



“The Believers Talk and Walk”

Colossians 4:2-18

TO: **LEGISLATORS, STAFF & LOBBYISTS**

FROM: **DAN MADISON**

DATE: **Week of May 25th, 2009**

This will be our last Bible Study for this legislative session and I, for one, will miss our Tuesday and Wednesday meetings as we gathered together to study the Word of God. As you return to somewhat of a normal schedule please know that I will be praying for you on a regular basis. For those of you who are interested, we will be starting our “monthly” satellite Bible Studies in September. We will have a study in Reno, Carson City, and Las Vegas. Please call or e-mail me for specifics. It is our prayer that many of you will be able to join us. The satellite studies are open to legislators, spouses, colleagues, staff, and anyone that you deem would be interested.

INTRODUCTION

When our Lord told the Pharisees that “the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart” (Matthew 12:34), He gave an important spiritual principle: **Speech will reflect the kind of person one is.** Because the tongue can speak so easily and is difficult to control, a person’s speech becomes the truest indicator of his/her spiritual state (Matt. 12:37).¹ In the section of Scripture before us, Paul will focus on the “talk & walk” of the “New Man in Christ.” This seems appropriate as these are areas that a watching world will look at carefully when evaluating Christianity. Next to thoughts, attitudes and motives, it is also the most difficult area for believers to control.²

In this brief section, Paul points out three important ministries of speech.

I. THE SPEECH OF PRAYER (COLOSSIANS 4:2)

***Colossians 4:2** Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;*

Prayer and worship are perhaps the highest uses of the gift of speech. Prayer is the very breath of spirituality. Its absence indicates deadness and coldness.

Query: Paul lists three elements of prayer found in verse 2.

What are they and how might they be achieved?

“Watch and pray,” Jesus told His companions in Gethsemane. They promptly fell asleep. In fact, they kept on falling asleep. They neither watched nor prayed. In this verse we see three elements of effective prayer life.

- **Be Faithful**—“continue earnestly...” Be steadfast in your prayer life; be devoted; don’t quit.
- **Be Watchful**—“vigilant.” We must be alert & awake as we pray. Real praying demands spiritual energy and alertness.
- **Be Thankful.** Thanksgiving is an important ingredient in successful praying (Phil. 4:6). If all we do is ask, and never thank God for His gifts we are selfish.³

II. THE SPEECH OF PROCLAMINATION (COLOSSIANS 4:3-4)

***Colossians 4:3** 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,⁴ that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

Paul turns from prayer, which is speech directed to God, to the proclamation of the gospel, which is speech directed to people. Having exhorted the Colossians to pray, he gives them two specific “Prayer requests.”

Query: What specific prayer requests do you see?

Notice that Paul did not ask that the prison doors be opened for him, but that the doors of ministry might be opened. It was more important that he be a faithful minister than a free man! Notice the second specific request. Paul asked for clarity in his speech: “*that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.*” (ESV).

Paul wanted people to pray that doors would be opened, that he would speak clearly, and that he would speak as God wanted him to speak. That should be our prayer also.

All in the Capitol Community are Welcome to be a Part of Regular Bible Study and Fellowship

LEGISLATORS BIBLE STUDY: WEDNESDAY 12:30 P.M. ROOM 3143

STAFF & LOBBYISTS BIBLE STUDY: TUESDAY 12:00 NOON. ROOM 3161

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III. THE SPEECH OF PERFORMANCE (COLOSSIANS 4:5-6)

^{NKJ} **Colossians 4:5** *Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*

Unsaved people **watch and listen**. What **believers are and do gives credibility to what we say!** So often our behavior as Christians does not commend the gospel to the unsaved. Our “life and lip” should be a consistent, faithful witness.

Query: What are some ways in which Christians should walk more wisely toward outsiders? Once lost, is it possible to “redeem” our witness?

If those who say they are believers live as fools, **“outsiders”** or unbelievers (cf 1 Cor 5:12-13; 1 Thess. 4:12; 1 Tim. 3:7}, will denigrate the faith and shun the gospel. Only if believers live wisely will the watching world see the power of God at work in them.

GUARD YOUR TESTIMONY—WITNESS

1. Our walk must be consistent. “Walk” is *peripateō* “to order one’s behavior.” Views the Christian life in its totality.
2. Believers are to conduct themselves with wisdom. Spiritual wisdom begins with a genuine fear of God and ends with the exaltation of Christ. (2:3; Proverbs 1:7). Genuine wisdom is seen in a godly life under the control of the Holy Spirit.
3. Christians are to reach the unsaved that are outside of Christ and the true church. The unsaved are hopeless and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). If they remain unsaved, they will be outside the habitation of the redeemed, for all eternity (Rev 22:15).⁴

REDEEM THE TIME

We are stewards of our time. Time is a nonrenewable resource. It slips past us at an alarming rate. Once it’s gone, it’s gone. It can never be recalled. **We invest each fleeting moment with something even if it is only idleness.** Solomon had a well-developed appreciation of the value of time (Eccl. 3:1-8) even though it seems that he didn’t practice what he preached.⁵

BE PUNGENT IN CONVERSATION

Paul urges us to add two things to our conversation—and he has “them that are without” in

mind. All too often, we alienate people with our tongues. Paul has a recipe for that.

1. Add grace to our speech. That rules out all harshness, criticism, gossip, and all unkind, ungracious talk. (4:6a)
2. Add seasoning to our conversation (4:6b). So much of our conversation is flat and insipid. And, so much of it, when it is spiced, is seasoned with anger. The Christian is to add salt to his conversation. Salt does three things:
 - a. It adds tang. Many foods would be tasteless were it not for salt. We are to add pungency to our speech. We are to aim at being interesting conversationalists and communicators.
 - b. Salt arrests corruption. The Christians’ conversation should be a constant rebuke to those who use profanity and take the Lord’s name in vain.
 - c. Salt creates thirst. Our talk should make people thirsty for the water of the Word.⁶

Query: Ephesians 5:15 tells us “*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,..*” Is it possible for believers to walk “as fools?”

IV. FINAL GREETINGS (COLOSSIANS 4:7-18)

In closing Colossians, Paul provides a glimpse into the personal lives of himself and his friends. Although we will not dwell on this section, it is worthy of your individual study. It can be broken down into the following outline:

- The Men who were sent. (4:7-9)
- The Men who stayed (4:10-11; 14a)
- The Men who prayed (4:12-13)
- The Man who strayed (4:14b)

V. CONCLUSION

Perhaps it is fitting that we close this study with a warning as we look briefly **“At the man who strayed.”**

Demas is his name, and he is mentioned only three times in Paul’s letters, and these three references tell a sad story.



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We first find him in Philemon 24 where he is called “Demas...my fellow laborer” and is linked with three good men—Mark, Aristarchus, and Luke.

Then he is mentioned in the book we are studying (Colossians 4:14) and is simply called “Demas.” There is no special word of identification or commendation.

But the third reference tells what became of Demas: “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10).

Demas forsook Paul and apparently was never reclaimed. His sin was that **he loved this present world**.

World—refers to the whole system of things that run this world—a **“society without God.”**

John pointed out that the world entices the believer with “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:15-17). Which of these traps caught Demas, we do not know; perhaps all three were involved.

We would like to think that, as believers, we don’t fall prey to the “temptations of the world.” But—we do know that Christians today can succumb to the world just as Demas did. How easy it is to maintain a religious veneer, while all the time we are living for the things of this world. Demas thought that he could serve two masters, but eventually he had to make a decision; unfortunately, he made the wrong decision.⁷

Think of the hurt that was inflicted by Demas’ decision.

1. Paul must have been hurt greatly when Demas forsook him.
2. It also hurt the work of the Lord; for there never has been a time when the laborers were many.
3. Most of all, it hurt Demas, for he wasted his life in that which could never last. “...*whoever does the will of God abides forever.*” (1 John 2:17)

APPLICATION

How important for each of us that we “Guard our hearts” from the evil one. Put on the “whole armor of God that you

may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.” Eph 5:10-18.

^{NAS} **Proverbs 4:23** Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it *flow* the springs of life. ²⁴ Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put devious lips far from you. ²⁵ Let your eyes look directly ahead, And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. ²⁶ Watch the path of your feet, And all your ways will be established. ²⁷ Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.

^{NKJ} **1 John 2:15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

^{NKJ} **Matthew 6:33** "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

^{NKJ} **Proverbs 3:5** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

¹ MacArthur, John, *Colossians & Philemon* (Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, c1992) p177

² Ibid

³ Wiersbe, Warren, *Be Complete* (Victor, Colorado Springs, c2005) p136-137

⁴ Gromacki, Robert, *Philippians & Colossians*, (Tyndale, Chattanooga, c2003) p215

⁵ Phillips, John, *Exploring Colossians* (Kregel, Grand Rapids, c2002) p205

⁶ Ibid p207

⁷ Wiersbe p155-156