

Reteaching/Study Guide from Lakeside's Online Worship
Sunday, November 8, 2020, Sermon by Dr. Greg Corbin, Senior Pastor
"A Word about Our Words" –Colossians 4:2-6

"²Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. ³At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, ⁴so that I may make it known as I should. ⁵Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. ⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person."

Colossians 4:2-6 Christian Standard Bible

We go through thousands of words each day, using them to talk about everything from college football and politics to the latest fashion trends and what we hope to have for dinner. On average, men speak approximately 10,000 words per day and women about 30,000. In both cases, that's a lot of vocabulary volume. Among other things, we tend to use our daily verbal barrage to converse about what excites us and what concerns us most. For the first three chapters of Colossians, Paul spoke with excitement and concern about the greatness of our Lord and about the complete and remarkable salvation He has made available to all who will respond. Now in chapter four as he prepared to conclude his letter, **Paul challenged the believers at Colossae to use their daily allotment of words with energized purpose in two ways toward the advancement of the Gospel.** In both cases, Paul presumed that his readers would be just as excited about Jesus and concerned about the lost as he was, resulting in heart conversations that are just as natural for us as talking about college football and dinner menus but with the attention deserving of matters of ultimate importance.

First, we must talk to the Lord about People (Colossians 4:2-4). We must devote ourselves to prayer, making conversation with God more than a passing thing. Being devoted to prayer means that we **Pray Persistently (v. 2)**, knowing that God hears our prayers. Consistent time in prayer is crucial to our own spiritual growth, but it is also an activity that God has ordained to work through for the accomplishment of His purpose: "the prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect" (James 5:16). Prayer indicates the posture of our hearts toward God and confesses our dependence upon Him. We must also **Pray Alertly (v. 2)**. In the same way that Jesus called His disciples to remain alert and pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, He now calls on us to remain focused on His purpose as He continues to work out the purpose of His Kingdom, as He continues to draw others to salvation. Being alert means that we are focused and attentive to the needs around us so that we can lift those needs up to our Lord, most importantly that we are aware of the lostness of the people in our communities and in our world so that we can pray for their salvation. Being alert also means that we are fully engaged in our prayer time, not sleeping or simply going through the motions. Devotion to prayer means that we **Pray Thankfully (v. 2)**, remembering to thank God for the new life He has given to us and for the mission He has entrusted to us. Thankfulness reminds of the awesomeness of God and moves us to praise Him and declare His greatness and faithfulness. Foundationally, we must **Pray Evangelistically (vss. 3-4)**, asking God to give us opportunities to share the Gospel and to tell people about what He has done for us and what He means to us. In essence, we must talk to God about people. This part of our conversation needs to be both general and defined, general in asking that God open the hearts of the people in our communities to hear and respond to His message and defined in praying for specific people around us who are lost. While we lift up our own needs when we pray and the physical, daily needs of other people, we must devote ourselves to praying evangelistically for people's greatest need, forgiveness of their sins and a right relationship with God.

Second, we must talk to People about the Lord (Colossians 4:5-6). Paul challenged his readers to make the most of every opportunity to connect positively with “outsiders,” with people who have yet to respond to the Gospel. This begins as we genuinely care for the people we encounter, conduct ourselves with Christlike character, and intentionally and honestly build relationships that can lead to Gospel conversations. In doing so, we use our time and opportunities wisely to glorify God and bring his saving message to bear on the lives around us. Central to this “wise” behavior is using our speech in a gracious way. Our role is not to condemn and argue or to come across angry and fearful. Our responsibility is always to flavor our conversations with the zest of the Gospel. We must treat people well, but we must also speak. We must regularly talk to people about Jesus: “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and teaching” (1 Timothy 4:2). We cannot be silent!

To reflect further about the importance of prayer and talking to people about God read Mark 14:32-42, Acts 4:23-31, Philippians 1:12-20, 1 Peter 3:8-16, 1 John 1:1-4, and Psalm 92.

Questions/Actions for Reflection/Discussion/Application

How much time do you spend praying evangelistically?

How can you make talking to people about God a more vibrant and regular part of your conversations?

Who are you building a relationship with, praying for, and sharing the Gospel with?

You're in My Prayers,

Stacey