

5/26/19 - Col. 4:2-6 - "A Call to Pray & Evangelize"

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[0 : 0 0] Please join me in prayer. Lord God, as we study your text, as we dissect it, as we look at the words that Paul chose by the inspired word to put on this page, it was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Father, that we can look at this text, that we can see exactly why he's writing this to the church. And Father, how it touches our lives in this current century, nearly 2,000 years later.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So chapter 4, verse 2 says, Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

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, that I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

[1 : 1 1] You know, there's a common phrase in churches all across the country of, like, yeah, I go to church, but I just don't connect.

I just go. It's good. The music is nice. But getting that deep connection, it's just not there. Or I don't know where to fit in. I just don't know where to serve.

Sometimes there's churches of many different sizes, large churches and small churches. And, you know, a lot of us, if you have experienced this dilemma in life, you get to a point where you're just like, I'm feeling a disconnect.

I don't know where I'm going to get connected. I don't know how I can fit in. These people are kind of different from me. We don't really have, we don't share too much in common. Paul highlights in this passage two components of the church, of where we must be plugged into.

It's not optional. Big church, small church, left church, right church, whatever you want to, however you want to swing it, of where we need to focus our energy. So the first point today, I want to talk about the charge to the church to be zealous in prayer.

[2 : 3 3] In verse two, read with me. It says, continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. Within this first point, we're going to be looking at the prayer life as Paul is putting it and looking at a prayer life in its frequency, its attitude, and its expectation.

Lifeway actually released some staggering statistics of, I just saw, based on the Barna Group research, that 80% of church members do pray, but inaudibly.

And somewhere around like 4% actually use words to pray, corporately or privately. And then you can obviously imagine that the other 14% of the church members have admitted that they don't pray.

But this passage is telling the church, Paul is instructing the church, just as we've been developing, this new life in Christ is supposed to be executed and expressed in a certain way.

There are four types of prayer, prayer, people who pray. There's the people who continually forget to pray. They say, I think we're all victim of this.

[3 : 54] We say we'll pray for somebody and then, you know, within a moment's notice of walking away, we completely forget. Or even out of the kindness of our hearts, we'll pray for you, but we forget.

So those who continually forget to pray, as I've been a victim of in the past, the on and off prayers, the Bible in a year prayers, the people who start off New Year's, you know, January 1st, I'm going to get it this year.

I'm going to be praying every morning before I even use the bathroom. I am going to pray and I'm going to get it. And then obviously, January 2nd comes around.

Oh man, this is getting a little bit hard. Well, you know, I guess I could pray a little bit on my pillow in bed and then obviously, you know, I don't know how many, is anybody stuck to their New Year's resolution in here?

Eh, really one, okay, one out of all of us. I didn't set a New Year's resolution this year. It was a cop out. And then there's the people who have bottle rocket prayers that kind of just like light them, like sporadically, like pew, pew, pew, you know, throughout the day or throughout life that just throw it up to God.

[5 : 05] But then there's this group of people who are dedicated to prayer. The prayer warriors, as we call them.

The prayer walkers that are so devoted to prayer and they get this passage. They get the meaning of this passage. And Paul is telling the church that there should be a frequency of prayers when he says continually.

And this should be known as that the beauty of the prayer life that Paul is instructing for the church is being conscious, continually conscious to persistently relating and involving God in all aspects of life.

Yes, in a special time set aside in our private worship as our New Year's resolutions start, you know, in our private worship, also in our corporate worship, we've prayed a lot even this morning having that time set aside.

But also having that time set aside when we're driving, when we're at a grocery store, when we are experiencing joy, or when we're experiencing suffering.

[6 : 12] And the second thing Paul seems to hit here is that the attitude of our prayers must be steadfast. The attitudes of our prayer must be steadfast.

Scripture is clear about the attitude of steadfast prayer. Romans 12.12 says to be constant in prayer. It says, Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Ephesians 6.18 says, Being praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. 1 Thessalonians 5.16-18 says, Pray without ceasing.

You know this one. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Then we also notice in verse 2, it says, Be watchful. Interesting. So there's a certain level of expectation in prayer.

[7 : 14] Being watchful, observing the fulfillment. And if we're supposed to be doing this with thanksgiving, if we're praying with thanksgiving, we already know we're praying in faith that God's going to fulfill it.

So can you see and sense the attitude and the faith that Paul is calling upon the prayer life of his church? As many people talk about where to get plugged in and everything, this is a non-negotiable church that we have to plug into the prayer life of the church.

And I think we can actually see this watchful attitude of prayers in the 120 disciples that were gathered in the upper room. after the resurrection, we see that they were continually devoting themselves to prayer.

Acts 1.14 states it. And the early church was an example of this devoted prayer. Acts 2.42 says, And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

So, church, participation in the gospel ministry is available to those who have received the new life in Christ that has been the theme of the entire chapter 3 of Colossians.

[8 : 27] This new life in Christ and is tangibly attained through an active prayer life. We do not need to search too hard of where to plug in with the church.

The second point this morning is the charge of the church of the direction of our prayer and prayer life. Look with me in verse 3-4.

It says, At the same time, pray also for us that God may open us a door for the Word to declare the mystery of Christ on account of which I am in prison that I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak.

The effectiveness of the ministry of His church, of this church at Youngstown Metro, if you can look around the room, of His church, the gathered saints, the effectiveness of this ministry is fully dependent upon prayers.

Upon prayers. Just as we see at the same time in verse 3, it says, At the same time. Paul is saying, While your constant steadfast prayers are abounding, don't forget about this.

[9 : 43] At the same time you are to pray with thanksgiving, don't forget about this special department of care. Focus on this, church and colossi. So the direction we see here of our prayers is open doors.

That there's a unique unity to the prayers and the doors that open for us in ministry, the effects of ministry, of this baptism being filled every week. Prayerful concern for open doors to share the mystery of Christ which is founded in His Word.

This is the direction of our prayers. The direction of our prayer life is for opportunity, for this open door as verse 3 states, for the Word to declare the mystery of Christ.

The mystery in Christ which Pastor Brad actually spoke on many weeks ago which we've been hitting on. The mystery of Christ has been actually repetitive throughout the book of Colossians which is the mystery of Christ revealed which is salvation available to all regardless of cultural circumstances, regardless of social circumstances, or racial circumstances.

Salvation for all people. And at that time it was for the Jews only, but now the salvation, the good news, is open to Gentiles as well which was a mystery indeed at this time period.

[11 : 05] Something hard to grasp. But the direction of our prayer life must also be focused on new opportunities as well for the pastors. See, in this passage it says the direction of our prayer life should be the pastors too.

Especially for us, Paul is including himself in that. Verse 3 is plural. Paul and his co-laborers, fellow pastors, we have three elders on staff here that we are to lift up.

That those who are primarily evangelizing and preaching the word, the pastors, the elders, the overseers, all instructing and relating to the same office in the church, also known as the deacons of preaching, the servants of the word.

Charles Spurgeon once said, no man can do me a truer kindness in this world than to pray for me. Charles Spurgeon. And I love how verse 4 talks about the clarity of the declaration is driven by prayer.

That he says in here, to declare the mystery of Christ in which I am a prisoner, in prison, that I may make it clear. So there's a unity between what we're praying for, the direction of what we're praying for, and the clarity of that message of Christ, the declaration of Christ.

[12 : 25] And comically, I'm just like, great Paul, so this is good news, so if I'm not making sense up here, it's your fault. You need to pray for me. But no, there's a certain responsibility of a pastor to be laboring, to be toiling for the ministry of the word as Colossians actually states.

But there's a participation in this ministry of the word that even if you're not doing the ministry of the word, you actually are doing the ministry of the word by praying for the pastors.

There's such a strong union church between the prayers of God's people and the effectiveness of the proclaimed message of Christ. So the precision of what is preached is sharpened by the prayers of God's people interceding on behalf of the ministry of the word and of the man's heart.

The precision of the proclaimed message of what is preached is sharpened by the prayers of God's people interceding on behalf of the ministry of the word and the hearts of man.

The people who are receiving this message. And finally, the third direction is praying with each other. The direction of our prayer life must be focused on new opportunities as well for the church that just as we can totally do a cop-out and say, well, you know, I guess I could declare the mystery of Christ but I'm not good with my words.

[14 : 03] I don't know the Bible as good as I really want to. You know, so I guess I'll just sit in the back row and I'll just pray for the pastors because after all, Brent said that part of the ministry of the word is praying so sure, this is actually doing, I'm being obedient to the message that he preached.

However, we're missing something here, church. In verse 4, looking back at verse 3, sorry, verse 3, we can understand something else is important because we see plural us.

We see us here that while Paul is included, yes, his co-laborers are included, yes, but us, meaning the entire church is not only including the pastors, the deacons of the word, the deacons of preaching, but the corporate gathered church is also to participate in this very endeavor of preaching the word as well.

So what is true for Paul is true for the church. we must all be dependent on each other's prayers for opportunities to preach. And when they do come, when these opportunities do come, it's done with clarity because guess what?

You are prayed for throughout the week as well by the elders of this church that we are lifting you up in prayer and we are definitely acknowledging the importance of God's word being exposed to those in your life as well.

[15 : 33] So if the direction of our prayer lives is to be toward opportunities to preach, then the most vital ministry of the church must be equally conducted in prayer. Which brings me to the third and final point this morning in this passage.

In verse 5 and 6 is a charge to the church to be zealous in evangelism. Many of you probably know where I'm going with this because, you know, we're talking about us as a corporate body united in this participation in evangelism.

Verse 5 says, Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

We see here that there's a call to urgency here because he mentions time in this passage. Our time is limited.

I think it was a quote that we were just talking about in our prayer time before service that, you know, our time is so limited to seeing bad theology. I don't know where that came from. Was that you? Yeah.

[16 : 41] Yeah, I think it was Pastor Brad. Yeah. Theology nights. Yeah. Time is of the essence on this earth.

Time is of the essence to be doing this. Notice in verse 5, the link between wisdom and our time. This can be summarized to be wise with your time when you are walking with outsiders.

Because we're not always going to be in this little cocoon of the church, in the comfy church walls. Yeah, this is great and all, but if this is the end of our lives living together as Christians, if we're not leaving these doors with a mission at hand, we're missing something and I might as well just be spending my time sitting in that chair and not talking to you in the morning.

We're missing it. To be wise disciples and evangelists for the ministry of the gospel, we have a limited amount of time and opportunity. Many of us, number one, forget the importance of our role in evangelizing, saying that it's for the pastors, they're better at this, they're smarter, you know, things like that.

We can give a hundred reasons why we could probably not do it. But Paul is telling the church to do it. But we forget the importance of our role in evangelizing.

[17 : 59] And number two, we miss the opportunity after opportunity that God brings in our lives, or in other words, we are just not being watchful in prayer. We're totally missing it.

As Bonhoeffer says, he says, silence in the face of evil is in itself evil. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak, and not to act is actually to act.

So, through us, not speaking is actually denouncing Christ in our lives when he's giving us an opportunity to speak. We see in this verse a strong sense of inaction when God is calling us to action.

Not speaking when we should speak. But verse six in this passage addresses that which is spoken when an opportunity is seized. So, when you actually do open, when you start moving your tongue and proclaiming this message of hope, the mystery of Christ, it says, let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

There are various evangelistic tactics. There's hundreds of books written on evangelism. How to do it, when to do it, what to say, what to look out for, how to respond to certain apologetic remarks and combativeness towards God's word.

[19 : 24] But when opportunities are engaged in evangelistic work, we choose to open our mouths. And we must remember that our speech, regardless of what comes out of our mouth, it has to be rooted in graciousness and seasoned with salt.

And graciousness is something to be understood as being courteous, being kind, being pleasant, showing divine grace and expressing polite surprise what's being communicated here.

And seasoned with salt, I love when the Bible mentions salt because back in the Sermon on the Mount when we were talking about being salt of the light and salt, you know, the passage, being salt of the earth.

Historically, salt preserved and salt enhanced flavor. Salt preserves and salt enhances. And so, likewise, the speech of those seizing the opportunities, if you open your mouth for claiming the message of the gospel, we're doing so graciously but also preserving the hope of the gospel and not corrupting the message of the gospel to make it seem a little more gentle.

Yeah, being gracious in our speech isn't to be like softening the edges because the edges of the gospel actually do cut. They hurt because we are sinners. We're in rebellion against a holy God and Him bringing His kingdom to earth.

[20 : 44] Thank God that He didn't crush us but He allowed us to be part of His kingdom on this earth. So, season with salt, preserving the sharpness of the gospel but also doing it in a gracious manner.

Christians are known to hold up banners and signs throughout all times. Some even Baptist churches around this country hold up signs that say God hates, insert the blank, just holds it up proclaiming a message.

God hates this group of people. God hates you because of this. And as I mentioned, there's various evangelistic tactics. This is telling us to walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of our time.

I recall those who hold, you know, self-proclaimed clever evangelists that go out on the street corners in maybe New York or busy inner city streets and they'll hold up signs like, you're going to hell.

You know, like the picket signs, like, you're going to hell. And then on the back, it's like a sigh of relief. Ask me how. Like, really?

[21 : 54] Really? Is this all you can do? Is this making, is this walking in wisdom making the best use of your time? Because I guarantee half of the people just watch, see the front of your sign and put them in complete condemnation and the back of the sign is like saying, ask me how.

What does that even mean? It's an incomplete message. And actually, you're dealing with a culture that if we actually look at us, because we're living in a post-Christian culture, like that Christianity is not like the source and the essence of this country anymore, that not even people, even Christians in various churches proclaim a literal hell, that they don't even identify that there's a literal place called hell of eternal separation from God, eternal damnation and separation from God.

And this is the same culture who would see that sign and say, you're going to hell. Oh, I heard it's actually not a bad place. My pastor actually just told us that it's not too bad. Catholic churches will talk about purgatory, that, you know, it's a cleansing part, you know, before we go into heaven.

But this culture also, looking at a sign like that, minimizes the need for repentance. Repentance is a huge, sometimes missing component in Christian churches these days, of that we proclaim hope, we proclaim faith, but we, like, sand down the sharpness and the edges of the gospel, of the message of the gospel.

It's all hope and glory without the death, without the repentance. We're missing something vital in that message. So, looking at this man with the sign, you're going to hell, but ask me how to repent.

[23 : 38] You know, there's something missing. I don't believe that that is being wise and making the best use of our time. And I believe that Paul would be someone who would actually challenge that method.

Within every gospel opportunity, church, lies a varied audience, a varied people group with a varied historical journey in life, which also will directly affect the varied results.

How you ought to answer each person, as verse 6 says in his word, so regardless of our conduct, regardless, our conduct must uphold the graciousness of those born in the image of God that each and every person that we are proclaiming the message of God we're doing of graciousness because they were created in the image of God, that they are created by God.

But we also must be preserving the life-changing message of the gospel and not standing down the rough edges of the gospel. So, we just looked at two departments of the church, of prayer and evangelism, two departments of partnership.

So, when you're talking, when we hear, I'm feeling disconnected, I don't know where to fit in. Church, if you are there today, I invite you to join in prayer, number one, and join in proclaiming this message, taking this message outside of these walls because both are required.

[25 : 10] The substance of each, each of us is rooted in the word of the Lord. The substance of each of these departments of prayer and evangelism is rooted in the word of the Lord. And the results of both departments are completely and utterly up to our participation in God's will.

The results may vary. So, the good news, church, is that when we pray, church, when we pray, we pray to an eternal God who, number one, He knows all things.

That He is not bound to time and space, unlike we are bound to time and space and He is in control of all things. This is good news because the results of our prayers are completely in His control according to His perfect will and His timing.

Our prayers. It is up to Him and that is good news. And also, in evangelizing, when you're saying, I'm not good at it, I just don't know the words and everything, well, good! It's not up to you in the first place.

This is all of our responsibility to act in the church, to evangelize. So, the good news is when we evangelize, we are advocates to the eternal God who, number one, knows all things that is not bound by time and space and who is in control of all things, church.

[26 : 28] This is good news because the results of our evangelism are also completely in His control as well and according to His will and perfect timing. As God is completely and utterly sovereign and preeminent over all things, Colossians 1, that whole hymn in Colossians 1, 15 through 20, He is preeminent over all things and He's in all things.

This verse should be compelling within our lives and something actually revolutionary in your life right now if you have not been praying, if you have not been evangelizing as you ought.

This eternal God who knows all things, is not bound to time, is in control of all things, desires us to participate in this redemptive plan on this earth.

Think about that really hard for just a moment. The eternal God who has delivered you from this present evil age desires for you to participate in His redemptive plan on this earth.

The eternal God. And results may vary and they're up to Him and that is good news. But the action and the call to pray and the call to evangelize is actually not optional for the church.

[27 : 47] We must all do this together. So I have three challenges and then a final challenge for you this morning. We are at 12 o'clock. If you have a Bob Evans reservation at 12.15, you will be late.

First challenge, are you asking for opportunities, church? Are you asking for opportunities? Now, I do want to caution you to be careful with this prayer.

When you ask God for opportunities, because I believe that this is one prayer that if you ask, He will no doubt of me, undoubtedly, fulfill for you.

He will bring opportunities to you. Are you asking for these opportunities? There is often also a question that I am asked by many church members in different seasons of life.

You know, I just don't know how to pray. You kind of have like a prayer paralysis. Like, you are just restricted by the sovereignty of God, the bigness of God, and you are just like, little Joe here, you know, and this big God.

[28 : 53] How could this even make a difference? I don't even know how to talk to God. But I encourage you to pray, number one, through Scripture. Open up your Bible, read the Psalms, pray through Psalms, pray through catechisms.

There's a lot of good catechism. There's a New Life Catechism. You can actually download an app on your phone, New Life Catechism, that is solid with some good confessions. And there's also confession books of other, like, theologians throughout all time that have written out their confessions and their prayers that are really good to read.

But you can also do as the Lord Jesus instructed in Matthew to do the Lord's Prayer. He sets it out for us that our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil because thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Jesus lays this out for us.

[29 : 59] If you don't know how to pray, use this. This is a good starting point for you. The Christian Post actually put an article out there too with some percentages of prayer that I felt were insightful.

It says in the Christian Post in an article just a couple weeks ago, it says, when asked how many times they shared with someone, quote, how to become a Christian, 55% of respondents answered zero.

This is a Christian research poll. 55% of the church when asked how much they evangelized, 55% said zero.

24% of respondents said that they had shared how to become a Christian to somebody one to two times in their lifetime, getting a little bit better. 12% responded three to five times, 5% said six to ten times, and 1% said 11 to 15 times, and 3% reported 16 times or more.

It's miraculous that somebody hasn't shared Christ enough that they can actually count. So there is a problem in the church today, and I pray that this is not a problem in our church.

[31 : 17] So the second challenge for you today is where is God calling you? Are you living a watchful life, church? Or are you living a comfortable life?

Eddie, you mentioned that, you know, the church is comfortable, you know, and that's a good thing. You know, you want to be comfortable, you want to be sitting under God's Word, you want to be learning and growing in God's Word and growing together as a community.

However, when we leave these doors, and even when we preach this message, we must wrestle with this, we must exhort each other, we must admonish one another as we spoke in chapter 3 about letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly, teaching and admonishing one another.

But this must not be too comfortable, we can't get too comfortable in this community, but we also must leave these doors on a mission that definitely is not comfortable, I must tell you. But if you're not living a watchful life, if you're living kind of comfortable, low risk, you're satisfied, remember this passage said, as we can recall, that, what does it say in verse 3?

Look with me. Pray, 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.

[32 : 43] Yeah, he might be comfortable in prison, but this led him to prison, that there is sometimes sacrifice and challenges that occur.

Just recently, Theology Nights posted just recently, the martyrs did not die because they believed the gospel, they died because they proclaimed the gospel, which is a quote from David Platt, that there was actually repercussions from proclaiming the gospel.

They didn't sand the edges down, they didn't make it sound appealing, it was seasoned with salt, it was preserved, the message of the gospel was preserved, church. And the third challenge is where has God placed you right now?

I really want you to think about this, where has God placed you right now in life? Because opportunities of partnership await outside of these walls. While there is partnership at home, ministry to family is very important and also to neighbors.

It's just unfortunate that sometimes it takes a natural disaster, like a tree falling on your property and just destroying somebody, like your neighbor's house, or maybe like a basement flooding.

[33 : 59] Last year, when all the basements and boardmen flooded, you remember that crazy, just torrential downpour? If anybody in here was a victim of that flood, in Boardman up on the, I think it was north, no, south side, south side, that all of a sudden I went out to help one of our church members and he's talking to his neighbors.

He's lived here for numerous years and he's just getting to know his neighbor, Christian in church, just getting to know. It took a natural disaster to know your neighbor.

There's a problem. So, where has God placed you now? There's partnership at home with your family and your neighbors. Number two, there's partnership at church.

There's partnership here. Everyone who's gathered here are partners in the gospel. Now, we're not just attendees. We're not just weekly attendees. We don't just, we're sometimes monthly attendees if we want to get real.

We're not just weekly donors. We see the tithe go around and boom, I'm on good terms with God again. If this is what we're minimizing our faith to be, we're missing something great.

[35 : 14] Have you asked where God wants to use you here? Church, have you asked God where he wants you to, wants to use you here?

Are we just merely attending and dropping money in the basket? The pastors cannot execute all the ministries here. That is not the New Testament model. The church comes together and we do ministry together.

You don't just sit on the sideline, drop a coin in the basket and pray for the pastors as we're talking about in the scripture and say, okay, I'm going to go home, put on the office and be content with life.

There's partnership here. The gathered people are vital to the mission of this church and there's much opportunity here to lead. Trust me. And I am, if anybody knows me better than anyone, I am so passionate about giving opportunities for people to lead here and to be partners with you and to grow together in partnership.

And then finally, there's partnership at the workplace. Imagine what would happen if our Christian identity was observable and expressed in our workplace for doctors, for salesmen, for call center folks, for people working at the rescue mission, for the teachers in this room, past teachers, with doctors, with the nurses in this room, with the steel workers.

[36 : 43] What would happen if we became partners in the gospel in our workplace when our identity was observable in Christ? How this can impact the world and that we open our mouths and take the risks and proclaim Christ when He's indicating we need to.

And a final challenge, church, are we active participants by holding each other up in prayer for His mission for us on this earth? As Matthew 28, the Great Commission, says, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us.

This is our mission, church. Do we choose to accept it? This is our mission. Do we choose to accept it? Our church at Youngstown Metro here consists of 51 covenant partners, church members, 51 church members, adult church members.

And it also consists of 64 individual regular attendees that just come and join and gather with us, receive God's Word, and tithe regularly, things like that.

51 church members and 64 individual adult church attendees. That is a total of 150 adults. And with the 30 plus kids, you know, there'd be about 150 people altogether, adults and children.

[38 : 19] Think about that. 115 adults. Can you imagine the impact of the ministry of this church that this could have if we all started off small and asked ourselves, who is my one?

Who is my one? There's actually something going on in the SBC. We are a Southern Baptist church that we partner with, and there's actually a campaign called Who's Your One?

And the simple fact is, who is your one in your life? 115 adults, who would be our one? Who is our 115 people that we are reaching out to and we're discipling outside of these walls?

One person that we choose to reach to. If this were the case, if we reached one person, if 115 of us reached one person and brought them here to this church, literally we would be having people stand in the back.

We have about just over 100 chairs in this sanctuary, in this gathering space. Who is your one that you need to tell Jesus? You need to invite the church to hear this gospel that we need to get this baptism ready for.

[39 : 37] Who is your one? Let us express our dedication to God by our active participation in our church gathering. Not neglecting to meet together as Hebrews talks about in chapter 10, 25, but also allow the active participation occurring within these walls flow out those doors and downstairs, flow outward into the surrounding communities.

I'm often asked as well where I sense God is leading this church. People ask me where I feel God is leading this church. And if you want to know the answer, this is where He's leading this church.

This is His mission. It's been the same for all decades, all generations, all centuries since Christ appeared before the 500 people, the eyewitnesses. It is here and it is now.

Who is your one who you need to reach? We are His church and we are in this together. And next week we're going to be finishing up the book of Colossians. I swear, I promise you this time, I swear, as God is my witness, we will be finishing this book and we will be having a summer kickoff.

And throughout the summer we're going to be doing a one-to-one Bible reading, which is simply finding somebody, non-Christian, hopefully, or a Christian outside of this church in different various walks in life, sitting with them, meeting at a coffee shop for just one hour, opening this.

[41 : 02] And there's actually, if that makes you uncomfortable, we've made it easy. There's a couple questions that you read a passage with somebody and you say, what's this passage saying? Simple, open-ended questions to create and engage in a biblical discussion.

We're helping you. We're giving you the tools so that there's no excuse that we walk outside of this church as we open up this word and we read one-to-one with people. This is going to be the summer.

And so we're going to be talking more about that next week and we're going to be finishing the book of Colossians and praying for the direction of this church. We're going to be pausing all things in this church and we're going to be coming together in prayer for one another and prayer for opportunities.

We're having testimonies if anybody wants to share of what God is doing, by all means, share. So please, please focus on this mission of the church.

We are together. We are His church. We are His people. Please join me in prayer. Thank you.