

Colossians Sermon Illustrations 4

COLOSSIANS SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS, DEVOTIONALS AND COMMENTARY

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COLOSSIANS 4

COLOSSIANS 4:1

PEOPLE OVER PROFITS

September 1, 2003

READ: Colossians 3:22-4:1

When Truett Cathy started his first restaurant in 1946, it was closed on Sundays to give his employees time to be with their families and to attend church. It's still true today of the more than 1,000 Chick-fil-A fast-food outlets franchised by his company.

Cathy's slogan is: "Put people and principles before profit." It's a motto each of us can make our own, whether we give orders or take them on the job.

The apostle Paul had a word for employers and employees in Colossians 3:22-4:1. He said we need to remember that we have a Master in heaven (Col 4:1), and we are to work from our hearts to please Him, not just the person watching us (3:22, 23, 24).

Truett Cathy strives to remain true to biblical principles in his business. Larry Julian, author of *God Is My CEO*, a book about Cathy and other business leaders, says: "God doesn't promise a tangible return on investments, but He promises the fruits of the Spirit, love and peace and joy, on a personal level. Cathy is not only experiencing peace and joy and love in his life personally, but he's also making a difference to his foster children, his own children and grandchildren, and his employees. He's leaving a legacy on how you can do things the right way."

That's an example we can take to work. —David C. McCasland

Lord, teach me how to love and work,
That everything I do
May be to someone in its turn
A service good and true. —Anon.

When people are more important than profits, everyone profits.

Colossians 4:1

Beyond Just And Fair

Working conditions in England during the 19th century were abysmal. Men, women, and children labored in dangerous factories during the day and went home to dirty tenement slums at night. Many of the factory owners cared little for the well-being of their employees.

But during that time, the owners of the Cadbury chocolate company were different. Quakers by conviction and business entrepreneurs by giftedness, they focused on improving the working conditions of their 200 workers. The Cadburys built a state-of-the-art factory with heated dressing rooms, a kitchen, and recreational areas. And to care for the employees' spiritual needs, the workday started with Bible study.

Colossians 4:1 tells us: "Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven." Certainly the Cadburys sought to give their employees what was just and fair. But their heavenly orientation motivated them to go a step further to meet physical and spiritual needs.

Though we may not own a company, we do have regular contact with a variety of people. As believers, it is important to be ethical in our dealings. We can also, with God's enablement, care about others' well-being through prayer, encouragement, and the meeting of physical needs (Gal. 6:10).— by Dennis Fisher

Lord, thank You for loving us and meeting our needs.

Often You bring people into our lives who need Your

love and care. Give us wisdom to creatively reach

out a helping hand that we might share Your kindness.

God blesses us so that we can bless others

COLOSSIANS 4:2

WHY PRAY?

November 25, 1998

Read: Luke 11:1-13

One of the great paradoxes of the Christian faith is that God wants us to talk to Him about everything that is going on in our lives, even though He already knows everything. So why pray?

If you've ever wrestled with that question, perhaps the thoughts of the 19th-century preacher R. A. Torrey can help. Among the reasons he gave for prayer are these:

Because there is a devil, and prayer is a God-appointed way to resist Him (Eph. 6:12, 13,18).

Because prayer is God's way for us to obtain what we need from Him (Lk. 11:3-13; Jas. 4:2).

Because prayer is the means God has appointed for us to find "grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

Because prayer with thanksgiving is God's way for us to obtain freedom from anxiety and to receive "the peace of God" (Phil. 4:6, 7).

Besides these reasons, it's enough to read the command in 1Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing," and realize that God wants us to talk with Him. Yes, He is all-knowing, but He also desires our fellowship. When we seek God's face in prayer, we strengthen our relationship with Him. That's the most important reason to pray. --J D Brannon

Since prayer is God's most gracious plan
Whereby He links Himself with man,
Should not His own more often say
To one another, "Let us pray"? --Sterling

Our highest privilege is to talk to God.

COLOSSIANS 4:2

WATCH WHAT HAPPENS!

August 20, 1997

Read: Colossians 4:2-13

A missionary to Haiti was told by a doctor that she might have cancer. A biopsy was performed and sent away for analysis. As she waited for the results, she was filled with fear and could find no peace of mind.

Then one evening her anxiety suddenly lifted like a cloud. She had a deep and inexpressible awareness that the Lord would take care of her husband and children and their emotional needs, regardless of the outcome.

As she reflected on all of this, it occurred to her that it was Wednesday evening--prayer meeting night in her home church back in the United States. She also realized that it was the first Wednesday night after friends had been notified of the potential crisis. These facts convinced this faithful missionary that God had given her an opportunity to sense His answer to the prayers of others on her behalf. In addition, the medical report soon came back with the welcome news that there was no cancer.

This true incident carries a needed reminder to all of us who are Christians. The emphasis given to prayer in Colossians 4 highlights the kind of support we should be giving one another. Let's pray for the needs of others and then watch to see what the Lord does. --
M R De Haan II

When earthly help is of no avail,
There is one Friend who will never fail;
Just lift your eyes--the answer is there,
For nobody knows the power of prayer! --Kenny

To influence people for God, pray to God for people

COLOSSIANS 4:2

IT'S THE KNEES

December 6, 2004

READ: James 5:13-18

Continue earnestly in prayer. —Both of my knees were hurting, and I could not figure out why. I hadn't done anything to damage them or put undo pressure on them.

Or had I? I recalled that over the previous few days I had been working on the walls in our house, scrubbing them and getting them ready for painting. And then I had painted them. All the while, as I stood on the short ladder to reach the top, I had been pressing my knees against the ladder for balance. I was, in effect, being supported by my knees.

Then a new thought came to mind: When was the last time my knees hurt because I was on them praying? It had been a while.

Although it's true that people pray all the time without kneeling, the question I asked myself is a convicting one. Whether we are on our knees, standing up, or seated, how often do we use prayer to support ourselves? We can find help from many sources—friends, counselors, books—but there's nothing better than the support and strength we get from God when we pray.

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16). Prayer has power. We are to "continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant" (Colossians 4:2).

How are your knees? —Dave Branon

When I kneel before my Master,
I can feel His presence there,
And the load of care and sorrow
Seems much easier to bear. —Anon

Prayer does not require eloquence but earnestness.

COLOSSIANS 4:3

INVISIBLE PEOPLE

December 7, 1995

I'll never forget the feeling. It was as if I suddenly had become invisible. I had gone into a major department store in a large mall to purchase a gift for my wife. I made my way to the proper section and stood by the counter. Nothing happened. I moved around and tried to look eager to buy. Still nothing happened. I could not get waited on.

The store was not busy. I could see two or three clusters of clerks engaged in conversation. Others were straightening racks. But no one even acknowledged that I was there. I finally went to another store.

Many people around us have an even greater need--to know about Jesus Christ and His gift of salvation. Some are yearning for us to acknowledge them and reach out to them. Others would respond to a kind deed done in Jesus' name. Still others may require gentle persuasion to accept the offer of salvation. But none of them will respond if we do not see them as people in need of Christ and make the effort to witness to them.

Paul prayed for an open door to proclaim the gospel (Col. 4:3). If we do the same, we will find genuine seekers of spiritual help all around us. Let's show them by our words and actions that they are not invisible. --D C Egner

Help me to see the tragic plight
Of souls far off in sin;
Help me to love, to pray, and go
To bring the wandering in. --Harrison

Do you see a needy world through the eyes of Jesus?

COLOSSIANS 4:4

MAKE IT CLEAR

May 6, 2001

Read: Colossians 4:1-6

I was teaching a group of prisoners about prayer, using what is commonly called The Lord's Prayer as a model (Matthew 6:9-13). I was explaining the opening words, "Our Father," telling the men that though they are God's "offspring" because He created them (Acts 17:28-29), they can become God's "children" only when they place their trust in His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:14-17). Then God truly becomes their heavenly Father.

As I struggled to get the point across, one of the men said, "Let me tell it." He said, "Listen up! God made you, okay? But that doesn't mean you aren't going to hell. You can only become God's child if He saves you. To get that, you gotta trust in Jesus. If you haven't done that, you better get it done now." After the lesson, three prisoners trusted in Christ.

I learned a lesson that day. When we present the gospel, we need to use terms and concepts that are familiar to our audience. We must express it clearly, simply, accurately, and in ways that our listeners will be able to comprehend.

Whether presenting the gospel to prisoners, teenagers, shop workers, or stockbrokers, we must communicate it plainly. That's not always easy, so we need to ask God to help us make the message clear (Colossians 4:4). —D C Egner

We must preach the gospel clear and bright
In a way that's plainly understood;
We must speak the truth and shine Christ's light
To our world for their eternal good. —Fitzhugh

The truth of the gospel is as clear as a bell, but it isn't always tolled!

COLOSSIANS 4:5

BUYING TIME

Consider this: "If we had to buy time, would there be any difference in how we would spend it? Would the days of our lives be used more wisely?" That's what time management consultant Antonio Herrera asked the participants in a seminar he conducted on the subject. Then Dr. Herrera became more specific. He asked, "What if you had to pay in advance \$100 an hour for the time allotted to you? Would you waste it?" The answer should be obvious.

Of course, we can't put a price tag on the minutes and hours we possess. They are given to us freely. But that doesn't excuse us

from using them conscientiously, carefully, and wisely. The giver of time is God Himself, and that places a far greater value upon it than any monetary figure could suggest. We must therefore use our time intelligently, taking advantage of opportunities it provides for us to serve the Lord and to do His will. - R. W. De Haan

COLOSSIANS 4:5

If we live 65 years, we have about 600,000 hours at our disposal. Assuming we are 18 when we complete high school, we have 47 years, or nearly 412,000 hours to live after graduation.

If we spend 8 hours a day sleeping, 8 hours for personal, social, and recreational activities, and 8 hours for working, that amounts to 137,333 hours in each category. When we think of the time we have to work and play in terms of hours, it doesn't seem like much. And when seen in the light of eternity, it's but a fleeting moment. How important, therefore, that we spend our waking hours wisely!

D. J. De Pree, a former member of the RBC Board of Directors always calculated his age in terms of days. If you asked him, "How old are you?" he answered immediately with the number of days.

He based this practice on Psalm 90:12, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

Literally counting his days reminded him of the swift passage of time and the need to live with eternity's values in view. —R. W. De Haan

FUTURE PROSPECTS BRING PRESENT JOYS.

COLOSSIANS 4:5

TIME: HANDLE WITH CARE

Read: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

If you had to buy time, would there be any difference in the way you would spend it? Would you use the minutes, hours, and days of your life more wisely?

Of course, we can't put a price tag on the minutes and hours we possess. They are given to us freely. But that doesn't excuse us from using them carefully and wisely. The giver of time is God Himself, and that places a far greater value on our time than any monetary figure could suggest. We must therefore take advantage of the opportunities time provides to serve the Lord and to do His will.

This doesn't mean that we have to be working every single moment. It's necessary to take a break every so often, to stop and smell the roses along the way, or to enjoy the beauty of a sunset. We use our time wisely when we combine the appropriate "stops" with the proper "steps." According to Solomon, there is a time for all of God's purposes to be accomplished (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

I'm so grateful that the Lord doesn't sell time. He provides it as a gift of His grace. So let's spend our days "redeeming the time," using the opportunities to live for God (Colossians 4:5).

Yes, time is precious. Handle with care! —R. W. De Haan

We do not know how long we have
Till time for us is past,
So let us live as if this day
Is going to be our last. —D. De Haan

**To spend time wisely,
invest it in eternity**

COLOSSIANS 4:5

BEE POLLEN AND THE GOSPEL

April 21, 1995

Nellie Pickard loves to tell people about Jesus Christ. She does it so often that she's written a series of books describing how she witnesses in everyday situations. In Just Say It! she tells about her phone call to a health-food store. She had noticed that bee pollen was on sale, so she asked the manager about the benefits of using it. "You'll live forever," he replied.

To Nellie, the words live forever were an open invitation. "I know you're joking," she said, "but I know I'm going to live forever, and

not because I buy your bee pollen."

His response was encouraging. "I'd like to hear about it. I'm really interested in why you think you're going to live forever." Although he did not trust Jesus as Savior at that time, Nellie had planted the seed by being wise "toward those who are outside" (Col. 4:5).

Our opportunities are endless, yet our words are often powerless. Instead of directing our conversations with unbelievers toward spiritual matters, we tend to stay in the safe zone. Doing as Nellie does is a skill we need to develop and a challenge that comes straight from God's Word.

We must look for those openings. With sincere kindness and genuine concern we can turn most conversations to eternal matters—even if the subject is bee pollen. -J D Branon

Take control of my words today,
May they tell of Your great love;
And may the story of Your grace
Turn some heart to You above.-Sees

The best place to witness is where God has placed you.

COLOSSIANS 4:5

Author and lecturer John Erskine (1879–1951) declared that he learned the most valuable lesson of his life when he was 14 years old. His piano teacher asked him how much he practiced. He replied that he usually sat at the instrument for an hour or more at a time.

"Don't do that," warned the teacher. "When you grow up, time won't come to you in long stretches like that. Practice in minutes wherever you can find them—5 or 10 before school, a few after lunch. Sandwich them in between chores. Spread the practice throughout the day, and music will become a part of your life."

Erskine stated later that by following this advice he was able to live a fulfilled life as a creative writer, in addition to his regular duties as an instructor. He wrote nearly all of *Helen of Troy*, his most famous work, on streetcars while commuting between his home and the university.

Use your spare moments to read the Bible, or to pray, or to write a note of encouragement to a needy soul. —H. G. B.

WASTING TIME INSULTS THE GIVER OF TIME.

COLOSSIANS 4:6

THE GRACE OF CHRISTIAN SPEECH

"He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile."-- 1Peter 3:10.

THE IDEAL of Christian speech is given in the Apostle's words to the Colossians. Our speech should be always gracious; and grace stands for mercifulness, charity, the willingness to put the best constructions upon the words and actions of another. It is a great help in dealing with envy, jealousy, or unkind feeling to compel our lips to speak as Christ would have them. If you are jealous of another, the temptation is to say unkind or depreciating things, but if we live in the power of the Holy Spirit, He will enable us to check such words and replace them by those that suggest kindly consideration on the part of ourselves and others. Endeavour to say all the good that can be said, and none of the evil. It is remarkable that when we make the effort to speak kindly on behalf of those against whom we feel exasperated, the whole inward temper changes and takes on the tone of our voice.

There should be salt in our speech--purity, antiseptic, and sparkling like the Book of Proverbs. A playful wit, a bright repartee, are not inconsistent with the Apostle's standard, but whenever we mix in conversation with people, they should be aware of an element in us which makes it impossible for them to indulge in ill-natured gossip or coarse jokes.

We must continue in prayer that God would open to us doors of utterance, so that we may speak of the hidden beauty and glory of our Saviour. Sometimes, also, when we are hard pressed to know how to answer difficult questions, it is given to us in that same hour how we ought to speak, and we find that the Holy Spirit has found an utterance by our lips (Lk 12:12; 1Pe 3:15).

It is recorded of our Lord that during His trial He spoke not a word to Pilate or Herod, but as soon as He reached the Cross, He poured out His heart as their Intercessor, saying: "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do!" Speak more to God than to men who may be reviling and threatening you. It is blessed to realize that He is able to guard the door of our lips, for probably there is no part of our nature that stands more in need of His keeping power.

PRAYER - Live in us, Blessed Lord, by Thy Holy Spirit, that our lives may be gospels of helpfulness and blessedness. May all foolish talking and covetousness, bitterness, wrath, and anger be put away from us, with all malice. AMEN. F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

COLOSSIANS 4:6

LIFE WORDS

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."-- Proverbs 18:21

Words of encouragement can be "life words," bringing new motivation to our lives. Mark Twain said that he could live for a whole month on one good compliment!

Christian encouragement, however, is more than a compliment or a pat on the back, valuable as these can be. One writer described it as "the kind of expression that helps someone want to be a better Christian, even when life is rough."

As a youth, Larry Crabb had developed a stutter that humiliated him in a school assembly. A short time later when praying aloud in a church service, his stutter caused him to get both his words and theology mixed up in his prayer. Expecting stern correction, Larry slipped out of the service, resolving never to speak in public again. On his way out he was stopped by an older man who said, "Larry, there's one thing I want you to know. Whatever you do for the Lord, I'm behind you one thousand percent." Larry's resolve never again to speak publicly weakened instantly. Now, many years later, he addresses large crowds without stuttering.

Paul told us to season our speech "with grace" so that we may know how to answer others (Col. 4:6). Then we will speak "life words" that bring encouragement.-- Joanie E. Yoder

It may seem insignificant
To say a word or two,
But when it is encouragement,
What wonders it can do! -- K. DeHaan

**Correction may mold us,
but encouragement will motivate us.**

Colossians 4:6

Tone Check

Driving home from work, I heard a radio advertisement that got my attention. It was for a computer program that checks e-mails as they are written. I was familiar with "spell check" and "grammar check" programs, but this was different. This was "tone check." The software monitors the tone and wording of e-mails to make certain they are not overly aggressive, unkind, or mean-spirited.

As I listened to the announcer describe the features of this software, I wondered what it would be like to have something like that for my mouth. How many times have I reacted harshly instead of listening first—and later regretted the words I had spoken? Certainly a tone check would have protected me from responding so foolishly.

Paul saw the need for us as believers to check our speech—especially when talking to those who are not Christians. He said, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6). His concern was that our speech be graceful, reflecting the beauty of our Savior. And it must be inviting to others. Talking with the right tone to unbelievers is vital to our ability to witness to them. Colossians 4:6 can be our tone check.— by Bill Crowder

Tone of voice can be effective

If our spirit's calm and meek;

Let us watch our words and actions,

Always careful how we speak. —Hess

Every time we speak, our heart is on parade.

COLOSSIANS 4:6

WHAT'S YOUR SALT CONTENT?

Colossians 4:1-6

IF you were to evaporate a ton of water from the Pacific Ocean, you would get approximately seventy-nine pounds of salt. A ton of Atlantic water would yield eighty-one pounds. And from the Dead Sea you would get almost five hundred pounds.

As these statistics demonstrate, the earth's bodies of water vary greatly in their degree of saltiness. So do Christians. Jesus said that we are "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13). But we all have different levels of "salt content." A few Scripture verses tell what it means to be "salty."

Salt enhances flavor (Job 6:6).

Salt indicates purity in speech (Colossians 4:6).

Salt symbolizes keeping a promise (Numbers 18:19).

Salt speaks of goodness (Mark 9:50).

Now, check your salt content. Are you the kind of person who enhances the lives of those around you? Is your conversation pure? Do you keep promises? Are you characterized by goodness? An unbelieving world is watching and listening to you. What do they see and hear?

Perhaps your life needs more salt. Study Jesus' life for a pattern and rely on the Spirit for power. As you obey Christ, you will give the world a taste of a life "seasoned with salt"—and you will make people hunger and thirst for the same in their own lives. —P R Van Gorder

COLOSSIANS 4:6

A MANNER OF SPEAKING

The powerful French statesman Richelieu (1585-1642) was also known as a man of great courtesy. On one occasion someone applied to him for a job, knowing that he would be turned down. Richelieu's manner of speech was so warm and accepting that it was worth having a request denied just to hear how graciously he expressed himself - even when he said no. We can all learn from that example.

In the early years of our marriage, my wife Margaret lovingly reminded me on occasion about my tendency to express my opinions a little too emphatically. In my enthusiasm to make a point, I was inclined to speak loudly and with great animation. As a result, I often appeared to be angry when actually I was not.

I wonder, what is your speech like? We as Christians ought to be so sensitive to the needs, hurts, and disappointments of others that no unkind words come from our lips and no harsh tone is heard in our voices - even when we find it necessary to be firm. We have Christ dwelling within us, and as we yield to His control His love will become evident not only in what we say but also in how we say it.

The difference between being an offense or a blessing is sometimes just a manner of speaking. -Richard W. De Haan

Words of kindness spread so gently,
They give volume to one's voice;
Words of joy and words of gladness
Make a humble heart rejoice. -Potts

GENTLE WORDS FALL LIGHTLY BUT CARRY GREAT WEIGHT.

COLOSSIANS 4:6

COMMUNICATING WITH CARE

I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue. --Psalm 39:1

Human beings are more than mere animals; we have been made in God's image. As persons we can communicate with one another with words -- something animals cannot do. We use words like love and patriotism to share our ideas and emotions. Think of the hours we spend talking, whether in casual conversations about trivia or deep discussions about important issues.

We have all kinds of devices to help us communicate. We have telephones, fax machines, computer bulletin boards, voice mail, radios, TV sets, and of course, printed materials of every kind.

The Bible recognizes that communication, a central component of our lives, needs to be monitored with great care. For

example, Paul urged that our "speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6). And James cautioned, "No man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8).

We need to guard our lips, making David's prayer in Psalm 19:14 our daily prayer: "Let the words of my mouth and the medication of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." - Vernon C. Grounds

Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages for Thee;
Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King. --Havergal

Mind what you say, or you may say whatever comes to mind..

COLOSSIANS 4:12

F B Meyer – Our Daily Homily

Always striving for you in his prayers ... he hath much labor for you. (r.v.)

This is a very beautiful epitaph on a good man's life. He had come from Colosse with tidings for the apostle; but amid all the crowding interests of his visit to Rome his heart was with his friends, and he sought to help them, as we may all help dear ones far away.

He strove for them in prayer. It was no runaway knock that he gave; no light breathing of desire; no formal mention of their names: but it seemed as though he were a wrestler, whose muscles stood out like whipcord as he agonised for the prize. He labored. We shall never know, till we stand in the clear light of heaven, how much has been wrought in the world by prayer. Here, at least, there is mention of a man's labors. Probably the work on the results of which we are wont to pride ourselves is due less to us than we suppose, and more to unrecognized fellow-laborers.

There is a pretty legend which tells of the dream of a great preacher who was marvellously used of God, and inclined to magnify himself and his gifts; but who was instructed by an angel of God that his success was entirely attributable to a poor widow, who sat regularly in the free seats at the foot of his pulpit, and who never ceased to pray for him. May the writer ask of any who receive benefit from these words to labor and strive for him in prayer to God.

Let us be careful to mingle much intercession with all our prayers, especially on the behalf of missionaries and lonely workers in foreign lands, that they may realize that we are actually working and laboring beside them, though many thousands of miles intervene.

COLOSSIANS 4:12

BEAUTIFUL EPITAPH

This is a very beautiful epitaph on a good man's life. Amid all the crowding interests of Epaphras's visit to Rome, his heart was with his friends. He strove for them in prayer. It was no passing thought that he voiced; no light breathing of desire; no formal mention of their names. It seemed as though he were a wrestler, whose muscles strained as he agonized for the prize.

He labored. We shall never know, till we stand in the clear light of heaven, how much has been wrought in the world by prayer. Here, at least, there is mention of a man's labors. Probably the work on the results of which we are inclined to pride ourselves is due less to us than we suppose, and more to unrecognized fellow laborers. Let us be careful to mingle much intercession with all our prayers, especially on behalf of Christian workers, that they may realize we are actually working and laboring beside them. F. B. Meyer

COLOSSIANS 4:12-13

ZEALOUS FOR GOD

October 23, 2004

READ: 2 Kings 13:14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

We know little about Epaphras except that he was so concerned about the spiritual welfare of the people in Colosse that he is described as "laboring fervently . . . in prayers" for them (Colossians 4:12). When I was a pastor, I saw this kind of enthusiasm in the way new converts prayed and witnessed. But all too often, many of them gradually lost their zeal.

I believe it was King Joash's lack of enthusiasm that made Elisha so angry (2 Kings 13). The monarch had obeyed the dying

prophet's command to shoot an arrow toward the east. He had heard Elisha's promise that God would bring his nation complete deliverance from Syria. Joash had obeyed the command to strike the ground with a bundle of arrows, which he did three times. So why did the prophet angrily tell him he should have struck the ground five or six times?

I believe it was because he felt Joash was following his instructions in a half-hearted manner. The king should have been far more enthusiastic in his response to God's wonderful message of victory over Israel's enemies.

The king's nonchalance cost him dearly. He won an incomplete victory. I wonder how many spiritual victories we forfeit because of our lack of zeal. —Herbert Vander Lugt

Let us serve the Lord with gladness
And enthusiastic praise,
Telling all who do not know Him
Of His great and wondrous ways. —Sper

Godly zeal is love on fire.

COLOSSIANS 4:18

VICTORIOUS OVER LIMITATIONS

F B Meyer

AT THE close of his dictation, St. Patti took the stylus from the hand of his amanuensis, and appended his signature to the letter, which was awaiting that necessary endorsement. As he did so, he contrasted his irregular and clumsy writing with the flowing current-hand of his scribe, and in excuse, said pathetically, "Remember my bonds!" It was as though he said, "You cannot expect a man who for thrice years has had his wrist fettered by an iron chain to write as well as when he was a student at Gamaliel's feet!" He makes reference to the same subject in Gal6:11, where he speaks of the "large letters" which he had written with his own hand; but in this case it was caused by his failing eyesight rather than the iron fetter.

There are other bonds than iron chains which impose on us their straits and limitations. Many of us, as we review our work at the close of the day, are overwhelmed with the sense of failure. As we kneel before our Lord, we are constrained to say, "Alas, we have inscribed Thy Name on the hearts which lay open to us, as paper the hand, in very clumsy and unworthy style. Forgive us, and remember our bonds."

Let us accept our limitations as from the Will of God. There is no way to peace or power, save in accepting the Will of God, making no distinction between what He appoints or permits, but believing that in either we are in contact with the Eternal purpose for us. Paul never forgot that he was the prisoner of Jesus Christ. He believed that for every limitation on the earthward side there would be enlargement on the other and spiritual side. Weakness here, added strength there; the being hourly delivered unto the cross, and from the ground the blossoming of endless life.

Let us do all the good we can in spite of fetters. St. Paul could not continue his travels over the world, but there were many avenues of service open to him. He could pray, and he did (Col 1:3; Col 2:1; Col 4:12). He could influence others (Phil 1:11-14). He employed his leisure in writing the epistles that have been the perennial solace of sorrowful hearts. There is a door, nearer to you than you think, opening out of your prison, through which God will enable you to render helpful service for Him.

PRAYER - Our Father, we thank Thee Thou canst make no mistakes. We believe that all things are working together for our good, and we trust Thy guiding hand. AMEN. F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

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