

Evotional

Sermon title: “It is all about Jesus – Thai Life Insurance.”

Speaker: Neil Durling.

Bible passage: Colossians 4:2-18.

Date: 24.8.14.

Message:

Tell Archippus: ‘See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.’ (17)

What is our ministry? Paul tells us here how to live out our ministry, after reminding us of who Jesus is. He “earths” following Jesus in these verses.

Praying:

Paul was under house arrest; no more church planting and discipling whilst he made tents. I imagine this silencing of Paul would hurt him. He asks the Colossian Christians to pray:

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. (2-4)

In *The Message* it says “pray diligently”. Praying isn’t just asking God for stuff. It is a conversation. It is about nourishing a friendship. Let’s unpack some of the words in these verses:

- *Devote*: To remain somewhere. To endure, be steadfast and faithful. It reminds me that we are easily deflected from prayer.
- *Watch*: Refrain from sleep. This word was moved from the physical to the spiritual sphere so that we can pay attention to God. It keeps us from slackening in the faith and keeps the energy up! It literally means to have disciplined attention and concentration. Jesus told the disciples to do this in the Garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26.
- *Thankful*: (*eucharistia*) from *eu*=well and *charis*=grace. It means to accept something as if you don’t deserve it. We get the word Eucharist, Holy Communion, from it. Paul knew that praise injects prayer with freshness and is an antidote to the sluggishness of the soul.
- *Open a door for our message*: Please notice that Paul doesn’t ask them to pray that he’d be released from prison (even though he’d probably have heard of Peter’s miraculous escape) . Rather, he asks them to pray that he will be able to share Jesus whilst in there. He wants a door for their message to be able to “...make Christ plain as day to them.” (*The Message*) Sometimes prayer is not asking for what we want or what best suits us. Sometimes we need to take the larger, kingdom view in our prayers – and that may not run smoothly for us personally...

Doing:

Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. (5)

Let’s unpack some of these words:

- *Wise*: (*sophia*) this is wisdom that relates to goodness. Paul has already said that Jesus is the source of our wisdom - important to remember in Colossae where wisdom was much misunderstood. For Paul wisdom is “a human response to God’s will”.
- *Way you act*: One translation says “walk”. Be careful what you do! There should be consistency in the way we live our lives.
- *Outsiders*: Those “outside of doors” should see us living wisely.
- *Make the most of every opportunity*: This can be translated as “redeem the time”. There is often a tension here because making the most of an opportunity with someone might put another’s nose out of joint. That’s why we need to be wise in what we do.

Speaking:

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (6)

- *Conversation*: (*logos*) This means “intelligent way to communicate”. It is the word used for Jesus in John 1 when he is called The Word. Logos is everywhere; in theology, biology, anthropology, psychology...
- *Grace*: These intelligent conversations should be seasoned with grace, as this is the way God has dealt with us. Always seasoned with grace; not just when we like the other person, are in a good mood, or when they are polite to us – always.
- *Seasoned with salt*: Salt makes the food appetizing. Eagerness to make the most of every opportunity shouldn’t lead us to brashness.
- *Answer everyone*: This implies people will ask questions because they have seen how we live our lives.

We know all this, don’t we! So did the people mentioned in verses 7-17. But maybe Paul felt they needed reminding. And, maybe, so do we.

Why not check out this Thai Life Insurance advert to remind yourself?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaWA2GbcnJU>

Whatever your ministry, may you live it out by praying, doing and speaking...and probably in that order.

Questions:

1. Where have you been encouraged in your *praying*?
2. Where are you challenged in your *praying*?
3. Where have you been encouraged in your *doing*?
4. Where are you challenged in your *doing*?
5. Where have you been encouraged in your *speaking*?
6. Where are you challenged in your *speaking*?
7. What did you think and feel as you watched the Thai Life Insurance advert?

Prayer:

Father God, Thank you that you are with me, by your Holy Spirit, in my ministry. Amen.