

The Small Things

Colossians 4:1-18

6/14/2025

Application

Announcements Israel [Psa 121:4 NKJV] 4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep. Father's Day Your role is not optional, it's essential; it's not secondary, it's primary. A Father like Abraham who modeled faith and complete obedience to the Lord. Like Joshua who showed resolve that as for him and his house, they would serve the Lord. Like Job, who regularly interceded for his children before the throne of God. Like the father of the prodigal son, who is always waiting with mercy, grace, and generosity. Beware fathering like Eli, the priest who refused to discipline his wicked sons, causing them to walk into God's judgment. Like David who did not confront Amnon's rape of Tamar or discipline Absalom for murder and rebellion. Like Lot who chose to raise his family in Sodom; offered his daughters to wicked men.

Scripture

[Col 4:2-18 NKJV] 2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3 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, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. 7 Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9 with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here. 10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. 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 all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. 14 Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. 15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house. 16 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." 18 This salutation by my own hand--Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

Main Point

Point 1

Consistent in Prayer

Scripture

Colossians 4:2-4 (NKJV) "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 may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."

The four aspects of prayer:

Continual Vigilant Thankful

Continual:

Prayer is a constant communication with God.

We must continue in it. When we feel as though God isn't listening, we must continue. When we have prayed about it 100 times without a perceivable answer, we must continue. When we're tempted to believe it's all for not, we must continue. Earnestly - to continue steadfastly; to persevere and not faint.

Scripture

Luke 18:1 (NKJV) Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.

Quote

The antithesis of discouragement and failure is prayer.

Application

Prayer is our direct line of communication with God, a loving Father who deeply cares for us. When we face discouragement and failure, turning to prayer can bring us comfort, guidance, and strength. In scripture, we see examples of how prayer transformed desperate situations. For instance, in 2 Chronicles 20:12, King Jehoshaphat prayed when surrounded by enemies, acknowledging his own helplessness but putting his trust in God's power to deliver them. Likewise, in James 5:13-16, we are encouraged to pray in times of trouble and sickness, as the fervent prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Let's not underestimate the incredible power of prayer in overcoming discouragement and failure, for through prayer, we invite our faith to grow and God's hand to move, working miracles within us and around us.

Prayer is not about us seeing the results we desire; it's about aligning with the results He desires.

Scripture

1 John 5:14-15 (NKJV) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Vigilant: to be attentive; to watch.

Scripture

1 Peter 4:7 (Type Version) - 7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

Application

One of the dangers of religious prayer is that it can become rote and repetitive, which causes people to stop thinking about what they are praying. To be watchful in prayer implies an awareness that prayer is not merely the reciting of words or a religious ritual, but rather a response to reality.[Mat 6:7 NKJV] 7 "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Scripture

[2Ki 6:15-18 NKJV] - 15 And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16 So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 18 So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

Illustration

The enemy became blinded when the servant's spiritual eyes were open. We need to pray with spiritual "eyes wide open" realizing the battle is the Lord's, recognizing the spiritual warfare that we are engaged in, and being aware of the things taking place around us.

Thankful:

Prayer should never be a place we bring our entitlement, but rather our gratitude. When you start praying by thanking God for who He is and what He's done, little room is left for selfish prayer or complaining.

Quote

— *Pastor Josh*

Gratitude shifts our perspective from US to GOD and leaves us humbled by the multitude of His mercies and blessings.

Scripture

[Psa 116:12, 17 NKJV] - 12 What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? ...
17 I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

Illustration

Imagine being robbed at knifepoint—your money gone, your security shaken. Most of us would respond with anger or fear. But the great Bible commentator Matthew Henry once recorded this in his journal after such an event: "Let me be thankful—first, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed." What a powerful example of a heart anchored in gratitude. Rather than letting fear or bitterness win the day, he chose to see God's mercy even in misfortune. This is the kind of thanksgiving that should shape our prayers—not just thanking God when life is good, but acknowledging His grace even when life is hard. Gratitude in prayer isn't based on our circumstances; it's rooted in our confidence that God is still good, still sovereign, and still with us.

Main Point

Point 2

Continuing in Wisdom

Scripture

Colossians 4:5 (NKJV) "Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time."

Quote

The inner life of prayer will be followed with the outer life of witness.

Scripture

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NKJV) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Application

To walk in wisdom and walk circumspectly also implies a watchfulness about your life. I'm watchful in prayer, in the things of the Spirit, but I'm also watchful in the physical realm of my life and my moments. We need awareness and wisdom more than ever before because of the evil that surrounds us and the eyes of those in the world that are watching us, waiting for us to falter and fail. Those who are outside are those in the world, apart from Christ. Our lives are a witness to the reality of Jesus and the truth of His word. Wisdom is not just about what we know, but how we implement it towards the world.

Quote

— Charles Spurgeon

"Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom."

Redeeming the time - two possible meanings:

Redeem - to purchase back. The enemy is using every moment to steal, kill, and destroy. We are to redeem every moment for God's glory; to bring life, hope, light, and truth into the world in the enemy's clutches. Make the most of every opportunity - Time is one of the precious commodities that, once it is used and spent, can't be undone. Do you see your schedule with eternal eyes? You might think you're just going grocery shopping, but do you realize that God may have a divine appointment or schedule for you? We need to start viewing our time and our decisions as possible opportunities to do something of eternal value.

Again, Charles Spurgeon once wrote,

Quote

— Charles Spurgeon

"Time is short. Eternity is long. It is only reasonable that this short life be lived in the light of eternity."

Main Point

Point 3

Connected in communication

Scripture

Colossians 4:6 (NKJV) "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."

Question: How do your words taste? What flavor is your tone?

When Paul spoke about our speech being seasoned with salt, he wasn't encouraging us to have a "salty" attitude!

Salt is a seasoning that enhances the flavor of something and a preservative that prevents things from spoiling. If you have good food, not enough salt will make it bland, and too much salt will turn you off from eating it. Paul says that the salt of spiritual speech is grace. Speaking with grace will never compromise the truth, but it will present it with the balance of humility and boldness, conveying the heart of the matter and motivated by love. Apparently, the way we speak is as important as the truth we speak.

Quote

— *Matthew Henry*

Though it be not always of grace, it must be always with grace.

Whether we are sharing the gospel or talking about the next football game, we should seek to insert grace as a salt on our speech so that people see and hear the care of Christ. They may love or hate our words, and many people will hate our words, but may the way we choose to frame those words be in such a way that no slanderous things said against us could stick, and those who are actually listening will discern what we are truly saying.

Main Point

Point 4

Comforted through fellowship

We have never lived in a time when we have been so technologically connected and, at the same time, so unaware of what's going on in each other's lives. Well, Paul now lists off a bunch of people's names. These sections often get treated like the heels of the bread, cut off and thrown out. But there are some nutrients in these words and names.

The first thing that sticks out to me immediately is that Paul did not have a lone ranger mentality to Christian life and ministry. Every name is a person that Paul was relationally connected to in fellowship, worship, mission, and spirit. These are not just names. Each name represents a person, and individual in the family of God. Each name represents a heart, a gift, a contribution to the church, a person used by God for an eternal purpose. We as humans like to skip over people sometimes. Well, I think this section of Colossians gives us a perspective into the tight-knit community of fellowship that the church had back then. Paul didn't sacrifice people for the mission; people were the mission. They served the Lord TOGETHER.

Scripture

Colossians 4:7-8 (NKJV) Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts.

This is interesting to me. The couriers of ancient times were not emails, social media accounts, or YouTube. When Paul wanted people to know how he was and when he wanted to know how they were, he sent a person... flesh and blood, mind and soul.

Tychicus reminds me that it's critical to have actual human beings who know you and care about the state of your spiritual and physical life. To be surrounded by people in this life but be alone is a hard thing, and it shouldn't be what characterizes Christian relationships.\

Scripture

Colossians 4:9 (NKJV) "with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here."

Onesimus: Paul's other courier. He was a runaway slave.

The book of Philemon tells his story. Philemon was encouraged by Paul to receive back this runaway slave, no longer as a slave but as a brother in Christ. Apparently, when Onesimus ran away from the home of Philemon, he found his way into the house of God.

Application

Churches should be places where people can return who have been labeled by sin, and when they find repentance, they can be forgiven and received back into our midst. No one of us deserves to be welcomed or loved or served, but God's grace abounded in the midst of our sin. May Grace be a place where people can be forgiven, healed, and restored!

Scripture

Colossians 4:10 (NKJV) Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him).

Talk about a lineup of redemption stories! Onesimus was a man who found spiritual freedom from physical slavery, but Mark was a man who found renewed purpose after rejection!

Scripture

Acts 15:37-39 (NKJV) Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus.

Scripture

2 Timothy 4:11 (NKJV) Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

Application

Who was right and who was wrong? Paul or Barnabas? Neither and both! God used both, because Mark received encouragement and discipleship from Barnabas and, after maturing, became a useful man in Paul's ministry. Sometimes we look at parting of ways as good guys and bad guys, and sometimes that is a reality. But sometimes, it's just God's way of getting us out of where we aren't growing, and getting us into a place that will test and mature us. If you feel as though some pastor, ministry, friend, or employer has rejected you, instead of feeling sorry for yourself and wasting time in self-pity, evaluate, pray, and step forward by faith into a season of maturing and growth. Perhaps God will even bring you full circle with people once you realise that He had a purpose the entire time!

Main Point

Point 5

Constant in zeal

Scripture

Colossians 4:12-14 (NKJV) 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 all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

The zeal of Epaphras and Luke:

Do you have a zeal for the church?

Zeal - excitement of mind; fervor of spirit. Epaphras (probably the pastor) loved the church so much that even when hundreds of miles away, he labored in prayer for their well-being. Luke was a faithful servant and companion of Paul to the end, staying by his side in trial and even when others abandoned him. Prayer and commitment can be hard work sometimes. Prayer is easy when it's for 5 minutes, but when you get to three hours, your eyes, your body, and your mind become tired. That's when the discipline and work have to kick in. Commitment to the cause of the church can be easy when everything is exciting, but what about when it gets hard and sacrificial? A zeal for the church is such a wonderful thing to have. Why don't we have zeal for our favorite sports team? We have a zeal for our favorite hobbies. How much more should we have zeal, passion, and fervency for the body of Christ!

Illustration

I don't say this to offend, nor am I rebuking a love of sports, hobbies, or entertainment overall. But I believe that if Christians, Saint Joe, myself included, became as zealous, passionate and committed to the cause of Christ and the mission of the church as they were about the chiefs, Royals, their favorite band, hobbies, and movies, our entire city would be reached with the gospel, miracles would be taking place, and we would be expanding (money, resources, talents no issue at all). Why? Because the life that is set on fire by Christ will be so hot that everything they touch will become enflamed with Jesus.

Demas:

Demas is a sad story of someone whose zeal for the mission of Christ was short-lived, a flame that became quenched.

Scripture

2 Timothy 4:10 (NKJV) "for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia."

It's not how you start, but how you finish that matters. How many will be forgotten because they decided to give up on Christ, and trade the unseen riches of Christ for the temporary treasures and comforts of a fading world right in the middle?

Main Point

Point 6

Cultivating your calling

Scripture

Colossians 4:15-18 (NKJV) Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house. Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

House Churches:

Did the early church meet in houses out of principle or convenience? The Bible never specifies the appropriate method for where the church is to meet or what size the church needs to be, but only that believers are not to forsake the gathering together of the saints.

Biblically speaking, there is nothing prescriptive or inherently more spiritual about meeting in house churches than in mega churches. Wherever people are, there can be blessings and troubles! It is also not unspiritual for the church to financially invest in meeting place. How many of you if the church was meeting every week in your house might invest in some new furniture to accommodate the people? Clean carpet for the kids' rooms? Some kitchen supplies to feed the group? There is nothing wrong with trying to make an environment that encourages fellowship, welcomes visitors, and shows that we care about pursuing excellence in what we do for the glory of God.

Scripture

Colossians 4:17 - And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

Cultivating our calling is so important, as Archippus was about to learn! Three things I learn about ministry:

Ministry must be heededMinistry must be receivedMinistry must be fulfilled

Big questions about the things God has called and equipped you to do for His kingdom:

Quote

— *Pastor Josh*

Are you heeding or hating? Are you receiving or running? Are you fulfilling or failing?

Archipus had to be confronted about this in front of the entire church... now that's some accountability. But it's hard to see someone who God wants to use, but isn't, because of His unwillingness, but because of theirs. I have a feeling someone here today needs to hear the words, "Take heed to the ministry you have received in the Lord and fulfill it!"

Scripture

Colossians 4:17 (NKJV) "And say to Archippus, 'Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.'"