**Those Who Are Outside**

**Introduction:**

As Paul is nearing the end of his letter to the Christians in the city of Colosse, he reminds them of their great obligation to those who are outside, to bring them to Christ. This letter was written to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse. (Colossians 1:2) “To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” NKJV Anyone who is not a faithful brother or sister is considered by God to be “those who are outside.” This includes those who have never been citizens of the kingdom as well as those who have strayed from the faith. As such, they were without hope! (Colossians 1:13) “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,” NKJV (Colossians 1:23) “If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.” NKJV Paul instructs the Colossian Christians that the way to bring them to Christ was four-fold in nature:

1. Pray
2. Walk wisely
3. Redeem the time
4. Speak graciously

**Text:** Colossians 4:2-6

**Body:**

1. **Pray**  Colossians 4:2-4 “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 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, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” NKJV “Continue earnestly” This is from a strong word in Greek which means “to pay persistent attention to.” Even though Paul was in prison for preaching the gospel, he pleaded with them to pray that he would have an opportunity to speak the word, the message of Jesus Christ.

A wonderful passage of Paul’s is II Corinthians 2:12-17. “Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia. Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.” NKJV His desire was to preach the gospel as it ought to be preached, “manifest”: clear, evident, to show plainly. (Ephesians 6:18-20) “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints – 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, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” NKJV There is a way the word ought to be spoken, and a way it should not be spoken. Being in prison, he may have been tempted to soften the message and compromise it in some manner. But he said “pray for me that I may speak it boldly, firmly, and without fear.” Let us continually pray for the lost, let us speak plainly, courageously, and without compromise. If we want someone to change from one position to another, he must be convinced that the position he is leaving is false and the position he is embracing is true. Pray that you will do your best to convince him of that very thing, to come to Christ and remain faithful to Him.

1. **Walk Wisely** Colossians 4:5 “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.” NKJV Show wisdom toward those who are outside. They possess a soul made in the image of God. They are priceless. (Matthew 16:26) “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” NKJV It is wise to seek to win souls to Christ. (Proverbs 11:30) “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who wins souls is wise.” NKJV

 If we walk as Jesus did, our hearts will be heavy over those who are outside, and we will make the effort to bring the alien sinner to Christ and bring the prodigal back to the fold. (Luke 19:10) “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” NKJV

1. **Redeem the Time** Colossians 4:5 “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.” NKJV The psalmist said that it is like this: “So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12) NKJV Our days are fleeting and must be used wisely. We should allow no opportunity to teach the lost to slip through our hands, but should bring up every passing moment. When the 1st Century church in Jerusalem was persecuted, instead of lying low, they used this as an opportunity to preach the gospel. (Acts 8:4) “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” NKJV When Paul and Silas were in a jail in Philippi, they used it as a chance to teach their jailer about Christ. (Acts 16) We should look for opportunities to teach those who are outside. (John 4:34-35) “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’ Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you lift up your eyes and look to the fields, for they are already white for harvest!’ ” NKJV As we go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15) “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” NKJV This also includes restoring a fallen brother or sister. (James 5:19-20) “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.” NKJV The lost must be taught before judgment comes for then it’s too late. Listen to Paul’s advice in Ephesians 5:15-17. “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” NKJV There are plenty of things in the world to get us to waste our time. We must be alert to them. A danger exists in watching too much TV, playing too much ball, fishing too much. A little is fine, but be sure your time could not better be spent. We are reminded of I Timothy 4:8. “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” NKJV Let us be sure we use our time in pursuit of good.
2. **Speak Graciously** Colossians 4:6 “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,” NKJV Our speech needs to always be concerned with others; never abusive, harsh, unkind, condescending, or coarse but considerate of others’ feelings. Those who are outside will never listen to us if we speak corrupt words. (Ephesians 4:29) “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” NKJV Our words need to be seasoned with salt, made fit for use. Tough love is sometimes warranted. Salt has a saving and healing power. Our words need to reach the lost and bring them to Christ. Before this happens, we must consider how best to talk with each person we meet. Listen to the sage advice of Paul. (I Peter 3:15) “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;” NKJV Study so you can give good answers!

**Closing:**

We have a great responsibility in teaching the alien sinner as well as trying to retrieve the erring child of God. It is not an easy task. All of us know many who are “those who are outside.” We owe them and we must use every opportunity while we can to bring them into a saving relationship with Christ. (II Timothy 2:24-26) “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.” NKJV

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