

Colossians 4:1-6

Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. 2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 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— 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

The first verse reminds us of the theme of the last passage. Christians are to exercise their positions in life in the humility of faith and not merely for their own personal benefit. Christians in authority are still under authority, and should carry out their office as such. Christ will judge those who abuse their power to exploit others. Christians, of all people, should be just and fair in their dealings. While the New Testament nowhere commends slavery or advocates its continuation, it does realize that Roman society was a slave society, and so it gives caution to those who might have slaves, that if they do not free them, they surely ought not abuse them or treat them in a way inconsistent with the gospel and the love of Christ.

Paul then continues on to address things that pertain to all Christians. The Christian is to be on guard. The Christian is to be alert, a watchman. Distracted Christians are easy prey for the one who roams around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. And so we pray, for ourselves and for others, and we remain steadfast and sober. We do not push the envelope to see how far we can stretch boundaries. That's a good way to experience a bad fall. No, we stand in God's grace and let the light of His Word guide our path.

As Christians, like an athlete wearing a letter jacket, or an employee wearing a uniform, we represent something. We are representatives of Christ. Fairly or unfairly, people will oftentimes develop their view of Christ and His Church according to the contact they have had with Christians. We must take care, therefore, to represent the Lord well among unbelievers. Our speech should be consistent with our faith, and not sully other's impression of it. Our speech should edify and intrigue those who do not yet know Christ and His grace, and not scandalize and put them off. Our lives should lead the unchurched to ask about what makes us tick, what it is that we believe that leads us to have a hope so foreign to those who do not know the Messiah. And, Lord willing, when they ask, we should be prepared to seize the opportunity and answer. This is why we gather for God's services and study His Word, together with others in Bible classes, and on our own in our homes, not only for ourselves, but for others. We are not only feeding our own faith when we hear and learn God's Word. No, we are preparing to be able to feed others, should the opportunity arise, should the Lord have prepared such a work for us to walk in long before it ever comes about.

Lord, help us learn to speak, both to You and others, with sincere confidence through Your Son and with wisdom anchored in Your Word. Build us up through the light of the gospel and help us to let that light shine through our own speech and lives so that others might inquire about Your mercy. Amen.