

Seasoned With Salt • Colossian 4:5-6

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Alamo*

1. On a wall near the main entrance to the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, is a memorial to one of the Americans who died fighting there.
2. His name was James Butler Bonham.
3. There's a picture there, but it's not of him. The picture is of his nephew.
4. And this inscription explains – “No picture of James Butler Bonham exists. This portrait is his nephew who greatly resembled his uncle. It is placed here by the family that people may know the appearance of the man who died at the Alamo for freedom.”

B. *Christ's Portrait*

1. No photograph or portrait of Jesus exists either.
2. But His likeness is to be reproduced in each one of His followers.
3. The One who died to set us free has risen from the dead and desires to take up residence in us through the Holy Spirit – conforming us to His image, and producing a portrait of Christ for all the world to see.
4. This is what Paul writes to the Colossians in our text this morning . . .

II. TEXT

A. V. 5

⁵ **Walk in wisdom toward those *who are outside*, redeeming the time.**

1. The larger context of this verse is Paul telling the Colossians how to live as new men and women in Christ.
2. Last week we saw how we are to relate to one another in the Church, as Brothers and Sister in Christ
3. Here he tells us how we are to relate to those *outside* the Church.
4. As the family of God, we share a common bond.
 - a. our devotion to God brings a devotion and loyalty to one another.
 - b. as we grow in Christ we find a growing sense of affection and mutual care for other believers
 - c. unbelievers are *outside* that bond
5. Many of you have experienced what I'm talking about
 - a. you've come here on Sunday for church
 - b. we worship and study together,
 - c. then you go in to the fellowship hall after service where you meet others
 - d. you engage them in conversation, talking about what the Lord spoke to you that morning, listening to them while they share the same
 - e. one of your mentions a need and the others huddle round and pray
 - f. you embrace, And as you make your way to your car to leave,

- g. there's a deep sense of unity and belonging that comforts your heart
 - h. those people you've just spent the last couple hours with are more than friends
 - i. they're a part of your life!
-
- j. then, later that day, you go over to the house of a family member for a family reunion or get together
 - 1) though most of your relatives are unbelievers, you greet them warmly and engage in some friendly chit-chat
 - 2) you sit back and listen while people talk & as you do, you realize something
 - 3) though you share a *blood* tie, there's something missing
 - 4) you don't sense the same connectedness with them you did with those believers earlier in the day
 - k. it's not because you've been brainwashed
 - l. you don't carry a card that identifies you as a certified Jesus Freak
 - m. it's just that there is a definite spiritual unity and bond with other believers
 - n. a tangible attachment to the Family of God.
6. Within the Church, within God's family, we're to love and serve one another.
 - a. we're to guard one another's dignity
 - b. as we saw last week, we're to bear with one another
 - c. and when offences come, we're to forgive one another
 7. Here Paul tells us how we are to treat those on the *outside* – meaning unbelievers.
 8. He says we're to *walk in wisdom*
 - a. walking was a favorite idiom for Paul of our *lifestyle*
 - b. our walk refers to our *behavior*, our *actions*, the way we conduct ourselves in the world
 - c. he says that our lifestyle is to be marked by wisdom!
 9. Outsiders *watch* Christians!
 - a. all you have to do is mention you're a believer and suddenly people start treating you differently
 - b. they adopt a posture of *watching* you and checking out how you live
 10. There must be nothing in our lives that jeopardizes our testimony or dishonors Jesus.
 11. Walking in wisdom means we *apply* the knowledge of Christ to our daily lives
 - a. wisdom is the successful application of knowledge
 - b. it means living *skillfully*!
 12. I fear that in many churches today, we've done a fairly good job of imparting knowledge *about* God and the basic doctrines of the faith
 13. But have we been successful at translating that knowledge into action?
 14. According to recent polls, the majority of Americans say they believe in God and heaven.
 - a. but their personal lives do not reflect that
 - b. morally, on the whole, professing Christians don't appear to be significantly statistically different from unbelievers
 - c. in a recently conducted poll by the Barna Research Group, George Barna

said this,

"The research distinguished between the goals of adults who are born again Christians and those who are not. The distinctions, however, are surprisingly few in number."

- d. he went on to write,
"The [popular idea] is that interest in religion has *increased*, that teenagers are focused primarily on quality of life issues and that born again Christians are outer-directed. In light of those views, the survey data provide some surprising findings. For instance, if spiritual revival were occurring, [as many contend] you'd expect to see increasing levels of interest in a relationship with God, in church involvement and in commitment to the Christian faith. None of those are evident. If teenagers were on the leading edge of altruistic living, you'd see their levels of interest in integrity, faith and a modest lifestyle surpassing the levels of adults. We do not see that. And if Christians were truly focused on serving others, you'd expect to see much larger percentages of them committed to influencing other people and to making a difference in the world. That, too, is not evident."
15. Walking wisely means to walk our talk – to live *out* who and what we are inwardly
16. If you say you're a Christian – live like one.
17. If you have a "Honk If You love Jesus" bumper sticker on your vehicle, it's a good idea to obey the traffic laws and show yourself to be courteous on the road.
-
18. Then Paul says we're to "redeem the time."
a. at the same time that we're keeping a close guard on our lives and making sure our own behavior rightly reflects our status as the saved
b. we're to look for openings to actively share the Lord
19. This word *redeem* was a commercial term.
a. it referred to a merchant who kept his eye out for a good buy and when he found it, he snapped it up
b. as Paul uses it here, it presents the picture of believers seeing themselves as faithful stewards who are walking through the marketplace of this world,
c. keeping their eyes peeled for any and every opportunity to advance the Kingdom of God.
20. Some of you love sales.
a. you know a good deal when you see one
b. and you're quick to jump on it.
c. I knew someone several years ago who was really good at finding awesome deals at garage sales
d. at one sale, she opened an old cardboard box to discover a dozen badly corroded cups
e. instantly she recognized what they were and asked the owner what he wanted for them
f. he came over and looked in the box, made a face of revulsion, and said – "For that? \$5!"
g. she pulled out a five, handed it to him and walked back to her car.
h. she had just purchased a dozen ornate sterling silver wine goblets for \$5.
21. Opportunity!

- a. how many of you wish you had bought a hundred or more shares of Microsoft in 1983?
- b. or Qualcomm, or any one of a couple dozen dot-com companies as little as a year or two ago?
- 22. It's from the perspective of hindsight that we see the missed opportunities and kick ourselves that we hadn't been more alert and attentive and taken action
- 23. Paul is calling us that kind of alertness *now*.
- 24. *Every* day presents new opportunities to us to make an eternal difference in the lives of others
- 25. Dr. Will Houghton, was called to come be the pastor of the Baptist Tabernacle, a large church in Atlanta,
 - a. a businessman and critic of the church, hired a private detective to follow Dr. Houghton and report back on his conduct.
 - b. after a few weeks, the detective reported to the businessman that Dr. Houghton's life more than matched his preaching.
 - c. that man began attending the church and soon became a Christian.
- 26. We can invite people to church *every* week, but if they don't see the positive effect of church in our lives, why should they waste a couple hours of valuable time?
- 27. We can invite people to know Christ, but if our lives deny we know Him, why should they believe us?

B. V. 6

- 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.**
- 1. There's an old adage that goes, "By any and all means share Christ – sometimes, use words."
 - 2. That's what Paul is saying in vs. 5 & 6
 - a. in v. 5 he says, let your life reflect the person and power of Jesus
 - b. in v. 6 he says, as opportunities arise, open your mouth and let God's grace and truth flow forth.
 - 3. The Bible has much to say on the subject of speech and how our faith in God ought to steer the course our tongue takes
 - 4. Never underestimate the power of speech.
 - a. a judge says a few words, and a man's life is saved or condemned.
 - b. a doctor speaks a few words, and a patient either rejoices or gives up in despair.
 - c. whether communication is oral or written, there is great power in words.
 - d. for every word in Adolph Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*, 125 persons lost their lives in World War II.
 - 5. The power of speech is a gift from God, and it must be used the way God ordains.
 - 6. In the book of James, the tongue is compared to a bridle in a horse's mouth and a tiny rudder on a massive ship,
 - 7. He calls the tongue a fire, a poisonous animal or, it can be a fruitful tree and a fountain of refreshing (James 3).

- a. it has the power to wound
 - b. and it has the power to heal
8. We chose how and to what end we will employ it every time we open our mouths^[1]
 9. So Paul tells us to direct our speech at grace!
 10. I know that most of us hear the word “grace” and immediately think of it in the NT sense – unearned favor
 - a. and while that is the way Paul usually uses it in his letters,
 - b. that is not the meaning he intends for it here
 - c. he means it in it’s classical sense – as the Greek speaking world typically used it
 - 1) the word grace meant, “that which brings delight”
 - 2) it was often used to describe something that was so beautiful, something so pleasant to the senses that it brought delight and happiness
 11. When Paul says our speech is always to be with grace, he means it ought to bring delight to those who hear
 - a. instead of our words being always negative and critical
 - b. instead of complaining, being argumentative, and general being a pain
 - c. our speech ought to lift those around us
 - d. they ought to be living expressions of our love for and confidence in God
 12. We’ve all had the experience of knowing someone who every time they opened their mouth you just wanted to plug your ears or leave the room
 13. And then, there are those – when they speak, it’s a thrill to listen
 14. Our speech ought to be gracious!
 15. But grace can only come from our mouths if it’s first in our hearts
 - a. in Matthew 12:34, Jesus said that it’s out of the overflow of our hearts that our mouths speak
 - b. In Colossians 3:16 we read . . .

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.

- c. if we made this a regular habit, I seriously doubt we’d have a problem with our speech
16. Some of us here this morning find ourselves continually distressed over the content of our speech
 17. Try as we might, it seems we keep saying things we later regret
 18. Some of us have a problem with profanity – it’s obvious we ought not speak such words, but over and over again, we find ourselves stumbling in this area
 19. We have to take seriously what Jesus says in Matthew 12 – our mouths are but the fountain of the spring of our heart
 20. If you struggle with improper speech or profanity, let me ask you, do you spend time each day in the Word of God?
 - a. is the word of Christ dwelling in you richly?
 - b. do you spend time *verbally* praising God?
 21. If you find the worksite is the place you stumble the most, do you spend time with the Lord before you go to work?

22. Are you filling your heart and mind with love and truth?
 23. Let's face it – the moment just prior to your grievous speech, your heart wasn't full of grace was it – no, it was full of the world
 24. No wonder we fail!
 25. I know this for an absolute truth – when I have been in the presence of God, when I have worshipped Him and spent time just beholding Him in His beauty – my heart is filled with love and devotion and my mouth is a fountain of blessing, not profanity and corrupt speech
-
26. Besides grace, Paul says our speech should be *seasoned with salt*.
 - a. we use salt *today* for one reason – to add flavor to food
 - b. in the ancient world, salt was used for two important reasons
 - 1) to flavor food but even more importantly – to preserve it
 - 2) in an age without refrigeration, salt was *essential* to keep food from spoiling
 27. I think Paul means both uses of salt here
 - a. our speech should be *flavorful*,
 - 1) it ought to add spice and flavor to life
 - 2) after all, think about what believers get to talk about that the world doesn't
 - 3) real love – life in the Spirit – the hope of heaven – God who we know – Jesus Christ, our heavenly fiancé – the Holy Spirit who indwells us, empowers us, and enables us to live lives of excellence!
 - 4) our domain is truth – the spiritual air we breath is the atmosphere of heaven – this planet we live on is God's footstool – and all of history is His great drama of redemption!
 - b. our speech should also act as a *preservative*, retarding the influence of sin and corruption
 - 1) instead of contributing to the downward drag of sinful speech
 - 2) our words should direct men and women to think about God
 - 3) such is the power of the right word, spoken at the right moment.
 - 4) example: people who take the Lord's Name in vain and I say, "Is there something you wanted to tell Him?"

III. CONCLUSION

A. *The Wick*

1. Dr. Paul Brand was speaking to a college in India
2. His text was, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."
3. In front of the lectern was an oil lamp with its cotton wick burning from a shallow dish of oil.
4. As he preached, Dr. Brand referred to the lamp as an illustration, but in the middle of his speech, the oil ran out, the wick burned dry, and smoke rose up to make him cough
5. He turned even that into an illustration
6. He said, "Some of us here are like this wick. We're trying to shine for the

- glory of God, but we stink.”
7. “That’s what happens when we use *ourselves* as the fuel of our own witness rather than the Holy Spirit.”
 8. “Wicks can last indefinitely, burning brightly and without irritating smoke, if the oil supply is plenty.”

B. *The Holy Spirit*

1. All that Paul has written today is only possible if we are empowered by the Spirit of God
2. Without Him, all we are is stinking wicks and soon burnt out!
3. Your power to walk wisely, your ability to redeem the time and to speak with grace, is only possible when you are being filled with the Holy Spirit
4. Bring yourself before the Lord this morning and surrender once again to Him.

[\[1\]](#) Wiersbe, Warren