

I'm turning to Colossians 4 v2&3. In this book - We have seen and are reminded to obey and be doers of Gods Holy Word. We learn, and have seen something of the **fullness and richness of Christ Jesus**. Our **redemption so sure and secure**, our **forgiveness so complete** and merciful, that **He alone rescued us**. He settled us and gave us an inheritance. That He **strengthens us and keep us with all might and power**. We have also seen something of the **character and conduct of a Christian** that we bear with one another and bear the weak, we are forgiving. There is so much in these Chapters.

Now today - we look at **Coll 4:2&3**. – *Prayer for Congregation - that you teacher and the one with all knowledge and wisdom would open our hearts and eyes to become doers of what ye hear, that it would be very important unto us- more valuable than gold Sweeter than honey. That you oh Lord would help us to have a strong desire to pray more. – amen-*

Colossians 4:2-3 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; [3] Withal- (at the same time pay close attention to) 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:

Continue Pray, and watch, with thanksgiving. **Our subject today is** Praying – Watching with all vigilance and at the same time Praying always for the Gospel proclamation.

Here is the call for every believer. But more than a call an honour to be part of something so precious and that endures through all eternity. **Continue Watching, Thanksgiving, strong prayer for the Gospel preachers.**

1. **Continue-** includes the meaning to be devoted or constant- to **be strong in prayer**. To **persevere and not faint** to be **courageous in prayer**. To **persist and keep on**.

I read a moving story of a woman who lived on the sea shore one night the wind was howling the seas were rough and dangerous. And she heard what she thought was a cry for help. Perhaps with all the howling wind she thought it must just be the noise of the sea and the wind. But then again another cry. Maybe it's a person in trouble! Then another cry now she was convinced and ran to the life guards office where they sent out a rescue and were able to rescue 3 people from what would have been a watery grave. SUPPOSE those people in that deep water just cried once! But they CONTINUED – with STRONG cries.

Continue earnestly, unwearied in prayer, devoted to prayer. We read the Parable of the unjust Judge in Lukes Gospel **Luke 18:1-7. These verses teach us firstly, the great importance of perseverance in prayer.** There was a teaching around that you pray once in Faith and anything more is unbelief. But let's see what Scripture that is settled forever and changes not says- It is spoken by The Lord Himself to this end- that men ought to always pray and faint not – then the parable - This Judge didn't care was unjust did not fear God. **But the widow continued asking**, 'avenge me of my adversary'– most likely someone was trying to grab the land her husband had left her. and she asked continuously, she continuously came to the Judge and eventually he heard her and gave the justice she wanted. How much more our God who is Just and Fair and righteous and true – How much more will he hear us. *Luke 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?*

She came again and again- fervent – determined. **The judge said lest she wear me out. Let me give her justice.** She came again, and again, and again, and again; she would stop coming. **Now that is the way to pray, as if we would even weary God** with our supplications, **though we never can weary God.** The more we wait on God the stronger we get It doesn't make Him weary, He loves His Children, It is impossible to weary him with earnest believing, and heartfelt prayers, **yet we must show the same determination in prayer that this widow displayed while pleading with the unjust judge.**

2. *Colossians 4:2-3* **Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; And Watching-** Keep awake- Why do we have an exhortation to keep awake- Well in prayer there will always be many distractions. Our minds will wander, we often run out of things to pray. **How can we keep awake? How can we keep watching-** and not run out of things to pray for - How can we not run out of steam in our prayers. We will look **at a great aid** and help that, we can put in place. Yet also we should not forget the Helper the **Holy Spirit.** Who teaches us to pray. **Forget not in this very book col 3:16. to Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.** This becomes a great store house from which we can pray.

There are very practical measures we can put in place to enrich our prayer life. Prayer is the language of heaven.- Do you know there are people who spend years learning a language so they can communicate with others and understand the writings of old. But the most worthwhile of all the languages to

master is the language of prayer. To be able to communicate with the King of Kings. Oh let us make effort to learn to be more effective in our prayers.

- a. **Practical measures** we can do is to **make prayer a habit-** to have a **dedicated prayer time. To understand the ingredients of prayer** and to have a simple list in the back of our bible to prompt us until they are etched in our minds. We shall look at this list in a few moments. But before that more practical measures-
- b. A great hinderance to prayer - is **SELF CONFIDENCE**. Things we are used to doing we think no need to pray – like a Journey we are used to taking- we don't pray – we don't ask for Gods blessing and protection and travel mercies- We just go without prayer. Maybe **in our work** we are **very good at it** and **confident in our ability-** so **we don't pray and ask God for wisdom and guidance and help**. We see no need, **self-confidence** stops us praying.
- c. **We fail or forget to understand the great difficulty of spiritual work-** The impossibility of winning even one lost person or changing one heart **in own ability**. We realise it is only by His grace and His power, that unless the Lord moves and touches hearts of the Lost - their hearts will stay cold and hard and unresponsive. **We forget how dependant we are on the Holy Spirit convicting and softening and opening ears**. When we see this and and see the great necessity on prayer, we will be motivated to pray.
- d. **Coldness and lack of care and concern-** is a form of a backsliding not to really care that there are those on the broad way to destruction. **We don't pray when we don't grasp the seriousness of their plight** the awfulness of hell. *William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, once said that his desire, had it been possible, would be to dangle his evangelism trainees over Hell for 24 hours. That way, they could see the reality that awaits those who do not know Jesus Christ.* If there is coldness in our hearts towards the Lost, **there will be coldness in our prayers for the Lost**. If we have no concern for the multitudes of Lost, we will have no concern to lift them up in prayer. Those in our neighbourhood, those that walk our streets. Those in the Highways and Byways. May our hearts never be cold towards them.
- e. **Lack of Faith in Prayer**. Sometimes doubtful thinking attacks our mind - Will my prayer really make a difference? To answer that we must look at **James 4:2 ... the last part - Yet you do not have because you do not ask**.

If faith is low - We must remind ourselves of Truth, we consider, we reflect on Gods promises. Having the promises rehearsed in our minds causes faith to arise. **God has said it will he not perform it.** Psalms 86:7 In the day of my trouble **I will call upon You, For You will answer me.**

Faith in Gods Promises stirs us to pray. **John 15:16** *You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

The whatever we ask- we must ask ourselves **does what I'm asking Glorify Christ.** Is it **for His Honour.** Sometimes we ask amiss spurred by a selfish desire... as we read in **James 4:3** *You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. that you may gratify yourself, please the flesh, and gratify your carnal appetites.* Of course we may ask for our daily needs

F. Loss of a sense of the debt of gratitude. In this book of Colossians alone we read so many exhortations to be thankful. **Col 3:17** *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.* **Col 1:12** *giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.* **Col 2: 7** rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. **We are thankful for the Word of God** which strengthens us- grants us wisdom - The more we think of the great benefits of the Word of God the more thankful we are. **When the Word of Christ dwells richly in our hearts you can be sure there will be an overflow of thankfulness** from the heart. **Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."**

Our thanksgiving must include thanking God for answers to prayer. Take careful note of the answers to your prayers Thank God for the answers. Don't be like the 10 lepers that were healed **Luke 17:15** *And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God.*

Those are just 6 reasons there are many many more.. Lack of forming a habit of prayer, lack of disciplined times we stick to. These all affect and hinder prayer. **What can we do; We reflect on the promises of prayer and we are greatly encouraged.**

One day we will look back over our lives and ask ourselves what did I accomplish? – I was granted access by grace to the throne of God.

What did I do in 2024. Did I give myself to Prayer – did I continue steadfastly in it. Was I devoted to prayer. **Prayer is never wasted time.** But there are

things we do that waste so much of our time. **Browsing on our phones...** lets be conservative saying we spend about just 12 minutes a day, seems like nothing. But over a year it's equivariant to spending 6 days on our phone!. I looked on google the average American spends 4.5 hours a day ! That's 136 days a year! Wasted! Oh what would be accomplished if we spent that time in Prayer. So little really just 12 m a day...

Why do people not continue in prayer. Why don't they maintain a fervour for prayer. It seems like they run out of things to pray for. Seems like there don't know what to say. It seems like their minds wander. What is very helpful is to keep a list maybe in your notebook, or the back of your bible **of the Departments of Prayer or as some call it a biblical prayer pattern.**

1. Call upon His name. Make mention of the wonderful names of God. Jehovah Rapha , Jehovah Shalom. And the many other titles. Let me just mention one and expound a little upon it. **Jehovah Nissi**, "The Lord is My Banner." It's a Symbol of victory, If my God be with me who can be against me? A banner raised in celebration, It reminds us to put trust and confidence in God in difficult circumstances. That He will provide he will grant Strength and guidance in Spiritual battles. We pray to our Father – By adopting the title Our Father means we have been adopted and made His Children. Children who have been granted audience and access.

2. Adoration at His greatness. Mention some of His attributes – you can't mention them all. but His **mercy** His **faithfulness** His **compassion**, His **upholding power**. His **mighty wisdom**, **His Greatness and majesty**. His omnipresence. That he is omnipotent. The Father so great not bound by time, He reigns from His throne in eternity. For ever and for ever and nothing can unsettle His throne it is established forever. When we realise the greatness of the one we are calling upon that He is in heaven above and not beneath – High above every principality and power. We marvel and we wonder, and we adore.

3. Thanksgiving- Thank Him for the peace he has made for us. That our names are written in the Lambs book of life. That we are forgiven and saved. Thank Him for that He watches over you. That He is our hiding place that we are safe under the shadow of. His wings.

4. Affirmation of the truths of God- thank him for your eternal security, that He has removed your sin as far as the east is from the west. That

He has an eternal inheritance for us- For adoption into the family of God. Make A declaration that you are dependant upon the help of the Holy Spirit. A desire and acknowledgement of the need for divine help.

5. Repentance of sins, Pardon from iniquity. For deliberate wrongs – for neglecting to do what we know we should do.

6. Petitions – oh so many needs- both spiritual and natural- For lost ones for wisdom and direction- for provision and protection. In Petition we must also **name intercession**- we pray for others- Is it not helpful to have a list of names we need to bear up in prayer- mothers fathers brothers sisters friends and work mates. Neighbours and distant relatives. Our nation our city- our country-

7. Then close by thanking God once again for His goodness toward us – Bless the Lord - For His perfections, His holiness. His righteousness, His majesty. And then the Final AMEN. What does AMEN mean? Its Certain that all I've prayed He hears, It is **Let it be so** All that I've prayed – it implies that my hope is in The Lord, hope in a sure audience granted, hope that his ear is not deaf.

How helpful these reminders in our prayer times. It will grow and grow. The many things we pray for .

Let us consider **Colossians 4:3** meanwhile praying also for us, **that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains.** Petitions for preachers. Prayer for Gospel Servants.

Its for all not just a select few . Prayer for Open doors Prayer for the Mystry of Christ to be made known . Remember The apostle Paul was in Chains, He was in proson how could these prayers be answered? How would doors be opened for Him to make Christ Jesus know. As far as we know he never went out of the prison to preach . But opportunity was granted. Think of the way *Philippians 1:12* *But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,*

He was able to witness for Christ among the Praetorian guards, who had the charge of the prison where he was confined, and who also, in their turn, were on duty in Caesar's palace. This meant that the Gospel was talked about in the royal palace. Indeed God had opened doors that men may hear.

Oh, the tremendous value of prayer for the Minister. The praying ones are to the preacher are what Aaron and Hur were to Moses. They hold up his hands and decide the issue that is so fiercely raging around them. The Preacher must pray about the people must pray for their preachers as well.

We must pray for unction upon the words, for the mystry of Christ to shine like it ourht to shine. That the preacher may speak as He ought to speak – In Love. In clarity. In boldness.

Prayer is more needful to the preacher , or just as needful as oxygen is to our lungs. No oxygen in our lungs and we collapse, If the preacher does not pray , if the preacher has no prayer he will collapse. Prayer is vital for the minister. Oh we ask for your prayers.

But Continue in Prayer, be strong in prayer - it is my sincere hope that these verses have encouraged your heart. That they have inspired you to get more committed to prayer. After all - one of the common marks of all the elect of God. **“They cry unto Him day and night.”** (Luke 18:1.)

There is such a need – simply because the task is so vast. “Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”

In closing I must ask if you have prayed that one prayer- the prayer calling upon the name of the Lord - For "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED." Have you believed in the name of the Lord, Have you trusted in the name of the Lord. Have your sins been washed away. Have you been baptized in the name of the Lord. Are you walking in the Lord? It all begins by prayer, By calling upon Him.