

Colossians – Week 13 – The Gospel Life – Bible Study Helps

Title: The Gospel Life – Pray faithfully, Walk wisely, and Speak Graciously

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the essential elements of living a faithful Christian life centered on the Gospel. Drawing from Colossians 4:2-6, the message emphasizes that Christian maturity is demonstrated through three interconnected practices: praying faithfully, walking wisely, and speaking graciously. The sermon challenges believers to recognize that the Gospel life is not merely about knowledge but about daily dependence on God through prayer, intentional living that reflects Christ before a watching world, and speech that is always seasoned with grace and truth. The sermon emphasizes that everything we do should lead people to Jesus Christ, and that this requires constant surrender to the Holy Spirit rather than relying on our own strength. The message serves as a call to authentic Christianity where our private devotion to God flows into public witness, and where every moment, conversation, and relationship becomes an opportunity to bring glory to Christ.

Key Points:

- The Gospel life begins with total dependence on God through faithful, continuous prayer
- Prayer is not just talking to God but acknowledging we cannot live the Christian life on our own
- We must pray for open doors of opportunity to share the Gospel and watch for God to provide them
- Walking wisely means living intentionally for Christ before a watching world every single day
- Our conduct matters because the whole world is watching how we live as Christians
- We must redeem the time because opportunities are perishable and time is limited
- Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, reflecting Christ's heart in all conversations
- Death and life are in the power of the tongue - our words either lead people to Christ or away from Him
- Different people require different approaches, requiring wisdom from the Holy Spirit
- Spiritual preparation through prayer and Bible study precedes effective Gospel conversations
- We cannot do this in our own strength but must surrender daily to the Holy Spirit
- Our prayer life, walk, and speech are mirrors that reveal the true condition of our hearts

Scripture Reference:

- Colossians 4:2-6 (primary passage)
- Colossians 1 (Paul's prayer for the Colossians)
- Luke 4:22 (gracious words of Jesus)
- 1 Peter 3:15 (being ready to give an answer)
- Psalm 90:12 (numbering our days)
- 1 Thessalonians 4:12 (walking honestly before unbelievers)
- 1 Timothy 3 (having a good report with unbelievers)
- 2 Corinthians 2:12 (door opened by the Lord)

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- 1 Corinthians 16:9 (great door and effectual opened)
- Proverbs (death and life in the power of the tongue)
- James (practical living of faith)

Stories:

- A personal experience about receiving a prayer request about missionaries in the Philippines who lost their second child during pregnancy, illustrating the importance of sharing burdens
- The illustration of grocery shopping with coupons and their expiration dates to explain "redeeming the time"
- Personal testimony about confronting Jehovah's Witnesses in the neighborhood while realizing he hadn't yet knocked on those same doors for Christ
- The story of a child having a meltdown in the grocery store and the challenge of maintaining Christian witness during difficult moments
- Anecdote about marriage counseling and the challenge of maintaining a peaceful, Christ-centered home amid busyness
- Story about discipleship and baptism, where knowledge must lead to obedience and action
- Illustration of working at a grocery store and watching women use many coupons effectively
- Reference to Peter's denial of Christ and how his speech betrayed his identity
- The example of Jesus with the woman at the well versus His approach with the Pharisees
- Story about receiving cookies overloaded with salt as an illustration of improper seasoning in speech

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Discipleship Questions

How does viewing prayer as an acknowledgment of dependence on God rather than just talking to God change your approach to daily prayer?

In what ways does your speech reveal what is truly in your heart, and how can you align your words more closely with Christ's character?

What practical steps can you take to move from knowing biblical truth to actually living it out with wisdom in your daily circumstances?

How does the concept of redeeming the time challenge you to prioritize gospel opportunities over the busyness and distractions of modern life?

When was the last time you asked someone how you could pray for them, and how might this practice transform your relationships and witness?

What does it mean for your home to be a refuge that reflects Christ, and what changes might be needed to create that atmosphere?

How do you balance speaking truth boldly like Paul did while also speaking with grace and gentleness as the situation requires?

In what ways has prosperity and convenience potentially weakened your dependence on God compared to believers who faced greater hardships?

How can you prepare yourself spiritually to know not just what to say about the gospel, but how to answer each person uniquely?

What missed opportunities to share Christ come to mind when you reflect on times you remained silent when you should have spoken?

Small Group Guide: The Gospel Life

Based on Colossians 4:2-6

Opening Prayer & Ice Breaker

Ice Breaker Question: What's one New Year's resolution you've made in the past that you actually kept? What helped you stay committed to it?

Sermon Overview

This week's message focused on three essential components of living a gospel-centered life:

1. **Praying Faithfully** - Total dependence on God
2. **Walking Wisely** - Living intentionally before a watching world
3. **Speaking Graciously** - Communicating Christ through our words

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Praying Faithfully (Colossians 4:2-4)

1. **Read Colossians 4:2** - Prayer is our acknowledgment that we cannot do life on our own. How does this differ from viewing prayer as simply "talking to God"? How does this perspective change your approach to prayer?
2. Paul asks the Colossians to pray for "open doors" for the gospel. When was the last time you specifically prayed for an opportunity to share Christ with someone? What holds us back from praying these kinds of prayers?
3. The sermon emphasized "continuing in prayer" and being "watchful" (alert). Share a time when you prayed for something and then completely forgot about it. How can we become more spiritually alert to God's answers?
4. **Personal Reflection:** On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current prayer life? What's one practical step you could take this week to grow in faithful prayer?

Part 2: Walking Wisely (Colossians 4:5)

5. **Read Colossians 4:5** - The phrase "walk in wisdom toward them that are without" means living intentionally before unbelievers. Who are the "them that are without" in your daily life (neighbors, coworkers, family members)?

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6. "The whole world is watching." How does this reality affect the way you:
 - Handle conflict at home?
 - Respond to stress at work?
 - Treat service workers (waiters, cashiers, etc.)?
 - Use social media?
7. Discuss the concept of "redeeming the time." The sermon mentioned that opportunities have expiration dates. What's an opportunity you missed to share Christ or show His love? What did you learn from that experience?
8. **Challenge Question:** If someone followed you around for a week, what would they conclude about Jesus based solely on your lifestyle? Would they be drawn closer to Him or pushed further away?

Part 3: Speaking Graciously (Colossians 4:6)

9. **Read Colossians 4:6** - "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt." The sermon emphasized the word "alway." Why is consistency in gracious speech so difficult? What situations tempt you most to speak ungraciously?
10. Jesus used "gracious words" (Luke 4:22), yet He also called the Pharisees "vipers" and confronted the woman at the well directly. How do we balance speaking truth with speaking grace? How do we know which approach to use with different people?
11. The sermon stated: "Out of the abundance of your heart, the mouth speaks." What does your speech reveal about your heart? Are there areas where you need God's help to change your heart so your words will change?
12. **Read 1 Peter 3:15** - How prepared are you to "give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you"? What could help you be more ready?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **The gospel life begins on our knees** - Without faithful prayer, we cannot effectively walk or speak for Christ.
- ✓ **Our lives are on display** - We're living before a watching world that needs to see authentic Christianity.
- ✓ **Every conversation matters** - Death and life are in the power of the tongue; our words either lead people toward or away from Christ.
- ✓ **We need the Holy Spirit** - We cannot live the gospel life in our own strength; we must surrender daily to God's power.
- ✓ **Time is limited** - We must redeem the time because opportunities to share Christ are perishable.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE area to focus on

Option 1: Praying Faithfully

- Start a prayer journal specifically for gospel opportunities
- Set a daily alarm to pray for "open doors" for the gospel
- Attend the weekly church prayer meeting
- Ask at least 3 people this week, "How can I pray for you?"

Option 2: Walking Wisely

- Identify one area where your life doesn't reflect Christ well and confess it to God
- Choose one "person without" in your life and intentionally build a relationship with them
- Evaluate your schedule - are you redeeming the time or wasting it?
- Before each day, pray: "Lord, help me to walk in wisdom today before a watching world"

Option 3: Speaking Graciously

- Before speaking in difficult situations this week, pause and pray
- Memorize Colossians 4:6 and recite it each morning
- Ask a trusted friend or family member to give you honest feedback about your speech
- Prepare answers to common questions about your faith (Why do you believe? Why church? etc.)

Group Accountability

Share with the group: Which option will you commit to this week? How can we pray for you and hold you accountable?

Memory Verse

Colossians 4:5-6 (KJV) *"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."*

Closing Reflection Questions

1. What is one specific thing God spoke to you about through this sermon?
2. What will you do differently this week because of what you learned?
3. Who is one person God has put on your heart to pray for and reach with the gospel?

Closing Prayer Points

- Pray for each person's specific commitment from the "This Week's Challenge"
- Pray for open doors for the gospel in your community
- Pray for wisdom to walk faithfully before a watching world
- Pray for grace-filled speech in all your conversations
- Pray for those who don't know Christ that group members mentioned

Additional Resources

- **For Prayer:** Get the church prayer sheet (available on the website, church app, or at the welcome table)
- **For Evangelism Training:** Ask about the church's evangelism study
- **For Discipleship:** Connect with a mature believer for one-on-one discipleship
- **For Bible Reading:** Consider starting a Bible reading plan this year

Leader Notes

- Allow time for genuine sharing; don't rush through questions
- Be vulnerable yourself - share your own struggles with prayer, walking wisely, or speaking graciously
- Encourage the group that this is about progress, not perfection
- Consider breaking into smaller groups (men/women or pairs) for more personal sharing on question 11
- Follow up during the week with group members about their commitments

5-Day Devotional: Living the Gospel Life

Day 1: The Foundation of Prayer

Reading: Colossians 4:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Devotional: The Gospel life begins on our knees. Prayer is not merely talking to God—it is our acknowledgment that we cannot live the Christian life in our own strength. When Paul wrote from a Roman prison, he didn't ask for comfort or release. He asked for open doors to preach Christ and boldness to speak clearly. Our prayers reveal what truly matters to us. Are we praying for opportunities to share the Gospel? Are we watching for God's answers? This year, commit to a life of continual prayer—not just crisis prayers, but constant communion with your Heavenly Father. Pray for open doors, then watch expectantly as God provides divine appointments you could never orchestrate yourself.

Reflection Questions:

- How would you describe your current prayer life—occasional or continual?
- What specific Gospel opportunities will you pray for this week?

Day 2: Walking in Wisdom

Reading: Colossians 4:5; Ephesians 5:15-17; Psalm 90:12

Devotional: The whole world is watching how Christians live. Our faith is not merely proclaimed on Sunday—it is demonstrated Monday through Saturday in our homes, workplaces, and communities. Walking in wisdom means applying God's truth to real situations, living intentionally for Christ in every ordinary moment. Moses prayed that God would teach us to number our days so we might gain hearts of wisdom. Time is perishable. Opportunities expire. That conversation you avoided, that witness you postponed, that moment of testimony you let slip by—these cannot be recovered. Redeeming the time means recognizing that every day, every interaction, every moment matters for eternity. Live today as if it counts, because it does.

Reflection Questions:

- In what areas of your life does the watching world see Christ most clearly?
- What expired opportunities haunt you, and how will you seize today's opportunities?

Day 3: The Power of Gracious Speech

Reading: Colossians 4:6; Luke 4:22; James 3:1-12

Devotional: Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Your words today will either lead someone closer to Jesus Christ or push them further away. When people heard Jesus speak, they marveled at the gracious words that proceeded from His mouth. Our speech should always be seasoned with grace and salt—preserving truth, enhancing understanding, preventing corruption. This doesn't mean weak or compromising words, but words that reflect Christ's heart. You can be gracious and truthful, gracious and firm, gracious and serious. The challenge is that our speech reveals our heart. If harsh, critical, or unkind words flow easily, we have a heart problem. Surrender your tongue to the Holy Spirit today. Let Christ speak through you.

Reflection Questions:

- What does your everyday speech reveal about your heart?
- Who needs to hear gracious, Christ-like words from you today?

Day 4: Prepared to Give an Answer

Reading: 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 1:8

Devotional: When you live a Gospel life, people will ask questions. Your hope in suffering, your peace in chaos, your joy in trials—these will make others curious. But are you prepared to answer? Peter commands us to sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts and always be ready to give an answer for the hope within us—with meekness and fear. This requires preparation. You cannot share what you do not know. Study God's Word. Learn to articulate the Gospel clearly. Understand how to answer objections. Different people require different approaches—wisdom with the seeking, boldness with the deceived, gentleness with the wounded. The Holy Spirit will guide you in the "how," but you must be faithful in the preparation.

Reflection Questions:

- Could you clearly explain the Gospel to someone today if asked?
- What biblical truths do you need to study more deeply to be better prepared?

Day 5: A Life Set Apart for the Gospel

Reading: Colossians 4:2-6; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Devotional: The Gospel is not just a message we believe—it is a life we live. We are ambassadors for Christ, living letters read by all men. This requires total surrender: praying faithfully, walking wisely, and speaking graciously. It means your life at home matters as much as your testimony at church. Your words in the kitchen count as much as your words in the sanctuary. You cannot compartmentalize Christianity—claiming Christ on Sunday while living for yourself the rest of the week. The Gospel life is comprehensive, touching every conversation, every decision, every moment. This is why we desperately need God's help. We cannot do this in our own strength. But what an incredible privilege—to partner with the God of heaven and earth in His redemptive work!

Reflection Questions:

- What area of your life remains unsurrendered to Christ's lordship?
- How will you live differently this year to reflect the Gospel more clearly?

Closing Prayer: Father, thank You for calling us to the Gospel life. Help us to pray faithfully, recognizing our complete dependence on You. Give us wisdom to walk worthy of our calling, redeeming every opportunity. Season our speech with grace and salt, that we might always speak as we ought. Open doors for the Gospel, and give us boldness to walk through them. May our lives lead others to Jesus Christ. In His name, Amen.