

# Coach House Church

# BEACONS

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## FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRAYER

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21ST APRIL 2020

Hello, everyone. In this time of continued uncertainty, I want to talk about a short set of instructions in the Bible. Colossians 4, verses 2 to 6, is a short passage written by Paul during his time in prison. Colossians, as a whole, was written as a letter to provide guidance to the churches in Colosse, during a time of great anxiety and false teaching being passed down among the general populace.

The passage we will be looking at, however, is one that takes place at the very end of the letter, and it reflects one of Paul's universal message and concern to all congregations, so let us take a look through the passage now.

**Colossians Chapter 4, verses 2 to 6:**

**Further Instructions**

**2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 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. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.**

The theme of Colossians 4, verses 2 to 6, is that a Christian lifestyle involves both a personal prayer life and a growing understanding towards interacting with the world outside your door.

This set of instructions contain a message that is applicable to this day. Paul here is addressing his audience that is the Colossian church, as well as any church that seeks to model the ideal Christian congregational lifestyle. In these instructions, Paul is addressing Christians pastorally in two ways, the first being the ministry of prayer and the second being the ministry of proclamation. Prayer is about a Christian's inner life, or how they interact with themselves and God. Proclamation is about living out a Christianity for others who are not familiar with a Christian's way of life.

Paul opens his instructions with asking the church to devote themselves to prayer. Prayer is an action built on persistent and earnest effort. In addition to regular discipline to prayer, Paul instructs Christians to be watchful and thankful. We should never pray as if we are asleep. Instead, it is important to pray with hope and confidence towards the future, knowing that God hears our prayers, even if the answer that will be given is not what we prefer. Prayer recognises God as Lord over your request, as the one who knows the genuine state of your heart at all times.

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## something worth instructing the church to pray for

Paul then asks for prayer, but not for his personal needs. Although he was imprisoned at the time of writing this passage, he instead asks that the church prays for God to give an opportunity to share the very news for which Paul became physically chained up. The Good News, the Gospel, that reveals the mystery of Christ is what Paul is concerned about, and he asks for the church to pray for his message and speeches about this Gospel to become even more clear to those who do not know what he is talking about.

Remember, again, that Paul writes this letter during a time when people are running around to spread what Paul calls hollow and deceptive philosophy, as described in Colossians Chapter 2. Clarity of the Gospel he preaches as something separate to the popular philosophies at the time is something worth instructing the church to pray for. Paul then instructs the Colossians on the ministry of proclamation, in that Christians must be wise in the way they act towards outsiders. Outsiders can mean those who do not generally believe in the message of Jesus as well as those who teach incorrectly on Christian living. A wise community, be they Christian or not, makes use of every

opportunity to stand as a witness for what they believe in. This is exactly what Paul is referring to in this passage.

Christian living does not only consist of prayer. It also involves living practically and being aware of opportunities to represent Christ in the best way possible, with grace but without compromise. This is a call to cultivate captivating and understanding conversational skills, so that we can be ready to respond appropriately to anyone who interacts with us. This may require time to be put aside to reflect and understand personal flaws in your conversational skills, or considering different kinds of methods to self-improvement. Ultimately, this is a call to take in an attitude of active personal growth.

This passage is short. However, it highlights what is important for a Christian lifestyle. Prayer involves personal responsibility, empathy, and an attitude of gratitude. Proclamation is also part of the package. Representing what you believe in is important, and knowing how to continually improve your presentation without watering it down is essential.

This is Paul's further instructions, as seen in Colossians Chapter 4, verses 2 to 6. Amen.



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