

The New Man and Evangelism
Colossians 4:2-6
May 27, 2012

Introduction

Paul is now closing up his letter to the Colossian church. He spent the first half talking about the false teachers who try to claim that Christ alone was not enough, and they had the deeper secret that was essential to salvation. Paul tells the church that Christ alone is sufficient. From chapter 3 on, Paul applies the character of a Christian who is complete in Christ. He tells us that we are a new creation, our old self had died and was buried with Christ. And with Christ, we are raised to a new life. Paul then explains to the church the new man and his relationship.

Christians have turned the world upside down with their message. We proclaim Christ crucified, resurrected and the hope for us. We proclaim that there is no other salvation by which we are saved except through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul reminds the church of their responsibility and encourages them to share the gospel.

Colossians 4:2-6 *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

I. Paul's Prayer Request (3-4)

- Paul in prison
 - *for which I am in chains*
 - Paul was arrested in Jerusalem because the Jews tried to kill him (**Acts 21:27-22:29**)
 - He was brought to trial before Felix and Agrippa (**Acts 23:23-26:32**)
 - Romans transported Paul to Rome to appeal to Caesar (**Acts 27:1-28:15**)
 - He was brought under house arrest in Rome (**Acts 28:16-30**)

Acts 28:16 *When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.*

- Opportunities to speak
 - *God may open a door for our message*
 - Paul never asked to be released from prison
 - Open a door = opportunity God gives them
 - What opportunity did Paul have while under house arrest?
 - He obviously shared with the soldiers the gospel

Acts 28:30 *For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.*

Philippians 4:22 *All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.*

- Proclaiming the gospel
 - Proclaiming it clearly
 - *Pray that I may proclaim it clearly*
 - The gospel message about repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ
 - Paul never tried to “hook” people on the gospel, but to tell it clearly what the gospel says

- Side note: There are 3 ways that we should not do in evangelism
 - “My life story” evangelism (people respond to testimony and not to the gospel)
 - “Your life would be better” evangelism (Jesus would solve all your problems and your life would be better)
 - “Hook ‘em” evangelism (trying to hook them by making a decision without all the information concerning the gospel)

Luke 14:25-33 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them He said: ²⁶“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? ²⁹For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, ³⁰saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³²If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be My disciple.”

- Proclaiming it boldly
 - as I should

1 Corinthians 9:16 I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

Acts 4:29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak Your word with great boldness.

II. Praying for Godly Results (2)

- Persistent and Unceasing Prayer
 - Wrestling with God
 - Devote yourselves to prayer
 - Idea here is to struggle continuously
 - Jacob wrestling with God—“I will not let go until You bless me.”

Note: We must ask ourselves these questions: Do we want to see people in church? Do we want God’s will in our life? Do we want to speak with boldness? Do we want others to know about Jesus?

Luke 18:1-8 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ²He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. ³And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’” ⁶And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? ⁸I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly.

Luke 11:5-10 Then He said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ⁶because a friend of mine on a

*journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' ⁷Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness [**persistence**] he will get up and give him as much as he needs. ⁹So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*

Note: This is on the heel of the Lord's Prayer that Jesus taught the disciples.

- Watchful prayer
 - Being specific in your prayer...not asking in generic way
- Thankful prayer

III. Doing the Works of Evangelist (5-6)

- Action speaks louder than words
 - *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders*
 - How you act will have a major impact on others
- Seasoned speech
 - *Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*
 - Salt—cleanses and prevents decay
 - Encouragement
 - Reinforcing positively—you seek the best of others
 - Sometimes confronting people with sin, but offering them grace as well

Philippians 4:8-9 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble [**honorable**], whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

Conclusion

Paul sums up here that as a new man in Christ Jesus, we want to tilt the world upside down with the gospel of peace being proclaimed to every corner of the world. It starts with prayer. Praying that God will open up opportunities for us to share the gospel. Praying that God will give us boldness. Praying that we want His will be done on earth as it has always been done in heaven.

Matthew 9:35-38 *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."*

Second, we must cultivate a heart for the lost, that we are compelled to preach the gospel. Just as Jesus has compassion for them, so must we.

Finally, we need to pray for opportunities to speak (not just go out to other countries) in our community.