**Prayer That Brings Access to the Gospel**

Colossians 4:2-4

**Introduction**

Those who love the name of our Savior and are concerned about the progress of the gospel devote themselves to prayer. “Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.” (Oswald Chambers) The book Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation by Jason Mandryk gives this insight: *Prayer is action. It is an act of faith, an act of obedience, an act of acknowledging our dependence, an act of warfare, an act of sacrifice, an act of labor, and an act of love.* Prayer that recognizes who God is and has a soul-winning purpose is prayer that is answered. (Acts 4:24-31) It is no wonder, therefore, that Paul exhorted the believers in Colossae to devote themselves to prayer.

1. **Paul applied the lordship of Christ to their relationship with unbelievers.** 
   1. Colossians is a Christ-centered letter.
      1. The false teachers troubled the members of the church by emphasizing spiritual growth apart from Christ.
      2. Christ is the only sufficient source for spiritual growth.
      3. Therefore, Paul emphasized Christ.
   2. Christ is supreme.
      1. Since He is supreme, He is sufficient.
      2. Since He is sufficient, believers are complete in Christ.
      3. Since He is supreme, believers should be submitted to His Lordship in their lives.
2. The fact that Christ is Lord ought to show up in the church and relationships.
3. It ought to be evident in the home. Your marriage is not an end in itself; it is to bring glory to God. Your children should be discipled in the home.
4. That Christ is Lord should show up in your workplace. You should work in a godly fashion, and remember that you come into contact with people for Christ’s sake.
   1. Paul now shifted the focus of application to the effectiveness of their evangelism toward those who are outside the faith.
      1. The lordship of Christ should affect our relationship with unbelievers.
      2. The church cannot survive if it is only inward focused.
      3. We must be concerned about those who have not received the gospel.
   2. If we are concerned about those who have not received the gospel, we should pray. (Romans 15:30-32; Ephesians 6:19-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2)
5. Some have not received the gospel because they have rejected the gospel, but some have not received the gospel because they have do not have access to the gospel.
6. “What can a group of ordinary, believing people do to make sure that outsiders hear of Christ? Speaking to God about people (v. 2-4); speaking to people about God (v. 5-6).” (Stott)
7. **Paul urged the believers of Colossae to devote themselves to prayer.**
8. “Paul highlights the need not only to pray, but to make prayer a standard feature of the Christian life.” (Moo)
9. Paul commands the church to continue in prayer.
   * 1. The verb “continue” is the imperative present active and is in the second person plural.
     2. It means to adhere to; to stay by; to hold fast to; to cling to; to be loyal; to attach oneself to; to be devoted to; to associate closely with.
     3. It means to serve personally or wait on; to be continually ready or to stand ready; to occupy oneself diligently with; to pay persistent attention to; to persist at; to persevere in; to spend much time in; to continually be in; to busy oneself with or be busily engaged in.
     4. It is “to continue to do something with intense effort…despite difficulty.”
     5. It implies persistence and determination in prayer. (Acts 1:14, 2:42, 6:4; Romans 12:12)
10. The manner of one who has devoted himself or herself to prayer is alertness.
    * 1. To watch is to be awake or keep awake because of the need to be continually alert; to be vigilant, watchful, and in continuous readiness and alertness; to be on the alert.
      2. To watch, according to Thayer, means “to take heed, lest through remissness and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one; to employ the most punctilious or meticulous care in a thing.” (Mark 14:38, I Corinthians 16:13, I Peter 5:8)
11. The manner of one who has devoted himself or herself to prayer is thankfulness.
12. **Central Idea: Paul urged the believers of Colossae to devote themselves to prayer so that others might have access to the gospel.** 
    1. This makes them partners in taking the gospel to every person.
    2. Paul urged the believers to pray that God would open a door for the Word. (v. 3-4)
       1. *Withal* means “at the same time.”
       2. They were to pray that God would open to them a door; to make possible some opportunity; to make it possible.
       3. A door of utterance refers to a message of divine revelation.
    3. He urged them to pray that God would give him the opportunity to preach the message.
       1. *To speak* is to sound out or announce.
       2. Sounding out the message of the gospel brought Paul into Roman custody; he was “in bonds.”
       3. He prays for more open doors, not for his own liberty.
    4. He urged them to pray that God would help him to make it clear when he had the opportunity.
       1. He wanted to make the gospel message manifest; to make it known.
       2. He felt obligated to make the message clear.
13. **We should devote ourselves to prayer so that others might have access to the gospel.**
    1. We should be devoted to prayer because only God can open doors for the gospel.
       1. It is not our prayers that open doors for the gospel. It is God who opens doors for the gospel.
       2. However, God has directed us to pray for laborers in the harvest. (Matthew 9:38)
    2. We need to be devoted to prayer so that others might have access to the gospel.
       1. Devote yourself to prayer as an individual.
       2. Devote yourself to prayer as a family.
          1. Use missionary prayer cards at meal times to pray for God’s servants.
          2. Use your church directory to systematically pray for fellow members.
       3. Devote yourself to prayer as a church.
          1. Pray for your teacher.
          2. Pray for your pastor.
          3. Pray for our missionaries.
          4. Pray for missions trips.

**Conclusion**

Someone has wisely stated, “There is much we can do after we have prayed, but nothing we can do until we have prayed.” Make prayer the basis of your approach to life. Pray for boldness in the proclamation of the gospel.