



Ephesians

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...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

In the previous verse, Paul had asked for prayer and supplication to be made “for all the saints.” Now he makes a specific, personal, extra request by saying, “and for me.” He felt that he needed their additional and explicit prayers so “that utterance may be given to me.”

He wanted prayers for the very words he would speak, desiring that they would be in accord with his calling and as led by the Spirit. This then would be a confirmation of what Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 10:19, 20 –

“But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; ²⁰ for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

Jesus' words were directed to those who would speak on His behalf in the transmission of the gospel message. This certainly included Paul. Though his commission came later, he was still an appointed apostle of Jesus Christ, and he desired prayers that his words would not be of him, but rather given to him by the Spirit. This utterance is then further explained by the words, “that I may open my mouth.” In Scripture, the idea of opening one's mouth indicates an intentional and authoritative utterance for direction, teaching, and instruction. For example, it is used to show this when Jesus spoke out the Beatitudes –

“And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:”

-Matthew 5:1, 2

Paul's desires in the opening of his mouth was "boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." Vincent's Word Studies indicates that the word "boldly" is tied to "make known" rather than "open my mouth." Anyone can open their mouth and proclaim something, but it was Paul's desire that he do so in order to boldly impart the mystery of the gospel.

This was his passion and his great desire. Until Christ completed His work, the gospel was not fully realized. And even after His work, the mystery of it being open to the Gentile people was still not fully realized. Peter got a glimpse of this in Acts 10, but it is Paul who makes known the full scope of what the church age indicates. This is what he desired to proclaim, and this is what he was asking for concerning prayer.

Life application: Do we suppose in our Christian walk that we can do without prayer? Paul didn't. He asked for prayer openly, understanding that God does hear and respond to them. Likewise, we should not refrain from praying, or refrain from asking for prayers when the need arises.

...for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.
Ephesians 6:20

The words "for which" are speaking of "the mystery of the gospel" which Paul just mentioned. It is for this marvelous message from God, and which speaks of peace between Him and man through the work of Christ, that Paul found himself "an ambassador in chains."

His words here are an oxymoron, and even a paradox. Paul claims to be "an ambassador" but he also states that he is "in chains." The very nature of being an ambassador signifies one who is granted outward splendor and high honor. This was, and continues to be, a law of nations. A violation of this honor could then, as now, spark immense outrage and even war. An ambassador represents a leader. Thus Paul was a representative of Christ, and yet he was bound as if a criminal. The word for "ambassador" here is *presbeuó*. It "means to act as an established statesman (diplomat) – a trusted, respected ambassador who is authorized to speak as *God's emissary* (represent *His kingdom*)" (HELPS WORD Studies). It is found only here and in 2 Corinthians 5 –

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

-2 Corinthians 5:20, 21

The ambassador of Christ, who represented the One who knew no sin, but who was made to be sin for us, was also accounted as one who had committed an offense. Paul emulated His Lord well in order to bring the word to the world. Even today, he is despised by Jews, his

words are attacked by world leaders and college professors, and his life and work is even diminished by ill-informed Christians as to the nature of what his writings mean. He is often ignored by churches, and yet it is his writings which establish proper doctrine for all churches during the Gentile-led church age. As Christ's ambassador, rejecting him and his word is thus a rejection of Christ and His word. But in his life, the Lord allowed him to be so bound.

The word translated here as "chains" is actually singular in the Greek. Paul would have been bound by a manacle connected to a chain, and that may then have been connected to his Roman guard. Or, it could be that his chain was bound to a ring on the wall next to him, or even loose. If loose, it could easily be grabbed by the guard as he tried to escape. No matter what, Paul was free on one hand so that he could move about, write, and so forth, but he was still bound. It is this chain which he is now considering the badge of his ambassadorship. Unlike other ambassadors who were considered immune from prison, Paul found his ambassadorial duties intimately connected to his confinement.

In this state, he asks for prayer and supplication (see verse 18) "that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." As can be seen, his request for prayer wasn't just some arbitrary desire, as if he was looking for people to unnecessarily recognize him. Rather, he truly needed this prayer because of the abnormal state in which he was placed. He, an ambassador bound to a chain, was a representative to the Gentile world of the grace of God which is found in Jesus Christ.

Life application: Christ Jesus was made a public humiliation in order to reconcile us to our heavenly Father. Paul followed Him in this and became an ambassador of Christ who was frequently afflicted with trials, imprisonments, beatings, and the like. Should we not consider that oppression and trial for the sake of the name of Christ is also a badge of honor if we so suffer? Let us not forget that our faithful testimony in such circumstances will be rewarded by the Lord when we face Him on the day of our judgment.

But that you also may know my affairs *and* how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; Ephesians 6:21

This verse begins with the words, "But that you also..." This is an indication that other churches were apprised concerning Paul's affairs and his condition. This would have been the understood meaning of these words. This is then made completely evident in the words of Colossians 4:7 –

"Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me."

Tychicus would have been sent out with Paul's letter(s) of instruction, and he would have carried along other information about how he was and what he was up to. This Tychicus is mentioned several times in the New Testament. He is found in Acts 20:4. There he is described

as being a person “of Asia.” He was also accompanying Paul from Corinth to Asia. He is mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:12, and in Titus 3:12 as well.

In this letter, he is called “a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord.” The word used for “minister” is *diakonos*. This is the source of our word “deacon,” and it comes from two separate words – *dia*, meaning “through,” and *konis*, meaning “dust.” Therefore, it is someone who scurries through the dust, and is thus a servant or a minister. In this verse, he is doing exactly what the name implies. He is travelling with the message through the dusty streets of cities for the benefit of the saints. This term is probably not being applied to him in the technical sense of a “deacon,” but rather it points to the duties which he is carrying out. He is ministering to Paul as a friend, a brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant.

It is this hardy soul who was with Paul in such a close relationship who “will make all things known to you.” Not only would he bring the beautiful epistle in his hands, and not only would he tell about how Paul was doing, but he would also answer any further questions that would come about concerning Paul and his ministry.

Life application: How willing are you to relay the good news concerning the gospel to others? Tychicus was willing to travel by land and sea in order to get the news out to those who were hungry to hear it. Are you at least willing to share it in the circles you travel? Do the people at the restaurant you frequent even know that you are a Christian? Get the news out!