

## ***Final Words To Go The Distance (Col. 4:2-17)***

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. We have been speaking about the practical implications of knowing Christ to the Colossian believers and how that relates to us today. The apostle gives his final exhortations to go the distance in living for Jesus.
- B. It has been said, it's not how to start but how you finish that counts. Last words always seems to carry the most weight of all.

### **II. CONTINUE IN PRAYER**

- A. First, we are exhorted to, *“Continue earnestly in prayer...”* Prayer is the mightiest force in the universe because it is the basis for our relationship with Christ, and the power that unlocks doors for God to move in areas previously closed.  
*<sup>2</sup> “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” (Col. 4:2-4).*
- B. **“continue”(v.2):** Is word *proskartereo* and it means, *to be earnest towards, to persevere, constantly diligent, to attend assiduously [working diligently at a task]*. The early church *“continued with one accord”* in prayer (Acts 1:14). Something breaks in the spirit realm when you give yourself to earnest, continual prayer.
- C. **“being vigilant” (v.2)** To be *vigilant* means to be awake and to watch. To give strict attention to. To take heed lest through remission and indolence [showing disposition to avoid exertion; sloth] some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one. *“blessed are those servants whom the master, when He comes, will find watching” (Luke 12:37).*
- D. **“to speak the mystery of Christ” (v.3):** The word mystery (*mysterion*) means *a secret previously hidden but now made clear to everyone*. The gospel message of Jesus Christ, The Son of God has openly revealed was kept hidden in ages past. *That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak (v.4)*. That God would give me the opportunity to declare to gospel so that all may know and believe.

### **III. LIVE FOR CHRIST BEFORE THE WORLD**

- A. We are exhorted to live for Christ before the world around us, and not just to hide our faith in a back corner somewhere; but we need to do it in the right way.  
*<sup>5</sup> “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one” (Col. 4:5-6).*
- B. **“Walk in wisdom” (v.5)** means, *with full and broad intelligence*. Proverbs 11:30 -- *“he who wins souls is wise”*. It requires skill to reach people on the “outside” of the family of God.

- C. **“redeeming the time” (v.5)** Means, “to buy up, to rescue from loss, what others throw away.” The idea is to use time wisely and effectively. To be good stewards of our time. To live making the most of every opportunity to serve Christ [power of a focused life etc.]
- D. **“Let your speech always be with grace” (v.6)** “Grace” (*charis*) is the divine influence on the heart and life. It means God’s unmerited favor. The Apostle tells us to sprinkle our speech with salt as it were. Salt preserves. Salt make things more “tasty”. Salt makes us thirsty. As one preacher said: “Let it be holy, wise, gracious, Christian, savory, wholesome, courteous, respectful, desirable, and worthy of being kept in the memory of others.”

#### **IV. LABOR IN PRAYER**

- A. Perhaps the highest calling anyone can have is to intercede for others in prayer. Epaphras, Paul’s companion, was such a person. It says, “he has a great zeal for you” (Col. 4:13).  
*12”Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in the will of God” (Col. 4:12).*
- B. Epaphras is known as, **The man who prayed!** That’s the only ministry we know that he had in serving Christ. He was the follower of Christ who prayed! And notice how he prayed: He prayed constantly (always). He prayed fervently (*agonizomai*), meaning – to contend with an adversary. To fight; to strive. He prayed personally (“for you”) not just abstractly, in general.

#### **V. FAITHFULLY FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY TO THE LORD**

- A. The final words of the Apostle Paul was to a leader in the church at Colosse. He might have been a pastor or deacon.  
*“say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it” (Col. 4:17).*
- B. **“Take heed” (v.17)** means, “to look at, regard”. He is exhorted to look after the ministry that God has entrusted to him (received), to fulfill it. To **“fulfill”** means to finish a task, to cram. To see something through to the end. To not squander or waste something that was given to you.
- C. When I think of these words, I can’t help but be reminded about the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) where Jesus gave one 5 talents, to another 2, and to another 1. We have all been given talents that we a responsible to steward before God. The Bible says that the man returned to “settle accounts” with them. In others words, he came to ask them, “*what did you do with what I gave you?*” That’s the exhortation the Apostle Paul is giving to Archippus.
- D. In 1 Corinthians 3:9 Paul writes: “*We are God’s fellow workers.*” Again, “*According to the grace of God which was given to me as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it*”. 1 Cor. 3:10).
- E. May we faithfully execute the charge God has entrusted to us and run the race with patient endurance unto Jesus who is worthy!