

David Gardner Send off Service

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

This is it, I guess. Last service at Vision. I wasn't expecting to do this, but I'm really going to miss you guys.

One of the neat things for me is that I know going down there that I've got a church that's got my back. And I think if there's anything that I'm thankful for, it's that.

Is that God's allowed some major friendships to come into my life during this time that we've been here. And God's allowed us to grow closer with a lot of people.

And I really thank God for it. And I thank God for you guys. Because Katie hates it when I do this. But just so you can be praying, we're leaving in two days, 22 hours, 43 minutes, and two seconds.

[1 : 04] And so it's happening. And it's happening quickly. So, you know, we're excited about it. Be praying. We're actually getting down there. So we leave Wednesday afternoon from here.

And we'll get into Lima at about 11 o'clock on Wednesday evening. And then Thursday, the only time that there were flights available was at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. So I'll be leaving Lima at 5 o'clock, landing in at equip at about 6.30.

And won't even have time to stop by the house or anything. We'll go straight to Omega. And I'll be preaching at Omega. And so just pray that my flight's not delayed. And so if it is delayed, I'll just have an extra message for the next week.

Amen. So that'll be good. I don't have to prepare one the next week. But be praying for, just be praying for everything that's going on down there. God's allowing some, you know, great opportunities to happen. And so just be praying for us.

And, you know, it's not of us. None of it's of us. It's all of him and his power in us. And open your Bibles to Colossians chapter 4. And I'll share this passage with you because I feel like it is an opportunity for me to ask you to be involved in our ministry.

[2 : 17] And to be involved in our life. And to continue to pray for us. And that there is a responsibility for the church, you know, and the relationship between the Colossian church, which Paul had never met.

And Paul is a very close relationship. And he prays for them and they pray for him. And, you know, there is a responsibility there for us. And we'll look at Colossians chapter 4.

And we'll start in verse 2 and go through verse 6. And let's start in verse 2. Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving. And so you look and, you know, the verse that I really want to just skim over.

And a lot of us as Christians, you know, our priorities are wrong many times. And I think that the priority of the church or one of the priorities of the church is that we should continue in prayer. And, you know, it's very easy for me to look at verse 2 and say, continue in prayer.

And verse 3, be praying for me as I go to the mission field. And we always want to skim over it. And we don't give much importance to prayer many times. But when you look at, you know, verse 2, Paul not only says, continue, not like just keep praying, but it's like a persevere in prayer.

[3 : 51] Give yourself to prayer. Dedicate yourself to prayer. Be praying and be communicating with God. And not just, you know, don't just come and, isn't it ironic that I'm talking about prayer and we had to cancel the prayer meeting tonight?

I think that's funny. But anyway, you know, he says it's time for you to just wrestle in prayer with me and to talk to me and speak with me and follow after my heart and chase after me.

And not just come to me with your laundry list of what you want me to do, but continue in prayer and dedicate yourself to communicating with God and communing with Him. And I believe that, you know, more and more, the more and more I'm involved in ministry and the more I'm in ministry and the more I see God doing things in ministry, we've got to pray.

You know, I started praying, just asking God for silly things and God started providing because He is, He's God and He's our Father and He cares about listening to us. And we've got to dedicate ourselves to prayer.

And He says, pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send laborers into His harvest because the harvest is great and the laborers are few. And so, you know what, I honestly, a year ago I thought, man, I'm reading this verse and I've read it so many times.

[4 : 58] And, you know, we always focus on the harvest is great and the laborers are few. And then instead of praying, we get up and preach about how the harvest is great and the laborers are few and we never go back in our room and we start praying.

So, you know, for some reason I just started asking God, God send somebody, God send somebody, God send somebody. And He did. You know, I thank God because it's not about the prayer, it's about the answer, right?

The God that we pray to. And, you know, Kyle and Hannah are heading on deputation. I couldn't be more excited about God answering that prayer. And I think we as a church should continue, should dedicate ourselves, should strive in prayer.

It's very easy for us to just skim over that. And it seeps into every aspect of our life, don't you? I mean, have you ever heard this one?

Man, I'm sorry the loss that you're going through. Is there anything I can do for you? Well, there's nothing left to do now but pray. It's like our last resource. It's not our first resource. It's our last resource.

[5 : 59] Well, what can I do for you? Well, there's really not much you can do for me but pray. And I'm guilty of it very often. But the fact is that He says, you know, He starts out and, you know, verse 1, He talks about, you know, Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

And then He starts into this. This is what you guys should be doing as a church. You should be continuing in prayer. You should be dedicating yourself to prayer. You should be continuing to prayer because I will answer Him because that's where everything begins.

It's not where everything ends. That's not our last resource. That's our first resource. If we don't have God's blessing on our life, if we don't have God's blessing on our ministry, if we don't have God's blessing on our church, we won't grow.

We won't send missionaries out. We won't give. We have to start, start and not end, start in prayer. And not only in prayer as in petitioning but He also continues. And He says, continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

And we need to be watchful. We need to be watchful and we need to be eyes open and we need to be looking for opportunities to pray. And looking not only for, you know, just, you know, God bless us and God bless us as a church.

[7 : 07] But we will be watching for needs, be watching for opportunities and praying. And the great thing is, is that we should be praying with thanksgiving. And I don't know what kind of situations we have, you know, in this church.

All the time we have people that are suffering and people that are hurting. But there is something about our God is that we can always come to Him with thanksgiving. And it's not because of our circumstances and it's not because of what we're going through and it's not because of somebody that's hurt us or whatever.

It is because of our identity and what God's done in our life and God's salvation. If you look in chapter 1 and verse 12 real quick, same book, Colossians, it says, giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

And so no matter what circumstances that we go through, the one thing that will remain is that we will always be meet to be partakers. We are saved, we are made righteous in the blood of Christ.

And now we have the opportunity to thank Him for saving us. And, you know, I've grown up in church and all, you know, you always say, does anybody want to give a testimony? Well, I want to thank the Lord for saving me.

[8 : 10] And it just rolls off of our tongue. But do you realize what He's done? Thanking Him for what He's made us. Thanking Him for saving us. Look at chapter 2 and verse 6 and 7.

It says, Nor have men sought we glory. No, that's 1 Thessalonians. My bad. Chapter 2, verse 6 and 7. It says, And as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

And, you know, it says, When you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, you receive Him through faith, and you receive Him by His grace. And as you've received Him, so walk ye in Him. Be rooted, be built up, and thank Him for the growth that's going on in your life.

And there's one thing that we can say about our church, is that we've grown. We've grown. We've grown in so many, not numerically, that's not really the focus.

I mean, yeah, we've grown from that too, but we've grown. We've grown as individuals. We've grown as a church, and the fact that our focus is right, and we're on the Word of God, and we've grown spiritually, and we've grown in our discipleship, and we're growing, and constantly growing, we're growing as individuals, and as couples, and we can thank Him for that.

[9 : 21] Amen? There's no change of that. I mean, that's going to continue to happen. He that began a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. He's going to continue working in us.

We can thank Him for our growth. Look at chapter 3 and verse 15. Chapter 3 and verse 15, we can thank Him. It says, And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the work which ye are so called in one body, and be ye thankful.

And we can always thank Him for our church. We can thank Him for the body of Christ. Amen? I really, I'm, you know, I'll just pause and say, I'm really thankful for this church. I've, you know, I was just at two different churches this past week, and they're great churches, and they're discipling, and they're great about missions, but there's just something special about my church, and I'm thankful for it.

We can be thankful for our church. We can be thankful for the body. And in chapter 3 and verse 17, he's also, it says, And whatsoever you do, in word or deed, do all in the same, in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

And we can always thank Him for the opportunity to serve Him. We can always serve Him. Paul is writing this letter from prison, and Paul is actually being, you know, he is in prison right now.

[10 : 27] He's not, you know, he's not out serving. He's not out pastoring a church. He's in prison writing this letter, and he says, We can thank Him for the opportunity to serve Him. Right? So, our responsibility as a church is to watch and give thanks and to continue in prayer.

And that's really one of our responsibilities and one of our priorities as a church is that we should pray. We should pray more often. One of the most special times for me is in the past couple of years is when we were up there praying for hours on end and hearing Sam Paxton say, Lord, we know we've got this laundry list of names and looks like we'll never finish it, but Lord bless so-and-so and Lord bless so-and-so and Lord bless so-and-so.

That's exciting, right? The fact that we can pray for each other, the fact, that is a priority. But Paul not only says, you know, continue in prayer, but then he gives a special request and he gives a specific request.

And in verse, look at verse three, it says, with all praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance. And so, you know, you hear so many times that, you know, about these, either you're a church that prays for everybody and you're a church that prays for every member of your church and everything that they're going through, or you're a church that's about missions, or you're a church that's about other people.

And the fact is, is that in this, he's saying, look, you've got a responsibility to pray and you've also got a responsibility to pray for me. Be involved in the ministry with me. Be connected to me. While you're praying for that, also pray for me.

[11 : 52] Pray for what's going on with my life and in my ministry while I'm here in Rome. He's in a different place. He's on the mission field and he says, pray for me. And so we as a church should be involved praying also for our missionaries.

Amen? We should continue to pray for them. And he says, pray for me. And this is what he prays for. That God would open unto us a door of utterance. So where is Paul when he's writing this letter?

He is, where's he at? He's in prison. Is that right? So he's imprisoned and he wants a door of utterance. He wants the opportunities. And look who he asks that would, it's funny because he says, pray for us.

And what are the next two words? Pray for us. Pray for us. Pray for us. That God. Right? Pray for us. That God would open us a door of utterance.

And I'm leaving in two days, 22 hours and some odd minutes. And I'll be honest with you, I know that there's, there's, there's nothing that I can do in myself and there's nothing that I can do in my own ability.

[12 : 53] And I would ask you that if you pray for us, that you would pray that a door of utterance would be open. That we have the opportunity to preach the gospel and that the opportunities in the ministry would open up for us in Peru and that God would present opportunities that we can't just, we can't resist.

We've got to do them. And, you know, I can go down there and, you know, we've got 25 years. January 28th, do you realize? January 28th will be 25 years to the day that my family arrived in Peru.

Which is, you know, super exciting for me because I get to continue in that work. You know, me continuing in that work, there's nothing that I can do to force God's hand at it.

I don't open doors. God opens doors. I don't make opportunities. He makes opportunities. And God's the one that opens the door in our life and He says, pray for me that God would open us a door of utterance.

And so we've got, you know, the Bible College and we've got the television station and we've got these churches and we've got a team of pastors and we've got all of these things. You know what, I could go down thinking that I'm just going to take advantage of all these things and just move the ministry forward because I'm awesome and I'm great.

[14 : 00] But Paul, you know, in his circumstance, he says, pray for us that God would open a door of utterance. And if I could ask you to pray for one thing, it's to pray that God would open doors for us and that God would do a work in Peru not because of us but because of who He is.

and he says, praying for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ. And this might be, I don't, I notice this is that Paul, while he's imprisoned, you know, he's in prison right now and as he prays and he's asking them to pray, he wants a door of utterance not so that he can go before Caesar or go to appeal his imprisonment, his circumstances and where he's at, he asks God that the door would be open so that he could preach the gospel.

So many times we ask God to remove us from persecution or to remove us from circumstances in our life or to remove us from things that are happening in our life that aren't pleasant and different difficulties that we're going through and that God would, you know, God take this sickness away from my family, God take this, give me a job, God, you know, take away my unemployment, God give me this, give me that, God take me out of this and instead of Paul asking God to remove this circumstance, he said, church, Colossae, pray for me that you would, that I would have the opportunity to preach the gospel.

And so, you look at him and he says, pray, we're all praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ for which I am also in bonds.

And Paul doesn't care what the need is, Paul doesn't care what kind of persecution he's going through, he doesn't care what kind of problem he's going through, he says, pray for me, I don't care if I'm in bonds, I don't care what situation I'm in, I'm going to make the most of it and I'm going to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and I'm going to make his name great.

[16 : 09] And so, you know, it is neat to see that while he's writing this letter to Colossae, he's also writing the book of Philemon, right? Do y'all remember the book of Philemon? He's sending Philemon to the church of the Colossians to say to Philemon, forgive, you know, excuse me, I am absolutely wrong and that's why my dad was looking at me weird.

Onesimus, he's writing the book of Philemon and he's sending Onesimus and Onesimus is going with the church, you know, with the letter of, he's going with Colossians and he's going with the book of Philemon and he's taking it to the church of the Colossians.

While he's in prison, God is continuing to work in his life and while he's in the toughest circumstance of his life, God is continuing to use him. And I could ask you that you would pray for me, that I would have the courage to have the same faith that Paul has and I also encourage you that you realize that God's going to use us no matter where we're at if we just surrender ourselves to him and look for the opportunities to serve him.

Amen? So he says that I may make manifest as I ought to speak. So you see that the church's responsibility is to pray and pray together and continue in prayer and to wrestle in prayer and you also see that Paul gives a request but he also makes mention of this and this is something that I would beg of you to take and it's very difficult to preach to this church because I know that you hear great preaching every week and I know that every single one of us apply it every week.

Amen? We just take what we've learned and run with it. Amen? Liars. Alright. So Paul says look, I want you to pray.

[17 : 50] I want you to continue in prayer and I want you to pray for me while I'm doing the work where I'm at but you are also to be doing the work and if you look in verse 5 it says walk in wisdom toward them that are without redeeming the time let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt that you may know how you ought to answer every man and so Paul is saying look, I know I understand that I'm in prison and I understand that I am away from you guys I'm in Rome and I still haven't met you but I hope to meet you someday soon I understand that I'm here and while I'm here and the circumstances that I'm in and the different culture that I'm in and the different whatever that I'm in right now I understand that I'm trying to make the most of it and that I'm asking God that any chance that I get whether it be to witness to a prisoner or whether it be to witness to a runaway slave or whether it be to witness to somebody else I want to use this opportunity for the glory of God and I ask you to be praying for me but just remember you guys should be doing the same thing he says while I am asking God to give me opportunities you should be walking in wisdom toward them that are without and it really is easy especially with a church with 17 18 missionaries on the back wall and you see missionaries and you know hear their testimonies and how many churches they've been in and you know where they traveled to this past week and you're constantly hearing of these missionaries it's easy to think well those guys and us but I hope that you understand we're in this together amen let's start that over thank you brother

Pepperdine I hope you understand we are in this together amen we are in this together and while we are a great missionary sending church I hope we never stop being a people reaching church it's real easy to think man great job reaching out to people in Peru it's great job Jason Hull reaching people in Chile and great job but the fact is that we as a church should be reaching people and we should be redeeming the time we should be walking in wisdom we should make our life public to where people can see our life and see what God is doing in our life see the change that God has done in our life and that we might redeem the time that we might confront people with the gospel of Jesus Christ and let me just ask you one question that's a real tough question for people that have been saved for more than a couple of years how many lost people do you know by their first name how many lost people do you know let me ask you your second question how many lost people do you know that you're praying for that God would give you a door of utterance because you know we start with prayer right and we pray that God would give us a door of utterance so how many people are you praying for that God would open the door that you might present the gospel to because he does say walk in wisdom so that you are a good person right is that what it says walk in wisdom so that you will be a moral person and don't let anybody see you know don't interact with anybody is that what it says what does it say verse 5 it says walk in wisdom to who toward them that are without who are the outsiders unsaved we're the body amen we're the body of Christ and there's some people that aren't part of the body and so who should I be walking in wisdom in front of

I should be walking in wisdom in wisdom in front of unbelievers and not only walking in wisdom because I really I don't believe in lifestyle evangelism because if you're not confronting people with the gospel it's not evangelism at all it's just lifestyle and so it says walk in wisdom toward them that are without redeeming the time let your speech be all the way with grace seasoned with salt that you may know how you ought to answer every man and so I'm just going to ask you on the prayer side I would ask you that you would pray for me I really I mean I'm really excited about what God's doing but there's a lot of responsibility I'm preaching eight or nine times in the first week that I'm there and for a missionary that travels around preaching the same message every week I don't do that just other missionaries right the other missionaries that do that there's going to be a lot of pressure of studying and there's going to be a lot of pressure of training men and there's going to be a lot of pressure of doing that

I would ask you to pray for me but on your side I would ask you that you would make your life public and if you're at the summit I mentioned this make your life public that people could see your life that God could that people could see the change that God has made in your life and why you have peace and why you have joy through through difficulty and through loss and when they see that that you might have the door of utterance that you could share the gospel with them and that when you share the gospel with them they might be saved and that you might love on them it says let your speech be all the way with grace seasoned with salt be kind be loving and that people would come to know Christ and that you might know how to answer every man and so I ask you that you do that the frustrating thing for me very frustrating thing for me is that it seems like we consider mission fields places that have a lot of people that aren't the same color as me you know people in Africa that's the mission field and then that's that's who we ought to go be that's who we need to be reaching we need to be investing we need to be somebody needs to give their life to go to go reach them and and if they speak a different language than me and if they are you know if they look different than me and if they play a different sport than me and if they do different okay well that it's so much of a difference it's so much of a difference and and and our lives contrast so much that they need to be reached but we don't even pay attention to the fact that we need to be reaching people here and let me tell you just because you work at the same place with another you know white guy that speaks the same language as you and y'all are fans of the same football team that doesn't mean that he saved that doesn't mean that he has more hope than some kid in

Africa if the gospel is hid it is hid to them that are lost and so I would encourage you that you would continue reaching people and I am I am excited about the day that we might be able to send out a missionary that has been saved in this church and that has been trained in this church and that has been sent out and I don't think that that hasn't happened yet we're close I think we're close and I think God's going to do it but wouldn't it be exciting amen that God would send out missionaries from here that have been saved in our church amen I want to see that day and so I ask you that you continue to serve him to pray that God would open doors of utterance for me and not only for me but for you and that gives us a connection that nothing else will give us Facebook doesn't give us that connection reaching the loss with the gospel of Jesus Christ that gives us this connection that we're in this mission together amen let's pray dear God I thank you for this opportunity I thank you for your word and I ask you that you would show us the importance of prayer that you would show us the importance of serving you that you would show us the importance of thanking you for what you've done in our life and I ask you that you would bring great honor and glory to your name through my life as I go to the mission field and through this church as you use them to reach the lost you know I pray this message was recorded at Vision Baptist

[25 : 26] Church in Alfredo, Georgia for more information log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information and more audio and video recordings matters.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I GPS love you. As you in prof Stanley I GPS told youire.com you I GPS HE ■■■■■ vampus people come to the marketplace