

Holy Spirit's help, you need not fear. God can use you, even if you don't word everything just right.

b. Our speech must always be seasoned.

- 1) To season our words with salt is to use words that "taste nice." There is an old saying, "**You can attract more flies with honey than with vinegar.**" That is true as we witness as well. Tactful, kind words will soften more hearts than harsh argumentative words.
- 2) Be friendly. Be cheerful. Be kind. Ask questions rather than making accusations (e.g., "Why do you believe that?" Rather than, "That belief is of the devil.").
- 3) Though the Gospel is not all positive, be sure to give the person hope.
- 4) Quoting helpful Scripture or letting them read it is another means of "salting" your witness. God blesses His Word.

c. Our speech must always be perceptive.

- 1) To "know how you ought to answer" literally states "having perceived how it requires you to answer".
- 2) With God's help, we must know or perceive how the conversation requires us to answer.
- 3) Each person to whom you witness is unique. You must approach a person who has never darkened the door of a church in his life far differently than you talk to a Catholic or Mormon. As you talk, think ahead and pray for wisdom. Each person demands a customised approach.

Conclusion: Don't let this overwhelm you. If you spend quality time daily in God's Word gaining wisdom, He will give you the insight, the opportunities, and the courage to speak for Him. With God's help, **walk in wisdom** (do not let your life be a stumbling block), **redeem the time** (courageously taking advantage of each opportunity God gives), then **speak appropriately** (depending on God's grace, seasoning your words, and discerning how to best answer).

Remember, as a witness for Christ, you are not a failure unless you say nothing.

Song: Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord – **337** Think about the words as you sing.

Evangelistic Wisdom

29 October 2023 PM – Text: Colossians 4:5-6 – Topic: Wisdom – Series: Col23

Introduction: Why is the Gospel impact of today's Christianity making such a minimal impact on our society? Could it be that the unbelieving world sees very little in the lives of Christians that attracts them to Christ? If the things we do, say, watch, attend, laugh at, seek, honour, praise, and spend our money on are no different from the unbelieving world, why should they want Christ?

In our age of technology, people are obese with information, yet starving for wisdom. With a click, you can be instantly bombarded with pages of information on just about any imaginable topic. Whether you are looking for ancient history, sports statistics, an archaeological discovery, today's weather, Bible trivia, or a bargain, it is all instantly available. Our minds are bloated with facts, but we are starving for wisdom.

Wisdom is the God-given ability to make right choices. Wisdom does not reside on the web; it comes from God. Therefore, fearing God is the key. (Proverbs 9:10) "**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.**" (Proverbs 2:6) "**For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.**" (Proverbs 4:7) "**Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.**" Wisdom is linked to words like discernment and insight. It is the ability to spot a problem to avoid, or the insight to discern a better way. God is the author and source of all true wisdom.

Wisdom is the theme of our text this evening. Colossians 4:5-6 requires God-given wisdom.

Transition: Paul had just requested prayer for his evangelistic outreach, now he addresses the need for evangelistic wisdom among believers. In doing so, he gives us a threefold challenge.

1. We must wisely walk.

a. Our walk is our daily conduct.

- 1) The word "walk" literally refers to walking about. However, figuratively, it describes our personal conduct. It is the sum of all that we do each day. It is the part of our lives that others see.

- 2) Our walk begins when we get out of bed. It includes our choice of clothing, our morning Bible time and prayer (or lack of it), our attitude at breakfast, our punctuality to school or work, our time on social media, our honesty or dishonesty, our viewing habits, our choice of language, our prayer before we eat lunch (or lack of it), our obedience or disobedience to rules and laws, our respect or disrespect of others, etc.

3) The way that you live your life is your walk.

b. Unbelievers are observing our walk.

- 1) We might like to think that our walk is not noticed by others, but that is far from true. (Proverbs 20:11) "**Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.**"
- 2) God challenges us as believers to "**Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.**"
 - a) Those "without" are those "without Christ", the unbelievers all around us. Those unbelievers include your neighbours, people on the bus or train, classmates, workmates, those in the shopping centre, etc.
 - b) God's command is that we walk in wisdom as we mingle with unbelievers. God's wisdom must govern our attitudes, words, and conduct each day. We must not give any unbeliever an excuse to reject Christ (e.g., Christians are hypocrites, they do the same questionable things that I do, I hear them arguing and fighting just like my other neighbours, if that dishonest person is a Christian, I want nothing to do with church, etc.).
 - c) Think back over today, yesterday, and last week; did you walk like a wise person or like a fool? Would God say that you walked in wisdom?
- 3) If you must admit that some of your walk was not in wisdom, what specifically do you need to change? Is it your tongue, your attitudes, your anger, your dress, your honesty, your unfriendliness, or your viewing? Pin it

down. We must know what we need to change before we will ever make the change.

2. We must wisely redeem the time.

a. Our time is limited.

- 1) In context, the word "time" seems to be speaking of time to share the Gospel.
- 2) Several things can limit our time to witness to a person.
 - a) Tender hearts do not stay tender forever.
 - b) You may never see that person again.
 - c) People move without notice.
 - d) Death can come suddenly and unexpectedly.

b. We must wisely use our time.

- 1) To "redeem the time" literally speaks of buying back the time. But what does that mean?
- 2) It is making wise and sacred use of every portion of time. Zodiates put it this way, "by prudent and blameless conduct, gaining as much time and opportunity as possible in view of persecution and death."
- 3) The idea is that we should diligently use each opportunity to share the Gospel that the Lord gives to us. We must walk wisely so that we do not hinder the Gospel, and then be watching and praying for opportunities to speak for Christ and not let them slip away without using them.
- 4) God will not hold us accountable for those who reject the Gospel, but He will hold us accountable for turning people away by foolish living and for not sharing the Gospel when we have the opportunity.

3. We must wisely speak.

a. Our speech must always be with grace.

- 1) This may mean that our words must be gracious and kind, even when undeserved.
- 2) However, since grace is "divine enabling", it probably means that our words must be enabled by the Holy Spirit. We must depend upon Him to give us the right words to say in every situation.
- 3) If you will be loving, tender and compassionate as you speak to an unbeliever about Christ, depending on the