

Earnest prayer; wise speech
Mystery See Matt. 13:11, note

Walk Eph. 5:15
wisdom Matt. 10:16
Grace: v. 6; Col. 4:18. (John 1:14; John 1:17, note). See 2 Pet. 3:18, note

Tychicus Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; 2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12

Onesimus Philem. 10

Aristarchus Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Philem. 24

Mark Acts 15:37; 2 Tim. 4:11

Epaphras Col. 1:7; Philem. 23 Ro. 15:30

Perfect See Phil. 3:12, note

Luke 2 Tim 4:11

Demas

Church (local) v. 15; Col. 4:16. (Acts 8:3; Phil. 1:1, note)

2Continue 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.

5Walk 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.

7Tychicus, 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.

10Aristarchus 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.

12Epaphras, 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. **14Luke 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.

16Now 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."

Continue Luke 18:1

w thanksgiving Col. 2:7

Meanwhile Eph. 6:19

Open 1 Cor.

16:9 **mystery**

hidden truth

Eph. 3:3, 4; 6:19

for which Eph. 6:20

Redeeming the time Ephesians 5:16

w grace

Eccl.10:12

Seasoned Mark

9:50 **answer**

each one 1 Pet. 3:15

I am sending

Eph. 6:22

²NU you may

know our

circumstances

and **he may**

comfort

What would

these men be

like? What

would they be

doing on the

team? What

would they have

to endure?

Read

Cp. 1Thess. 5:27 2
Thess. 3:14

Archippus Phile 2

Ministry 1 Tim 4:6 2
Tim 4:5

Grace: v. 18; 2
Thess. 1:12. (John
1:14; John 1:17,
note). See 2 Pet.
3:18, note

18**This salutation by my own hand—Paul.**
Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

Perfect Matt.
5:48; 1 Cor. 2:6

Complete NU
fully assured

Zeal NU
concern
Luke 2 Tim.
4:11; Philem. 24

Demas 2 Tim.
4:10
the church Rom.
16:5;

1 Cor. 16:19
Nymphas NU
Nympha his NU
her

This salutation
1 Cor. 16:21; 2
Thess. 3:17
m Heb. 13:3

I used the NKJV in paragraph form, with cross-references from the NKJV Scofield Study Bible and the NKJSB. You can see I made observations of the main ideas and keywords. You can make your chart using the translation you are using.

The table can be reproduced using either Word or Pages program. The table has three columns and seven rows. I did not give a title, which is something I usually do

All right. Turn with me to Colossians chapter four. We'll start our study in Colossians 4, chapters 4-2. I left a template in the bulletin on the back page that you could recreate on any paper you'd like. You could take a character, much like the characters we will have described from about verse 7 all the way to the end of the chapter. There are different characters.

Character Study

Reference	Verse	Deductive inference

Here is an inductive chart for individual verses. Once you understand the three columns all you need is the second row. Table set up 1 row, three columns. Observe the dotted line. The process is related to each column.

Inductive Study Notes

Scripture	Observations, Interpretations, questions, notes	Applications, Significance, Actualizations Summaries
4:18 This salutation by my own hand— Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.		

Inductive Study Notes-1

4:18 This salutation by my own hand— Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.		
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Outline

Prayer

1. Be devoted
2. Be visionary (involves teamwork)
3. Be specific

Look for opportunity
Some times the Lord reminds us

Wisdom

1. It will help us know when to speak and when to be silent.
2. It will give us insight into how to relate to others with tactfulness.
3. It will equip us to discern the best course of action with skeptics and critics.
4. It will grant us opportunities to give advice and counsel in the midst of people's struggles.

Recipe for speech

- ◆ salt for grace
- ◆ Peppered in truth
- ◆ Herbs for healing
- ◆ Soaked in love
- ◆ Spiced in wisdom
- ◆ Laced w humor

What ingredients would you add

Had a likable personality-
People wanted to be around him.

Paul and his fellow workers - What do they teach us

1. They worked
2. They were valued
3. With out them we would not know Paul and we know less of our Lord

Team helped with

1. Writing
2. Distribution
3. Ministry

My outline helps me stay on target when I'm preaching

2 **Devote~!** yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; 3praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open^x up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak^x forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; → 4in order that I may make^x it clear in the way I ought to speak.^x 5 [Lit., Walk] **Conduct~!** yourselves with **wisdom** toward outsiders, [Lit., redeeming the time] making the most of the opportunity. 6Let your speech always be [Or, gracious] with grace, seasoned, → as it were, with **salt**, so that you may know how you should respond~ to each person.

Key

~! Commitment to a long term way of doing something. A command to keep on doing an action as one's general habit or lifestyle. Repeat each time this situation arises.
~ constantly or repeatedly, customarily; it continuous or process or habit

7 As to **all my affairs**, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. 8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know^x about our circumstances and that he may encourage^x your hearts; 9 [Lit., along with Onesimus] and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the **whole** situation here

10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas' cousin Mark (about whom you received [Or, orders] instructions: if he comes to you, welcome^{x!} him); 11 and also Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision; and they have proved to be an encouragement to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may [Or, stand firm] stand^x [Or, complete or mature] perfect and [Or, made complete] fully assured → in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has [Or, much toil or great pain] a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the **beloved** physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas. 15 Greet^{x!} the brethren who are in Laodicea and also [Or, Nymphas (masc)] .Nympha and the church that is in [Some ancient mss. read their] her house. 16 And when [Lit., the] this letter is read^x among you, have^{x!} it also read^x in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read^x [Lit., the] my letter that is coming from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, "Take heed~! to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may **fulfill~!** it. [Or, continually fulfill]

18 [Lit., The greeting by my hand of Paul] I, Paul, write this greeting with **•my own** hand. Remember~! my [Lit., bonds] **imprisonment**. Grace be with you.

X it kept it completed fact; actually; indeed; to accomplish; to effectively or successfully bring about; action conceived of as

a single hole; a single action
X! Commitment to a decisive or effective choice. A command to do this! Make it happen! Don't just try! Begin to do this now!
→ and now still is an action having lingering results or continuing effects; an action leaving a condition or state, lasting significance or status.

Alternative options of translation
Emphatic

• means the in the original text is emphatic because of the word special form, not the sentence word order

You can draw this chart on a piece of paper, or you could use your Word processor and a table program to re-create it. Both Page and Word have tables that you can create.

But you could take any of those or any time you're studying the Bible, and you come across a name, and I'd like to know more about that name. You have a tool in your Bible; you may have cross references where those names have references to it. And that will open up some information for you to look up those verses and see how that person was mentioned. There might be something you can draw from that tells you a little bit about the person. But I guarantee that if you read around those verses, you will get a picture of what that person went through.

And many of these people were with Paul when he had hard times, and they went through it with him. And it tells you something about what they are and who they are. You know, it's a little bit more than just a verse.

If you like, think about Luke or Mark if I could illustrate it. What do you know about Luke or Mark? Well, we know that they wrote two Gospels of the Bible. Now, everybody right next should be a hat. (Imaginary) And you pick up that hat and put it on, you know, and suddenly, that is a hat of your old English teacher. Can you imagine your old English teacher wearing that hat? Anyway, now, you have your English teacher who tells you you can learn about the writer for what they wrote.

And when you think about writing like Mark or Luke, what does that tell you about the writer? It tells you things about the writer. Mark is telling you things about him and what he's like. He tells it, and it's in the writing. Mark loves describing the action. Luke is the same way. What do you know about Luke from his writing? He was very interested in facts, history, people, and women. He had a long list of things. And they begin to tell us a story. Well, Luke, we go to the book of Acts, and we find that at a certain point, Luke joins Paul, and he's with Paul for a time. And then he goes, and he's somewhere else. And then he comes back. We know something about Luke from those experiences and what they went through. And, of course, he goes ahead and finds out other things.

Mark was the same way. Mark first went with Paul and Barnabas, and he happened to be a cousin. When I lived up in Grand Rapids, if you weren't Dutch,

¹ NASB 1977

² Gary Hill Discovery Bible Moody Press Chicago, Illinois. 1987

you weren't much. And, you know, I went to a camp, Pine Ridge Camp, and Dutch people ran it. And I can tell you that if you're not Dutch, you're not much. You're on the low totem pole. What, who are you teaching, Bill? Well, I'm teaching the youngest children in the camp. Now, if I were part of the family, I'd teach somebody else. But, no, I had to teach who they gave me. And they kept telling me year after year, you do such a good job with those little kids.

Contrary to that, whenever they had a problem with the big kids, the high schoolers, who got the call to come out to talk to them? I had to go out and counsel them and work with them. And, you know, I'm just saying the skills were always there. But I did learn about the little people.

You know, little people like to do one thing at camp. If your floor has something made of sawdust and you're out in the woods, every little kid, seven years old, six years old, eight years old, nine years old, every one of them will, it's like being on a baseball diamond.

Have you ever seen a pitcher go to the diamond and that pitcher start to make a hole for himself? Well, the hole that he makes is individual to that pitcher, you know. Then, the other pitcher from the opposing team will make another hole and mess with the other guy's hole so that they can do this for the whole game. You know, you've probably never seen it. You don't care. Blah, blah, blah. But they're trying to mess with the other guy's head, which is what they're doing.

Well, kids are the same way. They wiggle those feet back and forth. And all of a sudden, you got a dust bowl. And a wise teacher told me, she said, don't correct them for that. Let them do it. They're going to do it anyway. Just let them do it. And they're listening. And she was right. I got along with those little people. But I didn't notice how they liked to kick the dust-up. When they improved those buildings and put them on cement floors, I got kicked out of those wonderful places. I was out in the woods, and I could use the woods in my Bible teaching. Do you listen to the wind? Do you listen to the birds? I'm using that stuff, and the kids are enjoying it. But once they entered a nice building, I got kicked out and put somewhere else. No respect. Anyway, if you're Dutch, you're not much.

OK, so we're going to look at people today, and we're going to see that Mark is part of the family with Barnabas; even though he failed, Barnabas stayed with him and worked with him. Later, Mark rejoins Paul, and Paul finds Mark very useful. Peter finds Mark, and Mark works with Peter. Mark, working with Peter, gave us one of the books of the Bible, and Mark wrote it. Mark wrote

it. He once failed, but God didn't give up on him. And we have a fascinating book by Mark. And if you read Mark, it'll teach you something about the author. It really will.

So you could use that template to begin developing a character where you look at the scriptures, and then draw from that what that person's like. And you're already on your way.

Recipe for speech

salt for grace

Peppered in truth

Herbs for healing

Soaked in love

Spiced in wisdom

Sprinkled with humor

OK, today we're going to look at prayer. We're going to look at wisdom. We're going to look at the way we talk. I left you a note in the bulletin about a recipe for speech. When you look at that recipe, I deliberately challenged you with an idea. What would you put into the recipe that I didn't put in? And what scripture or thought would you put in along with that? There's more. OK. Have you ever seen a recipe and then used it, making it an excellent dish? Then, you share that recipe with other people who like recipes. Suddenly, they give you another part of a recipe you had never even thought about. But it changes and makes it even more wonderful than what you had before. So I like recipes—recipes for speech.

Then Paul will talk about his fellow workers and what they teach us. What do they teach us? Finally, we're going to see that the team helped. Without the team's help, we would never have known about Paul. We can't say that. And I'll show you my thoughts on why it's so from these scriptures.

OK. Lord, help us as we open your word to see these things and how they apply to our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Reality of Speech

Vertical speech	Horizontal speech
God	Interpersonal relationships
By Faith	By sight (most of the time)
Both are real	
In Heaven (future) both will be horizontal	

In prayer we are talking to a God who is there and not silent. How does God talk to us?

Well, prayer. It seems like we're always working on the truth from the Bible about how to pray and encourage ourselves—verse two.

“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.”

You know, prayer is something to be continued earnestly. This goes along with what Paul shared about how we pray continually. Pray without ceasing.³ And here it goes along with that. Pray earnestly. Other translations give it a very wonderful word. “Be devoted” to prayer. Give your heart to it. And we're to do that. We're to be diligent. And diligence is the primary meaning here. But it has the idea of watching for something, an opportunity to pray. And sometimes, we have to be available, watching for an opportunity to pray with somebody who may have a need or concern. And it's encouraging to them that they pray. The opportunity for prayer was illustrated for me last week in the hallway as we left. And there was a prayer given that somebody gave to somebody else who had a need because they were looking for the opportunity to pray. And the need was there to pray. And they prayed right there. Not for me to notice, not for you to know now, but I'm just letting you know that's how we're to be. You see, we're looking for opportunities to pray.

³ 1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18 **praying always with all prayer and supplication** in the Spirit, **being watchful** to this end with all **perseverance and supplication** for all the saints—

You know, when I go on silly social media and listen to all the propaganda people put out on social media, I don't really listen to it, honestly. My little finger is scrolling very quickly past all of that. It's like water off of a duck's back. I don't even pay attention to it. You know, somebody's got some hate thing or whatever going on. I barely saw it. But I am looking for things to pray for, and things come up.

There's a little girl whose mother has constantly had pictures of her. And she was a young infant when she first had a problem. She had cancer. And the mother showed pictures of her. And she's being cared for. And she's just as cute as a button. And sometimes she gets very sick. And then, you know, she responds and gets stronger. And then she's got to go in again for another battle. And again, there was another picture where she wasn't doing well. So this has now been going on for almost a year. And this picture, I don't know. I just responded, "Thank you for sharing these pictures." It reminds this old foolish man--I didn't say that, but this is what I was thinking--to pray because I need to pray for her. And so I prayed for her. And I don't know the outcome of her life. We live in a fallen world. Sometimes, God heals, and other times, he takes someone home. So I don't know. But I know it's good to pray. God hasn't told me whether or not the girl will be healed, the little baby. I have no word on that. But I know to pray. And I hope by praying with this family that they will know. However, it came out that at least some people were really praying.

So anyway, we look for the opportunity. And we look for it with thanksgiving, giving thanks. While you're doing that, while you're being watchful, Paul goes on to say, "Meanwhile, at the same time that you're praying and looking for an opportunity to pray, pray also for us that God would open to us a door for the word to which to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest how I ought to speak." He's praying for two things. He's praying for an open door, and then he's praying for how he might share the gospel so that people can understand it and the truth can be known.

God opened doors in Paul's life, and he walked through them—he sailed through them. But sometimes, God closed the door. He wouldn't let Paul go through it. Paul doesn't know if God will open a door, but he is praying that he will have an open door to walk through and share the word. Once he did that, he wanted to have the words so that people could understand them. Those are great prayers.

So, we have to have a visionary part of our prayer. It involves teamwork, where other people pray with us, and then we must be specific. As we do that, we're giving God a chance to open a door.

Now, what does an open door suggest to you? Many of you open these doors, and as you open the door, you've come into the church to experience our worship service together. And so you walk through it and then experience the worship service and all that it means. But you didn't know what to expect because sometimes God does something different. But we want God to open doors. Praying for it. Answer to each one.

Finally, wisdom. Wisdom, Col. 4:4-6.

"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."

Walking in wisdom. And we're specifically looking at how we walk with people who are on the outside. We're careful to manage the time and redeem the time for the Lord. It's the same teaching that we have in Ephesians.⁴ We see the exact words about redeeming the time. You know, the days are evil. We have to redeem the time. And when we redeem it and buy it for the Lord, we're thinking about how we communicate to people on the outside.

Well, our speech is flavored. All right? Salt for grace. Peppered in truth. Herbs for healing. Soaked in love and spiced in wisdom. Laced -- I like this one because I came up with it. Laced with humor. OK? If you're like my wife, you'll say, "Well, Reeves, you're not that funny." In my mind, I am. But anyway, laced with humor.

The thing that we always have to keep in mind about the Lord Jesus, and I see this more and more whenever Christians act wrong, and they act small-minded, they act -- I don't know, you throw the word in there, how they act, and you actually look at Christ, he doesn't act that way.

I was reading Killing Witches by Bill Reilly and Martin Dugard.⁵ The way the Salem witch trials were carried out was unbelievable. You know, Christ didn't put people on the stake and burn them for this or that. He didn't do that. When somebody was caught up with the devil and the occult, he confronted the devil

⁴ Eph. 5:25, 16 15 "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

⁵ Killing the Witches: The Horror of Salem, Massachusetts (Bill O'Reilly's Killing Series) Hardcover – September 26, 2023 by Bill O'Reilly (Author), Martin Dugard (Author)

and healed the person involved.⁶ He didn't put them on a stake. You won't find him -- he didn't burn one person at the stake. But there have been Christians who specialize in such wonders. But it isn't the Lord Jesus. Why? I'm going to tell you something. I hope you've gotten it from Pastor Rains over the years, but Jesus was somebody that you wanted to be around. There was a likeableness about the Lord. People wanted to be with him. So I think this recipe has to include that well-liked personality that God wants to put into our life, and that might be what helps us to speak.

Speech is tough, especially when we think about each one. How do you answer each one? Everybody's different, and it takes a while for God to give you the kind of wisdom you need to talk to individuals because they're all different. OK? Wisdom. I love this section. These little verses are just so wonderful. So, work on that recipe. What ingredients would you add?

Let's go on. Paul and his fellow workers. What do they teach us?

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.

I did a little thumbnail sketch of him, just like I showed you in the bulletin for this particular fellow.

What do we know about Tychicus?

Scripture	Verse	Draw from
Acts 20:4; Context 1-6	And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia— also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.	Note uproar, travel, Jewish plot went with Paul then spilt up and met at Troas 7 days

⁶ As you read through the gospels and Acts what happened when Jesus or the apostles confronted people being destroyed and used up by demonic forces. They were healed and delivered. There was no confession then horrific death. The contrast is worth noting and a clue the witch hunters were completely off based. Look at Mark 5:1-20 and Acts 19:17-20, Note the confession of sin led to conversion not condemnation. Acts 16:16-24 The slave girl is delivered and her masters who used her lost the demon connection that made them money.

Ephesians 6:21	1But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; 22whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.	Note character beloved and faithful a messenger and comforter - a reporter
Col. 4:7-9	7Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here.	
2 Tim. 4:12	And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.	Paul's last days he is sent to Ephesus- the work continues.
Tit. 3:12	12When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.	What would the winter look like there?

Make the above chart yourself. Choose your translation and put in the references and texts. Look at the context, and then start drawing your own deductions, questions, observations, and interpretations. You will get more out of it.

So in Acts 24, “And Sophitar of Berea, comforting him to Asia, also Aristarchus of the Thessalonians, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, and Tychius, and Trofimius from Asia.” All right? Now, when I look at the context of chapter 20, I see an uproar that’s happening. People are really in an argument, and these guys are with Paul, and they’re probably the ones that are trying to protect Paul. That tells me something about them. And he’s with them, and he spent seven days with them. So imagine being with Paul for seven days. For some of you, that might be a highlight of your life. You might even be able to sell a book, “Seven Days with Paul.” We can’t write it because we weren’t there, but nevertheless, it would have been a great book.

And then in Ephesians 6.21, “That you may also know my affairs and how I’m doing, Tychius, beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord.” These are the exact words that we see here. “Will make all things known to you, for I sent him for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and he may comfort

your heart.” So we know a couple of things about him. He’s a mailman. He’s sending news, and people are asking questions about Paul, and he’s able to tell them. And when he tells them these things, this guy has the ability to encourage other people.

Of course, we got this in Colossians. And then, in 2 Timothy, he sends him to Ephesus. This is at the end of his life—life in his last days. He sends this guy to Ephesus. This guy probably wanted to stay with Paul, but Paul sent him to Ephesus, and he went and continued to work.

By the way, between the book of Acts, when the book of Acts ends, and when we see the last days of Paul, there have been five years that we don’t know much about. But these people were with Paul, and they were working with him. And his ministry was happening because of him. We must find out what they were doing in heaven because it’s not recorded in the Book of Acts. OK? I’ve got a few clues for those interested in some of the writings, but we don’t have a full picture. Paul could have gone to Spain and back. We don’t know. Just giving you an idea.

Timothy 3.12, “And I’ll send Artemis to you and Arctitetes, be diligent to come to me and Nicopolis, for I desire to spend the winter here.” So now he asks for this guy to be diligent enough to come, because Paul is going to spend the winter in this place. Some of us would ask, “What is the winter like?” “Paul, I don’t mind spending the summer with you. All of the spring is grand.” I don’t even know if there was a spring. There was probably more of a dry season and a wet season, two seasons, because it’s in the Mediterranean, so their seasons are slightly different. But wherever he was going, I’d probably like to know what winter would be like.

Now, let’s say Pastor Rains⁷ completely lost his marbles, and he goes, and he lives up in Maine. OK? Now, if he goes and lives in Maine, that’s self-explanatory. I think he lost his marbles because that brother’s not going to Maine for no reason. Anyway, he’s up there and says, “Hey, come quickly. I want you to spend the winter with me.” Oh, I’d have to think about that. But anyway, you know, I’d like to know what winter was.

All right, so we know a little bit about this guy. Let’s go on.

“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

⁷ Pastor Rains is in the audience. He has no desire to go to extreme cold places. Everybody knows this who is listening.

the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.”

OK? What if your name was Jesus, and you became a Christian? You’d probably like to change your name to Justus, too. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are circumcision, and they comfort me. So, these guys are from the Jewish race. They’re fellow workers, and they’ve comforted Paul.

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.”

Epaphras, well, he’s a bondservant, but he’s also from the Gentile. He greets you. And this Epaphras fellow, he’s always laboring fervently for you in prayer, that you may be perfect and complete in the will of God. And my, those are some great words. You know, perfect and complete. That’s the goal that Paul was striving for. And this guy is praying for it.

Here is a word study on perfection. In our lives perfection is a goal but one we will never achieve. But having a goal there is a lot of progress. Don’t beat yourself up not achieving it. Just keep it in front of you and remember God loves you and will continue to work in your life. We are never saved by works, but there are works God wants us to do. Keep walking.

perfect (Gk. teleios) (1:28; 4:12; Rom. 12:2; Phil. 3:15; James 1:4) Strong’s #5046: This Greek word is an adjective derived from the word telos, meaning “end,” “limit,” or “fulfillment.” Paul uses telos to speak of Jesus Christ as the complete fulfillment of God’s law (see Rom. 10:4). In his letter to the Colossians, Paul uses teleios to speak of the completion or perfection of Christians (1:28; 4:12). The “perfect” Christian is a mature Christian, who has endured trials (James 1:4) and has learned to express God’s love to others (3:14). By loving others, we not only are made complete in and through Christ but we also see God’s love “perfected” in us (see 1 John 4:12). Just as Paul pressed on towards the goal of perfection (Phil. 3:12–14) to which Christ had called him, so we too should make perfection in Christ our goal, a goal that will be completely achieved when “that which is perfect” comes (1 Cor. 13:10).⁸

⁸ Radmacher, House, Allen New King James Study Bible p. Thomas Nelson 2007 p.1891

For I bear him witness that he has great zeal for you. He does not only pray for you, but he has great zeal for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. So for this particular area, he's got, that's where he wants to minister. And that's who he's concerned about. And I bear witness.

Now we get to Luke, verse 14. Luke, the beloved physician. And Demas greets you. Not much is said here about Demas. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and Nymphos and the church in his house. So, according to the Greek in this particular Bible, this fellow they feel is a guy, and it's his house. Other people think that that's not a guy but a girl. And it's her house. I don't know. We'll find out. But he is; he wants people to greet him.

Now, when you read this epistle, it is read to you. See that it's read to the church of the Laodiceans. And you likewise read the epistle to the Laodicea. And I say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry you've received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it. Now, I wanted to share a couple of things about this.

These fellow workers, what do they teach us? First of all, they worked. That's -- anybody who's working in the ministry, that's a good thing. OK. I've known people who said they were in the ministry but didn't work.

One lady I knew in Liberia, I couldn't believe it, but she was claiming that she was ministering to hundreds and thousands of people. So what she would do was there would be a meeting somewhere, and she'd take pictures of it, put herself in the pictures, and it was like she was doing the work. And all she was doing was showing up, you know. And those churches that supported her a lot. And what she did was she lived in one of the cities, Buchanan, and she had three ladies, and they used to have tea together. That was her work. But anyway, that's not what she put in her newsletters.

But these people worked. They were valued. Paul valued them very much. Without them, we would not know Paul, and we would know less about the Lord. And I'll stop that at one point because of time, but what if Luke wasn't on that team? We wouldn't know about the Acts of the Apostle. We can't say about what Paul did. Luke is interesting. Well, we would know less about the Lord Jesus without Luke. So these people are essential, and because of what they did, people knew about Paul. Paul had a team with him, a remarkable group of people.

They were helping Paul write the Word of God. Many of his letters were dictated, and they were dictated to people just like my computer transcribes this sermon. These people wrote what Paul said and wrote it down in a letter, and

then Paul signed it. I don't know why.⁹ Maybe he's in prison, and he didn't have a table. I don't know. I know they wrote it; we can see here that they distributed it, the Word. They brought it to Colossians. They brought it to these other places, and if they didn't bring it, people couldn't read it. Then, they were involved directly in the ministry, where they took up pastorates and missionary efforts, and Paul wasn't the primary missionary in some of these areas. Other people were. They were his team, and he writes about that. Pretty remarkable, you know, and I could spend a lot more time on this, but they did good things, encouraged, prayed, and helped. Good stuff.

16Now 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. 17And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

There were two things that the readers were supposed to do. One was to read the letter, and if we can take a queue from Archippus fulfill their ministries. One of the things that we need to learn to do is to read a book of the Bible, like we would read anything else. This is the best way to get an overview. Too often we read so slowly that it is difficult to get to the end of the book because the Bible is written with verses, we often read each verse doing a lot of thought about that verse but having difficulty putting it all together.

If I could suggest listen to somebody reading the Bible. They are going slower than how fast we can when we read, but at least it shows us a pace, that can be very helpful. Do you have difficulty reading the Bible? Listen to the Bible as you follow along. You will comprehend more not struggling.

This is a good book to do it being only for chapters keep in mind the people in Colosse had the letter read to them. How many times would you need the Bible read to you before you comprehend what the letter said? Reading is a good skill and prepares you for the study more in detail?

Second, there is a ministry that God has given you to fulfill. Got individualized every ministry to fit what each can do. Not only are there people that God wants you to witness to, but they're also people God wants you to

⁹ There are good theories on this one. One theory, Paul had an eye disorder and some people felt that he prayed about it three times we removed and it wasn't because of the eye disorder is writing would be very large. So that's why they feel he had his letters dictated. Gal 6:11; 2 Cor. 12:7-10. Winston Churchill often dictated his books. We may use stenographers, or now AI programs to transcribe our recordings. Did Paul have on his team people who could write his letters? Possible

disciple. God may have you do other services that help people both in the church and outside.

This is a great message for seniors who are looking for ways to fill their time with meaningful activity. Find the ministry that God wants you to do and fulfill it.

“18 This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace, be with you. Amen.”

Well, we get to the closing here. This salutation by my hand, Paul, may have been part of the writing problem: he was in chains. I don't know. People have speculated on reasons for that. His eyesight comes to mind. I'm not sure. He dictated the Word of God, and they wrote it down. The Holy Spirit worked for him. Peter recognizes that Paul wrote the Scriptures. By the way, meanwhile, pray for me that God may open the door. Verse 18, he's got to open another door in opening the door. Right now, I'm in jail. You got to open that door. If that door doesn't get opened, it's over with. Paul had five more years. What could Paul do in five more years? Quite a lot. Remember my chains.

All right, these things teach us.

Be mindful of prayer.

Look for an opportunity to pray for one another.

Look for an opportunity to pray for those around you.

Look for an opportunity to pray that God might open a door for you to talk.

And then, when you pray, be willing to walk through that door because I don't know what it will be like. I've had doors that opened up that were shocking.

There was a time when I did not want to share the gospel. I didn't want to do anything. I was in the middle of a problem and wasn't in the right place. I was in a dark place. And so I'm taking a bus out to see a counselor related to my problems, and there's nothing about me that wanted to share the gospel. And I'm sitting on that bus, and there were three guys on that bus, and they talked to me, and I kid you not, they were asking me, "What do you think this gospel is?" And I had to explain to them what the gospel was, and they accepted it right there. And I was not in the mood. This conversation happened without the cooperation of my spirit. But all three of those guys accepted Christ.

Now, I went to the counselor, and my purpose was to get right with God, but I was out of sync, and I couldn't believe that door. That door not only

opened, but it was like a chute. I just flipped right into it. It's the only time I can remember sharing the gospel where I wasn't looking for the joy of the angels in heaven. But that time, it did.

Other times I've shared the gospel, I can remember the Lord turning on the light, and people were receiving Christ right before my eyes. I had -- really, I am just the messenger. God saves, and when you see God saving somebody, you've got to walk through that door. You've got to walk through the door. And when you do, you never know what happens.

So learn how to pray, and pray specifically. Learn how to walk in wisdom and pray about how you talk to different people in your life. If you've got kids, every one of them is different. Now, this is especially true when you've got grandchildren. Every one of them is different. If you have friends, every one of them is different. If you have enemies, every one of them is different. So we need the grace, and God has to work this out. You know, he has to work it out. But we have to be willing to answer those who ask. And even when we are sharing the gospel, maybe they're open to it, perhaps they're not, and we go as far as we can with it.

But I've seen where God has saved people with whom I shared the gospel, and they said, "Willy, that's enough. I don't want to talk about it anymore." And then, 20 years later, "Willy, I accepted Christ." You know, but I didn't go farther enough. When they started saying no, that's when I ended the conversation. But thank God.

Lord, help us to devote ourselves to prayer. One of the biggest things about today's message is looking for opportunities to pray. I don't know how prayer works. I know that it's communication with you, and it's real, and it's by faith, not sight. And you want us to talk to you. You want us to pray. And when we pray according to your will, you always answer and work according to your will. All people can be hard, and they can resist God's will for many years. But, Lord, we know you can keep working in their life so they would be open to you, especially knowing that some may be saved. So help us to pray. Remind us to pray. Remind us to pick up the burdens of one another. Help us to be wise. And always help us, Lord, recognize those working with us to get the word out. In Jesus' name, amen. I hope you got something out of the message today. I've enjoyed this book.