

Colossians Pt. 7

Col 4:2-6

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Opening Question: *What motivates you to take action when you don't want to?*

Today's Passage:

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3** 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. **4** Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. **5** Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. **6** Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

A grammar lesson:

This passage today is full of imperatives!

Like tense, verbs can have "mood." Basically, this means using a verb to make a command like "sit up" and "pay attention." This is useful for **commands** and **instructions**. In Spanish, it's called the *imperativo* and is formed by adding an ending to the verb, like *siéntese* which means sit down.

Imperative examples **so far** in Colossians:

Seek
Set
Put
Let

Submit
Love
Obey
Provide

Imperatives this week:

Devote
Pray for
Pray that

Be
Make
Let

Let's talk about these one at a time.

Devote

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

This reminds me of the apostles Peter's letter in I Peter:

I Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

I Peter 4:7 The end of all things is near; therefore **be alert and of sober mind** so that you may pray.

When Paul says to be alert when we pray It's being alert SO that we can pray: the opposite is being drunk or not sober-minded or preoccupied (involved in other things). We need to do this because the enemy doesn't want us to be connected, spirit-filled, and living out the gospel. This also possibly refers the end times: we don't know when this is and we need to be alert.

We also need to be thankful:

Col 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Col 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is what we are supposed to be as Christians: overflowing and overwhelming each other with gratitude! We have a lot to be thankful for. Mark gave us an assignment to make a list of what we're thankful for and to start prayer with thankfulness.

Pray for

Col 4:3 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.

Paul wants prayer for open doors. This is a metaphor that reminded me of the time in Acts when Paul told people about Jesus and then went back to Antioch:

Acts 14:27 On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

Paul asks for the Colossians to have God open a door for a message: a miraculous intervention to bring the message around the Roman empire so people could become believers.

He wants the door opened to proclaim the mystery of Christ: what does this mean? According to Paul, this found in

Col 1:25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— **26** the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. **27** To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And

Col 2:2 My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3** in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The mystery is Christ! That Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish messiah, the anointed one, the king of all creation, the universe, everyone, and that salvation and eternal life has all been offered through Christ. This is the fullness of God's word NOW! Up to now, it's' been confusing and even Jesus's closest followers didn't understand it until after Jesus died and rose from the dead. Paul had to be confronted on the road to Damascus to know this was the true message. Paul wants prayer that this mystery would have doors open.

Pray that

Col 4:4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Paul seems anxious that this message be proclaimed clearly.

II Col 10:10 For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing."

In person, people have an unimpressed attitude toward him.

II Co 11:6 I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

Paul spoke to a lot of people but he was untrained. Being a speaker was like a job (they put marble in their mouths to learn to enunciate, hand motions, amplification, learning how to use rocks etc. to amplify them). Paul didn't seem to know these things: he wasn't an amazing speaker. He asks for prayer for him to have the word go out with power and be believable.

Be

Col 4:5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Paul wants us to be wise: but this is probably not unrelated to prayer. I mentioned earlier that Ephesians and Colossians are related:

Make

Eph 5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, **16 making** the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. **18** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit

Doesn't this sound familiar? This gives us clues to being wise: It's being alert, not foolish, knowing what God's will is, understanding that people around us are evil. We need to know how to live in this culture to make the most of every opportunity: we know the cracks in people's armor to take advantage of them to speak in a way that people can understand. Being drunk or not sober limits awareness of these opportunities.

Let

Col 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

This is compared to Ephesians:

Eph 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

How should we talk? Paul uses the metaphor of salt. We have many spices but this was not previously the case. People traveled and fought wars to get spices like salt! If you had a steady supply of salt (and nothing else), you did well. It makes things taste good but it also preserves them. Today, we have several refrigerators, but in the ancient world, this was not so. Even something like ice was considered a luxury. If you rubbed something like meat with salt, it would preserve it and keep it for the future. It preserves life and is purifying. They used to rub babies with salt when they were born to purify them. When Paul says to season the conversation with salt, it means to make it helpful and beneficial. If you speak this way, people will want to hear you speak about more things, like Jesus. This is making the most of every opportunity!

I Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

How is that people are asking you to give a reason? It presumes they want to hear from you. If your speech is full of grace and good gifs, people may want to ask you and know more about you. Why is your speech so beneficial and helpful?

All of this must be covered in prayer!

To review:

Devote to prayer with thanksgiving and watchfulness

Pray for Paul or other people, each of us, as we go to talk about the gospel, and spread the message of Jesus.

Pray that: we would speak clearly: be good orators, boldness and persuasiveness despite our lack of training.

Be Wise

Make the most of every opportunity

Let your conversations be gracious and seasoned with salt.

Let's go back to my first question:

What gets me to do this list above? I'm assuming our natural selves don't want to do these things but just default to look for our own pleasures and gains. So why would we follow any of these in the list above?

The usual motivators:

Strong emotions

I personally did not like pep rallies, cheerleaders, etc. When I became a teacher and had to go to these things. I would have to get psyched up to do this: We play silly exciting games and invent things to pep us up!

Negative emotions

Fear and anxiety are motivators. Procrastinate something until the emotion like anger wins: You want to beat the other team badly enough to do something. How about guilt and shame? Can I be motivated by trying to avoid these? Is this healthy?

Jesus PLUS:

Where is Jesus in these motivations?

- We are motivated out of WHO Jesus is: the Christ, the supreme over all

- We are motivated out of WHAT he has done: Died on the cross, rose from the dead, saved us. These are extremely motivating. It's hard to spread out the study of this book over several weeks: it would be more motivating and useful to read it all at once. In fact, we are here right now to get motivated: we show up at church for motivation.

Open questions:

What usually motivates you to take action?

What would be a healthy motivation?