

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

SALTY SPEECH



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Many of us feel guilty about how rarely or how badly we talk about our faith to others. Sometimes we lack courage and fail to speak. Other times we lack care and fail to speak well.

How often do we pray for opportunities to speak to others about our faith? How many times have opportunities been given and we didn't talk about our faith? How many times have we talked about our faith but messed up. How many times

we spoken, and spoken well, but we've undermined it by how we talk and walk at other times.

Do you want to increase in courage and care when talking to others about God? As we'll see, it begins with talking to God about others. Let's see how the Apostle Paul directs us to talk to God constantly so that we can talk to others courageously and carefully.

CONTEXT

The Apostle has been giving specific directions to specific groups: husbands, wives, children, parents, employers, and employees (3:18-4:1). Now, he speaks to all Christians generally about how to be good witnesses to all.



1. TALK TO GOD CONSTANTLY (2)

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us...

Steadfast Prayer

We are often tempted to give up praying for help in witnessing for Christ. But Paul says, don't give up, **continue steadfastly in prayer**. Keep praying, and praying, and praying. The verb here means 'adhere to' or 'stick to.' Stick at it with perseverance, determination, and resolve. We can do this by continuing steadfastly in the Gospel.



Pray every day for opportunities to witness. Pray for opportunities with specific people. Even if you've missed or messed up opportunities in the past, stick at it.

BE A SUPERGLUE PRAY-ER
NOT A PRITT-STICK PRAY-ER.

Watchful Prayer

Being watchful in it. Watch you don't give up. Watch for opportunities. Watch with expectancy for God to answer your prayers. Watch that your prayers remain energetic not sleepy. Watch for the coming of the kingdom.



While we may close our physical eyes when we pray, we're praying that God would keep our eyes open after prayer. It's not just pray and forget, but pray and look out.

BE A DYNAMIC PRAY-ER
NOT A DROWSY PRAY-ER.

Thankful Prayer

Being watchful in it with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the greatest motive for prayer. If we're thankful for the Gospel, if we're thankful that others spoke to us about Jesus, if we're thankful for past opportunities that were successful, if we're thankful for God's patience with us in all our failures, then we will witness more and better.



If you lack stickability and energy in praying for the lost, if you are not praying for or taking opportunities, then the remedy is to increase gratitude to God.

GRATEFUL PRAY-ERS
ARE GREAT WITNESSES.



I'm wakeful, watchful, and grateful in prayer.
But what specifically am I to pray for?



2. TALK TO OTHERS CLEARLY (3-4)

That God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak (3-4)

An Open Door for the Word

That God may open to us a door for the Word (3). What closes the door? Two sets of rusty hinges. The first set of rusty hinges is on the other side of the door: people's lack of interest, lack of need, lack of time, lack of sin, lack of concern. All of these close the door on one side. But the second set of rusty hinges is on our side: our coldness, our unbelief, our doubt, our selfishness.

PRAYER OILS HINGES
AND OPENS DOORS.

A Living Person is the Word

To declare the mystery of Christ (3). When the door opens, we are to put a person in front of people, not a system of doctrine, not a church, not a pastor. We must always attach the benefits of the Gospel to Jesus. Jesus the justifier, Jesus the forgiver.

THE GOSPEL IS A PERSON
NOT A SYSTEM.

A Willingness to Suffer for the Word

On account of which I am in prison (3). Paul's praying for an open door while staring at a locked door. He's locked up in prison because he walked through an open Gospel door. He was willing to have the door slammed in his face for the sake of others seeing Christ's face.

WHEN THE DOOR IS SLAMMED IN YOUR FACE
REMEMBER IT'S SO OTHERS MAY SEE CHRIST'S FACE

A Clear Declaration of the Word

That I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak (4). He's praying and asking for prayer to be clear in his witness. "Lord don't let me fudge, or confuse, or back-pedal, or soft-pedal. Remove mysticism and vague generalizations. Give me help to be concrete and crystal clear. Help me speak so I cannot be misunderstood.

BE CONCRETE AND CRYSTAL
NOT FUDGE AND DODGE.



If we're not clear about the Gospel ourselves, we won't be clear in telling others about it. Take some time to write down the Gospel in the simplest terms. Imagine you were explaining it to someone with limited English or a five-year-old. How would you commend Christ to someone?



I've been praying constantly and speaking clearly but with no results.
What else is missing?



3. TALK TO OTHERS CAREFULLY (5-6)

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person (5-6).

Walk with Wisdom

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders. We are to be wise in how we live before others. We will not get a hearing for Christ unless we are living like Christ. **Making the best use of the time** means taking every opportunity to do good for and to others.

IT'S ALL VERY WELL TO TALK WELL,
BUT WE ALSO MUST WALK WELL.

Talk with Wisdom

Let your speech always be gracious. It's not enough to say the right thing; we must also say it in the right way. Gracious means dealing with people not as they deserve, not as they speak to us. It's not always speaking of grace, but speaking with grace.

Seasoned with salt. Salt stops corruption and brings out the flavor of food. Avoid all corrupt talk and bland talk. A wise walk plus wise talk adds seasoning to the Gospel feast. Salty speech is appetizing speech.

So that you may know how you ought to answer each person. If there was a formula or script, we wouldn't need prayer. We need prayer because every person and every situation is so different, that we need God's guidance in starting conversation, answering questions, manner, timing, etc.

IF WE WALK AND TALK WITH WISDOM
PEOPLE WILL ASK FOR OUR WISDOM



Some of us walk the walk but never talk the talk. Some of us talk the talk but don't walk the walk. God's way is a wise walk plus wise talk maximizes Gospel opportunities and Gospel success.

Jesus exemplified verses 2-6 perfectly in his life. We worship him as the one who talked to God constantly, and talked to others clearly, courageously, and carefully. As such, he is our example. But he also offers to cover all our failings, wipes out our record, and so motivates us again to follow his model.

'Cause I'm just a nobody trying to tell everybody
All about Somebody who saved my soul
Ever since You rescued me, You gave my heart a song to sing
I'm living for the world to see nobody but Jesus.

Casting Crowns



CONCLUSION



PRAYER: Lord Jesus, you are the perfect witness. Help me to talk to you constantly so that I can talk about you clearly and carefully.

FURTHER STUDY

Online Articles

- [Three Types of Evangelistic Context](#)
- [Seven Tips for Sharing the Gospel with Teens](#)
- [We need more Parlour Preachers](#)
- [15 Reasons our Churches are Less Evangelistic Today](#)
- [The Key to Evangelism in the 21st Century](#)
- [10 Ways to Practice Normal Evangelism](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What successes have you had in witnessing? What did you learn from that?
2. What failures have you had in witnessing? What did you learn from that?
3. Try praying with these three words in mind: wakeful, watchful, thankful. What difference did that make to your prayers?
4. Practice explaining the Gospel to a non-Christian. Ask them what was confusing.
5. How can you make your speech more salty?
6. What lessons can you learn from Christ's evangelism in the Gospels?

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