have a relationship with God if you RARELY or NEVER talk to Him?

Whenever we find ourselves in some kind of trouble, we are quick to pray. That is good! But we need to be devoted to prayer all the time!

Paul asked the Christians in Colossae to pray for him. Although he was in prison, he knew that God could provide opportunities for him to share the Gospel with other people. I am sure that he asked God himself, but he was no doubt encouraged when he knew that others were praying for him also.

A devoted prayer life also influences people for Christ when they know we are praying for them.

Doesn't it make you feel good to know when someone says, "I hear you. I somewhat understand what you are going through. **I will pray for you.**"?

THAT'S A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON PEOPLE! You can say those words to me all you want! I need your prayer support! I don't know of anyone who doesn't need prayer support! And knowing that someone is praying for you faithfully every day is a positive influence on you and others.

Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

Luke 18:1-8 (NASB)

18 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, ² saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. ³ There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' ⁴ For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'" ⁶ And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge *said; ⁷ now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly.

We have surely given up if we have stopped praying. But praying will keep you from giving up on life.

Prayer is a powerful tool in the life of the Christian. That is because God is all-powerful. He can do things we cannot do and He will listen when we ask Him in faith.

II. Clear Preaching.

Colossians 4:3b-4 (NASB)

so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴ that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

ILLUSTRATION:

A story is told of a visiting preacher that stayed in the home of a church family. On Sunday morning, the lady of the house who was hosting the preacher, prepared a delicious breakfast of bacon and eggs, biscuits and gravy, and even pancakes. And, of course, coffee, juice, and milk. But the minister apologized, saying, "Oh, I'm sorry, but I never eat breakfast when I am preaching in the morning."

The mother and her little eight-year-old son went to church that morning and after the service was over she asked her son, "Did you like the preacher's sermon?" The boy replied, "**HE SHOULD HAVE ET!**"

Sometimes preaching can be dry and boring. Other sermons can touch the heart and cause you to want to serve the Lord even more fully.

When I preach, I want to encourage you in your faith, help you make correct decisions in your life, and teach you how to build your relationship with Christ. I am sure that there are times that I do and there are times when I fail.

What can you do to help me? Pray for me. Pray that God will bless my study, my preparation and my delivery of His message. Pray that I will be able to make it clear and helpful and encouraging!

It is important to note, though, that this verse is not pointed directly at the preacher. We should all desire to have the ability to speak God's word clearly when God opens opportunities for us to tell others about Christ.

III. Wise Conduct

Colossians 4:5 (NASB)

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

We have all heard the saying, "Actions speak louder than words."

This is true in our Christian walk as well.

ILLUSTRATION:

Poem from an unknown author.

I'd rather **see** a sermon than **hear** one any day,
I'd rather one would **walk** with me than merely **tell** the way,
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing, but example is always clear.

Actions speak louder than words!

The scriptures tell us that we are the light of the world. This means that our lives should reflect Christ within us. People should see you and realize that you are different in a good way.

Matthew 5:14-16 (NASB)

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

This is one of the ways that we can witness, even without saying a word. Actions speak louder than words. If we are "preaching" one thing and living another, our words will be drowned out.

Paul says to conduct ourselves WITH WISDOM toward non-Christians.

This wisdom is not an earthly wisdom, but it knowledge based upon the eternal Word of God and the ability to know how to apply that knowledge in our life. This wisdom is only received by spending hours in the Word and embedding it in our heart. When we know what God's Word says, we are able to make WISE decisions in our lives which will be a "LIGHT" to the world.

IV. Gracious Speech.

Colossians 4:6 (NASB)

6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

ILLUSTRATION:

A mother invited a preacher to dinner one time. But she was somewhat worried because her two young sons had picked up the habit of cussing occasionally.

She said to them, "I'll tell you what. If you boys don't cuss one time, I'll give you an apple pie. But if you do cuss, I'll give the pie to the preacher." And they said, "Okay."

The meal went over very well. No problems. And just before the preacher was ready to leave, he said to the boys, "Remember, by God we live and by God we die."

And one of the boys replied, "AND YES, BY GOD YOU LOST YOUR APPLE PIE!"

Consistency of life must be followed by consistency of speech. Paul is not just speaking here of preaching the gospel, but general conversation.

James warned us in about our tongue (or our conversation).

James 3:3-10 (NASB)

³ Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. ⁴ Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. ⁵ So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and *yet* it boasts of great things.

See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell. ⁷ For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. ⁸ But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; ¹⁰ from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

So if our tongue is such a deadly poison, how can we control it?

Paul tells us to season our speech with grace.

A believers' **speech** must **always be spoken with grace**. There is no place for those things that characterize the unredeemed mouth. Whether undergoing persecution, stress, difficulty, or injustice, or whether it is with your spouse, children, believers, or unbelievers—in all circumstances believers are to make gracious speech a habit.

As one writer put it: "To speak with **grace** means to say what is spiritual, wholesome, fitting, kind, sensitive, purposeful, complementary, gentle, truthful, loving, and thoughtful."

Paul wrote

Ephesians 4:29 (NASB)

²⁹ Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

The speech of the new man must also be **seasoned... with salt**. It is not only to be gracious, but also to have an effect. Salt can sting when rubbed into a wound, but it also prevents corruption. Believers' speech should act as a purifying influence. Salt also adds flavor, and the speech of the new man should add charm and wit to conversation.

Believers must also know how to **respond to each person**. They must know how to say the right thing at the right time.

In Peter's words,

1 Peter 3:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

CONCLUSION:

ILLUSTRATION:

A saintly little old lady attended a revival meeting at her church. At the invitation time, she went forward. The preacher said to her, "Why did you come forward? This invitation is for sinners to accept the Lord and quit sinning." She said, "That's just the point. I ain't been doing nothin' and I'm a quittin'."

Have you been doing nothing for Christ? Paul is encouraging us to quit doing nothing.

Colossians 3:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

We all need to think more about how can we can use our words for Christ in a positive way. I've given you some of those ways.

- 1- Be devoted to prayer. Pray for others and tell them that you are praying for them.
- 2- Support me in my preaching ministry. Back me. Pray for me. Encourage me even when I preach a lousy sermon.
- 3- Watch your conduct or behavior at work and out in the world. People are watching you.
- 4- Speak kindly to all people. Use your mouth for the Lord. Invite people to church.

Let's commit ourselves to let our words glorify God!

If you do not know Christ as your Lord and Savior, I invite you to come. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

He Is Lord!

He is Lord, He is Lord. He has risen from the dead and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, That Jesus Christ is Lord.