

VILLAGE

CHURCH

Bible Study Notes

Intro Question: Who is someone who has modelled faithful, prayerful support for you in your faith?

Pray: That the message of Colossians would sit with us beyond this series.

Read: Colossians 4:2-18

Questions about the passage:

- What's Paul's encouragement for praying in v.2?
- What does Paul ask the Colossians to pray for in v.3?
- What does Paul mean in v.5 'walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time'?
- What does 'speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt' mean in practice v.6?
- What do Paul's personal greetings in v.7-18 show about his view of the gospel community?

Questions for us:

- How does your own prayer life reflect what Paul encourages? How could you devote yourself more to pray? What would this look like?
- How would you describe your speech (compared to v6)?
- Think about those in your life who are 'outsiders' to faith. What might it look like to 'buy up' (see notes) those opportunities more deliberately?

Pray: that Village would continue to grow into full Christian maturity

Homework: Read back through Colossians 1-4 in one sitting this week. Note one thing that lands differently having now worked through the whole letter.

Remind: *Do the health check survey if you haven't already*

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Overview:

Paul's letter to the Christians of Colosse in Asia Minor is one of his shortest letters. Paul is writing to a young church that's just starting to figure out what it means to believe in Jesus and follow him. He urges them to dig into the riches of the gospel and let it shape the way they live.

This week, we finish up Paul's letter to the Colossians. He draws together his instructions with a call to devoted prayer and wise witness before signing off with personal greetings.

Paul's aim:

Paul writes to a church he's never visited to establish his apostolic authority and relationship with them. His core aim is to ground them deeply in the gospel so they grow to maturity in Christ. Urgently underlying everything is a warning - don't drift toward the alternative teachings circulating in Colosse.

Asia Minor Map:



Asia Minor in the time of Paul

Source: N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 12, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 18.

Praying to see 10% of the northern suburbs in gospel-centred churches & 250 by 2030 at Village Church who grow, gather, give & go, in love & joy to the glory of God

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Questions about the passage:

What's Paul's encouragement for praying in v.2?

Paul calls for a steady, devoted prayer life, alert and watchful rather than drifting into obligation. 'Watchful' means staying attentive to reality, Satan's temptations, the Spirit's work & Jesus' return while remaining responsive to God throughout daily life, and thanksgiving anchors that alertness, keeping prayer rooted in what God has already accomplished (see 1:3, 1:12, 3:17). Paul then turns this personal call outward, the Colossians are to share in his mission by praying for an open door for the word, connecting their local gathering to the global advance of the gospel.

What does Paul ask the Colossians to pray for in v.3?

Paul asks them to pray that God would 'open to us a door for the word', meaning an opening for the gospel itself to enter into hearts and communities. The content of that word is 'the mystery of Christ', God's long-hidden plan for the salvation of the world now made known in Jesus (see 1:26-27, 2:2). Even from prison, Paul's concern is not his own comfort but the advance of this message.

What does Paul mean in v.5 'walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time'?

'Walk in wisdom' - to let Jesus, God's pattern for full human living, shape how Christians conduct themselves before people outside God's community. 'Making the best use of the time' - translates a verb that literally means 'buying up' every opportunity, treating each moment of contact with outsiders as an opportunity not to be missed. A blameless and holy life lays the foundation for effective witness.

What does 'speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt' mean in practice v.6?

'Grace' - God's grace and human graciousness, so that Christian speech is both theologically grounded and genuinely captivating. 'Seasoned with salt' - a common ancient image for lively, interesting, colourful speech, just like salt enhances the flavour of food. Adding elements that make words more readily acceptable to the receiver (eg. forthrightness, sincerity, tact, and eloquence). The goal is not winning an argument but knowing how to answer each person as an individual, with care and respect.

What do Paul's personal greetings in v.7-18 show about his view of the gospel community?

The roll-call of names shows that the gospel was never an abstract project for Paul but a shared life with real people. Epaphras in particular is described as 'always struggling on your behalf in his prayers' v.12, similar to Paul's own ministry of intercession from 1:3-12. The letter's closing makes plain that what is worked for must first be prayed for.

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Questions for us:

How does your own prayer life reflect what Paul encourages? How could you devote yourself more to pray? What would this look like?

Reflect on your prayer life over the last month. Is it consistent? Patchy? What would need to change, either in your practices or your thinking for it to be more shaped like Paul's encouragement? This might look like tapping into resources - reading a book on prayer, or chatting to others that have a robust prayer life for inspiration.

How would you describe your speech?

Our words have power. They affect and influence, built up or tear down. As followers of Jesus, we should take an honest reflection on how our words, especially for the sake of non-Christians. Notice the effect of inputs on your speech - people you are around, media you consume etc. What could shape it more in the direction of gracious, salt-seasoned talk Paul describes?

Think about those in your life who are 'outsiders' to faith. What might it look like to 'buy up' those opportunities more deliberately?

Paul's vision is not of Christians who avoid the world but who engage it wisely and warmly. Consider this week one relationship where you could be more present, more gracious, or more ready to speak.