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# Sermon Notes

March 1, 2015

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Speaking Like Christ

Colossians 4:2-6

<sup>2</sup> Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

<sup>3</sup> At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison--

<sup>4</sup> that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

<sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

<sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

## Words, Words, Words

- ❖ Our words reveal what is in our hearts (Matthew 12:34)
- ❖ Our words can wound or heal
- ❖ ***If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to keep his whole body in check.*** (James 3:2)
  - the speech of the unredeemed
  - the speech of the redeemed
- ❖ How Jesus used words (Matthew 5:2, Luke 4:22, 11:54; 1 Peter 2:22).

## Words of Prayer (4:2)

- ❖ Prayer is the most important speech any of us can utter
  - prayer strengthens our fellowship with God
  - prayer is the weapon God uses to equip us in our battles against Satan and his demons
- ❖ Steadfast, devoted, persevering prayer
  - being courageous in persistent prayer
  - Luke 18:1, Eph 6:18, 1 Thess 5:17, Rom 12:12
- ❖ Prayer often involves struggling and grappling with God (*e.g.* Jacob, Moses, Abraham, the widow in Jesus' parable)
- ❖ God is not a cosmic ATM machine with whom we have a transactional relationship
- ❖ Fill your prayer with thanksgiving

## Words of Proclamation (4:3-4)

- ❖ Paul asks his fellow believers to pray for Him so that he will be able to have continued and effective opportunities to proclaim the gospel
- ❖ The ability to make clear, effective gospel proclamation comes from the Holy Spirit
  - pray that each of us will have this Spirit given ability

- pray that God will give each of us “open doors” for gospel proclamation
- ❖ Gospel proclamation is a difficult task, but it is no more difficult for us than it was for Paul who was imprisoned for using his words for Christ and His kingdom
- ❖ We *ought to speak* about the facts of our faith
  - the facts about Christ
  - the need for repentance
  - the need to turn from sin and have a living faith in a living Savior
- ❖ Work out a 1-2 minute presentation of the gospel that you can sprinkle into a conversation whenever it seems appropriate (this is different than your testimony)

### Words of Praise (4:5-6)

- ❖ Walking *in wisdom toward outsiders* means we will live a life of praise and worship (Romans 12:1-2)
  - a true life of worship is submitted and surrendered to God 24/7, in all circumstances and in every relationship
  - *making the best use of the time* means we will respond to the Holy Spirit’s “nudges” to speak and relate to others in a way that puts maximum attention on Christ
- ❖ The words of grace we share with others will be: spiritual, wholesome, fitting, kind, sensitive, purposeful, complementary, gentle, truthful, loving, and thoughtful

- ❖ Consistency of life and consistency of words go hand in hand
- ❖ Words that are *seasoned with salt* serve to purify and preserve those who hear them
  - *...always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.* (1 Peter 3:15-16)

### Personal Application

1. Are your words more likely to wound or heal those to whom you speak them?
2. On a typical day, how conscious are you of using words of prayer? of proclamation? of praise? What are some possible ways in which you might make these three elements the centerpiece of your speech?
3. Take time and make the effort to develop a 1-2 minute gospel presentation that you might be able to use in a future conversation. Make sure your presentation includes the facts about Christ, our need to repent and turn from sin, and our need to have a living faith in a living Savior. Practice speaking your presentation out loud with a trusted Christian friend or two and ask them for their feedback on how you might present these facts even more clearly.