

Approximately Expository 35 minutes



## **“Living the Gospel in the Real World”**

### **Colossians 4 (NIV)**

#### **Opening Prayer:**

**Father God, we come before You tonight in the mighty name of Jesus. We thank You for Your Word .... living, active, powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. Lord, open our hearts. Open our minds. Speak to us clearly. Teach us how to live out our faith in a real and practical way. And Lord, if there is anyone listening who does not know You, draw them by Your Holy Spirit. We give You this time. Please teach us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## Historical Setting:

The book of Colossians was written by the Apostle Paul around A.D. 60–62 while he was under house arrest in Rome. Paul had never actually visited the city of Colossae. The church there had likely been planted by Epaphras 🙌 **eh-PAF-ruhs or (bed-half-rus)**, one of Paul’s converts during his ministry in Ephesus.

Colossae was a small city in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), but it was influenced by big ideas. There were false teachings creeping into the church ..... a mixture of Jewish legalism, Greek philosophy, mysticism, and early forms of what later became Gnosticism 🙌 **NOS-tuh-siz-um**. People were saying, “**Jesus is good... but you need more. More rules. More visions. More knowledge.**”

Paul writes this letter to make something very clear:

**Jesus is not part of the answer 🙅 He IS the answer.**

Colossians exalts Christ.

- Chapter 1 shows us the supremacy of Christ.
- Chapter 2 shows us the sufficiency of Christ.
- Chapter 3 shows us the life of Christ lived through us.
- And now in Chapter 4, Paul gets extremely practical.

Because real theology must lead to real living.

## **1. A Life of Persistent Prayer (Colossians 4:2-4):**

Paul begins: **Colossians 4:2**(NIV)

**“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”**

Notice that word: **“Devote”**.

- Not “occasionally pray.”
  - Not “pray when in trouble.”
- 👉 Devote yourselves.

The word carries the idea of steadfast persistence ..... holding fast to something.

Prayer is not a spare tire.

👉 It is the steering wheel.

Paul says be:

- . **Devoted**
- . **Watchful**
- . **Thankful**

Watchful means spiritually alert. **Awake.**  
Aware of what’s happening around you and in the **spiritual realm...the unseen realm.**

Thankful means you pray with gratitude, not grumbling.

Then Paul does something powerful. He asks for prayer for himself.

(v.3)

**Colossians 4:3(NIV) <sup>3</sup> And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.**

👉 Paul is in prison.

He doesn't say:

- "Pray I get out."
- "Pray my circumstances improve."
- "Pray Rome falls."

He says:

👉 **“Pray for an open door to share Christ.”**

“Brothers and Sisters.... That is the perspective God wants us to see.”

And then he says:

(v.4) **Colossians 4:4**(NIV) **“Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”**

👉 Clarity matters.

In a confused world, the Gospel must be clear:

- Jesus died for sinners.
- Jesus rose again.
- Salvation is by grace through faith.

Application:

- Are we devoted to prayer?
- Are we praying for people to know Christ personally?
- Are we praying for clarity?

👉 If any church ....wants impact... it starts in prayer.

## 2. A Life of Wise Conduct (Colossians 4:5-6):

(v.5) **Colossians 4:5(NIV) “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.”**

Paul shifts from prayer to behavior.

“**Outsiders**” means those who do not yet know Christ.

We are called to wisdom in:

- Our actions
- Our attitudes
- Our reactions

- . Our integrity

“Make the most of every opportunity”  
literally means “**redeem the time.**”

👉 Time is a currency.

👉 Spend it wisely.

Then Paul says: (v.6)

**Colossians 4:6(NIV) <sup>6</sup> Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.**

👉 Grace-filled speech.

- Not harsh.
- Not condemning.
- Not sarcastic.

Seasoned with salt ..... salt preserves,  
enhances flavor, creates thirst.

When you speak:

- Does it preserve?

- Does it bless?
- Does it make someone thirsty for Jesus?

The Gospel doesn't need to be watered down ..... it needs to be delivered with grace.

### **3. The Power of Faithful People (Colossians 4:7-14):**

Paul begins listing names.

- Tychicus. 🖐️ **TIK-ih-kus (or: tick-ih-cuss)**
- Onesimus. 🖐️ **oh-NESS-ih-mus**
- Aristarchus. 🖐️ **uh-RISS-tar-kus (or: uh-miss-tar-cuss)**
- Mark.
- Epaphras. 🖐️ **eh-PAF-ruhs (or: bed-half-rus)**
- Luke.
- Demas.

The mission in Christianity is not a solo mission.

👉 It is a team effort.

Let's notice a few:

➤ **Onesimus: 👉 oh-NESS-ih-mus**

Onesimus 👉 **oh-NESS-ih-mus** was once a runaway slave. Paul led him to Christ. He's being sent back to Colossae .... likely to Philemon.

From runaway to brother.

From slave to saint.

That is the transforming power of the Gospel.

➤ **Mark**

This is John Mark .... the one who once failed Paul and left a missionary journey early.

But here, Paul calls him a comfort.

👉 Our failures are not final in Christ.

➤ **Epaphras** 👉 eh-PAF-ruhs (or: bed-half-rus)

Paul says: (v.12)

**Colossians 4:12**(NIV) **12 Epaphras**

**Epaphras** 👉 eh-PAF-ruhs (or: bed-half-rus), **who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.**

That word “wrestling” is intense. 👉 It means agonizing in prayer.

The early church was built by:

- Faithful servants
- Persistent prayer warriors
- People who showed up

No spotlight.  
No platform.  
Just faithfulness.

👉 Brothers and Sisters.... heaven records  
faithfulness ... not fame.

#### 4. The Reality of Choices (Colossians 4:15-18):

Paul closes with greetings and one  
powerful encouragement: (v.17)

**Colossians 4:17**(NIV) **“Tell Archippus:**

👉 uh-RISS-tar-kus (or: uh-miss-tar-  
cuss) **‘See to it that you complete the  
ministry you have received in the Lord.’”**

👉 That’s a loving warning.

👉 Finish what God called you to do.

- Don’t start strong and fade.
- Don’t get distracted.
- Don’t quit.

Then Paul signs: (v.18)

**Colossians 4:18(NIV) <sup>18</sup> *I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.***

👉 **“Remember my chains.”**

Paul reminds them: this Gospel costs something.

Christianity is not comfortable.  
It is committed.

## **5. The Big Picture of Colossians 4:**

If we summarize this chapter:

- Pray persistently.
- Live wisely.
- Speak graciously.
- Serve faithfully.
- Finish your race.

👉 Christian maturity is not mystical ..... it's practical.

It shows up in:

- . How you pray
- . How you talk
- . How you treat people
- . How you finish your assignment

## Invitation: Are You Born Again?

Before we close, let me speak plainly.

- You can admire Jesus.
- You can respect Jesus.
- You can attend church.

But have you been **born again**?

Jesus said in **John 3:3**(NIV)

**“Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”**

## Being born again means:

- . You admit you are a sinner.
  - . You believe Jesus died for your sins.
  - . You trust in His resurrection.
  - . You surrender your life to Him.
- Onesimus 👉 **oh-NESS-ih-mus** was transformed.
  - Mark was restored.
  - Demas later deserted the ministry, .... choices matter.

Listen carefully, you have a choice...

Right now... this very moment....If you have never given your life to Christ, you can do that right now.

- You do not need a building.
- You do not need a ritual.
- 👉 All you need faith in Christ.

If this is you today....pray something like this:

**“Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe You died for me and rose again. I turn from my sin and place my trust in You. Forgive me. Save me. Be my Lord and Savior. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”**

 If you prayed that sincerely with faith in Christ, the Bible says you are saved.

Welcome to the family of God!

**Closing Prayer:**

**Father God, thank You for Your Word.  
Thank You for the Gospel that changes  
lives ..... from runaway slaves to faithful  
servants. Lord, teach us to be devoted  
to prayer. Help us to walk in wisdom. Let  
our speech be full of grace. Strengthen  
us to finish what You've called us to do.**

**And Lord.... for anyone who  
surrendered to You today, seal that  
decision by Your Spirit. Grow them.  
Establish them. Use them for Your glory.**

**We love You, Lord.  
Grace be with us all.**

**In Jesus' Holy name, Amen.**



Matthew 28:19-20