

**SCRIPTURE READING: Colossians 4:2-6**

**PREACHING TEXT: Colossians 4:5-6**

**SERMON TITLE: “Your Walk and Talk of Personal Evangelism”**

### **INTRODUCTION to reading**

Follow up to Sunday morning service

- our prayers for labourers / preachers (Luke 10.2)
- our participation in the preaching mission
  - through your constant prayers (v.2)
  - through your prayers for preachers, evangelists (v.3-4)
  - but also your personal evangelism / witness (v.5-6)

**SCRIPTURE READING: Colossians 4:2-6**

**CONFESSION READING: Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 86**

- Few texts on mission or personal evangelism
- The essential element of your personal witness is grasped in Q&A 86

### **Introduction**

You’ve prayed for labourers in the harvest (Luke 10.2)

- for preachers, evangelists, missionaries, and teachers
- “*Now I’ve done my duty....*”

BUT, in Jesus Christ, each of you are prophets,  
called to preach the Gospel (Acts 8.4)

- not ordained
- but every believer is called to witness – personal evangelism

**Col 4:5, 6 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.**

Two exhortations for every believer:

1. the way you live before unbelievers (v.5) *Your Walk*
2. the way you speak to unbelievers (v.6) *Your Talk*

## A. Your Walk of Personal Evangelism

*Your Walk:* The way you live before unbelievers (v.5)

Col 4:5 **Be wise in the way you act** (lit. *walk*) **toward outsiders;**

“Outsiders”

- unbelievers; non-Christians;
- still lost in sin; enemies of God
- have not heard the gospel -- *sola gratia*

“Be wise in the way you act”

- wisdom is living according to God’s will (reread chapter 3)
- living a Christ-like life so that your actions point to the radical change the gospel of grace has made
  - ⇒ forgiveness of sins
    - recall the teaching on original sin (Belgic Confession)
    - morally, we are no different from any other person.
  - ⇒ peace with God so that you may worship Him and pray to Him
  - ⇒ knowledge of and growing in obedience to the will of God

William Hendriksen, paraphrase: “Behave wisely toward outsiders, always bearing in mind that though few men read the Scriptures, all men read you.”

-bumper sticker: “Changed lives prove that the Bible is true”

ILLUS: example of church at Thessalonica (see 1 Thess 1)

- gospel had changed their lives
- their lives became a model for other believers
- consequently, the message rang out from them to everyone in Greece

Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 86

-by your good deeds, win your neighbour to Christ

- Recall the words of Jesus (Matt.5.16)  
**Let your light shine before men,  
 that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**

None believers regularly hear about the sins of the church, church leaders  
 -Roman Catholic priest; abuse  
 -evangelical pastors – regularly in the news in Quebec City  
 – tax evasion, abuse of children, sexual misconduct with minors  
 (found guilty; plead not guilty; flee the country...)  
*“Since that is what the church is like, I don’t want to be a Christian!”*

My wife and I desire to stay in Quebec City  
 -not our holiness; perfection  
 -but rather our faith, hope, love  
 also pardon, perseverance, patience!

Illus. a night light, guiding the lost.

- then you will give the unbeliever *no* opportunity for valid criticism because of your lifestyle  
 e.g. “I don’t want to be a Christian if they live like that!”
- recall:  
**Mt 5:16 ...[L]et your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**

Colossians 4:5 is an exhortation to *all* believers (commentator)  
 with a view to the witnessing opportunities and missionary possibilities  
 that a godly lifestyle affords both for individuals and the whole church.

For your Christian walk will begin to cause others to talk.

## **B. Your Talk of Personal Evangelism**

*Your Talk:* The way you speak to unbelievers (v.6)

People will begin to ask questions.

- implied in our passage:  
Col 4:6 **Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.**
- clearly stated in parallel passage in 1 Peter 3:15  
1 Pet 3:15b **“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”**

The questions will vary

- *“Why are you different?”*
- *“How come you go to church? ...why **twice** on Sunday?”*
  - This will be your first testimony!
- *“What have you and your husband done in your marriage that makes is so much more pleasant than ours? ...longer lasting?”*
- *Why do you listen to your parents?*

Sometimes they will come as statements:

- *“You’re children are so well-behaved!”*
- *“I admire you; you work hard and with dedication, even when the boss / teacher / coach isn’t looking”*
- *“You’ve displayed some real sportsmanship, even though the ref made an obvious error.”*

⇒ These are the opportunities which you need to make the most of (v.5) in order to give an answer for the hope you have in Jesus Christ.

Need for self-examination:

1. *“But no one ever asks me these types of questions”;*  
*“No one says those kinds of things about me!”*  
⇒ question: Are giving them no reason to ask?
2. *“How do I give an answer to these questions?”*  
⇒ need to give thought to the type of answers you can give  
⇒ find appropriate Scriptures to use  
⇒ short and long answer, depending on the circumstances  
⇒ most often short: *“God is essential to my life. I need a Saviour.”*  
*“The Bible is full of wisdom for daily living.”*  
*“God forgives me, so I can freely forgive others.”*

Two instructions about your talk:

a. *Your manner of speaking* -- how you say the things you say

Col 4:6a **Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt...**

- “always”: a habitual pattern
- “full of grace”: as recipients of God’s grace to wretched sinners, we must speak graciously to other sinners; 1 Pt 3:15 “gentleness and respect”
- “seasoned with salt” -- a delightful metaphor
  - a) salt preserves: from corruption; do not distort the truth
  - b) salt gives flavour: not dull or argumentative; rather winsome, thought provoking, with a love for the hearer

**“speak the truth in love”** (Eph 4)

b. *The particular hearer* -- a loving, concerned knowledge of the hearer

Col 4:6c **“so that you may know how to answer everyone.”**

- have a knowledge of the person to whom you are speaking:
  - particular interests, concerns; the issues of life he may be wrestling with
- prepare your answers; while ready for the Spirit’s leading
- you can know them b/c they will likely someone you meet regularly
- ultimately: know that everyone is a sinner in need of the Saviour.

Christians must not only walk their talk;

they must also be ready to talk about their walk!

We must take advantage of every opportunity:

Col 4:6 **“make the most of every opportunity.”**

-some particular challenges to our strong Church communities

1. *Situation / Circumstances:*

We do not have many opportunities to interact with many non-Christians

- most raised in Christian, covenant homes (not like Quebec City)
  - have many Christian friends; social activities involve same Christians
  - work for Christian businessmen; Christian employees; Christian customers
- ⇒ all a blessing from God; give thanks

Action needed:

1. do not avoid Christian communions
2. but cultivate/develop the relationships you do have with non-Christians:
  - opportunities to talk with non-Christian employee / customer
  - inviting non-Christian neighbor to your house / to birthday party

## 2. *Habit*

We do not always speak freely about our Christian faith/beliefs.

- keep such things private
- when we do, we stumble, we're uncertain what to say; it feels awkward,

Encouragement:

- given the Word of God -- which will not return void
- rich heritage of solid biblical, reformed theology
- the gift of the Spirit -- who will give you what you need to say

Requires:

- familiarity with Scripture -- pick a few texts to use: Jn3:16; Rm6:23
- learning from others; read evangelism material
- just doing it  
(Acts 8:4 -- God used the persecution to force the church / believers to preach the gospel to others, without the apostles)
- prayer for boldness (Acts 4)

Recall the *warning*:

Mt 10:33 **But whoever disowns me before men,**

**I will disown him before my Father in heaven**

- strong words; severe warning to the cowardly who will not stand-up and be numbered amongst believers
- you protest: "I will be mocked; laughed at; no one will talk to me..."
- Jesus Christ will reply, "You're right; you will be laughed at; mocked, scorned, despised and rejected by men! But if you will avoid such sufferings/persecutions by denying me, so will I avoid the wrath of God against your sin by saying 'I never knew you.'"

Never forget the *promise*/ word of good cheer:

Mt 10:32 **"Whoever acknowledges me before men,**

**I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.**

- Jesus will welcome you with open arms before the throne of His Father, "Come, my son, my daughter. You have been hated by many because you confessed my name. Be of good cheer; the world hated me first...."

*No place for excuse making:*

Never may be said about those to whom you are called to bear witness:

"Surely he won't believe." or "We don't want her in our church."  
or "Obviously, he isn't one of the elect."

The command is to answer -- to tell; to give a reason to whosoever might ask

Ultimately, you bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ not merely/simple that others might be saved, but that God may receive the glory!

## Conclusion

The need for prayer -- persistence in much prayer!

- reliance upon God's power and the work of His Spirit
  1. to open the hearts of your hearers
    - that He would provide opportunities to speak of the hope you have
  2. to guide your tongue in speaking the truth in love
 

**Mt 10:20 ...for it will not be you speaking,  
but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.**" (Luke 21:14,15)

Encouragement and assurance:

- Christ Himself is interceding for the church (Hb 7:24; Rm.8:34)
- as we learn from John 17:18, 20, 21, He prays:
  1. for the ministers of the Word
  2. for us who believe the gospel message, that through our Christian life we might proclaim the gospel to the world
- Christ Himself taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come!"

Devote yourselves to prayer

Praying with particular concern for the ministry of the gospel Word / labourers.  
And then commit yourself to live out your prayer in both your walk and talk.