



Week of March 4, 2019: Colossians 4:2-18

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And 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. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.” I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.”

Discussion Questions Set #1

In sermon, we learned that Paul envisioned the growth of the church along two specific dimensions – vertical growth (relational growth toward God and in depth in Christ) and horizontal growth (growth in the number of those enveloped by the church). Though Paul has spent the bulk of Colossians discussing vertical growth, our passage encourages horizontal growth.

1. Horizontal growth is also known as evangelism. In sermon we suggested that even if we struggle with the how of evangelism, we must never lose our grasp on the absolute necessity of it. Why do you think attempts at evangelism are core to following Jesus?
2. Discuss the following quote from Pastor John Piper:
“Christianity is evangelistic. It is persuasive and expansive and missionary. It is not coercive. It does not use the sword, manipulation, or brainwashing. But it does proclaim, and persuade and plead and pray. And where this is not believed and practiced, Christianity ceases to be Christianity.”
3. *In our passage Paul encourages us to pray for opportunities to act wisely towards those who are yet to follow Jesus and to pray for grace-filled conversations through which the Good News of Jesus can be clearly communicated. Why do you think he mentions these two specific requests? How might prayer for these two requests prime us for effective evangelism?*
4. What do you believe to be the top three barriers to effective evangelism in our world today? What cultural influences make evangelism difficult in 2019?

Discussion Questions Set #2

In sermon, we discussed that Paul strongly encourages the formation of a network of pray-ers to support ministry ventures, particularly in terms of attempts at evangelism. He uses three descriptors to help define what this network ought to look like – devoted, watchful and thankful.

1. Why is devoted or persistent prayer important for effective evangelism?
2. Watchful prayer involves the idea of relevant and circumstantially appropriate prayer. Why is this kind of prayer helpful in our evangelism?
3. Thankful prayer requires us to be anticipating that God in His sovereignty will answer our prayers. Why is it important that we offer confident prayers in line with the will of God for others?



Discussion Questions Set #3

“There is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all” (Colossians 3:11); there is no “male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

In sermon, we learned that Paul closes this letter by sending greetings to the Colossian church from a variety of individuals who are core to Paul’s ministry. The list is varied and includes men and women, those who are slaves and those who are free, Jews and Gentiles, luminaries and misfits, all presented on equal ground as vital members of the body of Christ.

1. Why do you think Paul closes his letter to the Colossians in this way?
2. Do you see yourself as a vital member of the body of Christ? Why or why not?
3. If Christ is supreme, if He is “in the church”, if He is in all and is all, then to whom is the growth in both depth and breadth of the church attributable? Why is this important for us to keep in mind?