Redeeming the Time
Colossians 4:2-6 (NKJV)

- Paul is finishing up his letter to the church of Colossae.
- Here in verses 2-6, we find his last words of exhortation to the church.
- Verses 7-18 will be the final greeting, where he will mention a few names that are important to him in this season of his ministry.
- But here in verses 2-6, you will find his last bit of challenge spiritually.
- I have titled this, “Redeeming the Time” taken from verse 5.
- There are five principles here that Paul gives us on how to do this.
- Let’s read verses 2-6 and get into this together.
- Five Ways to Redeem the Time

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving…”
Colossians 4:6 (NKJV)

1. Redeem the time by being devoted to prayer.

   - Devoted to prayer.
   - Notice Paul reminds the church to continue. It’s something that they started in, but needed to be faithful in.

Continue: be devoted to, to persevere and not to faint.

   - Don’t give up, don’t bail out, but instead persevere in prayer.
   - We read this about the early church. After 3,000 souls were brought into the kingdom, they committed themselves to prayer.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Act 2:24 (NKJV)

   - It’s something that we are committed to here at Wildwood.
   - Every ministry has been birthed in prayer and every ministry is sustained in prayer.
   - I was talking to Pastor Erik the other day about our children’s ministry. He oversees the leadership that runs our infant–kindergarten ministry. He told me that 30 volunteers rotated out of our children’s ministry this summer.
• For whatever reason – vacations, schedules not working out, or moving into other ministries. I asked him what his plan was.

• He said, “Prayer. We are praying the Lord of the harvest to send laborers. It’s His ministry and so we are asking Him to sustain it.”

• It blessed me to see his faith in the Lord to continue what He started and God is bringing in the help little by little each week.

• I have been asked about our sports field. “When will you be finishing that up?” and my answer is always the same, “When the Lord brings the finances to do so.” We have been praying and asking the Lord to make it happen. Our part is to pray. We don’t beg or plead with you to give more or to dig deeper. We ask the Lord to provide, to prompt people to give. We want it to be a God thing.

• It’s worked for Wildwood for 18 years and look what God has done. I wouldn’t have it any other way.

• The power of prayer. It’s how God’s work gets done. It’s how mountains are moved, how ministries flourish, how His kingdom expands. That’s why Paul uses the word, “vigilant”…

Vigilant: Watchful, awake and alert.

• Prayer is one of the ways that we stay alert and watchful spiritually. It keeps us on our toes spiritually. When prayer is lacking, we are going to find ourselves lazy spiritually.

• This is why Paul told the church in Rome…

“…rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer…” Romans 12:12 (NKJV)

• It’s continuing in prayer that will keep us alert to God’s heart and God’s plan for the church corporately, but also the church individually.

• It’s going to empower us to be patient in tribulation, to rejoice in hope, to not lose faith, but to walk in faith, and to grab hold of victory.

• Notice, Paul even reminds us that faithful prayer and watchful prayer will bring a thankfulness in prayer.

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving…” Colossians 4:2 (NKJV)
• The one who is faithful in prayer and watchful in prayer is going to be one that is grateful in prayer.
• It’s the key to ungrateful heart. Bend your knee and get connected to heaven’s heart and you will see your joy restored.
• Notice we move on…

“…meanwhile praying also for us…” Colossians 4:3 (NKJV)

2. Redeem the time by praying for others.

• Devoted to praying for others.
• Praying for others is what really helps make the church a community of believers a family.
• I have you do this often, let’s do it again, even if it’s uncomfortable; look at your neighbor and say, “We’re family.”
• You have also heard me say, the way a growing church stays small is getting into a small group. Let me add, another way a growing church stays small is praying together.
• Paul reminded the church in Ephesians…

“…praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints…” Ephesians 6:18 (NKJV)

• When we start praying for one another, there is a connection that is made that cannot be made any other way.
• It takes it beyond the Hallmark card or the meal that we bring.

Sometimes, in the house of prayer, we will line up 20 chairs up front and I will tell people, “If the Lord prompts you to come up and be prayed for, sit in one of these chairs and the pastors or elders will lay hands on you and pray.” About 6 months ago someone asked if they could pray over the pastors. If we would sit in those chairs and just let the Wildwoodians pray over us. It was awesome! The blessing that it was, the power that came from it, the unity it built. It was good to be on the other side. I can’t tell you how blessed the Fraley family is by your prayers for us. There are times that I can literally feel the prayers of the saints on my behalf –discernment that is given, power that
is present, joy that is infused. It’s because you are praying for me. Thank you Wildwood; don’t stop, I need it.

- We must stay committed to praying for one another especially as the day approaches. It’s how doors are opened. Notice…

“…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, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” Colossians 4:3-4 (NKJV)

3. Redeem the time by being committed to praying for doors to open.

- Devoted to praying for open doors.
- There is something about prayer. When the church starts seeking heaven, doors start opening that would not have without it.
- One of the classic passages on prayer is in Acts 12. Peter is in prison for preaching the gospel, hoping to shut them down, but the church got word and they gathered together in prayer. Notice what happened…

“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people." So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer.” Acts 12:5-13 (NKJV)
• Peter went to prison, the church gathered and prayed, and doors were opened.
• It makes you wonder how many doors have not been open due to the lack of prayer.
• Now Paul here is in prison and he is not asking to be delivered from prison, but that doors would be opened within the prison for the furtherance of the gospel.
• He asked the same type of thing from the believers in Ephesus.

“…and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel…” Ephesians 6:19 (NKJV)

• More than monthly support, he needed prayer support. He knew this was a need greater than any care basket that they could bring to him.
• He needed doors to open in the hearts of those near him and that would happen when the church was coming in agreement with him in prayer.
• It’s what the early church experienced in Acts.
• Notice what happened when the church prayed together…

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” Acts 4:31 (NKJV)

• They prayed and God moved. That is what is needed in these last days—a move of God in our midst, an upper room experience that will shake us all.

“Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.” Colossians 4:5 (NKJV)

4. Redeem the time by being devoted to walk in wisdom.

• Devoted to walk in wisdom
• The day we live in requires that we live it with spiritual wisdom.
“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Ephesians 5:15-17 (NKJV)

- We are to walk in wisdom because the days are evil.
- The snares that are set before us have been placed there by a sneaky devil and he wants to take us out to keep us from living for the King and advancing His kingdom.
- And when we are walking in wisdom, then we are going to see him and his snares for what they are.
- So how does this wisdom work? Solomon said…

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Proverbs 9:10 (NKJV)

- Having a healthy fear of the Lord; a healthy awe and respect for the Lord and His place in our lives.
- Without a relationship with the Lord, there will be no wisdom flowing from your life.
- It’s only when He has His rightful place will you be able to then tap into the wisdom He has for us.
- Solomon said…

“He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly…” Proverbs 2:7 (NKJV)

- So how do we get this wisdom that He has for us?
- Two ways.
- 1st we ask…

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” James 1:5 (NKJV)

- 2nd we open…

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Colossians 3:16 (NKJV)
• We ask and we open. If we skip out on either one, we are going to find ourselves lacking in the wisdom department.
• Let’s finish up with #5…

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” Colossians 4:6 (NKJV)

5. Redeem the time by being devoted to seasoned speech, salty speech.

• Devoted to seasoned speech.
• Let’s face it, if our speech does not match our walk, then our witness goes out the door.
• Pastor Scott said something the other day. I have heard him say it over the years. He said, “The tongue tattle tales on our heart” it’s true.
• What’s in our heart will eventually make its way out of our mouths.
• So let’s make sure we put the right stuff in our hearts.
• Paul would say in Titus…

“Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.” Titus 2:6-8 (NKJV)

• What does your speech say about you? What is your tongue tattling?
• To redeem the time, we must have salty speech – speech that preserves and blesses, that speaks well of Jesus Christ.
• It’s a question we all should be asking: does my speech bring people closer to Jesus or does it move them further away from Jesus?
• Because at the end of the day, we are all going to stand before Him.
• So let’s redeem the time because we’re getting out of here soon!