

RELATED SCRIPTURES

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 11.6.22

Hebrews 4:14-16 | Mark 14:38 | Matthew 5:13

SUMMARY

After covering a broad range of subjects, such as identity in Christ, being accepted by God through Christ and not the law, and being at peace with fellow believers, Paul brings his letter to the church at Colossae to a close. His focus centers around the practice of prayer. Through our union with Christ, we have special access to the Father; we can speak directly to him without a mediator because Christ *is* our mediator. With that privilege, Paul asks the church to pray steadfastly, “being watchful in it with thanksgiving.” This imperative is reminiscent of the instruction Jesus gave to his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation” (Mark 14:38), while Paul also includes, “with thanksgiving.” With such unique access to the Father through prayer, the temptation might be to merely make prayer a time of petitioning God for selfish requests. Instead, Paul encourages thanksgiving as a preventative measure for selfish requests while asking the church to pray for more opportunities to spread the gospel. Paul’s final instruction to the church surrounds their posture towards outsiders, specifically, people who aren’t believers (yet). Also like Jesus’ teaching (Matthew 5:13), Paul invokes the metaphor of salt as it relates to how the believer interacts with outsiders. While it is the Father who draws lost people to himself, the mechanism he sovereignly chooses to bring them near is other people—the church. Paul’s instruction (and Jesus’) reminds the church that the words we use and *how* we use them matter—thoughtful, wise, and gracious—as a reflection of Christ our Head.

GROUP QUESTIONS

From the sermon or your direct reading of Colossians 4:2-6, share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you.

What does it mean for you to be watchful in your prayers? What is the danger Paul alludes to here, and what might that look like for you personally? How does being thankful affect your prayers?

What does Paul’s instruction mean when he tells us to be wise and gracious with our speech when dealing with outsiders? Paul didn’t only use the word *wise*, nor did he only use *gracious*—how might this play out on a practical level?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.