

Colossians Chapter 4

2. Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

A. Continue earnestly in prayer

1. Continue earnestly- Gr. **proskratereo**- **pros-** towards; **kratereo**- to exercise ruling power

- a. This is where natural and supernatural living meets. The flesh can start but it cannot continue and remain constant. To continue we must continue to draw from the grace and life of God. Continuing in the Word results in knowing the Word and freedom. [**John 8:32**] Continuing in prayer will result in knowing God and being free. The Word and prayer go hand in hand. Both need to be continued. Continuing in the Word and then turning the Word into prayer will cause us to experience the victorious and reigning life.
- b. This Greek word means to keep exercising ruling power towards. This word reveals that we are to use our authority given to us in the name of Jesus Christ. We have authority with God to come boldly before His throne and make requests and receive what we ask. [**Heb. 4:16**] We must learn to pray with authority and stand upon the finished work of Jesus Christ and expect answers to our prayers on the grounds of the righteousness of Jesus Christ given to us. This word is a word of boldness and confidence. We have such confidence with God in that whatever we ask according to His will [Word], then He hears us, and since He hears us, we **KNOW** we have the petitions we have asked of God. [**1 John 5:14-15**]
- c. God will not take authority for us. We must take authority in prayer. We must boldly ask and receive. We must boldly command the enemy to cease his operations. We must boldly command the mountain to be removed.

B. in prayer- Gr. **proseuche**- *beseeking to the face*. This is a word of intimate conversation. It is face to face time with God. Oh, how this is lacking in the body of Christ today. Too often we suffice to watch a religious program or listen to a sermon on the radio or say a few words to God before we go to bed. What we need is continued face to face time with God! Herein lays the power of the Christian life!

C. be vigilant in it- Gr. **gregoreuo**- *to stay awake, to be watchful*- Jesus told His disciples to watch and pray. [**Matt. 26:41**] If we cease

praying we will fall asleep spiritually. A sleeping person looks like a dead person. You have to closely observe to see signs of life. A believer who has little fellowship with God in the Word and prayer is spiritually asleep. They look just like the world who are dead. Paul in Ephesians calls for these Christians to wake up and return to the Word and prayer and light would shine on them. [Eph. 5:14] If we are not in the Word and in prayer then we are in the dark and when it is dark, we tend to fall asleep! It is easy to be robbed from when you are sleeping!

D. with thanksgiving

1. Once again Paul tells us to be thankful. We simply do not understand how important it is to stay thankful. This is the ignition switch for our faith. You cannot be thankful and be doubting, unbelieving, negative, or complaining. Thanksgiving is grounded in faith, positiveness, and life! Being thankful is a key to the anointing of God flowing in our life. [Eph 5:18-19]

3. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be mentioned among you, as is fitting for saints;

A. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness

1. These are sins of carnal believers who are asleep! These are the sins of those who do not spend time meditating in the New Covenant scriptures and fail to take their place of authority in prayer and to come boldly before the throne of grace.
2. These sins are rooted in our old identity in Adam. If we will renew our mind by meditating on our new identity in Christ and using our tongue to constantly affirm our new identity, then we will see freedom from these awful and shameful sins.

B. let it not even be mentioned among you

1. The key to breaking free from these sins begins with our tongue! These sins should not even come to our lips. Our constant confession should be of our new identity in Christ and ceaseless thanksgiving to God. We are holy, pure, righteous, and loved. This should be constantly mentioned by us. It is then the Spirit will surely manifest such a life!

C. as is fitting for saints

1. Why should we not talk sin anymore? It is because we are saints-Gr. **hagioi- holy ones**. We are holy ones before God. Renewing our mind by constant affirmation of this will bring forth a holy life. If you are struggling with the sins mentioned in this verse you need

to start affirming on a regular basis that you are holy and free from sinful habits. When you are tempted it is important at that point to affirm out loud that you are holy and free from sin. If you happen to sin, confess it, and affirm again you are holy and free from sinful habits. If you will continue in this, you will experience freedom in short order!

4. **meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the Word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,**

A. **meanwhile praying also for us-** Paul was a mighty man of God, but he regularly asked for prayer. No Christian is an island to himself. We are part of a body and we need the prayers of other saints as we pray for them.

B. **that God would open a door for the Word**

1. Too often we ask that God open a door for US. The kingdom of God is not about us primarily! The gift given to us to minister is not for us, but for others and ultimately for God's glory.

2. God desires to open a door for the Word or revelation that is within us. That is why it is so important that we have the Word or revelation in us. God is not so much interested in opening a door for us as for the Word in us. Satan's attack on us is not really upon us but the Word in us! Paul was ready for any and every opportunity that God would open for the Word and revelation within him. Paul said that **AS MUCH AS WAS WITHIN HIM**, he was ready to preach the gospel. [**Romans 1:15**] We need to have something within us before a door will be opened to us.

C. **for which I am also in chains**

1. Often doors opened to us come with challenges and oppositions. Often effectual open doors come with adversaries! [**1 Cor. 16:9**] We must count the cost and be willing to walk through the doors of God no matter what it brings. If we walk through God's open doors in faith, then no weapon formed against us will prosper! [**Isaiah 54:17**]

5. **Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time.**

A. **Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside**

1. Those that are outside refers to unbelievers in the world.

2. Wisdom is the proper application of knowledge. Knowledge knows that a tomato is a fruit, but wisdom knows not to put it in a fruit

salad! We need to ask God for wisdom in dealing with those who are unsaved. We can put off unbelievers by foolish actions and words. The right action and word will win them over! The Holy Spirit will give you the right action and word for the right moment. Pray for divine appointments with unbelievers.

B. redeeming the time

1. **redeeming-** Gr. **exagarazo-** *to purchase out of the market-* This word means to purchase something at the market and make the most profit from it. In other words, we are to buy low and sell high! So many people, even Christians, take time so lightly. They waste so much time not knowing the value of it. A wise Christian will buy up all the time they can get in order to use it for the kingdom of God and get the most profit from it! For example, how much time do we waste while driving when we can be praying for others and the lost that are driving around among us! Also, daily small talks with unbelievers can be turned towards the things of God if we are sensitive to the Spirit. Buy up every second you can and make the most of it for the kingdom of God.

6. Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

A. Let your speech always be with [lit. in] grace

1. When our heart has been steeped in the grace of God, our speech will always be in grace towards others. Those who are steeped in legalism and the Law their speech is harsh, condemning, and critical.

B. seasoned with salt

1. Salt keeps food wholesome and pure. Salt provides taste. Salt makes one thirsty.
 - a. A Christian who is steeped in grace will have purity in their words. Paul in Ephesians tells us that we should not allow any unwholesome word to proceed from our mouth, but only words that minister grace to the hearer. [**Ephesians 4:29**]
 - b. A Christian who is steeped in grace will have speech that is easily received. Their words will be flavorful and appealing to listen to.
 - c. A Christian who is steeped in grace will speak things that will make an unbeliever thirsty for God. Relating to an unbeliever that God is not holding their sins against them, that He loves them, and that He has provided salvation as a gift will cause a

thirst in them. Those who are steeped in the Law will talk of judgment and how God is against the sinner. This will alienate unbelievers.

C. that you may know how you ought to answer each one

1. If you steep your heart in the grace of God, then the Spirit will enable you and give you grace to answer every man that questions you! The Spirit is the Spirit of grace. When you set yourself to understand grace and minister grace, then the Spirit will grant you grace to minister it. You will be amazed at the wisdom the Spirit will give you in the time you need it when you seek to minister his love and grace to others. It will be so good; you will KNOW it could not have come from you! When that happens, God gets all the glory! That is the purpose of grace to begin with - that God is glorified!

7. I am sending Tychicus to you. He is our dear brother, trustworthy deacon, and partner in the Lord's work. He will tell you everything that is happening to me.

A. I am sending Tychicus to you

1. Tychicus was used by Paul to be a reporter and messenger. [Ephesians 6:21-22] Paul trusted this faithful Christian man to accurately report his affairs and circumstances.
2. Not everyone can be trusted to repeat a matter exactly. Too often a message will get altered by those that repeat it. Tychicus could be trusted in this matter.
3. God desires that we all be like Tychicus and report His Word exactly and not to add to it or take away from it.

B. He is our dear brother

1. In exercising Christian authority over others, we must first and primarily keep in mind that those under us are our brother and are beloved of God. They are family. When a church loses the aspect of family and just becomes a business that church is in trouble. The Spirit will cease to move.
2. Service in the body of Christ must start with being born again into the family of God.

C. trustworthy deacon

1. This is the next requirement for Christian service. A steward must be found faithful. [1 Cor. 4:2] Leadership is born out of faithful service. Bishops and elders are to be selected from deacons. Deacons were to minister to the menial tasks of the church. If one

is faithful in the small, unseen, and menial tasks they will be faithful in the much and in influential positions. [**Luke 16:10**]

D. and partner in the Lord's work

1. Those in authority should keep in mind that those under them are partners in the Lord's work.
2. No matter how menial the task you are a partner in the Lord's work and will receive equal reward based upon faithfulness and not function.

E. He will tell you everything that is happening to me.

1. Again, Paul trusted Tychicus to faithfully and accurately to report the truth about Paul. Can we be so trusted?

8. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts,

- A. This shows the immense character of Paul. He was sitting in prison in Rome awaiting a trial that might end in his being be-headed and he is concerned about others who are worrying about him! He sent Tychicus to relieve their concerns and to give them a good report about him.
- B. In the midst of our trials and tribulations one of the keys to experiencing joy and victory during them is to minister to those who are having difficulties as well. Too often we become so self-focused in a trial and forget everyone but ourselves. In sowing help, prayer, and encouragement we shall reap it abundantly!

9. with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here.

- A. Onesimus was a runaway slave. Paul would write to Philemon concerning him because he ran away from him but got saved in Rome under Paul's preaching. This is a testimony of the life changing gospel and power of Jesus Christ. Onesimus used to be a thief and runaway, but now in Christ he has become a **faithful and beloved brother**.
- B. Philemon was a citizen of Colosse, and Onesimus had run away from Philemon's home.
- C. Paul sent Onesimus back to Colosse to face his old life. He trusted him to go back home and not run away again. Jesus will often lead us to face our past and deal with any wrongs we have done. Jesus gives us grace to do this.

D. **Onesimus** means *profitable*. When he was unsaved, he was unprofitable, but once he turned his life over to God, he became profitable. He had left Philemon's house carrying away stolen merchandise. He returned home carrying the treasure of one of the books of sacred scripture in his hand, the book of Philemon!

10. **Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him),**

A. **Aristarchus was imprisoned with Paul.** Others were assisting Paul from outside of prison.

B. **Mark the cousin of Barnabas**

1. This was the young man that had deserted Paul during his first missionary journey. Paul refused to take him on his second journey. Now, Mark had been restored to Paul's trust and was helping him. We often blow it in the Christian life and fail, but God does not throw us away. God did not throw Mark away, and Mark eventually became a big help to Paul. At the end of his life Paul asked specifically for Mark to come because he was profitable for the ministry. [2 Tim 4:11]

C. The church is littered with those with checkered pasts, both before they were saved [like Onesimus] and after they were saved [like Mark]. God is in the redemption business. If you have blown it, turn your heart and life over to God and He will turn them around and use you for His glory. He is not done with you! He will take your checkered past and make a glorious quilt out of it!

11. **and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.**

A. Paul did not have a lot of people helping him in Rome, but those who did were a great source of blessing and comfort to him.

B. You do not need a ton of friends, just a few faithful and trusted ones, who will be honest and help you when you need it. However, if all forsake you, you are still not alone because Jesus Christ stands with you! [2 Tim. 4:16-17]

12. **Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.**

A. Epaphras came from the city of Colosse and was probably at one time the pastor of the church. He labored in doctrine and in prayer. These are the two main functions of a pastor. He had taught them the whole counsel of God so they could stand in all the will of God. [Col. 1:7] Now that he was with Paul, he prayed that the Colossian saints would stand upon what he had taught them.

13. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

A. Oh, that every church had a pastor who had great zeal for the people they feed and lead. This zeal is found in close communion with the Heavenly Shepherd who has great zeal for all His sheep!

14. Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

A. Here in this verse Paul mentions **one that will prove faithful to Paul and one that does not.** When Paul is about to be tried before Nero and to be executed Luke is the only one with Paul, but Demas deserts him. [2 Tim. 4:10-11] As a Christian leader you will have some that will prove faithful to you and those who do not. If you get your eyes on those who are unfaithful you will be offended and hurt. Keep your eyes on the Lord, He will always prove faithful to you!

15. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house.

A. **Greet-** the Greek word means *to embrace*. We are to embrace and receive all Christians.

16. Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea

A. The letter of Colossians was a circular letter to be read not only by the Colossians but passed on to the Laodiceans and then to other churches.

B. We do not possess the letter written to the Laodiceans. That letter was not included in Holy Scripture and was not at the same level as the letter of Colossians. It is good to read other religious writings and books, just realize they are not the level of scripture. If you will major on the Scriptures, you will do well.

17. And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

- A. Paul was concerned about Archippus. He told him to take heed to the ministry which he had received of the Lord to fulfill it.
- B. We all have received a ministry from the Lord to fulfill. Many Christians are not taking heed to it or fulfilling it. So many ministers are quitting the ministry today. They have allowed discouragement, disappointment, hurt, and lethargy stop them from fulfilling the ministry the Lord gave them.
- C. The Lord is telling us today to take heed to the ministry we have received of the Lord and to fulfill it. Time is short and we want Him to say to us, "Well done my good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord."

18. This salutation by my own hand--Paul. Remember my chains. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

- A. Paul had many things come against him to try to make him give up on his ministry and not fulfill it. Aren't you glad he did not allow any to stop him!
- B. Paul refused to allow anything stop him from fulfilling the ministry given to him by the Lord Jesus. [Acts. 20:24] He had a divine tenacity we all need.
- C. Satan many times came against Paul to stop his work. Paul signed this letter with his own hand, and then told them to remember his chains. In the ancient prisons they wore chains on their hands. God used the very hand the enemy had placed chains upon to write Holy Scripture. Satan had thought he stopped the ministry of Paul by chaining his hands, but that chained hand given to God was used to pen Scripture that has blessed untold multitudes even today.
- D. Paul once was on a ship to Rome and it broke up in a storm and he was spared and swam ashore onto an island just to have a snake bite his hand. That viper bit his hand, but because of Paul's faith in God, He turned it around and Paul placed that snake bit hand on Publius' father and all the sick of the island and saw them healed. Satan tried to stop Paul by a snake bite on the hand, but God used Paul's snake-bit hand for His glory. Paul refused the venom of the snake and trusted God to use what was meant for his harm for God's glory. The serpent today seeks to bite our hand to stop what we are doing for the Lord and to pump his venom into us. If we let him, we will be filled with bitterness, anger, resentfulness, unforgiveness, and unbelief. We

need to shake off the serpent and refuse his venom and give our snake bit hand to God for His use! Paul finished his ministry, how about you!

- E. We can finish our ministry when we appropriate the grace of God. It is always with us; we just need to receive it by faith! The grace of God will empower us to live a God-honoring life and fulfill our ministry. Amen!