

COLOSSIANS

CHAPTER 4

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1. AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAYER (v2-4)

The first thing Paul challenged them with is their prayer life. In this part of the letter to the Colossian church—to a people that Paul has never met personally—the first of his final set of instructions is to encourage them to pray. In v2 Paul encourages them in the matter in which they should pray, which is:

Be devoted

Paul supported the Colossian church through his prayers for them. Firstly, he is asking them to devote themselves to prayer, he is asking them to be a people that pray persistently, pray continually, apply themselves wholeheartedly to prayer.

(Acts 2:42; 1 Peter 4:7)

Pray with an alert mind

Secondly, Paul encourages them to be alert when they pray. One of the temptations we must fight against in our prayer life is the tendency for our thoughts to wander or drift. It is easy to begin praying and then leave our prayers to begin to think about something else, especially when we have a busy day ahead.

(Ephesians 6:18)

Pray with a thankful heart

As believers we should all be thankful people. Paul clearly wants to encourage the church to have a grateful attitude. Always pray with thanksgiving for the great things God has done. Prayer cannot exist without praise.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Pray for opportunities to spread to gospel

Paul didn't ask for prayer for his personal needs (he was in prison) but that God would open the door to spread the gospel. Paul wanted prayer that he would continue to make the gospel clear and evident, even if it meant more chains.

(Philippians 1:12-14)

2. WISE WITNESSING (v5-6)

The believer's life isn't only lived in the prayer closet. There must be practical, lived-out Christianity, which lives wisely toward those who are non-believers.

Be gracious

Our words must be constantly filled with grace, having no harshness or bitterness, especially when they can be misunderstood or provoke arguments.

(1 Peter 3:15)

Be interesting

Our presentation of the gospel should stimulate people's taste to want more. We must live and communicate in such a way that it makes people interested in us and want to ask us questions. We must arouse their interest.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF A TEAM (v7-15)

From v7-15, Paul sets out to thank the people that have been with him on the journey so far. This is a section that we can easily gloss over but there are some lessons that we can learn.

Be a supporter

Our value and significance cannot be understood in our independence but may only be understood in our interdependence, so that who you are in Christ will not be discovered by standing alone but only by standing amongst God's people.

(Ephesians 4:11-13)

Trials are a test of our faithfulness to each other

While Paul was in prison many friends deserted him. People rejected him because if they remained loyal to him, it could potentially lead to their persecution.

(2 Timothy 1:15)

A burden shared

Aristarchus was in prison with Paul. Imagine the comfort it gave Paul to have someone there with him. It should be no different for us in the church. We should bear one another's burdens.

(Galatians 6:2; John 13:34)

Prayer is hard work

We often find the things that are good for us difficult to do. Exercising is good but it's hard, eating healthy is good but it's hard, prayer is good but it's hard.

(Romans 12:12)

First a servant

Paul refers to Tychicus as a faithful helper who serves me in the Lord's work. Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus (Justus) are fellow workers for the kingdom of God and Epaphras a servant for Jesus Christ.

(John 12:26; Galatians 5:13)

4. A CALL TO FAITHFULNESS (v16-18)

This is the last command Paul gave in this letter. He calls for them to remember his chains. Along with this is the reminder that he is in prison for the sake of the gospel. He has been faithful, and God has been faithful to him. No matter how difficult our current situation may seem, there are others who are experiencing far worse, and it is worth it for all of us in light of eternity.

Conclusion

The letter to the church in Colosse is just as relevant now as it was when Paul wrote it to them. Paul is encouraging us to live a life of importance for Christ. A life where we put Christ above everything else. A life that can give hope to others. In his final sentence Paul said 'remember my chains'. He is saying remember my sacrifice and follow my example.

Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:10-11)