



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Colossians 4: 2-6

Lesson 14 of 15

2018

"Pray, Live, Speak"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Mark, and good morning. I hope you all had a very happy Thanksgiving. It is good to be back with you, though, this Sunday morning, and looking at Colossians. We have been in it for a number of weeks but now we are coming to the end. We have one more lesson after this morning. Our lesson today is in chapter four, verses two through six. Paul writes:

² Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴ that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

⁵ Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. ⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Colossians 4:2-6

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Father, we do thank You for this time together this morning; this is a great blessing to be with Your people and opening Your Word, reading it, and studying it

together. We are reminded of the need that we have to be thankful. We have just come off the celebration of that, our annual Thanksgiving, and it is good to do that. But Paul reminds us that that is something for us to do daily—to be thankful.

And I pray, Lord, that through our time of study we will see the reasons for being a thankful people for all the good things that You have given to us in Your Son as Your people. As those who have put their faith in Christ, You have blessed us abundantly beyond all that we could ask or think. When we were not seeking You, You sought us, and You brought us into Your family, gave us life, and gave us eternal life, forgave us our sins, and made us Your children. And as we reflect on that, we ought to be thankful, and we ought to be doing the things that Paul encourages us to do in this text as he gives us direction on how we are to live our lives in this world.

And so Lord, I pray that as we reflect on these things, as we study through this passage, You would give us clarity of thought; You would help us to see the things that Paul is saying here and all the things that he is teaching. They seem straightforward to us, but may we understand it, and may we have also the desire to conform to it, to do the things that Paul is instructing us to do. And so, we look to You to bless and to teach us and to galvanize within us a desire to be obedient and to follow Your will. I pray You would bless this time as we study, that we would know You better as a result of it and know Your will better and then live it. So, bless us spiritually.

But we also need Your blessings materially for the physical things of life. I pray for those that are in particular need, that maybe they need work, or their health has been challenged, and some have gone through protracted illnesses, and some still are. And I pray for all of them, Lord. You know their needs, and I pray that You will meet them and encourage them and give them health. We know, Lord, that whatever You give us is ultimately for our good, and we want a positive, happy outcome to things. And if that's possible, we pray for that. If it's not and You have difficulties for us, help us to rest in that and know that You are in control, and it's for our good and we are to trust in You. So, Lord, bless. You are the wise One; You know how to bless.

And so, we look to You to do that. But we pray for Your people, that they would be blessed spiritually and physically. So, Lord, we commit our time to You now. We pray You bless us as we sing our next hymn and prepare our hearts. We ask for a time of study together and worship together. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, we have been in the book of Colossians for some weeks now, and hopefully you have learned that the great subject of the book is the person and work of Christ, the sufficiency of Christ. Paul carefully developed that in chapters one and two and then in chapter three he applied that doctrine to Christian behavior. All doctrine has practical implications, and he applied it to the Colossians very well. And as he is now bringing his epistle to a close in chapter four, he felt the need to advise the Colossians on a few more subjects that are of great significance.

At first glance, they don't seem to be related to one another. In fact, in his commentary on chapter four, verses two through six, Cambridge Professor C. F. D. Moule simply titled the passage "Various Admonitions." But if there is a common thread that connects verses two through six, it is that of 'communication'. The subjects addressed are prayer, conduct, and conversation and all three are about communication: Communication with God and communication with people. Communication through words and communication through conduct. Sometimes actions speak louder than words, but words are important. James reminds us of that in his book of how our words can be both healing and harmful. 'They can set the world on fire.', he said. (Jas 3). So, for us to speak well and behave well, as witnesses for Christ, we must first pray well. We must be in close communion and communication with the Lord.

And that is where Paul begins, with the subject of prayer. He counsels three things in prayer: faithfulness, watchfulness, and thankfulness. "Devote yourselves to prayer," he writes, which means 'be faithful at prayer', 'be persistent in prayer'. There's an urgency about it. We are in a spiritual war, and our prayers are our letters from the front. They are our requests for help in the battle, and they should be constant. They

must be. The Lord spoke of that in Luke chapter 18, verse 1. He told his disciples that "...at all times they ought to pray and not lose heart." 'Not lose heart' because that is what we do so often when our requests are not granted quickly. We wonder if the Lord hears us; we get discouraged and give up. But the Lord said, "Don't lose heart." Then He illustrated that with a parable about a poor widow who pleaded for help from an unjust judge and got her way only because she wore him down with her requests. The lesson is if a bad judge can be moved to help by a nagging widow, then certainly our good and loving Lord will help when His saints call out to Him.

So, we are to do that. We are to be unrelenting in prayer. What seems to us to be delays are not delays, not from His perspective. They can discourage us, as I say, seem to frustrate us and cause us to wonder why. But those delays, at least from our perspective, are part of His design to test our faith, and in testing our faith, to make it stronger with our perseverance in prayer and constancy. And He will answer our prayers at the right time and in the right way. We, for our part, must trust Him. We must rest in Him. We live by faith; that's the Christian life. And prayer is the means He has given us to get the blessings that He has promised us.

'So, do not lose heart.' That was Paul's instruction here and elsewhere. It is his instruction to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 17, where he wrote, "Pray without ceasing." How do we do that – without ceasing? Obviously, Paul didn't mean never get off your knees. The point is, prayer should characterize our life. We are to be walking with the Lord. We are to be communicating with Him.

Warren Wiersbe wrote that our prayers should be as constant and normal to us as breathing. In fact, prayer is often referred to as spiritual breathing. It characterized the early Church; it was a praying Church. In Acts chapter 2, verse 42, Luke wrote that the Christians "...were continually devoting themselves to the prayer." They were busily engaged in it, and the result was "...the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved." (vs 47). The Lord builds the Church. He is the One that adds to the numbers; He is the One that adds to the Church day by day. He guards it; He nourishes it. So, He is the One that we are to look to; He is the One that we are to pray

to. A praying church will be a triumphant church. It will shape the world. It did in the first century.

William Cowper wrote, in one of his hymns, "Satan trembles when he sees, the weakest saint upon his knees." He trembles because prayer is the path to strength. Paul said, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Phil 4:13). Satan wants to keep us weak; so, he wants to keep us from prayer. And when we are not praying, we are weak and unprotected.

So, we are not only to be faithful in prayer; we are to be watchful in prayer. That's what Paul says next, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it..." (vs2). In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night that the Lord was betrayed, He asked His disciples to, "Keep watch," while He prayed. It is the same word that Paul uses here, "keeping alert." The three disciples, as you know, didn't. The Lord prayed for an hour, came back and found them sleeping. And so He said, "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation..." (Mat 26:41). But they didn't. Again, they slept and were unprepared for the great test that came next when Judas led the soldiers into the Garden to arrest Christ—and all the disciples fled. And then later that evening, Peter denied the Lord three times.

What might they have done had they realized what they were about to face, had they known the tests that they were about to undergo, had they taken the Lord's warning seriously and been earnest in prayer? They didn't and as a result, they responded as they did. But had they been alert, had they been in prayer, they might have responded differently; they might have responded with courage and steadfastness. But Peter learned a lesson. Later he wrote, in 1 Peter five, eight, "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert...", (And there's our word again, "keep alert"), "...Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." When we neglect prayer, we are not watching. It is those who are persistent in prayer who are on the alert, who are aware of the danger, understanding of God's will and concern for others. Faith produces prayer. It is when we are spiritually dull, it is when we are spiritually listless,

when we are indifferent to spiritual things that we are indifferent to our situation and we stop praying. And that is when we fall into temptation. The devil is always watching. The devil is always active. The devil is always alert.

The Puritan Thomas Watson wrote, "Satan tempts when he sees us weakest. He breaks over the hedge where it is lowest." I like that description: vivid and true to life! "He breaks over the hedge where it is lowest." Where is the hedge lowest in your life? Well, you may not be able to answer that. I don't know that I could answer that. It may be low where we think it's high. Peter certainly thought the hedge was high when the Lord told him, "You are going to deny Me three times," and he resisted that, but it was true. And so, what we need to do is what Peter did not do, and that is listen to the Lord; that is understand what the Scriptures say: Read the Scriptures, study the Scriptures and pray, and as we do that we learn where we are weak and where we need to be strong.

Now, here's the thing, and this really brings us back to the main theme of this book, the person of Christ, the sufficiency of Christ. As we make Him our focus and know Him, our desires change and we want to know Him better. There is nothing more valuable to our spiritual life than that: Than looking to Christ, keeping our eyes fixed on Him. Do you remember Augustine's motto? "Love God and do as you like." It's true; it's scriptural. If we love God, we will want to do what He likes us to do, and we will be obedient. But to love God, to love the Triune God, to love the Son of God, we must see Him in the Scriptures and fellowship with Him in prayer. The more we know Him, the more we know His gifts, the blessings that He has given to us, and the more thankful we are.

Thanksgiving is the third feature of prayer that Paul encourages, and this really is the fulcrum of prayer. Prayer rests and turns on gratitude. It is motivated, generated by gratitude. So, this third feature of prayer brings things full circle. Earlier, in chapter three, Paul commanded the Colossians to be thankful. That is the greatest motivation to obedience: being thankful. And that is true of prayer as well. "The remembrance of former mercies," F. F. Bruce wrote, "produces spontaneous praise and worship. It is a

powerful incentive to prayer." His former mercies remind us that He is faithful. And when we consider the cross and all that the Lord did in order to make us His sons and daughters, we know His commitment to us is settled; it is certain. And that's what Paul said in Romans 8, verse 32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" If He gave us the greatest thing, His own Son, then won't He give us the lesser things? Of course He will. That is what Paul is saying. The cross is proof of that. The cross is proof that His commitment to us is settled and it can never be shaken. And this is the reason it is so important to reflect on the cross and reflect on the mercies of God, and what He has done for us. That makes us thankful, and it makes us confident, and it makes us responsive to Him.

Now, there is a discipline to this. We need to pray; it is essential, but to do that, we need to make a conscious effort. The way to begin is by making an effort to remember those mercies – former mercies, present mercies. Remember the promises that He has given us. All of that is to be the object of our reflection because His mercies to us are many; His promises to us are many; His declarations of His faithfulness to us are many. We need to reflect on these things. We need to pray for ourselves as a result of that. And as we think about these things and have the desire to pray, we pray for ourselves in thanksgiving, and pray for our needs, for our spiritual health and safety. But we also need to pray for others.

And that is Paul's next directive, by implication, when he asks for prayer for himself in verse three, "– praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned." An interesting request that Paul makes. He didn't ask them to pray for his release from jail. He didn't ask them to pray for his acquittal at his trial. He didn't ask them to pray for his health, (and he had many health problems). He didn't ask for them to pray for anything personal of that nature. Rather, he asked them to pray that he would have more opportunities to give the gospel—to evangelize.

And this was the very reason he was in prison—for preaching the gospel. Yet that did not keep him from doing it. In fact, he continued on with his preaching. He kept at it in spite of any threat to himself—and he did so with great success. Still, he wanted more opportunities. He saw prison as God's providence, where God had put him in order to do His work. It's not what Paul had planned for himself, but there he was and he realized the sovereign hand of God had put him in that place where he met people he never would have met in any other way. He knew that providence had brought him there and he knew providence extended to all the opportunities that could be there, as well. And so, he asked the saints to pray for an 'open door', (which was recognition of God's sovereignty in evangelism), that there would be a right opportunity for him and to present the gospel. God creates the opportunity, and we must wait on that. So he said, 'Pray that God will open a door.' He does that.

In His providence, He has put you where you are. In business perhaps, in the classroom—wherever. Businessmen come in contact with all kinds of people, (But people like me do not. I am up in a study most of the day. I see my wife and pray for her and speak to her.) But so many of you men see people in a variety of places, and all kinds of people. In His providence, He has put us all somewhere, and we are to seek His opportunities; ask Him to help us to see those opportunities and then to act upon them. He opens doors, and He opens hearts to receive the Good News that we have to give.

He did that in Philippi. He did it everywhere Paul went, but Philippi is a particularly interesting example. That's how the church began there. God opened a heart. Luke recorded it in Acts 16, how Paul was preaching to a small group of women down by the river outside the town of Philippi. And there, one of the women, Lydia, was listening, and as she was listening, Luke wrote, "The Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul." (vs14). God is sovereign in these things. He causes the work that we do to bear fruit. And so, we are to be faithful to Him, faithful to the message, and faithful to wait on Him to open an opportunity to give the gospel. And while we are to wait upon Him, and recognize His absolute sovereignty in all of life,

(and specifically in the work of evangelism), we are responsible to be active and careful in the work of ministry.

Now, when I say, "the work of ministry," I suspect you think, 'Well, this is the work of ministry: Standing in a pulpit giving a sermon or standing in a lectern giving a Sunday school lesson. That's the work of ministry.' And, of course, it is the work of ministry—but so that you can minister also. That is what Paul says in Ephesians four. He lists four gifts that the Lord has given: apostles and prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. And then he says, 'He has given them "...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service.' ' Why are you here? Well, you are here to worship the Lord; you are here to fellowship with God's people. You are here, hopefully, to learn something from the Scriptures. But the reason you should be here, ultimately, is to be equipped to go out into the world and do the work of service. We are all in the ministry. We have all been gifted to do things in the Lord's service, and we are all given opportunities to serve Him.

And so, we are to be active and responsible, careful in the work of service that the Lord has given us. Paul thought so. He thought we needed to be very careful. That's clear from verse four, where he asks the Colossians to pray 'that he would be clear in his presentation of the gospel.' So, he is not simply idle in what he is doing and taking things as they come; he is very conscientious about His service: 'Pray that I will have the right words at the right time, "...that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.' '

So, here is our second subject, that of 'conversation', speaking – speaking the truth. Again, the fact that God is sovereign does not mean that we are to be idle. God is the God of order, and He blesses order. God blesses planning – careful, thoughtful planning. He blesses clarity. This is what Paul worked earnestly to give. He spent time thinking about this, and that is clear from the fact that he is seeking their prayers about his words. That he thought about these things, have no doubt. I can just imagine him there in his Roman prison, wondering to himself; "How does an old man, a Jew and

former rabbi, talk to this young Roman soldier that I am chained to? We have so little in common.”

Evangelism takes thought. I am not setting myself forth as an authority on evangelism or a great example of doing it, but I think from the Word of God it is very clear that it takes thought; it is not mechanical. We approach people differently and we need to explain things in a way that they understand. One of the most important contributions Martin Luther made to the Church, and one of the main reasons the Reformation took hold was his translation of the Bible into German. When he was in hiding, in Wartburg Castle, he translated the New Testament in three months. It wasn't the first translation of the Bible into German, but his was the first successful translation. The reason was—it was readable. He wrote that when translating, he needed to be sensitive to the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the marketplace. ‘We must be guided by their language, the way they speak, and do our translating accordingly.’

Well, that is true of how we give the gospel also. The gospel is unchanging. We cannot tinker with the simple message of salvation for sinners through faith alone, in Christ alone, in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior. That is a message for everyone. It is adapted to every individual, the Jew first and also to the Greek. To those with the Word of God, to those without it. It is adapted to every kind of person in the world—and it is the only message that is. We cannot tinker with that. We cannot change that. And God uses that to save souls. That is what delivers the seed of life that Peter speaks of in 1 Peter 1, verse 23. The life of regeneration comes to a person through the preaching of God's Word or the giving of the Gospel. The Spirit uses even the clumsiest effort at giving the gospel. The important thing is the message, not the method; still, we need to be thoughtful in our presentation of God's truth.

And Christ gives examples of that in the Gospel of John, in chapter three. He spoke differently to Nicodemus than he did in chapter four to the woman of Samaria. He adapted the same message to different people. We need to be careful to be accurate and clear about the truth and sensitive to those to whom we speak. That was Paul's

concern. It takes effort, and it takes prayer. The power of God is in His Word. It is living and active; it is powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. And He gives us access to that power through prayer. We need to speak prayerfully and seek the prayers of others for our ministry—Whether it is a ministry here, or out there in the world where you are every day.

Spurgeon knew that. When people visited the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, he would take them to the basement where people were fervently praying on their knees. He called it "the powerhouse of the church." "If the engine room is out of action," he said, "then the whole mill will grind to a halt. We cannot expect blessing if we do not ask." That's true; that is how important prayer is. But still, we would all confess, I think, that we don't pray as we ought. I think that's true for all of us. Prayer may be one of the most difficult spiritual exercises we do. I find it easier to study than to pray and to pray consistently – that is my experience and the experience of others.

Even George Whitefield found it difficult. He was a great evangelist with genuine zeal for the Lord, but he used to pray, "Lord, help me to begin to begin." That's a good prayer. That's a necessary one. We cannot devote ourselves to prayer and pray without ceasing if we don't begin to do it. And so, to begin to do it, we need "to begin to begin." So, Paul has laid out the importance of doing that, the importance of prayer.

And now, in verse five, he shifts from conversation to conduct by encouraging the Colossians to behave wisely toward outsiders—which means towards unbelievers. It is a ministry for there are many people who never read a Bible, who have never heard a sermon, but who observe the conduct of Christians. My friend, Mike Black, often says, "You are the only Bible some people will read." That means we need to behave well. If we claim the gospel changes lives, then a changed life is what people ought to see in us. So, Paul urges that next. (Verse five), "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity." "Conduct yourselves with wisdom..." Wisdom is, very simply, skill in living. It comes with time, but it is learned. And it is learned not only from experience, (that's part of it), but chiefly, principally, from the

Word of God. God's revelation gives us perspectives, gives us goals, gives us direction; it gives us wisdom. And as we follow the Lord's way, we will always do what is right, and we will always be blessed.

Now, having said that, I recognize that is almost a 'truism'. It's almost a 'platitude', isn't it? I mean this is obviously true, (at least obvious to the believer), that if we follow God's Word, follow God's will, we will do what is right. The problem is doing it. The problem is being obedient; it's following the Word; it's doing what He wills. If we do it, we will be doing what is right, and we will be blessed for it; but the struggle is in doing it. And so often we know what to do and we just don't do it. It's the personal struggle that Paul wrote of in Romans 7:15, 'of practicing', he said, 'the very evil that I do not want.' So, again, it brings out the importance to us of devoting ourselves to prayer, the necessity of spending time in prayer—'to begin to begin'. That's our powerhouse. It's the means of grace God has given us to receive the promises that He has given to us. We are weak in the flesh. He gives strength. And as we pray and follow His path, His providence leads us to people who observe our behavior for the good. When we are not watchful, people might see that which is not so good.

Unfortunately, we can get caught in an unguarded moment while having a bad day, grumbling about something – maybe with a waitress or in the checkout line – where we are recognized as that preacher or that Christian who doesn't live up to what he preaches, or she doesn't live up to what she says. We all have bad days; that's why we need to be in prayer; we don't know who's watching. We need to keep alert. That's what Paul has said earlier, 'Be alert'. You never know who's watching, and you may squander an opportunity. Paul was concerned about that – very concerned about that. We need to be alert, to watch for the opportunities that we have. This statement, "...making the most of the opportunity" is literally, "redeeming the time". It's a commercial or business term and means 'buy up', 'exhaust the possibilities', 'don't waste a minute'.

Well, we will, won't we? We will waste a minute or two or many; we know that. I am not saying that to give an excuse for being lazy; we are certainly not to do that, not

to be lazy. But we are not better than the apostle Paul who candidly said, 'I practice the very evil that I do not want.' So, the reality is we don't redeem the time as we should. Still, I look at Paul and think, "If I were with him and been one of his companions, like Timothy or Luke or Silas, and see the battles that he went through, they would seem pretty triumphant to me (unlike the battles I have)." And my next thought would be, "There is a man who redeems the time." Yet Paul would have said, "I am wasting too many minutes." I think what we would have seen in him is a man who was earnestly seeking to use his time wisely and well. We see that in the request that he is making to the Colossians.

But we see that in other men as well, and we certainly see from their prayers and their statements the importance of doing that—redeeming the time. We see it, for example, from David in Psalm 39:4, where he prayed, "Lord, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am." We all are. We are all transient, and that means our opportunities to take opportunities is short. I think that is the point that David is making: 'Help me to know how brief my time here is, because I don't want to waste it'. In fact, there in that Psalm, he describes himself as "a mere breath." (vs5). That is all we are in this world, "a mere breath." So, we need to recognize that time is short for all of us, and we need to pray that the Lord will help us to know how transient, how temporal we are, and move us to make the most of the time we have.

And then we are to speak well. That's what Paul says next in verse six. So, it's back to the subject of speaking; this is how we make the most of our God-given opportunities. "Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person." The salt metaphor is a common one in the New Testament. The Lord used it. Salt is both a preservative and a condiment. Things taste better with salt; that's the idea here. What the salt, or seasoning, represents is grace. We are to be gracious in our conversation, not

combative. We are not only to speak with grace, we are to speak about grace; we are to talk about God's love and salvation.

It is very easy, it seems to me, to preach on sin or speak on people's failures. It's easy, I say, because when we get on that subject, we are always going to hit the target because we are all vulnerable to that. We are all weak. So, if I could speak on any subject of sin, everybody's going to feel it. Now, sometimes that is necessary; sometimes we cannot avoid it because it is in the Scriptures, and we are preaching through the Scriptures. So, it is a necessary thing to talk about. But we are to talk about it in a proper way, not with what some have called 'the scolding tone.'

Paul says our speech should be with grace. That is the salt that seasons our words. Maybe very often with the salt of our tears, as we speak of the terrible consequences of sin and willful rebellion. But always our rebukes and warnings should be wed with hope of forgiveness; that's grace. And the Lord is so gracious. The Savior receives sinners as they are. He doesn't say, "Now, you go away and make some changes, and let's see some reform in your life. You come back and then we'll talk." No, where you are at that moment, He saves. We need to be prepared to tell that to people. That is the instruction that Peter gave in 1 Peter 3:15, 'Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you yet do it with gentleness and reverence.' And this is what Paul was saying here: 'Speak of our hope'.

What better subject for today is there than the subject of hope? People can talk of the changes that they hope politics will produce. Or the gains they hope the stock market will give, or medical research will bring. But whatever hope this world fulfills, it is only for the moment. Even if we get the very best from whatever we are hoping for from whatever temporal institution—it is just temporal. For remember, we are all, "a mere breath" as David said. We only get 'things temporarily. We have them for the moment and then we are gone.

No, we have a different hope. We have a better hope: an eternal hope. It is the only hope that really counts. This is what we are to be prepared to explain and defend—

but we are to do it with gentleness and reverence. That is another way of saying, "Let your speech always be with grace, as those seasoned with salt."

Now, to talk to others about our hope and about grace, we need to understand it. We need to understand what our hope is. We need to understand what grace is. That means we need to study God's Word and learn about it. So, we need to redeem the time, use it well, and learn. That is really what will shape our conduct. When we learn more of the grace of God that saved us, (saved us as we were, saved us where we were, saved us in the midst of sin, forgave us and made us a new creation), we will be grateful, and we will live differently. We should.

And when we do that, people will see; they will read our lives like a book and understand that there is something different about us. And maybe, seeing that, they may ask some questions. "I see you are different. Why is that?" We need to be ready for that moment and answer truthfully and graciously. And we will do that by God's grace and only His grace.

The Lord gave the disciples comforting words about that, about His grace and His help in Mark 13 and verse 11. They were going to face difficult days, and He was forewarning them, but He gave them some encouragement. He said when they are arrested and put on trial, they were not to be anxious, He said, "...for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit." And that's the assurance that we have. As we walk by the Spirit, we will be led into opportunities to speak of what we know, and He will help us; He will enable us; He will bless what we do. So, study so that you will know what you should know and live a life that is consistent with what you know. That will be good communication in both word and deed.

And pray! May God help all of us to see the need of that, the necessity of being men and women of prayer, communicating with God Almighty. May we devote ourselves to prayer; it is God's gift to us. It is a means of grace that He has given us to lay hold of His promises and receive His power, to receive the blessings that He has obtained for us through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. It is one of the greatest

privileges we have. The devil knows that and tries to keep us from it. So, may God help us 'to begin to begin', become men and women of prayer.

Well, maybe someone is here, and all of this is very much new to you; you have never heard the Good News. And if so, let me say it is simple. Here it is: You are lost. All people are born lost and guilty sinners. But God sent His Son to die for the guilty and by His death in our place save all who believe in Him. And that is all we must do; that is all we can do, and we can only do that by the grace of God. Trust in Christ; trust in His sacrifice, in His person, and in His work. He forgives all who do. He saves us and He changes us, and He will change you. He makes all things new. Trust in Him and then, by God's grace, may we live out the instruction that Paul has given us here. Let us pray.

Father, we do thank You for the instruction that the apostle gave to these Colossians. May we live lives that give praise to You in our every thought and deed, in our conversation, and in the way we live. May we live in a way that brings great honor to You. As we think about all You have done for us, we will certainly be motivated to do that. Thank You for all that we have in Your Son, for the eternal life we have, and for the life we have in this world which is a life well-guarded by You and provided for by You. We thank You for Your goodness and Your grace, and we thank You for that, in Christ Your Son. Amen.

(End of Audio)