**A Life That Brings Access to the Gospel**

Colossians 4:5-6

**Introduction**

We should be concerned about the access that the people of the world have to the gospel. There are over 6,900 unreached people groups that have little to no access to the gospel; they are outside the gospel; they are “without.” Access refers to the opportunity to experience or make use of something; a means of approach or entry; permission or liberty to approach or communicate with a person. These people without access to the gospel will most likely live and die without knowing Jesus.

There are many barriers restricting access to the gospel: location, language, ethnic and cultural differences, governmental regulations, lack of resources (over 2,000 languages have no portion of the Bible), and lack of concerned Christians. However, the greatest barriers to the gospel are not in the form of language and cultural differences—languages can be learned and cultural differences can be embraced. Ironically, the greatest barriers to the gospel are those who already have the gospel. Those who have the gospel are too busy to take the gospel. Those who have the gospel value other things more than the gospel. Those who have the gospel are stumbling blocks by living in a way that dishonors the gospel. Those who have the gospel are rude and unfriendly with the gospel. Those who have the gospel are not coming into contact with those who do not have the gospel. Those who have the gospel are not ready to share the gospel.

It’s time for God’s people to get serious about their responsibility. Taking the gospel has not been relegated by God to the hands of “professionals,” neither is it a program we do twice a week or once a month. Taking the gospel must be a way of life of all recipients of the gospel. It must be our passion to fulfill the Great Commission given to us within our lifetime. We don’t come to church services just to receive God’s Word; that would be a selfish and unbiblical form of Christian living. We come to take what we have heard and reproduce it in the world in which we live. We who are on the “inside” have been called to go to those who are on the outside. This is how Jesus trained His followers to think. This mindset will lead you beyond just praying that others might have access to the gospel; it will lead you to take the gospel to them. Does someone have access to the gospel when they come into contact with you? Does your life give them access to the gospel? How can your life as a believer give an unbeliever access to the gospel? How can your life as an insider give access to an outsider?

1. **A Christian who provides access to the gospel is one who lives above reproach. (v.5a)**
   1. The only way to avoid bringing a reproach on the name of Christ is to walk in wisdom.
   2. Wisdom has become a way of life to them.
      1. The term “walk” refers to how one conducts their daily life; their behavior.
      2. Wisdom means the ability to use knowledge for correct behavior; insight; understanding; to be prudent; to know the next right response (Berg). The term is used 51 times in the New Testament and 5 times in Colossians.
      3. They were to live in a way that applied what they knew from their relationship with God.
      4. Wisdom is guiding their private world and their public life. What if a private detective was assigned to follow you? Would he find you living everywhere the way you profess to?
   3. The way you live either provides reasons to receive the gospel or reject it. The way you are living is either wise or unwise. Thus, it is either leading others to Christ or away from Christ.
      1. Is the way you are relating to the opposite sex giving them reason to receive the gospel?
      2. Is the way you are using modern technology giving others reason to receive the gospel?
      3. Is the way you are treating people giving them reason to receive the gospel?
      4. Is your integrity giving someone reason to receive the gospel?
      5. Are you weighing your rights vs. your responsibilities? More is expected out of leaders.
      6. Key question: Are you blameless?
      7. Is the way you are living making it easy or difficult to share the gospel?
2. **A Christian who provides access to the gospel is one who views every interaction as an opportunity for the gospel. (v. 5b)**
   1. To redeem means to buy all that can be bought; to ransom; to rescue from loss; not allowing a suitable moment to pass by unheeded; making the most of an opportunity; making the best use of; taking advantage of.
3. You have to learn to know a good buy when you see one; when you find a bargain, you buy up all that can be bought. Coupons have an expiration date; you have to redeem them before the time runs out.
4. The same is true with the opportunities God gives us. We need to buy them up before they are gone!
5. You are not in a place to buy up what is of real value if you have been wasting your money on things that don’t really matter. In the same way, stop wasting your life on opportunities that don’t matter.
   1. Time is not merely a succession of moments, but that which time gives opportunity to do; a seasonable time. (Galatians 6:10, John 4:35)
6. The best way to have the time of your life is to buy up all your time for Christ. Buy up everything that is available to you.
7. Monopolize your time for Christ. Who has a monopoly on your relationships? You are using the time for someone. Is it Christ?
8. What opportunities are given to you? What opportunities do you have with lost family members, at school, at work, when you go out to eat, when you stop at a convenience store? How much have you bought of these opportunities?
9. You have a short life. It would be the wise to buy up every opportunity for Christ!
   1. “There is never a time …when our responsibilities to the outsider can be out of mind.” (Stott)
10. **A Christian who provides access to the gospel is one whose speech is godly. (v. 6)**
    1. The way they live provides an opportunity to speak to others about God.
    2. Their speech gives reason to receive the gospel rather than reject it.
    3. Their speech is with grace—a quality that adds delight or pleasure; attractiveness; charm; a favorable attitude.
       1. We need to be right in a right way.
       2. Your zeal needs tact. We must be bold, yet tactful.
       3. Harshness and being argumentative may win arguments, but you may lose people.
       4. Love and respect should guide our interactions. Jesus was gentle in his speech.
       5. Be warm and friendly. Talk to people. Look up from your cell phone to notice people.
       6. Christians should be extra careful about their speech. They should not complain, gossip, or be crude.
       7. Speak in a way that makes the gospel attractive.
    4. Their speech is seasoned with salt—it is “tasty,” profitable, beneficial and wisely spoken. “Those who are the salt of the earth might be expected to have some savor about their language.” (O’Brien).
    5. Their speech provides a Christ-honoring answer.
       1. The way you talk should provide answers, not stir up more questions.
       2. You speech should point to dependence on Christ.

**Conclusion**

You may be the only access some have to the gospel. Those who know God and His Word—the “insiders”—have something to go by. The “outsiders” do not. The only Bible they see is in the life of the insiders. They either take steps toward the gospel or away from it based on the actions of the insiders. Note that the actions of one insider are a reflection on all the other insiders. What you talk about, the words you use, where you go, what you post on Facebook, what music you listen to, how you dress, the relationships you have, whether you pay your bills, keep your promises, show honesty and integrity, skip church, read your Bible, or put Christ first in your life will cause others to either step toward the gospel or away from it. We should be insiders who are concerned about outsiders; we should face outward rather than inward.

Your life is providing access to something and someone. Does someone have access to the gospel when they come into contact with you? Make the most of every relationship by living in a way that gives them good reason to receive the gospel. Following God will lead you to others. Following God will lead others to God. Make the most of every opportunity by leading them to Christ through your speech. “When character, conduct, and conversation are all working together, it makes for a powerful witness” (Wiersbe).