

part of the thought here. It is the loving power of the Lord Jesus in one's discourse. Such is to be the character of a believer's speech. It is pleasant sweetness. Added to such is the idea of spiritual vigor and health. Salt brings the opposite to corruption and impurity. See Matt. 5:13 and Lev. 2:13. Wholesome pleasantness should surround one's speech!

- b. Its content. Questions will be raised for the believer to answer. Conversation cannot be carried on without prompting the need for answers. Sweet reasonableness should be a priority for all believers when aiming reply to questions posed. 1 Peter 3:15 adds a helpful note to this entire item.

Conclusion

Christianity is not always judged by what it says, but by what it does (James 1:22). How does belief on Christ affect one's praying, walking, and talking? According to this section, there is expected to be a marked evidence of change and difference. May those who see us, not alone hear the Word, but actually find the glory of God manifest in our lives!

Notes

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

"Some Apostolic Advice."

Colossians 4:2-6

Introduction

1. Christianity is practical. There is no room in it for a faith which does not live the Gospel. Practice of one's faith is part and parcel of the truth!

2. Hence, in the closing verses of this epistle, Paul enjoins the believers at Colosse concerning certain practical issues of their faith. These exhortations follow right on the heels of a passage on Christian living with a variety of applications.

3. There are three major items for counsel. Each one touches on a distinct aspect of the Christian life. These are essential facets of lives which really count! Mark, then, the advice offered:-

1. ABOUT PRAYER vv. 2-4

a. How to pray.

- 1) With perseverance. The verb which is used here has at its root the term "strong or steadfast." It means to attend to constantly, continue steadfastly, adhere to, wait on. For its use elsewhere, compare these passages: Mark 3:9; Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4; 8:13; 10:7; Rom. 12:12.
- 2) With watchfulness. There is often the tendency to pray with a mechanical force. Others pray with confused thoughts. Some pray under great test of temptation. With all these possibilities, Paul urges to pray watchfully! The verb employed means to keep awake. Hence, there is to be no listlessness in prayer!

For clarification on the use of this verb, check out the following texts: Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 16:13; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 3:2; 16:15.

- 3) With thankfulness. One of the great accompaniments of the Gospel is gratitude. Thanksgiving in prayer is not a cliché, but a command (Phil. 4:6,7). How our Lord was grateful in all things (cf. Luke 10:21 with Eph. 5:20).

b. What to pray for.

- 1) People. The word "us" is full of meaning. Paul never worked in isolation. He always had many who shared with him in the Gospel. He issues a call for prayer for themselves. See Rom. 15:30; Eph. 6:19, 20; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1. There is utterly no thought here that evangelists and pastors don't need prayer. They do! Spurgeon was once asked about his success. The reply: "My people pray for me." Rich is the servant of God who has such support! No salary can take its place!
- 2) Places. The word "utterance" should be translated "word." Here is a prayer request for the open door of preaching the Word of God. The basic idea here is for opportunities to reach people with the Word. It is God Who will perform this, but it is a legitimate item for prayer. Cf. 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Rev. 3:8. Other things which God can open are listed also: Acts 14:27; Eph. 6:19.
- 3) Things. An open door for the Word of God brings in a focus on the mystery of Christ. Here again Paul accents the striking difference between the Gospel of grace and the message which had been preached prior to his revelation (cf. Eph. 3). The bringing together of Jew and Gentile in one Body is a mystery. It was not made known prior to the present dispensation (Rom. 16:25, 26). So vigorous was the opposition then to this idea (and incidentally it still is today!) that Paul was put in prison for this glorious message. But even in bonds,

he wanted this to be made manifest as was necessary. The awesome "woe" of the Gospel was laid upon him (1 Cor. 9:16). Would to God that every servant of the Lord were pressed with this burden!

2. ABOUT CONDUCT v. 5.

Prayer is towards heaven, but the walk of a believer is earthward. It concerns one's entire conduct for the verb for walk means to "walk around."

- a. The manner of it. The noun "wisdom" is fraught with meaning. It is the knowledge of the Gospel applied in Gospel common sense! In a very winsome manner, it is important to show the vital difference of our position with that of the world. Practical goodness is a good way to put it.
- b. The people with it. The in group and the out group are so designated in the Word from a spiritual basis. The out group is not to be ignored, but pampered! The preposition "toward" notes that with regard to those on the outside, specific action is to take place. Cf. 1 Cor. 5:12, 13; 1 Thess. 4:12.
- c. The reason for it. There is a price to pay for careful thought in order to seize hold of every opportunity. It pays to know the interests, prejudices, and needs of those without. By so doing, the believer will buy out from alien ownership for oneself (middle voice of the verb) the privileges to witness unto Christ. This is pertinent counsel for these days: buy up the opportunities amongst those without! Lost ones can never be bought! Eph. 5:16.

3. ABOUT SPEECH v. 6.

- a. Its character. Grace is a word of wide and deep significance. Among other meanings, it has the idea of divine acceptableness. Surely, this is