

## **Jesus, Our All in All – More Things to Do - Colossians 4:2-18**

Today we are going to have a look at the remaining verses from Paul's letter to the Colossians. In these final two chapters, Paul has spent a great deal of time encouraging these new Christians in their faith journey. Through each of his instructions, Paul's intended goal for them was that they live the type of life which daily demonstrates the trust they have in Jesus as their Lord. He also encourages them to trust the power associated with believing in Him as their all-sufficient and pre-eminent Savior. I hope as we have worked our way through these words of wisdom from Paul that you too recognize the same value in trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord. Jesus truly is everything and is superior to all things. It's just as Paul teaches. He is "*all, and in all*". (3:11 ESV) Let's read these last verses of Colossians together. **Read Colossians 4:2-18.**

Paul, in verses 2-6 implores the Christians at Colossae to follow some steps that will help them work towards and maintain the kind of life that demonstrates what it's like to live for Christ. To begin with, in verses 2-4 he emphasizes prayer. He says to them concerning their prayer life, "*Continue steadfastly*" in it. "*Be watchful in it*". Do it with "*thanksgiving*". And do it for a purpose. Many people pray only when necessary. There must be some pressing want or some urgent matter, or some major crisis before many people make the time to pray. This includes Christians as well. If this is your formula for a prayer life, I want to encourage you to make some changes. What does Paul mean by continuing steadfastly in prayer? Well, *continuing* means to be persistent in an activity. *Steadfastly* means doing so with an unwavering and determined passion. Another way to think about this would be to suggest that our prayer life must be carried out faithfully and must always be something we look forward to. Paul was teaching a concept that Jesus had previously taught in the parable of the persistent widow. **Read Luke 18:1-8.** Jesus is concerned about the consistency and faithfulness of our prayer life. From this parable we learn that He wants every person to always have a spirit of prayer in their heart. When I think about this below the surface, I am reminded that my Savior really does want to hear from me, and prayer is the best way to do that. In verse 8, Jesus mentions His concern that when He returns, He might not find any faithful people left. I surely hope that will not be the case. Will you make a commitment to pray more often? Will you be as David was when he penned the words in this Psalm. **Read Psalm 55:16-17.** Or maybe look at Daniel as an example. **Read Daniel 6:10.** Both men were beloved by God. Even Paul said to the Colossians, "*we have not ceased to pray for you*". (1:9 ESV) Prayer is extremely important for your walk with Jesus.

Being watchful in prayer is also not a new idea. Paul is simply teaching what he had previously learned from Jesus' interactions with the disciples. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus says to them, "*Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*" (**Matthew 26:41**) Paul said to the Ephesians when informing them about wearing the armor of God, "*praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance.*" (**Ephesians 6:18**) Peter, in his first letter says, "*The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober minded for the sake of your prayers.*" (**1 Peter 4:7**) When we listen to these words and set out to apply them to our lives each day, "being watchful" in prayer ensures that we will not be caught off guard by Satan and the temptation to sin. We will not fear death and judgment because we will be prepared

for it when it arrives. Likewise, we will be prepared and filled with anticipation for the second coming of our Savior Jesus Christ. Will you make a commitment to pray with a watchful eye?

Paul also exhorts us to make sure our prayers are filled with thanksgiving. Not some false gratitude, but genuine gratitude. Here in verse two, Paul is reiterating what he has already stated in other places in his letter to the Colossians. Read **Colossians 1:3**. Read **Colossians 1:12**. Read **Colossians 2:7**. Read **Colossians 3:15**. Read **Colossians 3:17**. Why is thankfulness in our prayers so important? It acknowledges that God is the source of all blessings. It expresses our trust in His ability to answer our petitions in accordance with His will and His timing. It cultivates a spirit of humility in our heart. It deepens our relationship with God. Being thankful in prayer brings about a sense of peaceful understanding and helps us better understand His goodness and His love for us. Will you make a commitment to pray with a thankful mind and heart?

As Paul requested from the people at the church in Colossae, we too should make sure our prayers have a purpose. Not a selfish purpose, but a Kingdom-minded purpose. In verse 3, Paul specifies, *“At the same time, pray also for us”*. Too often our prayers are generic in nature. While God knows the true reason behind our prayers, it is beneficial for us and for others around us to know the specifics sometimes. Just look at the specifics from Paul in our text. He wasn’t asking for a generalized prayer. Paul asked them to pray for “an open door” and for wisdom. He simply wanted them to ask, even though they were in prison, that God would provide an opportunity to share Jesus and in doing so, He would make sure the message was communicated clearly. Will you make a commitment to be more specific in your prayers?

These valuable words from Paul should encourage each of us to make prayer a more integral part of our daily walk with the Lord.

Next, in verses 5 and 6, Paul reminds us of a few more important aspects which will help us live a more Christ-like life. He says, *“walk in wisdom”, “make the best use of your time”, and “let your speech be gracious”*. If you look at these requests below the surface, you’ll see that each deal with the way we interact with others. As a follower of Christ, it’s important that we allow the Spirit of God to be in control. How do you know He is in control? Look at how you interact with the people around you. What is your conduct like? What words do you use? Do you waste people’s time or try to make it valuable? Look, whether we like it or not, being a Christian often puts a target on our back. The world is full of people who need to see us behave like Christ. They need to hear words that reflect the character of Christ. They need to know that we value their time just as much as we want them to value our time. The time we have been given on this earth is short. As Christians, we need not waste it by acting and speaking foolishly. We need to be slow to judge and even slower to react to the world around us. The key to this section from Paul lies in our speech. He says it should be gracious. Ask yourself, do the words coming from my mouth speak words of truth in the same gracious manner that they did coming from Jesus? If not, who is in control? You or Him? The Bible is filled with warnings against using our mouths improperly. Old and New Testament. Words from God and from Jesus that encourage us to think before we speak. Again, Paul says, it should be “gracious” and “seasoned with salt”. Not salty but delivered in such a way that others are more apt to listen. Why do we want them to listen? Because we have a life saving message that needs to be heard.