

Colossians 4:2-11 – Pray for Us

After finishing his exhortations to family members and to masters and slaves, Paul continued with some general exhortations. At the beginning of the letter Paul told the Colossians how he had been praying for them. In chapter 4, Paul asked the Colossians to pray for him. After the final exhortations were the closing greetings.

Read Colossians 4:2-6.

Paul exhorted the Colossians to continue in prayer. According to verse 2, how were they to pray? (4:2)

In verse 3, what did Paul ask them to pray for? What did Paul mean when he asked that God would “open for us a door for the word”? Was Paul able to proclaim the Gospel in prison? Explain. (4:3)

Most translations of verse 4, like ESV, NASB and NIV emphasize “make it clear”. Other translations like KJV have “make it manifest”. The “it” refers back to “the mystery of Christ”. What was Paul’s desire in verse 4. Was his desire that his chains would not prevent him from proclaiming the mystery of Christ, the Gospel? Or, was his concern that he was not making the Gospel clear enough when he preached? (4:4)

In verse 5, who were the “outsiders”? How can we “walk in wisdom toward outsiders”? How can we make “the best use of the time”? KJV has “redeeming the time”. NASB has “making the most of the opportunity”. Some see in this verse an exhortation to evangelism. (4:5)

In verse 6, do you think that Paul was still talking about the Colossians’ relationships with “outsiders”? How were the Colossians supposed to speak to others? Why were they supposed to speak in this way? (4:6)

Read Colossians 4:7-11.

Who was Tychicus? See Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, 2 Timothy 4:12, Titus 3:12. (4:7)

Even though Paul did not plant the church at Colossae, they must have been familiar with him. Paul said that Tychicus would tell them about his circumstances (literally, “the things with respect to me”). Not only was Tychicus sent to tell the Colossians about Paul, but he most probably delivered the letter to the Colossians. What does that tell us about Tychicus? (4:7)

What three phrases did Paul use to describe Tychicus? (4:7)

Verse 7 focused on Paul (me / my). Verse 8 included those with Paul (we). What two reasons did Paul give for sending Tychicus to the Colossians? (4:8)

Paul sent Onesimus with Tychicus. How did Paul describe Onesimus? Where was Onesimus from? Who was Onesimus? See the book of Philemon. At the end of verse 9, what were Tychicus and Onesimus sent to do? (4:9)

Paul started his final greetings in verse 10. Aristarchus sent his greetings. How did Paul describe Aristarchus? Who was Aristarchus? See Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2, Philemon 1:24. Who was Mark? What special instructions did Paul give concerning Mark? Why might these instructions have been needed? See Acts 15:36-40. (4:10)

There were a couple of other people named Justus in the New Testament, but this Justus, named Jesus, appears to be a different person. Who were “the only men of the circumcision”? Why do you think Paul singled them out as being “of the circumcision” as opposed to the idea that “there is neither Jew nor Greek”? ESV, NASB and NIV convey the idea that these Jews were a subset of those who were Paul’s fellow workers for the kingdom of God. These Jews were an encouragement to Paul. They were the only Jews who were working with Paul. The implication was that other Jews were working against him and the Gospel of Jesus. KJV has “these only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God” KJV21 is similar. These translation could lead someone to the idea that the non-Jews were not fellow workers for the kingdom of God. This understanding is not correct. NKJV seeks to correct this by translating the phrase “These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision”. The translation of the ESV, NASB, NIV and NKJV bring out the correct meaning. There are numerous examples in Colossians of how Paul valued and embraced his Gentile brothers in Christ. (4:11)