

2) Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 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, 4) that I make it manifest, as I ought to speak. 5) Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6) Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

INTRO: v.5 repeats our 4-week overall theme, Redeeming the Time. v.6 has an interesting expression also, namely, 'seasoned with salt.' More on that later. Let's start with the concept of redeeming the time. I'm highlighting three recommendations for redeeming the time: Continue in prayer; Walk in wisdom; Speak with grace.

### I. CONTINUE IN PRAYER (v.2)

#### A. Why should this come first?

1. August funeral; 300 bulletins; office copier out of toner...
2. nothing local; on-line delivery time; Linda at Bible class...
3. then and there! Phoned salesroom; repairman; 'you're answer to...'
4. this story proves nothing!
5. Psalm 50:15 Call upon Me...I will deliver thee...glorify Me

#### B. How does Paul want us to pray?

1. v.2 earnestly continue; persevere; adhere
2. it is so easy to forget, get discouraged
3. vigilant, awake, watchful
4. Jesus says like thief breaking in at night; end will come suddenly
5. with thanksgiving, as I try to begin each prayer
6. as you thank, you acknowledge the Source

#### C. For what shall we pray?

1. pastors; Immanuel; RGV; up north; other countries; 'bound' v.4
2. pray for 'open door', willing listeners to their message
3. to speak the 'mystery of Christ': God Incarnate
4. to the Jew, stumbling stone; to the Greek, foolishness
5. but only way to avoid hell = Jesus' atonement

(continued)

## II. WALK IN WISDOM (v.5)

### A. An odd expression; start by defining 'wisdom'

1. Prov.9:10 fear of lord is beginning of wisdom
2. knowing the will and word of God, and the world, and self
3. 'walk in wisdom' = peripatetic; walking around (teaching)
4. in Bible, usually, 'how you live your life'
5. for Lutherans, live by 3<sup>rd</sup> Use of the Law

### B...Toward those 'outside'

1. probably 'outside the visible church'
2. v.3 Paul 'in chains'; for Paul, 'outside' = 'prison guards'
3. remember the jailor at Philippi!?
4. 'outside' – anyone we contact who will listen to Gospel

### C...Redeeming the time (v.5)

1. Paul probably felt the urgency of his remaining time
2. also, this opportunity may not recur
3. one cannot 'rewind' actual time

## III. SPEAK WITH GRACE (v.6)

### A. About the concept of 'grace'

1. divinely influenced giving manner of the heart
2. probably synonym of 'seasoned with salt'
3. speak so that the hearer savors your words

### B. Speak **about** the grace of God

1. 'that you may know how to answer' (v.6)
2. John the Baptizer started with 'repent' and salty idioms
3. 'tis the season to be prepared: Advent, and Judgment, both
4. the former prepares for the latter
5. Advent speaks of Bethlehem, Jordan, Galilee, Gethsemane, Golgatha Olivet

CONCLUSION: Now for me, I'd use 'sugar' instead of 'salt' for my seasoning illustration. It's a sweet tasting message about this gracious God. But the word 'sugar' isn't in the Bible.

'Honey,' yes, but not 'sugar'. So, continue in prayer, walk in the wisdom of God, and let your words to those outside the faith be seasoned with salt. Amen.