On Mission, Together

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 November 2026

Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

[0:00] Well, please take your Bibles, if you have a copy of God's Word, and open them up one final time to the book of Colossians. If you don't have a copy of God's Word with you, that's okay. We have them in the seat backs nearby, but I would encourage you to have God's Word open as we walk through it together.

This is our final sermon through our journey through the letter of Paul to the church in Colossae, and our passage this morning is chapter 4, verses 2 through the end of the chapter, verse 18.
So when you found it, let's stand in honor of the reading of God's Word this morning. 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. 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 person.
[1:16] Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

And with him, Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you.
And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions, if he comes to you, welcome him. And Jesus, who is called Justice. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.
Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.
For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you, and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.
Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, as does Demas. Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and to Nympha and the church in her house.
[2:26] And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans. And see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, see that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.
Father God, would you please, one final time in this letter, would you bless the preaching of your word? Would you show us Christ? Would you engage us in the mission that we're called to be a part of, each and every one of us, as members of this body?
Lord, would we be on mission together for the sake of Christ amongst the nations? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. On August 2nd, in the year 216 BC, a military general named Hannibal Barca executed one of the most impressive feats in military history.
It's called the Battle of Cannae. It was fought during the Second Punic War. The much larger, much more refined, much more formidable Roman army went to battle with Carthage, and they came up against Hannibal and his troops with 86,000 Roman soldiers.
[3:52] That was about twice as many as Hannibal had at his disposal. On paper, this should have been a landslide victory for the Romans, but what happened next is one of the greatest tactical victories recorded in military history.

Hannibal understood how the Romans liked to attack, and at the same time, he knew his enemy well, and he took into consideration the skills and the strengths and the weaknesses of his own

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

soldiers, and he arranged them accordingly.
In the center, Hannibal placed the Iberians and the Gaelics, knowing that they would eventually lure the Romans into the middle, and on the flanks, he places more experienced African warriors.
They spread wide, and they waited for the right moment to close in and close the trap in on the Romans. And then on the wings, on the far exterior, he placed the Numidian cavalry, and their job was to move with speed and agility and to take out the Roman horses, and then to come around the back so that the Romans would then be closed in on all sides.
And Hannibal himself stood right at the center, orchestrating the attack, giving orders and trusting his troops to do their job. The records show that Hannibal and his troops slaughtered the majority of the 86,000 Roman troops that day, making it one of the most lethal days of battle in human history.
[5:20] History shows that his strategic orchestration, with each soldier playing his role, it won one of the world's most impressive and shocking victories. Well, this morning, as we bring our study in this letter to the Colossian Church to a close this morning, what we see is the Apostle Paul is listing off several names, he's rattling off several acquaintances, and if we're honest, sometimes I think we can be prone to just skip right over these sorts of portions of Scripture.

What do these travel plans and personal shout-outs have to do with us? But what we see is that the Apostle Paul is giving us a look into the strategic deployment of the church in the mission of God.
King Jesus has given his people a mission. Do you remember what it is? Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you.
Surely I am with you to the end of the age. He has called his church to take up arms against the overwhelming powers of darkness and advance the kingdom of God to the ends of the earth.
This is our mission. Sometimes, when you look at the apparent strength of our enemy, the mission seems impossible.
[6:47] But the truth is, as we look back at the cross of Christ, we see that Jesus has already won the battle. Now, Paul's already told us this in chapter 2.

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him. And now, he has strategically deployed his people, the church, to continue on mission together.
So this morning, what we see as we close the book of Colossians is three ways the mission advances. Three ways the mission advances.
First, we see the mission advances through prayer. Look there, starting in verse 2. Paul calls the church to 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.
[7:57] The mission advances through prayer. And there's a story of Charles Spurgeon. He's often called the prince of preachers. In the 19th century, in London, Spurgeon, at this point, was drawing massive crowds to come and to hear him preach the gospel.

Many were coming to faith in Christ. And often, traveling ministers and young students who aspired to the ministry would come to hear him preach. And they asked him one Sunday, what is the secret to your success?
And so he took them on a tour of the building of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. And eventually, they got to the basement. And he asked them if they would like to see the boiler room. And by that point, they'd seen all the more impressive parts of the building.
And they had no interest in taking a look inside the boiling room. And so they politely declined. But he insisted. And so he opened up the door. And inside, there were about 100 people on their knees praying for him and for the ministry.
On their knees praying for the preaching of the word. On their knees praying that God would bless the preaching of the word unto the salvation of the lost and for the edification of the church and the spread of the gospel to the nations.
[9:14] And he said, this is my boiling room. He said later, if you want to see the gospel advance, you must pray it forward.

The secret of all success, he says elsewhere. The secret of all success in Christ's holy war is found in the closet of prayer. When the church prays, she is moving the hand that moves the world.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Do you believe that, church? And if so, do you pray as if this were true? Paul says that we are to be faithful in prayer.
That is, pray steadfastly. That's faithfully. Without ceasing, he says in 1 Thessalonians. He says we're to be watchful in prayer. This is one way, one key way that we set our minds on things above where Christ is.
And not on things of the earth. It's in the closet of prayer. We're to be thankful in prayer. We just modeled a prayer of thanksgiving. Do you notice how often we pray in our service when we gather together?
[10:20] Do you tally it up? Does it seem like a lot to you? And we pray silently as we gather to prepare our hearts. We pray after the scripture reading. It's called a prayer of invocation as we pray at the beginning of our service.

We often pray at the close of our confession of faith. If we respond to what we've heard and learned in prayer. We pray a rotation of either a prayer of thanksgiving. Sometimes a prayer of confession. Sometimes a prayer of praise. These different ways that we're called to pray to the Lord. We pray a pastoral prayer. Listing a number of requests that we have as a church body. If you stick around long enough after the sermon, guess what we're going to do?
We'll pray some more. Why? It's not just to fill time and to move through the elements of the service. We believe that prayer is a vital part of the mission of the people of God.
Prayer advances the mission. Paul calls us to pray faithfully, watchfully, thankfully. And he tells us what to pray for as we pray for the advance of the mission.
[11:23] He says pray for us. Pray for us. Pray for us that God may open to us a door for the word. To declare the mystery of Christ on account of which I'm in prison. Pray for us that I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak.

Pray for us that God would open a door for the word. There is a foolish controversy that gets people all twisted up in the scriptures. God's sovereignty.
With the relationship between God's sovereignty on one hand and human responsibility on the other. God's sovereignty and the things that God's people are called to do such as prayer.
And the argument goes, well, if God is totally sovereign as we believe he is, if he's fully in control of everything that happens in all creation, that nothing comes into our life apart from his fatherly hand, if that's what we believe, then they say, why in the world would we bother to pray?
Why in the world, if God's totally sovereign, would we bother to share the gospel? He's already ordained everything that's going to come to pass anyways, right? I think that Paul would just laugh at how ridiculous that sounds.
[12:38] He would say, I'm here in prison. Why? Because I'm giving my life to proclaiming the mystery of Christ. I'm in prison because I'm out here dying for this.

I'm risking my life to make Christ known. I labor to make it clear. I labor to profess the mystery of Christ. I labor to share the gospel with everyone who would hear me speak. But if God doesn't do the work, if God doesn't open the door, if God doesn't empower the preaching of the word, then all of my proclamation is a loss.
God is sovereign. And he will advance his mission. We believe God is sovereign and he will redeem every single one of his people through the preaching of the word.
God is sovereign and he will make certain the gospel of Jesus Christ comes into the ears of every single one of his elect and then into his heart by the power of the Holy Spirit.
And he says, we are called to pray to that end. We believe the mission of God is entirely in God's hands.
[13:51] He is 100% sovereign. And so, for that reason, we pray. God, would you open doors for your word and would you send out the message of the gospel?

John Piper, in his book, Desiring God, he says, prayer is not a domestic intercom to call the butler for more comforts in the den. Prayer is a wartime walkie-talkie to call the commander for tactical air support as we advance the lines of the gospel.
Is this how you pray? So we see first, the mission advances through prayer, but prayer alone is not enough. Second, the mission advances through proclamation.
Second, the mission advances through proclamation. And these two battle strategies, we need to see this, these two battle strategies go hand-in-hand together.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Prayer and proclamation. Prayer and proclamation. Without prayer, you can be trying to get in the door, but that door may stay shut if we're not praying that the Lord would open that door.
[14:58] And without proclamation, well, that door may be wide open with no one to walk through it. We need both. Some of you have been faithfully praying, even for years, God, would someone just go and bring the gospel to my lost neighbor?

God, would somebody just preach the gospel to my lost family member? If only someone would be brave enough to go and speak to them about Christ, maybe they would listen.
Maybe, just maybe, in God's wisdom, He has providentially placed you in that opportunity of proclamation. Maybe He has placed you in proximity to this person so that you can be the one to faithfully open your mouth and proclaim the good news of Christ.
Others of you, you're less afraid to show your cards, and so you've shared, you've shared, you've shared, you've spoken, you've spoken, you've spoken, you've talked with your non-believing family and friends, but it's like you're just hitting a wall with them.
But I would ask you, have you devoted yourself to prayer? Are you continuing steadfastly in prayer on behalf of your lost friends and family members and neighbors?
[16:14] Do you find it easier to talk to them about God or to talk to God about them? We need both. And these two means, prayer and proclamation, these two battle strategies, go hand in hand together to advance the mission of the gospel.

Paul knows this, and so he asks the church in Colossae, would you please pray for me? Would you please pray for us? He says, please pray that God would open to us a door for the word.
For what, Paul? For the clear proclamation of the gospel. He says, that's how I ought to speak. I don't need to make this hard to understand.
I need to speak clearly about it. But it's not just Paul. It's not just the apostles. It's not just his co-laborers who are tasked with this ministry of proclamation.
Look there, starting in verse 5. He calls them, the church, the Colossians. He says, you, church, you are called to walk in wisdom toward outsiders, that's non-believers, those who are outside of the church, making the best use of the time.
[17:28] Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. I wonder if you think that gospel proclamation is a job reserved just for pastors, or just for the spiritual elite, whatever that may mean to you, just for those who have been seminary educated, just for those who are gifted with articulation.

I wonder if you think that gospel proclamation is not for you. The task of gospel proclamation is a group project.
And there is a limited window of time in which we can go about it. Do you realize that there's an expiration date on this task of evangelism?
Do you realize that this is a here and now mission? Do you realize that in the new heavens and the new earth, when Christ returns, when He ushers in the kingdom of God, there will be no need to evangelize?
No opportunity? To evangelize? There is a limited window that we have to communicate the message of the gospel to those who are lost.
[18:54] And so Paul says, each one of us needs to consider how to make the best use of the time. Don't waste it away with empty speech. He says, I don't want to waste it away with complicated speech.

Let your speech always be gracious and seasoned with salt so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. In other words, there ought to be a certain flavor to the way that a Christian speaks.
It doesn't mean that you only always ever speak about the gospel. You can talk about the weather. You can talk about sports. You can talk about family. You can talk about all sorts of things. But there ought to be a certain quality of the way that you speak that would commend the gospel of Christ.
An article from Ligonier Ministries says it like this. It says, We are called to say what you mean, mean what you say, and never be mean when you say it. That's gracious and seasoned with salt. Whatever it is that you say, you ought to speak in a way that commends Christ. But of course, church, the aim and the intention of our interactions with others, especially those outsiders, is not just to stay talking about the weather or talking about family or talking about travel plans or sports.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[20:17] The aim is prayerfully that God would open a door for you to open your mouth and proclaim the mystery of Christ and to do so clearly at that.

That's the goal. So my question for you, church, is number one, are you praying for this? Are you praying for opportunities to share Christ?
Not just for someone else to do it, but are you praying for opportunities for you to share Christ with those around you who don't know Him? And number two, are you ready to share when that prayer is answered?
are you ready to share when it happens? Are you praying that God would open up doors for the gospel and if God just happens to answer your prayers, are you ready to share the good news of Christ?
There are so many reasons, excuses, that we give for why we don't speak up and share Christ. Of course, we know that we should.
[21:26] I think we all know this, right? We know that we're tasked with this mission of gospel proclamation, but we hesitate because, well, maybe we don't want to ruin a good relationship.

We have a friendship. We don't want to put that at risk. We don't want to risk being rejected. We don't want to risk attention in a relationship. Maybe we don't think we're persuasive enough.
But for most people, I think that the reason that we would give is that we don't feel equipped. We don't feel capable of sharing the gospel.
We don't really know how. J.I. Packer, he says evangelism is simply the communication of the gospel.
It is a matter of turning to people and telling them the good news about Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose again. We are not sales representatives trying to force a product.
[22:28] We are ambassadors delivering a royal decree. And to put it simply, church, the task of evangelism is the task of speaking the good news of Jesus.

And you've probably heard the old quote preach the gospel, use words if necessary. Have you heard that? Preach the gospel, use words if necessary. That is foolishness.
That's like saying feed the hungry, use food if necessary. You can't do that. Yes, your godly life, the way that you speak, the way that you act, again, ought to commend the gospel to everyone.
But your godly manner of life alone is not preaching the gospel to your family. Your godliness in your life is not proclaiming the gospel to your neighbors.
Your good godly life is not proclaiming the gospel to your co-workers or your friends. Faith comes through what? Through hearing. And hearing through the word of Christ, Romans 10 tells us.
[23:34] We're called to speak the good news of Jesus. But you cannot speak what you cannot say. So I ask you, when is the last time you practiced saying the gospel?

When is the last time you practiced and rehearsed speaking the good news of Christ? Can you share it? You will not share it if you cannot share it.
The mystery of Christ, the good news of the gospel, the message that we proclaim, the mission, is to proclaim this message that there is a God who made the world and everything in it.
There is a God who is good, who is glorious, who is happy and free, who is worthy of all of our worship, worthy of all of our praise.
And the bad news is that we have each and every one of us sinned and rebelled against Him. We have fallen short of the glory of God. We have turned our back on Him.
[24:42] And this is the Bible's explanation, by the way, of everything that's wrong and broken in our world. Our sin has earned us death and worse. Our sin has earned us separation from a holy God.

We are each and every one of us by nature under His wrath. That's the bad news. But God, in His infinite wisdom before the foundations of the world, planned redemption in His Son, Jesus Christ.
The gospel is the good news that His Son, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man. He lived perfectly in our place. He died as a substitute.
He bore the wrath of God that was due to us for our sin. And He rose from the grave never to die again so that now, any sinner who puts his faith in Christ, any sinner who turns from their sin and trusts in the perfect Jesus Christ will be forgiven of their sin and made new in the image of Christ.
They will be adopted into the family of God and they will be given eternal life. So would you repent of your sin and put your faith in Christ? That's the gospel. Can you proclaim it?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[25:58] Can you proclaim it? And that proclamation may be an elevator pitch 60 seconds. I don't know if that was 60 seconds, maybe 90, right?

Like what I just did. Or it may take weeks, it may take months, it may take years as you proclaim the good news. But are you capable of proclaiming the good news of Christ?
You're called to it, church. The mission of Christ advances as the church proclaims the good news of the gospel. Here as we gather but especially wherever we go when we scatter.
Unless you think that this is just the ministry of an elite few, let's look at our third and final point this morning. How does the mission advance? Third, the mission advances through ordinary people just like you.
Just like me. The mission advances through ordinary people. Look there starting in verse 7. And I mentioned that we often just skip right over sections like this.
[27:01] We don't know these people. We may recognize a few of the names but for the most part it seems a little bit disconnected from us. And Paul's just giving these personal shout outs to people he knows.

I mean, what could we possibly gain from this, right? Well, for one, would you just notice all the different people that Paul mentions specifically by name here?
Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus, Epaphras, Luke, Demas, those at Laodicea, Nympha, and her church and her house, Archippus.
Do you see the diverse mosaic of the warriors and the mission of God here? These are the Numidians and the Iberians and the Galics and the Africans and Hannibal's army.
Here you have Jews and Gentiles, you have men and women, you have different people from different backgrounds with different roles to play with Christ standing right there in the middle orchestrating the attack and trusting his military and trusting every member of his army with their job to fulfill.
[28:12] Paul understands that this mission is not dependent on any one man. This mission is a group project and would you look at all the different ways that they go about the mission?

Everyone plays a part here. Tychicus and Onesimus, they go to minister and to encourage the saints. They come with words of encouragement. They're the communications officers who go and report how things are going on the front lines of the battle.
And they say, yeah, our general's locked up in prison and guess what? The mission goes forward. He's doing great. The mission is advancing. Onesimus, we're going to learn more about him next week, Lord willing.
He was a former bond servant who came to faith in Christ during Paul's imprisonment and he says, you are on the same side now. He's one of you.
Aristarchus and Mark, they send their greetings as well as Jesus called justice. You may remember Mark. He's the cousin of Barnabas. He previously deserted Paul and so Paul didn't want him to come with him on his second missionary journey.
[29:21] Barnabas disagreed and so they argued and they had this big split. But here, Paul puts his personal issue aside and he says, you know what? The mission is bigger than me.

If he comes to you, greet him. We need him in the battle. And these men, he says, are the only ones of the circumcision, those who are ethnically Jewish, who have been won over to Christ, who are now workers for the kingdom of God and they have been a comfort to me.
What an important role that is to play. Epaphras, verse 12, sends his greetings. He's one of them, a Colossian. He's laboring in prayer for them.
He's praying that they would be mature in Christ. He's praying that they would be fully assured in all the will of God. He's praying. He's proclaiming. He's working hard for you. He's working hard for all in Laodicea.
He's working hard for all in Hierapolis. Luke and Demas say hello. They're Gentile converts. They're living reminders that God's word is advancing to the nations, that he's calling all tribes and all tongues and all peoples to himself.
[30:29] Nympha serves the mission by opening up her home for a church to meet in her house. You can only assume she's serving tables and using this gift of hospitality to see the mission go forward.

Archippus, possibly at the end of his ministry, maybe he's facing some discouragement, but Paul calls him, finish the task. Archippus, run the course.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

We need you in the battle. He calls him a fellow soldier in Philemon. and Paul, he sends instructions for his letter to be shared and read.
He gives a personal charge. Would you remember my chains? Don't get too comfortable over there in Colossae. There are always casualties in the battle, but while I'm locked up in here, guess what? The word of God is advancing and it is advancing through you. This is how the mission advances church. It's not just through one or two skilled warriors.
[31:32] It is through an army of everyday ordinary saints empowered and emboldened by the Spirit of God to go to war by praying for the advance of the gospel and by opening up their mouths to proclaim it wherever they go.

Every member plays a part. This is what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12. Well, this is where we get the language of church membership by the way.
We're not members like you might be a member of Sam's Club where you pay an entrance fee, you come and go as you please, you have a service provider that you benefit from on your terms.
Now, we are members of a body and every single member has a role to play. Every single member is necessary. Every single member is gifted for the task, for the good of the whole.
Every single member has a contribution to make for the body, he says, does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, because I'm not a hand, I don't belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body.
[32:43] In other words, they're wrong. And if the ear should say, because I'm not an eye, I don't belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing?

If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be?
As it is, there are many parts yet one body. Church, we have been given a mission and it demands every member of this body to be engaged, to be deployed, to use the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you for the good of the body and the advancement of the gospel.
Church, we need encouragers here. And we need those who would faithfully fall to their knees daily for the spread of the gospel here. We need proclaimers of the gospel, each of you speaking and sharing the good news of Christ.
We need some of you to open up your homes for Bible studies and for discipleship opportunities to use your dining room table as a mission field. We need children's ministry volunteers who would entrust the gospel to the next generation.
[34:09] We need spiritual mentors. We need elders. And we need deacons. We need older soldiers and younger soldiers, male soldiers and female soldiers.

We need some in the center, some on the flanks. We need some on the wings. We need every member playing their part. And when they do, you will see the mission of Christ advanced in our homes and in our church and in our neighborhoods, at the ball field, in our workplaces, in our community, in our nation, and ultimately in the world.
In the aftermath of Hannibal's victory, the Romans, of course, panicked. They were not expecting this. They were sent back on their heels. They scrambled and they had to re-evaluate their entire military strategy.
And some on Hannibal's side saw this as a prime opportunity for Hannibal to march right into Rome and take immediate control. This was the chance to advance.
A fatal wound had been dealt. But history shows that Hannibal refused. And this caused the Numidian commander, Maharbal, to say to Hannibal, assuredly, no one man has been blessed with all God's gifts.
[35:36] You, Hannibal, know how to gain a victory, but you do not know how to use it. The good news of the gospel is that Christ has already gained the victory for us.

As we go about the mission, we don't labor for victory over the powers of darkness. we labor from a position of victory. Christ has already won.
But for many in the church, Maharbal's exclamation could be said of us. We have been blessed with victory, but we don't know how to use it. The king has given us our marching orders.
Advance the good news of my victory to the ends of the earth. We are called each and every one of us, ordinary people united to the living Christ, empowered by his spirit.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

We are called each and every one of us to pray your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And then to go and open our mouths and proclaim the victory of Christ over sin. [36:49] And proclaim the disarming of Satan and the triumph over the grave to all who are in your reach. Let's be a church on mission together. Amen.

Father, we pray asking God that you would use this church and every member of it to advance the gospel of Christ.
You have already empowered us with everything needed to fulfill the call that you've placed upon us. You have already given us victory at the cross of Christ. And so we pray, Lord, would we be faithful to advance the mission together?
Would we open our mouths to proclaim the gospel? And we pray, Lord, would you open up doors for us to do so? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host