



“Living in Light of the Lord’s Return”

Colossians 4:2-6

June 12, 2022

As we get started, I want to begin by warning you of a kind of sleepiness that has been affecting and even afflicting God’s people all throughout redemptive history. In the physical realm, chances are that many of us are not getting enough sleep.

This seems to be the case for many of us as we grow through adulthood, but what we are concerned about in this portion of Scripture is that God’s people are often found sleeping spiritually; catnapping in the midst of most urgent need and opportunity. We see glimpses of this all throughout the pages of the Bible.

We think of the mighty Samson asleep on Deliah’s lap when his calling was to watch over Israel as one of its judges. Maybe we think of Jonah asleep in the cabin of the boat going the exact opposite direction of Nineveh, where God had called him to go to proclaim repentance to a population of people who could not tell their right and from their left. We remember the disciples asleep in Gethsemane when Jesus repeatedly instructed them to watch and to pray.

And we can think of all the opportunities to serve God that pass us by because we quite frankly are asleep in the light. Maybe we are worn out by pursuing the pleasures of this world. Or maybe we are weary with anxiety. But so often the very people of God are sleepy and sluggish rather than awake and alert as the return of King Jesus draws closer and closer every day. There is the capacity toward spiritual lethargy that is latent within each and every one of us.

That is why God in His grace gives us the kind of instruction that we are going to receive from the portion of the Bible that is ahead of this morning. God wants us to be alert. God wants us to be awake in view of the coming of the Messiah and the opportunities we have to be witnesses for Him as that time draws close.

As we read what the Holy Spirit was giving Paul to teach first the Colossians, then also to teach all of us, is that he knew that the young Christians in that shrinking town of Colossae, they too were capable of the drowsiness that we are talking about now. And we know that the church in California is capable of this too.

So we take heart to what God is giving us here to keep us alert and awake in the power of the Holy Spirit given to the church as a precious and powerful gift. This is not just for Colossae. This is for California, even Bellflower, even Bethel Grace.

Let’s read Colossians Chapter 4 and Verses 2 through 6:

²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³At the same time, pray also for us, 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—⁴that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

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

Amen and may the Lord bless the reading of His Word and the teaching of it as we dig in.

As we read this paragraph, let me remind you that we are coming to the end of this extended portion of the book of Colossians, where Paul talked about the new life in Christ Jesus. Throughout Colossians Chapter 3 into Chapter 4, Paul talked about the life of the new creation in the various spheres and segments of life.

So if you scan across the pages of your Bible, you see how Christians are to be filled with the Spirit and conduct themselves in church life in Chapter 3 and Verses 12 through 17. Then in Chapter 3 and Verse 18 through Chapter 4 and Verse 1, you have the conduct of the believer filled with the Spirit living in new life in the household.

Now as we read in Verses 2 through 6, we have the teaching of how the new person in Christ is going to be living in the midst of the world that we are living in; out in the midst of society, mingling with people who are not saved; who have not come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul gave us instruction.

This morning before we consider the application of this text in our own lives by looking at the imperatives in verse 2, 5, and 6, we have to look and see how at the heart of this we have an example of the kind of vigilance that we want to have as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul himself provided that example.

In Verses 3 and 4, we have the exact opposite of the kind of spiritual lethargy that we see pictured elsewhere through the pages of Scripture. I have given you a few examples already, but here we see an example of someone who is awake and alive and alert, looking for the next opportunity to serve Christ and point people to Him.

We see this in the Apostle Paul and this is the same mind that we are being called to have as well. This text is given to us by God for our good, not only the instructions that frames it, but the example that is stuffed into the middle of it. God is giving us this example of a man filled with the Holy Spirit.

Let me remind you that Colossians is one of the “Prison Epistles” written by the Apostle Paul. He wrote this while he was incarcerated in Rome. He was in chains in an apartment on house arrest awaiting trial before Caesar Nero himself. But the Apostle Paul did not regard this incarceration as an interruption of his missionary work. Instead, he saw it as a continuation of it.

In fact, Paul was looking forward to what might have been recognized as an apex moment in his evangelism. You read what Paul had to say and where his heart was in the midst of his arrest, he was looking for an opportunity to do some evangelism with the most powerful man in the world under God, Nero the Emperor of Rome. That is what Paul was looking for.

So Paul was asking the church to pray for him. Do you see how he was calling for prayer? Paul was saying, “Pray that the Lord would open a door for me. Pray that I will see the door of this apartment open up and be led into the presence of the emperor himself. Be praying that I will be clear.” Paul was asking for clarity.

Brothers and sisters, if I can give you a little bit of vernacular, maybe Paul would be saying, “Pray that I won’t experience brain fog. Also pray that I will not draw back in timidity. Pray that I will not mince words. Pray that I will be given boldness to proclaim the mystery of Christ on account of which I am in prison. It is my devotion to this mystery of Christ that got me here.”

Paul realized that was his purpose in being in prison. It was to extend the mystery in Christ. Paul, the ultimate strategist, you can picture it in his mind—God is doing this. He is putting me here. How else was Paul going to gain an audience with Nero? And here Paul was seeing that trial as the very opportunity, so God was helping him in the way that he was thinking about it.

What was at the heart of what was fueling Paul?

³At the same time, pray also for us, 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—⁴that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

He wanted to declare the mystery of Christ. So pay attention here because Paul was being energized by this mystery. He was burning at the mystery of Christ. This was the high dosage of caffeine in his work. This was kind of like Paul’s Red Bull without all of the nasty side effects.

Paul used this language of mystery all throughout his writings. You will find that he used that word about twenty times. It has also been used multiple times in the book of Colossians. So we must pay attention to this because understand, this was fueling his tank and I pray this will be fueling our tanks too! Theology is important. Theology leads to doxology and praises to God and fuel for the work that God calls us to do. So Paul had this mystery in mind.

Just a little bit of review of what we studied in early January when we came across this word in Chapter 1 of Colossians. When we come to this discussion of mysteries, Paul was not talking about some riddle that was hard to understand. When the Bible is talking about a mystery, it is not necessarily talking about something hard to understand, although it is attached to a truth that is profound.

But when we come to the language of mystery in the writings of the Apostle Paul, we come across something that was not made known in Old Testament days. It was a truth that remained veiled and to be fully revealed when Christ came and continued His teaching ministry through His Spirit-filled apostles.

We know, celebrate, and recognize that Christ Jesus in His person who came with salvation, He is revealed all throughout the Old Testament. Christ pervades the story of Scripture. But not every aspect of His ministry was made known until it was revealed through the New Testament prophets and apostles. This Pharisee born again by the Holy Spirit was burning at this mystery that was being revealed.

You will recall that Paul articulated the aspect of the mystery that was on his mind at the end of another one of his wonderful long, winding sentences that was used earlier in this letter. At the end of this sentence, Paul gave these seven life-transforming words. Here is the mystery. Colossians Chapter 1 and Verse 27:

27To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Back on January 9th we spent close to an hour in Colossians Chapter 1 and Verses 24 through 29, seeking to understand this glorious, wonderful, awesome statement that we have right here. Christ in you! The Everlasting Messiah in you. Which is the hope—the exclamation point, the fist-pump—of glory.

So what is this mystery that we are talking about in this text? Let's summarize it. First, it has to do with:

1. The indwelling of Christ in each believer.

The indwelling of Christ is in each one who trusts in the Gospel of grace, having it opened to them by the power of the Holy Spirit. What we find is that Christ is not only God with us, glory, glory, hallelujah, but He is also God in us. This is the Doctrine of the Indwelling of the Messiah. It is also stated in the parallel verse in Ephesians Chapter 3 and Verse 17 that Christ dwells within the hearts of His people by faith. Wow!

But is not just that. There is the indwelling of Christ in each believer, Christ in you, but there is also:

2. The glorification of the believer in Christ.

This is the time that is coming when sin will be totally irradicated from the life of the follower of Christ and they will be immersed in the glory of God.

This mystery is the indwelling of Christ in each believer, the glorification of the believer in Christ, and here is something else that really got the Apostle Paul:

3. The certainty of both of these for the Jewish and Gentile believers alike.

In Christ, God is bringing together Jews and Gentiles and with them all together, forming one new man in Christ. Or in other places in Scripture, forming the bride of Christ. So we have Jew and Gentile alike with the indwelling of Christ as the current reality and the glorification that they will receive and which will be cumulated at the Second Coming of Christ. When is this marvelous experience of the glory for the church to be experienced? Do you remember what it says back in Chapter 3 and Verse 4. Paul was telling them, “If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”

Then Paul went on in that paragraph and put the exclamation point on it when he said:

⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

That’s is when the glorification of the Christian and the church will occur.

This Doctrine of Glorification does not mean that you will become an inherently glorious being yourself. There is one inherently glorious being. That is the Triune God. God alone has this kind of internal substance that shines forth with radiance.

However, the time is coming by God’s gracious gift, when we Christians and us the church will be filled with the presence of God to the fullest extent that a created being can be. We will be saturated with His power and His presence. We will be reflecting His eminence and His radiance. We will be image bearers of the Lord Most High in the most profound, ongoing, awesome of ways.

So Paul, he was there on house arrest and he was contemplating the glorious mystery of God, and he knew that the glorious mystery of God was something that he needed to share outwardly, so he said:

³At the same time, pray also for us, 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—⁴that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

Paul wanted to get in the presence of Nero, and he wanted to proclaim the Gospel. He wanted to let Nero know about it. Paul was looking for some boldness and he wanted to get in the presence of that very powerful man who could stick his thumb up or stick his thumb down. Life or death for Paul.

Paul wanted to perhaps echo what Christ declared in the presence of Pontus Pilate. There is a Kingdom that is not of this world and it is going to pervade this world with power, and there is another King who has power that is unfathomable. This King came into the world, God as man. This King came into the world and shed His blood on a Roman cross. That blood was shed so that sinners like us could be made clean.

This King came and He lived a perfect life so that He could adorn us in His perfection as a gift, so that the righteousness of God would be honored in the salvation of sinners as they too are now reflecting the righteousness of Christ. And Paul was saying, “Even a Roman Gentile emperor like you can be brought into this if you will repent and trust in Christ and even if you do, this will be the work of God in you.” And this is what I think Paul was dying to be able to say to Nero, so Paul was asking the Colossians to pray for him.

In all of this, was Paul a man who was asleep or alert? Paul might have struggled with moments of questioning God, but the Spirit of God by-in-large was keeping him awake and alert. In the sister epistle to the Philippians, Paul said that he evangelized the entire Pretorian Guard, those Army Rangers of the Roman Empire. Paul told them all about Christ and said, “Who is next?” Caesar is. May the Lord open the door.

This was the fuel that was in Paul’s tank—the glory of Christ in redeeming sinners and joining them together. Now we need to say, “Lord, that was Paul then, and he was trying to extend similar perspectives to the Colossians then. But is the book of Colossians only for the Colossians? Or is it for the Californians too? The answer is yes, it is for the Californians too.”

So here in the heart of it, we have an example of a man alert and awake in the midst of his place in life. That was Paul’s example. Now what about us? What is the instruction that is given to us?

²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³At the same time, pray also for us, 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—⁴that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

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

It is given to us by way of three words of instruction, all of them in the imperative voice. This is God calling His church to action. Just like Jesus with His disciples at Gethsemane, “Be awake and alert. Be awake and watchful.” And as He also taught them at the Olivet Discourse about His coming return, “Be awake and be alert.”

The glory of Christ is going to appear in the sky and that day is drawing nigh. So in the meantime, God is calling us to be His witnesses. How can we go about being His witnesses in view of the coming of Christ? First, we will see that it is a matter of being determined in the way you pray. Second, be deliberate in the way you live. Third, be distinct in the way that you talk.

We will go through each one of these, asking God not only to speak into our lives, but to activate obedience in our lives.

In view of the great appearing of Christ:

1. Be determined in the way you pray (4:2)

That is what it says in Verse 2:

²Continue steadfastly in prayer

Be devoted to prayer in an ongoing way that you might be nourished and strengthened prayer.

²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

What we find is that throughout the writings of Paul, he was constantly putting premium value on the practice of prayer. He opened virtually all of his letters telling the churches, “I am praying for you. I am praying for your fruitfulness. Please pray for me.”

Paul emphatically informed of prayer and asked for prayer because God has willed that prayer is the means by which power is released. That is what God designed prayer for. So it is as we are praying and calling upon the Lord that we are being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to see and seize the opportunities that God is giving us.

No prayer, no power! Just read the Scriptures, how power from God is connected to the church of God calling upon His Name in prayer. Yet, how sluggish I am and perhaps you are in calling on God and seeking His power for witnessing, for eyes to see how He is positioning us.

So we have this word in the middle of this text on outreach; on being salt and light, Paul said:

²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

In view of this, what if tomorrow morning, then every day next week, then every day the next month, everyday this next year, every day for the rest of your life, you have the Word opened, so that you can hear the will of the Lord and you are praying and calling upon God, asking Him that day, saying, “Lord, today help me to see the doors of opportunity that you are opening up to me. On this day, help me to be attuned to who it is that you are positioning for me to benefit somehow by giving them the truth of who Christ is.”

What if every morning we woke up praying to God, saying, “Lord, You have designed me. You have created me to be Your ambassador. You have created me to do good works. You pre-designed and preordained those works for me to walk in, so open my eyes so that I can see the works that You are calling me to do; the people that You are calling me to talk to or to pray for. Give me eyes to see. Help me so that I won’t be sluggish and sleepy in this. Open the doors and give me eyes to see the door that is open and the good sense to walk through it.”

Sometimes that timidity will strike. There is a golden opportunity, the open door, and we hesitate and pull back, because we are busy and think maybe next time. But God will give us the strength and the fortitude and the desire to walk in the good works that He is calling us to walk in. It comes with prayer.

When was the last time you prayed like that? I don't pray like that nearly enough. But this is what Paul was being exemplified in. He gave us an example. God gave us this example in Paul. So, this is how we are to pray. Pray with watchfulness in the context of how we live in the midst of the society that God has placed us in.

Be determined and be steadfast and be decisive that you are going to pray. That is what we see first. In view of the great appearing of Christ, be determined in the way that you pray. Here is a second point that we see in this text.

In view of the great appearing of Christ that is to come:

2. Be deliberate in the way you live (4:5)

Look how this is given to us in Verse 5:

⁵Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

Notice first that Paul used the word outsiders. All around you are people that the Bible calls outsiders. Five times in the New Testament, this word is used from the pen of the Apostle Paul. It is speaking of people who are not in the Kingdom. To use language from earlier in the book of Colossians, they have not been transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of light. They remain outside the kingdom of light. They are in the domain of darkness.

Understanding this to be the spiritual reality, the Lord is not calling us to go and hide from the darkness. He is calling us to be those who penetrate it with the good news of the Light of the world, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's be wise and careful and circumspect as we do so. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders. That is calling us to great care that we don't fall into the outside worldview. That we don't fall into outside forms of acceptable behavior that the Scripture has deemed sinful behavior, but are quite appropriate in the eyes of the people of the world.

Let's be careful that we don't fall into outside beliefs and practices that are out of sync with the Word of the Lord. We need to be wise and we need to be careful. We need to be out in the midst of the world for sure with love and grace, but we must be mindful.

Let's see more language from earlier in Colossians. There in Colossae, there was false teaching pervading the streets and Paul said, "As you are in the midst of them, be careful about the plausible arguments that you will hear." So Satan, he creates systems of thought. Satan is not stupid.

The fallen world is the domain of Satan's darkness, and he creates systems of thought that are appealing. Now Satan is a fool, biblically defined, but he is not unintelligent. So we must be careful about the plausible arguments that we will hear. We must be saturated with the teaching of the Bible; the reading of it; taking it into our hearts and minds.

Be wise. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, but with love and grace making the best use of the time, it says. Make use of the time that we have to be good witnesses for Jesus. That is what this verse is calling us to.

Making the best use of the time is great language in the ESV. The Greek experts tell us that that phrase in ancient times was used in the market. This is marketplace language. The Greek word for a shopping center is Agora. So it takes the language of the Agora and it turns into a verb, then it sticks a prefix of intensification on it, so Paul was saying, “So in the marketplace, go in and snatch up every single opportunity.” It is intensified shopping in the marketplace. Go get every opportunity you can get.

Here is an example. Right now the Saltzmann freezer has about a dozen packages of butter. My wife, she is awesome and so dialed in on the household shopping. She knows what the needs are, and she knows where to get different items for the best possible price. So when she goes the store that has the best price, she grabs the shopping cart and buys as many as she can. It is the idea of clearing the shelf in the store.

Take advantage of all the open doors and all of the opportunities that God is designing for you and giving to you. That is what we are talking about here. Buy up! Snap them up! Clear the shelf. This is the will of God expressed to us here in Colossians Chapter 4 and Verse 5.

There are so many different ways that we can become alert and awake to this reality. You are driving home and you see a dog running down the street. You can grab that dog and look on its collar, and find the owners. Then you can return the dog, mixing in language that is seasoned with salt, saying, “Here is your dog. God is so good in making animals like this.” This is testing the waters of receptivity to go further. These are little moments of opportunities. In the parking lot, you notice that a co-worker’s engine is dead. Get on it! Get your jumper cables out and help them out.

Some of you ladies who were here at WMF, the speaker Terry Larsen, was telling the ladies that she grows tomatoes. Her family eats a lot of tomatoes, but then they also take some of them to neighbors, just to inroad; to go make connections that can lead to deepened relationships and opportunities for Christ.

I like how Darrel Nishimoto comes into the church office a couple of times a year to print prayer cards to put in the boxes of his coworkers, asking them if he can be praying for them for anything. He is looking for those opportunities to open doors! Darrel is a fisherman in more ways than one, being a fisher of men!

This is the kind of thing that the Scripture is alerting us to, saying, “Look for the opportunities in the time that you have.” It has it in the language of making best use of the time, understanding that time and opportunities are limited. Time is not an infinite resource. Time is a limited resource. It is limited in terms of your lifespan as a mortal human being.

It is also limited in terms of the extent of the age that we are living in. You are going to be alive on this earth in your mortal body for only so long. As the years and decades of your life pass by, you will know more how life is just a vapor. So, in view of the lifespan that you have, God is telling you to make the most use of the time. Snatch up every opportunity.

Also, in view of the fact that the age that we are living, this Gospel Age is going to give way to the return of Christ. At the return of Christ, it is Heaven or Hell and people will be fixed in where they go. So in the midst of this, Paul was saying, “Make use of the time. Remain alert to the coming of Christ. Be aware that you are finite in that mortal body of yours. Be deliberate in the way that you live.” This is Scripture given to us.

Finally, in view of all of this there, is one last point. As we are praying to God for opportunities and to open our eyes to them and to seize those opportunities, then we must:

3. Be distinct in the way you talk (4:6)

Be distinct in the language that we use. The manner of our speech is to be distinctive of the Kingdom that we are a part of.

This morning a brother by the name of Samson Namala taught Sunday school. Those of you who know Samson, have you noticed that he has an accent? I’m looking at Adran nod his yes. Well, you have an accent too! You might say back to me that I have the accent! But we have accents that are tied to the nations and the cultures that we were born in.

Likewise, as those born again, the calling of God is that our speech is going to have an accent that is of Heaven and of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, both in the language that we use and in the manner in which we speak.

How does this verse define this for us? Here is one of the great New Testament expressions instructing Christians how to talk.

‘Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Did you notice that word *always*? What does always mean? Does this mean some of the time let your speech be gracious and seasoned with salt? It does not say that. Does it say half the time? We will award you all stars on your chart and make you an A students 90% of the time. No, let your speech be gracious and seasoned with salt—always!

‘Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt

This will help you in every situation. I am to be gracious and I am to be seasoned with the Gospel of the Kingdom, these truths that help people know their need for Christ.

So we are to speak with grace. Our language is to be kind, sensitive, thoughtful, gentle, all at the same time. Seasoned with salt, truthful, spiritual, with Gospel realities mixed in, flavoring the food.

Notice that it says: full of grace, seasoned with salt. It is not a big pile of salt that is seasoned with grace. It is a lot of grace. This is what our speech should be like: gracious and salty, exuding the quality of graciousness and kindness to the ill-deserving, yet salty—having the distinct flavor of those who are in fact the salt of the earth. Salt being used not only to flavor but to preserve food. Salty thus being influence for good and Gospel purposes, proclaiming the realities of sin, righteousness, judgment and deliverance through the Messiah.

We are to have gracious, salty speech as we interact with people. This is the will of the Lord given to us for the capacity of speech. We so often use speech for snide comments, insulting, tearing down, cutting sarcasm, cursing, expressing anger. It just comes out so easily.

I was thinking of this and thought of a girl named Carrie Underwood, who wrote song called “Jesus Take the Wheel.” Just this very morning I thought of a brilliant revision of that song, “Jesus Take the Tongue.” Jesus just take the tongue. This instrument is a restless evil filled with so much poison, according to Jaems, the half-brother of Jesus.

No man can tame the tongue except the God-man, Christ. We need for Him to take control of the tongue, and make it so that it is fluent in the doctrines of the Kingdom, so that we love words like atonement, justification, and imputation of righteousness.

Some might say that those words are kind of weird, but if they are different and distinct, good! It is supposed to be. You are not of this world. Let’s love theological language because the Bible uses it and let’s flavor our speech and fill it with influence, because this is what we are being called to .

We are to be kind and bold. We are to be friendly and winsome, yet clear and decisive. Our words are to be with the salt of truth that delivers and preserves from corruption, but always with amiability as those who have received grace from God. We are to speak with the same grace that we have received. This is the will of the Lord in relation to our speech. So we put these together and if these things are ignited in us, wow, what a profound difference it is going to make in how we live.

I’m going to tell you this: boy-o-boy, this, brothers and sisters, was such a convicting message for me to prepare and even to preach because coming into this pulpit this morning, I’m like, Lord, who am I to go up and declare these things the way that you call preachers to do. Because Point 1, Point 2, Point 3, I will tell you right now that I have sinned by way of omission and fallen short of the glory of God. Like this week, and even as I was preparing this message.

So I figured that I have to be honest about that, understanding that each one of these principles is revealing our sins of omission. Ech one of these is like a letter of the law showing us how we all still sin and fall short of the glory of God. I’m falling short, I’ll tell you that right now—in all three points.

What was Point 1? It was about prayer. Be determined in your prayer. I pray so much more with other people than I do alone with the Lord. When I am with people I can pray fluently but when I am alone, suddenly I am invaded with a stammering tongue. My Lord, please, please help me to pray.

What about seizing the opportunities? Seize the day! Right, you tell them, Jeff. This week I have let plenty of opportunities pass me right by. Different people let opportunities go by for different reasons. For me it tends to be anxiety. I have so much to do that I feel worn down by things I need to do. I am so worn down by things to do that I'm losing sight of the people that they are to be done for, and it is all about people. Lord, help me to be more people-oriented than task-oriented.

What was Point 3 all about? Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt. Even last night I was in the middle of some things that were frustrating me and I released some unkind words on my precious boys, and I had to go back and apologize to them. I thought, "Wait a minute, God's Word just told me to be gracious in my speech!"

So for Jeff, boom! The imperatives of God—Strike one, strike two, strike three. If it was baseball, I'm out! If that is the case with me, I wonder if that is the case with any of you? There is law and there is grace. Praise God for the hope of glory. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

I did absolutely nothing to deserve the salvation that I have been so graciously given. God know I fall short all the time. So passages like this, they both convict and inspire. I hope they will help us to see what the Word of the Lord is and the standard that we are called to, a standard that we all fall short of. But, praise God for Christ in us. Praise God for Christ coming to dwell in us and that we can call upon His Name for power that Christ might do the will of the Lord in us.

Christ has already done this in perfection in His incarnation, so that I am a man adorned in Christ before the holiness of God. Safe and secure in Him. Now it is by Him coming to dwell within me that more and more, I need to call on Him to forgive my sins of omission and commission and to grow in His ways. This needs to be Christ causing this to grow in me.

I am so thankful for the Apostle Paul. Do you see how he knew that he depended on the prayers of God's people? Pray for me. Pray for me! Bethel Grace, will you please pray for me? I need for you to pray for me. I will never be the pastor that God called me to be apart from prayer and His Word filling my life.

Over and over and over again, Paul asked the people to pray for him. I Corinthians Chapter 1, he asked to be help by their prayers. It is not just me, each of the pastors and the leaders and the elders, each of us we need to pray, asking God to help us to see opportunities and to seize them and to give us renewal and revival in the work that He has called us to do, because it is all about His power at work in us.

Now I want each of you to pray for your own life. Let's all go the Lord now and have a moment of prayer. Between you and God, how have you been doing. Have you been personally spending time with God Most High prayerfully?

Pray for the beckoning work of God which He is doing right now, and pray for the Spirit's power to make you, and the rest of us, obedient to that. Pray for a reignited prayer life.

Have you been watchful for the opportunities? Ask that the Lord will help you to be deliberate in the way that you live each day, watching and waiting not only for Christ to return, but for the opportunities He is designing for you in the meantime. Pray that Christ will activate you afresh.

How is your speech? How are you using your capacity to speak to other people? Are you using it with the purposes of grace and the saltiness that God designed it for? Pray that Jesus would take control of your tongue.

Now, let's close together in prayer.