Sustained In Christ

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Preacher: Shane Waters

[0:00] If I can get this.

Is it? Yep. Got it? All right. In and out, in and out. Turn with me to Colossians chapter 4. As you do, I want to reiterate, it has been a blessing to go to Montana.
I was thankful to be able to be sitting beside Jason as they affirmed your congregation into the association. And he was thrilled, as you know Jason to be.
He was so excited. I'm so thankful for that and so eager to see how the Lord is going to continue to grow. Not only that association, but you as your gifts and your strengths are going to be able to make that association just more and more faithful in that regard.
What a blessing it was for me. That's why I wanted to go there. I am a part of the Southeast Association as well, and so that was a piece of that. But I wanted to be sitting there beside Jason when that happened.
[1:27] And then to be able to come here after many, many months of being able to pray and be a means of encouragement. You guys, you know how this works. You pray for missionaries. But man, it's so much better if you can see them and see their face and see their family and know who they are and interact with them.

And now you can pray for them more particularly and carefully. And so thank you for that benefit. I've been praying for you guys without many faces. And so now I'm able to pray for you.
And we as a congregation will be able to pray for you with faces and names. And when you share particular concerns, we'll be able to know specifically those who are going through those things.
And so I am here this morning on behalf of Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. And I greet you in their name and with their authority. And I'm seeking to be faithful to honor our Lord Jesus Christ, but also be faithful to each of you this morning as we come to God's Word together.
Have your Bibles there open to Colossians chapter 4. This is where we're going to be. I'd like for us to... Thank you, sir. Thank you, sir.
[2:35] Let's see if I can get that. I'd like for us to be there at the beginning of Colossians 4 for our time. Let me pray. Ask the Lord to grant us His grace that we may hear and receive His Word this morning.

This is a prayer of illumination. And then our prayer will be that the Lord will, in His kindness, speak to us through His Word this morning. And so let's go to the Lord in prayer, and then we will begin our time.
Almighty Father, Maker and Sustainer, Good Shepherd, refuge of our weary souls that are here this morning, You tell of Your glory, Your power, Your majesty through Your creation.
You have spoken of Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness throughout the generations through Your prophets. You came and dwelt among us in the person of Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, the firstborn from the dead, the preeminent and worthy of all praise, adoration, and worship, Jesus Christ our Savior.
Grant us, I pray, Father in heaven, Your Spirit this morning, that we might look to Christ as our great hope, trust Christ as our sufficient joy, love Christ as our satisfaction and pleasure forevermore, reveal the foolishness of our hearts when we go after empty, earthly ambitions, trinkets.
[4:14] These make so many amazing promises to us, and yet, Lord, they have proven over and over again to be barren, to be useless, to be damning to our souls.

May we see Jesus Christ this morning. Father, cause us to cast away the worthless longings and joys that this world seeks to press upon us, and may we be thrilled this morning.

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With the preeminence of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen. So, you guys are a few years old as a church.
Our congregation is 24 years old. And I want you to know that the greatest blessing of your life can and will be through what God is doing through you and the congregation that God's placed you in. These are eternal things. And the chaos of life often causes us to forget that and make us think that so many other things are more important, and yet, our Lord has told us, better is the end of a thing than its beginning.
[5:33] This is Ecclesiastes 7. You're here this morning. All of you have certain places that you're at in your life and your struggles and your different things that you're in.

But here you are. And the question you've asked yourself and the question we ask ourselves often is not just, how am I going to make it through the next few days or the next few weeks or the things that we have in front of us.
The real question is, will I persevere to the end? Better is the end of a thing than its beginning. All of us can start out strong.
How many books have you started to read? And you might even say you've read them, but really you only got through the first chapter maybe or so. Our lives are that way. And I want to encourage us this morning toward perseverance.
Because that's what really matters. And that's what really we need to all have as our ambition and our aim. Because all of us have responsibilities and callings and people that look at us, maybe even for our faith.
[6:39] And that may be great and wonderful, but when they stand over our grave, will they still say, that man, that woman was faithful?

Man, I hope so. Right? I hope so. So how do we persevere? What is it that will cause us to persevere? John Owen, one of the favorites in way of English Puritans for so many, he writes a book entitled, or a little paperback, I would encourage you to get it from Banner of Truth, entitled Glory of Christ.
It is fantastic. It's great. I would encourage you to read it. Near the end, he talks about, what do we do as we're nearing death, or as we're growing old, to persevere?
To persevere. He talks about how, when we near the end of this work, we are seeking to look to the Lord, and too often, and too often, even in our weaknesses, we can feel as if our lives, and even our faith, is unraveling.
I used to, as a young believer, believe that if I really, really hit it hard, like I did in college, right before the test, really hit it hard, and was really faithful, and did really well, that by the time you become old, being a Christian is going to be easy, and I'm just going to be kind of coasting along, and I don't want to discourage you in this, but as you get older, the Lord just brings up those sins, that were just deeper, than you knew you even had, and there's new challenges, new things, that are coming along.
[8:17] So, in our old age, as we grow older, as we continue, Owen mentions two things, that he mentions here, in the latter part of this volume, called Glory of Christ.

He says, there are two things, which those who, after a long profession of faith, in the gospel, they are going to need to address, he calls these, the confinements, or the borders, that should be around us, as we face eternity together.
He says, one of these things, that we need to be concerned about, are our faults, that need to be repaired, our decays, that need to be recovered, and our backslidings, that need to be healed.
He said, it is easy in old age, to begin taking those too lightly, because they've been around for so long, that you begin just to kind of, see them as normal. He said, as we grow older, into faith, we need to take those things up.
And then he goes on, and he says, the second thing we need to consider, as we grow in our faith, as we profess the Lord longer, is he speaks of, the other is that, we may have these fresh springs, of spiritual life, vigorous actings, of all divine graces, in spiritual mindedness, holiness, fruitfulness, to the praise of God, the honor of the gospel, and the increase, of their own peace and joy.
[9:45] Now that's a Puritan sentence. They like to use a lot of words, and bring everything together there. So Owen shows us, how one might receive, both repair, for one's stubborn fractions, infractions, but also fresh springs, of divine grace, to renew our fervor, in our final days.

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What does Owen say, will do this, necessary thing, that we need, in our older profession, of faith? What is it that's necessary, he says? He says, look to Christ.
He said, look to Christ, a steady, this is what I'm quoting Owen here, a steady spiritual view, of the glory of Christ, by faith, will give us, a gracious revival, from inward decays, and fresh springs, of grace, even in our latter days.
This is exactly, what David, the king, in Old Testament, speaks of. Those who look to him, are radiant, and their faces, shall never be ashamed. Psalm 34, 5.
This is what Isaiah, the great prophet, of the Old Testament, speaks of, when he says in Isaiah 45, verse 22, turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is no other.
[11:04] Turn to me, he says, Isaiah. And this is what, Paul, is calling the Colossian congregation, and us this morning, to, in our text, in Colossians chapter 4.

I want you to notice with me, in Colossians chapter 3. Look with me, just turn a page over here. We're going to be looking at various passages, in Colossians, but we're going to be honing in, on Colossians 4.
Colossians 3, verse 1, notice what he's doing here. If then you have been raised, with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
Set your minds, on the things that are above, not on the things, that are on earth. Paul continues, in chapter 3, to give a very practical, very practical ways, we are to live, as we seek the things above. Isn't that vague? Seek the things above. What does that look like? Am I just simply, supposed to sit somewhere, and meditate, on the clouds coming by? No, he's very practical, in Colossians chapter 3.
[12:10] He speaks of this, seeking the things, that are above. And then he goes on, he says, in verse 5, notice there, it says, put to death, what is earthly. We're also, according to verse 12 then, to put on then, compassionate hearts.

Now, if you don't think, that's personal enough, notice as Paul does, he continues here, and he says, how are we to, set our minds, on the things above, where Christ is?
Wives are to submit, to their husbands, husbands are to love, their wives, children are to obey, their parents, fathers are not to provoke, their children, bond servants, are to obey, obey the masters, and treat their bond servants, justly and fairly.
Reading through, chapter 3 then, we may become, overwhelmed, at just how, personal, and intimate, and in our lives, it really is. It's unceasing, influence of Christ's, preeminence then, that we find earlier, in Colossians 1, speaking of Christ's, preeminence, is in every area, of our lives, is rubbed into, the very, the very, very small spots, of our lives in fact.
So Paul closes, this significant list, of direct imperatives, by showing us, how we might be sustained, this is what I'm talking about, persevering, in this new life, saturated, and consumed, with Christ's, rightful, preeminence, in our lives.
[13:40] Will we be sustained, in this? Well, I think all of us, right mind, even in our right mind, would say, well if it was up to me, no. If it was up to my strength, my energy, my effort, my abilities, none of us, I think, can say, we will not be sustained.

Unless the Lord, holds us up, we will all fall, in an instant. So then, what we have here, then, is Paul saying, well if this, is all the different aspects, where Christ's preeminence, is supposed to be in our lives, how might we be sustained, what is it then, that Paul is calling, this Colossian congregation, and us today, to do, in order to sustain, a fervency, in this life, in Christ, cherishing, his preeminence, in all things.
Very practical. Very practical. He's asking us, to do two things. Here's the two points, for the message this morning. Two things. Point number one, continue steadfastly, in prayer.
You see this here, in verses two through four. I'm getting ready, to read these passages, for you. And then point number two, walk wisely, toward outsiders. Verses five through six.
Point number one, continue steadfastly, in prayer. Verses two through four. And then, point number two, walk wisely, toward outsiders. Verses five through six. Look with me. Verse two.
[15:09] Continue steadfastly, in prayer, being watchful, in it, with thanksgiving. At 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, that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

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

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person.
This is the text, we'll be looking at this morning, and seeking to understand, by God's grace. We see here, that Paul, point number one, continues steadfastly, in prayer.
We see here, that Paul, is not simply, suggesting, the value of prayer, in our text. But instead, no one said, we find here, that Paul's, insistence upon prayer, being a constant, part of our lives.
In other words, and this is important, I think some of us, misunderstand this. Our text, is not speaking here, of the intensity, of our prayers, but the, consistency, of our prayers.
[16:21] Sometimes, again, like the college student, that hits it real hard, right before the night, before the exam, we think our prayers, are that way. I don't have to pray, as much, but when I do pray, I need to be really, really fervent, and just kind of, come at it hard, and then I can, lay off for a few more weeks.

No, here what we find, is that, it is not the intensity, of our prayers, but the consistency, of the prayers, that we find, that Paul is, encouraging us in. Our lives, are to be marked, by habitual, frequent, persistent prayer.
Paul then, gives us, two characteristics, of our prayers, that will help us, in our persistence. who here, don't raise your hand, can say, I pray enough, I mean, I'm, I'm, I'm killing it, I pray all the time, and I do plenty, and I don't think I need to do anymore.
None of us, right? So how can we, persist, more faithfully, more carefully, how can we persevere, in this prayers? First, we see, that our prayers, are to be watchful, are to be watchful.
You see here, in verse two, this persistent prayer, is rooted, in a discipline, that has been, all but lost, in our day to day. And this discipline, is historically, being called, watchfulness.
[17:40] However, this call, is something, we see, over and over again, in scripture. Jesus himself, calls his disciples, to this. Mark chapter 14, verse 38, Jesus says, to his disciples, watch and pray, that you may not, enter into temptation.

Do we need to watch, and pray guys? Absolutely. The spirit is, indeed willing, but the flesh is weak, Jesus tells, his disciples. He tells us. Peter, the apostle, warns the saints, of his day, be sober minded, be watchful.
Your adversary, the devil, prowls around, like a roaring lion, seeking someone, to devour. This is why, we need to be watchful. We see that these texts, are not simply speaking, of staying awake, while praying, and that's, that's a, that's a thing.
But instead, they seem to be speaking, of this watchfulness, with an eye, to an imminent end, of the world's agenda, to the return of our Savior.
We're praying, watching for, that end, looking for, how is it, Lord, that you're bringing, these things together. Therefore, it will be right, to pray, with fervent watchfulness, and to say, O Lord, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.
[19:03] Come, O Lord Jesus, come quickly, as the end of our Bible says. However, this watchfulness, watchfulness, is not simply, a praying, that is, constantly looking, to the clouds, for the Lord's return.

But instead, this watchfulness, is a diligent, watching, of one's own life, in light of Christ's return. In other words, this call to watchfulness, is not simply, an eye to the future, but it is, a careful, and diligent, guarding, of our hearts, from the coldness, toward God, and indifference, to His righteousness, and holiness, that we are all, so apt to, fall into.
Again, John Owen, the Puritan, can help us here. Owen, defines watchfulness, in this way. Owen, defines watchfulness, as, a universal, carefulness, and diligence, exercising itself, in and by all ways, and means, prescribed by God, over our hearts, and our ways.
So not only, the things that we're doing, but also what's happening, inside of us. The bait, and methods, of Satan, we're supposed to be, watching over those things. How is it that, Satan uniquely baits, and tempts me, or you, as we're thinking, through these things.
This is the watchfulness. The occasions, and advantages, of sin, in the world, that we, that we be not, entangled to them.
[20:33] Excuse me. Let me state it this way, and it may be helpful, our congregation, has found this helpful. And this may be, just a good test, for us, to see, how we need to, lean in, to this, this wonderful watchfulness.

Yesterday, think about yesterday, your yesterday. It's different than mine, I hope, for a couple reasons. Yesterday, to the degree, that you prayed, the amount, that you prayed yesterday, is

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exactly equal, to the degree, that you felt like, you needed God.
no more, and no less. The degree, or the amount, that you prayed yesterday, is exactly equal, to the amount, that you thought, you needed God.
No more, and no less. you only continue, steadfastly in prayer, if you understand, the great dangers, and the amazing assaults, that are around us, in the world, that we're in, regularly.
If you're in desperate need, for the Lord, what are you going to do? Well, you're going to pray. And if you have it all, figured out, and you've got it, and you can handle this, this is okay, guess what you're not going to do?
[21:55] You're not going to pray. Only if you begin, to acknowledge, the dullness, and the coldness, and the indifference, of your own heart, will you turn, to constant, steadfast prayer, doing this with watchfulness, knowing that, the Lord has to do something, in your heart.

But don't make the mistake here, what are, what are you watching for? You are not to be, diving into, a, a, a deep introspection, of your own soul here.
A self-help evaluation, what are the, calendar things, I need to change, what are the agenda things, I need to change, that's not what I'm speaking of. When I'm speaking of, watchfulness here, you know this watchfulness, is a, a vigilant, tenacious, attention, to Christ, in your life.
Setting your, eyes upon Christ. We will do this, how, how do you do this? Well, how do I do this? Well, turn to prayer.
Turn to the Lord in prayer. Cry out to Him. Persistent, looking to Christ, seeking His face, setting your mind and heart on Him, that He might warmly stir, a love, the mercy, the affection, of Him in you, comes when we, when we pray.
[23:22] And when we realize how much that, how valuable that is in our lives, we might even set aside, lingering time of prayer, and say, Lord, I need to sit here, and just pause, and listen, and be silent, and cry out, and explain my heart, and ask for you, to grant me grace.

Listen, brothers and sisters, our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, is seated at the right hand of God. And He's going to return.
And we can cry out to Him. He wants to hear His saints, His people, cry out to Him. Because there will be a day, when Christ, who is your life, will appear, Colossians 3, 4, if you want to look at it, then you also, will appear with Him in glory.
If that's your heart, that is a blessing. If that's not your heart, you're like, oh man, I'm just so far away from that. Ask Him, Lord, would you give me that?
Lord, would you, would, why would the Lord not answer, that prayer? That prayer of all, why would the Lord not answer that prayer? Lord, allow me to have a heart, that longs for your appearing, that when you also appear, that I might be with you in glory.
[24:44] Because of indwelling sin, and the world's influences, Satan's cunning, we must realize that, like gravity, these are always pulling us away from Christ.

If we ever put it in neutral, we're not going to remain in that spot, we're going to glide down the hill. So if you do not have a fervent passion for Christ, and regularly being reminded, I've got to come back to Christ here, His righteousness, His holiness, and His love, then let me serve to you a warning this morning.
Some need to hear this. You've already left your post, and you're off your watch. You're not being watchful. Turn back.
Ask the Lord for repentance. And turn back. Our prayers are to be not only watchful, but as well, they're to be thankful. It's hard.
Do you know of a praying person that's also a grumbling person? You don't. Because someone who's constantly coming to the Lord in prayer is one who is thankful.
[25:59] Glaring gratitude. That's what prayers are. We may come to prayer with hearts heavy and burdened, but while in the prayer we are able to reflect upon the lavish supply of Christ, and we are thankful, despite all of our real struggles, despite our pains and sorrows in the life, Christ comes shining through.

We can say, yes, Lord, and all of these things, and yet, think about it, a lot of times, those things that our hearts are so burdened over and struggling and difficulties, difficulties, were they ever promised to us forever anyway?
They weren't. We just love them so much and they've been such a good blessing from the Lord to us that we think, well, maybe we're to live the rest of our lives with this blessing or this good. Each

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and every one of us are going to set aside each and every one of these temporal blessings, all of which that were to point us and to remind us and to thrill us and to stir us to what?
The glory of Christ. If it's not doing that and we're anchoring our hearts in these things, what will cause us to persevere? Because that's the hard part, right?
When these things start being pulled away from us, even our health. Is Christ enough? Yes. He is. He is. And even if you're in church all your life, you'll ask that question when these hard challenges come.
[27:25] Is Christ enough? Yes. Yes. Ask those questions not only to brothers and sisters around you, but to our Lord. Christ, I want you to be enough.

We find that the more we reflect upon Christ, the more our hearts will turn to prayer and thanksgiving. In this short book of Colossians, we can't read more than just a couple paragraphs without seeing Paul turning his heart to gratitude and pouring out gratitude over and over again.
Look at Colossians 1, verse 3. Look here. Colossians 1, 3. It says, We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray to you. See that in Colossians 1, 3?
Colossians 1, 12. Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.
Giving thanks to the Father. Now look at chapter 2, verse 7. Rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith just as you were taught abounding.
[28:31] How? In thanksgiving. Look at chapter 3, verse 17. Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him. So, our prayers are to be watchful if they're going to persist.
But our persistent prayers also need to be focused. This is the second characteristic that Paul gives to us here in Colossians 4. The perseverance in prayer is also to be focused prayer.
And it might be better to say here targeted prayer. You see here in verses 3 and 4 both what He is wanting them to pray for, verse 3, and why He is asking them to pray these prayers.
Simply put, our prayers will never persist, continue steadfastly, as our passage here says, if they are random, wandering, aimless prayers.
[29:42] Dear Jesus, be with me all day and for everybody all over the place and also the missionaries. Amen. You've heard those prayers, right?

You've prayed those prayers, maybe. We see that Paul gives the Colossians a target, a focus for their prayers. He says here in our passage, at the same time, pray also for us that God may open to us a door for the Word to declare the mystery of Christ.
Do you see how specific he's being? We see here that Paul calls the Colossian congregation and to pray not for him. Notice, Paul here is not saying pray for me nor for anyone else specifically, but instead he's praying that the Word may go forward.
Paul does here what other New Testament writers often do. He personifies the very Word of God as if the Word of God is moving and working and changing and shaping God's people.
And it is. It is. We don't see it, but we pray for it and we trust our Lord for it. Paul is wanting the Word to continue to do what it has done in the midst of the church there in Colossae.
[31:09] Chapter 1 of Colossians verse 6, or excuse me, verse 3. Colossians 1 verse 3 says, We always thank God, there's our thankfulness, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ when we pray for you since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

Listen, of this you have heard before where in the word of the truth the gospel, listen to what he says here, which has come to you as indeed in the whole world, what is it doing?
It is bearing fruit and increasing as it also does among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God and truth. faith. This word, this gospel advancement is God's unfolding plan for the world to know and worship the Lord Jesus Christ.
This is what we have in our passage here in Colossians 4 that's spoken of as the mystery of Christ that we are to persistently pray for. We notice something interesting in the last phrase here in verse 4 on account of which I am in prison.
You see that? Here Paul is giving us an idea of just how necessary and committed he is to see the word of God go forward at the cost of even his imprisonment.

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[32:37] And yet Paul did not ask the Colossians to pray for his release. Isn't that interesting? This man's in prison. I mean the prayer that I would pray and I think the prayer that we would pray pray that the Lord will release me from prison and all by the way may the word of God be, I mean I wouldn't leave it out.

I hope I'm more spiritual than that, right? And we are. No. He doesn't even mention that. He's saying the point here is that the word of God goes forward. If somebody asks you we have two families every Sunday two covenant families every Sunday that we pray for specifically throughout the week.
And it's become a regular pattern in our congregation where those two families typically get approached on Sunday that they are going to be prayed for for that week. We mention them at the beginning of the service and then many in the congregation go up to those different individuals that are members of our church and say how can I pray for you this week?
You know how hard that question can be if we don't get asked that very often? So begin thinking about this. how can the word of God run and speed forward and excel and spread and flourish in your life and in the things that are around you?
You can begin thinking about how to specifically how focused do I need to be at asking others to pray for me and that will help us begin praying in our own hearts and our own ways specifically in this way.
[34:09] when you and I pray when you when you and I pray we're often too often or we're too often more concerned with our release from the difficulties that we find ourselves in and that becomes the focus of our prayer instead of how the Lord is opening doors in the midst of our difficulties and sorrows and hardships and largely think about this how would the Lord get into that area if that hardship didn't exist?

A lot of times if you think about it you realize wait a minute unless this hardship exists I wouldn't have access for the gospel here and yet the Lord places us in our lives and he placed Paul in prison so that the gospel can go forward even human attempts to shut down the gospel through Paul did not seem to diminish the gospel or cause it to stalemate the focus of our prayers is the propagation of God's word in our midst what is it that you and I pray for?
is it that God's powerful word would be accomplished its end in our life in your needs in your marriage in your family in your workplace in your own very heart if not I've got good news for you turn to prayer the Lord would love to answer that prayer Lord give me a heart that desires for your word to go forward and help me be help me be focused help me be targeted to see how your word is moving and working in the lives around me and in my own heart and need to start with me Lord 2 Thessalonians 3 1 says finally brothers pray for us Paul's saying this finally brothers pray for us that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored as happened among you I read that this morning in reviewing this sermon and I thought that's exactly what's happening at Reformed Heritage Baptist Church as the word of God is going forward and speeding among you it is among us and we can pray for each other in that very end and know that Christ will come one day and gather for himself the saints and we will be with him in glory we do not have a bitter end we have a glorious end and we can pray with that kind of fervency wouldn't that cause us to persist in prayer absolutely let me give you an example hopefully the children will remember this example some the kind of prayer we'll often find in our lives and in the world around us serious opposition this kind of prayer that I'm speaking of it did for Paul he ended up in prison and it did also for an Old Testament man that many of us know
Daniel you remember Daniel the Old Testament prophet here it also did it also caused opposition and struggle for Paul in this way but Daniel Daniel did not grow casual or even lean away from prayer but instead the opposition caused him to be more strengthened in his prayer Paul and Daniel both became more resolved to persist in prayer when hardship came and I'll say just as a pastor that's been around for a while this breaks my heart when a brother or sister that's been around for a really long time and some just horrendous hardship happens in our life and I call them to prayer and I want to go and pray with them and we want to gather around them as a congregation and say let's walk together with the Lord in this and if the Lord's going to take this away from me I've had enough I'm walking away it's hard but it happens we pray
Lord create a love for the glory of Christ in this person that's greater than the thing that they're losing that they think is ultimate and it never should have been the high officials of the day in Daniel's day devised a plan to remove Daniel's influence with the king remember how Daniel was

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able to just go to the king and talk to him all the time well the officials didn't like that and so so the the officials wanted to cause Daniel's influence to be turned away from and so they had the king issue an injunction against anyone praying except to the king himself the king signed this injunction thinking this is a great idea the only one that anybody in my kingdom can pray to is me that's what the king thought
[39:08] Daniel 6 10 says this when Daniel knew that the document had been signed he went to his house where he had windows where he had his windows in the upper chamber open toward Jerusalem and he got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God I find it so interesting that Daniel 6 1 says that when Daniel knew that the document had been signed this is going to cost me my life but I'm going to pray I simply wanted to mention this example to say that when Paul is calling us here in our text is nothing less than what his people were called to throughout the history of the church that diligent fervent prayer and it'll never come easy the reason you don't pray like you want to isn't because of your schedule it isn't because of your due list it isn't because of the family the Lord placed you in it isn't because of your boss it isn't because of your surroundings it's because prayer is war and we're going before our God asking him to confront the principalities of the air only those who see this utter emptiness and lack and desperately long for more of

Christ to satisfy the lack in their own souls and the souls of those around them will pray Psalm 16 1 and 2 preserve me O God for in you I take refuge I say to the Lord you are my Lord listen to this last part I have no good apart from you I have no good apart from you Psalm 16 11 you make known to me the path of life in your presence there is fullness of joy and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore do you believe that do you believe that I know you know it I know you've heard it does your soul believe that pray Psalm 16 verse 11 ask the Lord to give you that heart again many of us would say Lord give me that again I remember when my heart was there give it to me again the second point is going to be shorter but let me jump in here walk wisely toward outsiders and this is verses 5 and 6 we will be sustained in the preeminence of
Christ in our lives and those around us through our prayers our speaking with the Lord having become steadfast watchful and focused in our prayers then we are able to live and speak with those outside of the church faithfully and best we see here in verse 5 those who trusted Christ in this small congregation in this big town of Colossae opposed those that are in the town opposed Christ and his teaching big town little bitty congregation do you know what I'm talking about do you get an idea of what I'm talking about big town that's opposed to the gospel and the things of Christ little congregation man that can feel overwhelming that can feel like man what are we doing this is just a drop in an ocean the Colossian congregation were the minority for sure so Paul was calling them to live wisely toward those that are outside the church not to beat them up not to berate them not to go after them not to criticize them no instead notice what it says here walk in wisdom toward outsiders you see that there in our passage it's important to understand that our days are few and thus we need to according to our passage look at it again make the best use of the time this phrase has the idea of buying up time time and now some of you who are of my age or maybe a little older that have that were weaned and grew up on the treasured
King James version of the Bible and memorize most of your scripture memory verses are in King James I still most of my scripture memory I go I revert back to King James and that's a good thing but the King James translation says and I think they speak of it better here of this idea of buying back our time it says here the King James says redeeming the time instead of make the best use of the time we're to live as if every moment counts we should not waste our moments without considering how they should be used under the rule reign and lordship and preeminence of Christ back when there was this there used to be these things called checkbooks and I was in high school and in college and in seminary and I wrote redeeming the time at the top of my checkbook because I not only wanted to redeem my time but I wanted to redeem my time as carefully and hopefully as willingly as I was trying to redeem my money and keep it make every cent count make every moment count we are to live as if every moment counts we should not waste any of our moments we should know that we are indeed serving our lord what does lord mean what does lord mean does lord mean
I come to church on sunday and man he is thankful for that and I'm so glad that god's thankful for that because he's lord but then you can live your life any way you want to the rest of the week no lord means that the lord god in heaven the maker of all things visible and invisible reigns he rules he

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has lordship and here's the word from Colossians preeminence over all things in heaven and earth why should we walk wisely we should walk wisely because the outside world doesn't want us to flourish in the gospel never think that they do they would like for us to be nice but they don't want us to flourish in the exclusivity of Jesus Christ alone as our savior and lord of heaven and earth second we need to be wise because we are foolish often we're going to foolishly make decisions and go after things that are not bad things that are not wicked things at all but they're not best for the flourishing of the gospel and of Christ in our lives and others we have families in our church great families they are living close to our congregation living close to the actual facility where we where we worship and they struggle with getting the church on time now people have names of people in this church that do that

[46:27] I know you do you got that person in your mind right now aren't you glad they're here I mean it's a little later but they're still here and that's good we love them we have people in our church that show up show up a little later and they find this really really great house two hours away that's going to be a wonderful plenty of land all this wonderful blessings and I've got this and I've got this and we can invite people over and it's going to be great but you're moving two hours away and you already have a hard time getting here already is that a bad thing for you to do?

no but let's act wisely now I'm not saying you should do it or you shouldn't do it you should hear what I'm saying I'm simply saying that so often we take things that are good and are blessings and are for us and we don't measure is this going to cause my family and I to flourish in the gospel wisely or is this an unwise decision even though it may not be a bad decision and then thirdly the reason we need to be wise in our age is because by seeking to by seeking to influence or be around those that are in the world today you and I have every every ability to allow the world to influence us more than the scriptures do we have every ability to allow the world to begin influencing our thinking and our thoughts and our ambitions and our aims and brothers and sisters they may be again good things that the world is asking you to do that isn't bad but it's not rooted in a treasuring of the glory of Christ and so consider those things

I'm asking you to be wise here and here Paul is asking us to live wisely because the world that's around us those outsiders they aren't just simply going to be neutral in and around us Ephesians 5 16 says making the best use of time why?

because the days are evil that's really what I was speaking of there in that last point verse 6 we see that our speech is to be seasoned as we walk wisely among those who do not claim Christ we are not only to be judicious with our time but we are to be persuasive with our words look at verse 6 let your speech always be gracious seasoned with salt so that you may know how you ought to answer each person we see a couple of aspects of this persuasion in our text first we notice that the speech is to always be gracious I take this phrase not simply to mean that our speech should be nice or kind but instead convincing and compelling I think this is why Paul goes on to give us a metaphor for this gracious speech our speech should be always gracious like seasoned with salt you see that there in other words influential eloquent compelling and attractive this is how our speech is to be how will our speech be like this because mine isn't

I'm the bull in the china cabinet a china china broom right I just plow through too often and I'm not careful and gracious how can we be gracious in our speech listen to me as one who has failed many times and I can give you plenty of advice on this only when we are gripped by the grace that we've been shown only when we've been convinced that you know what the reason I'm not there is because my my savior showed me grace and mercy and so therefore I need to be showing grace and mercy as you and I become more enthralled and captivated by Christ the cross the gospel and the lavish grace we have been we have been shown in Christ only then will we speak rightly do you see how we seldom walk wisely by letting our speech be influential compelling and worthy of the one that we are speaking of our words are rarely seasoned with salt why because we have not spent the time continuing in steadfast prayer and watchfulness and thankfulness that I spoke of just a minute ago see how Paul is bringing these two things together until we do this we will know be gripped be captivated to be fixed by fixed on our joy in Christ and his rich grace that he has lavished upon us next next our wise speech is to be based on knowledge of not only God's grace in Christ but also a knowledge of the individual person we are talking to and this is frustrating our congregation are full of people that are sometimes not all that lovely how about yours right sometimes

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[51:29] Nick and I annoy the stew out of each other we did that this week and we will continue to do that and yet know that you know what we are going to love each other because that is what God has called us to do we are to lean into one of those lives and that means the messed up lives that you've got sitting around you and the messed up life that you have in your own heart and you're not let me help you here you do know that God has not called you to fix the people that are around you he's not called you to do that the gospel does that Christ does that you are the the person just as broken as the one sitting beside you even though you're not quite convinced of that and you're the one that can bring that beggar bread as another beggar and says here eat of this eat of this gospel let's cherish Christ together and so our wise speech is based not only on knowledge of the grace of God but also knowledge of the individual person that we're walking with and to here we find that Paul is calling this church to be gracious and careful to answer each person uniquely not simply to bark out bite sound bites or to simply declare one's position with more force or more volume or more demeaning banter aka we're not going to reach the world by podcast the person that is doing all the amazing wonderful things online that's convincing all these people in the church to be whatever they are going to be it's easy when that's happening because I don't have to rub elbows with those people that are no no this is where

God's called you to be sanctified and to grow and to be nourished because it's one thing to understand the particular atonement of Christ it's another thing to teach your five year old what it means for Christ to love us with steadfast love and faithfulness that endures to the mountains so we're to learn each other we're to grow and be more careful to understand one another what is required in giving an answer to each other it requires listening to individuals we're to be courageous enough to listen that we might as it says here answer each person do you see that here in our text with dignity for that person and confidence in the word I fail here I talk so much as a preacher that when I'm in the presence of people I get to going and I can't hush so I tell the church on the occasion people hey tell me to hush when we're talking tell me to stop talking to let others be able to share and that's a blessing that last page of Owen's work on the glory of Christ says this how are we going to persevere most of our spiritual excuse me most of our spiritual decays
Owen says our troubles the barrenness and the laziness of our lives arise from an inordinate admission of other things into our minds in other words guess what one of the greatest enemies that we have that Satan launches at us here it is distraction this or excuse me these weaken grace in all its operations but when the mind is filled with the thoughts of Christ and his glory when the soul cleaves to him with intense affections they will cast out or not give admittance to those causes of spiritual weakness and disorder how might we be sustained for a fervent life in Christ cherishing him as preeminent in all things we look to Christ we fill our thoughts with his glory and survey the wondrous cross in all of its wrath receiving sorrow with all of its grace giving redemption and eternal joy and we sing as the saints have for many years when I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died my richest gain
I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride where the whole realm were the whole realm of nature mine everything in the world was mine that were a that were a present far too small love so amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all Romans 12 12 rejoice in hope be patient in tribulation be constant in prayer let us do that right now let us pray father in heaven would you give I pray by your spirit this congregation a prayer a watchfulness in prayer give them father an opportunity a blessing to be wise and walk wisely among outsiders grant them your grace that as they continue to allow the word of God to spread and flourish in the midst of them may they rejoice when they see these things may they not be downcast when they do not but instead trust you continuing to come to prayer crying out for you to do what only you can do for them we ask that you do these things for the name of Jesus Christ and his glory alone amen amen amen may may may may may!
!!!! may may!

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