

1. Introduction to the letter of Colossians

Background

Colosse was a city in the Roman province of Asia (Asia Minor) in what is now called Turkey. The letter to the Colossians, like the letter to the Romans, was written by the apostle Paul to a congregation which he had not established himself. As a result, most of them did not know Paul (Col 2:1). Although this was the case, Paul seemed to enjoy a close connection with the church. This is probably because Colosse was only 200km east of Ephesus, the capital city for the Roman province of Asia, where Paul laboured for three years (Acts 20:31). During this time, people from the entire province came to hear Paul, and those who worked with Paul as well as those who were converted by Paul's preaching carried the gospel of Jesus back to the entire area, as Acts 19:10 tells us (this would have included Colosse).

Introduction

Who actually brought the gospel to Colosse? (Col 1:6-8)

Epaphras was the one who brought the gospel to them. Paul and Epaphras were close fellow workers.

What do we know about Epaphras? (Col 1:7; 4:12-13)

He was a servant - Paul referred to him as "our dear fellow servant" and as a "servant of Christ Jesus". We also learn that he came from Colosse, and after hearing the gospel (possibly in Ephesus), he told his people about Jesus. We also read that he was a man of prayer, who was deeply concerned for the church at Colosse and for the churches in the nearby cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis.

What can we learn from Epaphras? [discuss]

We ought to be a servant too, like our Lord Jesus (cf. Mark 10:45) – it is the key to Christian ministry. We also should have a heart to share the gospel with "our own people" – to the people around us, like our relatives, work colleagues, friends and neighbours. As we do, we ought to be praying fervently, and have a real heart of concern for people. Are you like Epaphras? What areas could you grow in?

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter, and what may have prompted it? (Col 4:3, 12, 18)

Paul was in prison – probably in Rome. It appears that Paul may have written this letter after Epaphras had come to visit him. Indeed, Epaphras may have been a fellow prisoner with Paul (Philemon 23).

What do we learn from Col 4:7-9, 16?

Paul sent his co-worker Tychicus to carry his letter to the Colossians. We also note that he sent Onesimus with Tychicus back to his master Philemon, who was a member of the church of Colosse (remember that Onesimus had run away from Philemon, but Paul had the joy of leading him to Christ; cf. the letter of Philemon). Paul's letter was also a circular letter to be shared with other churches in the area; ie, Laodicea.

Read the letter of Colossians together

Reflection and Discussion

Why do you think Paul wrote this letter?

What key verses did you pick up on?

One of the key sections in the letter is Colossians 2:6-10. What do you think Paul wants the Colossians to realise? What was Paul trying to correct?

Paul sought to emphasise the pre-eminence of Christ and the completeness of Christ's work for us on the cross. We have no need for human philosophy or wisdom to complete us, nor man-made laws and rituals to perfect us (2:16), nor spiritual experiences to lift us (2:18). All we need to do is to remain in Christ and grow in Him, for in Christ is to be found everything.

Memory Verse: Colossians 2:10

"You have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority." (NIV)

Summary: Don't look elsewhere; don't look for something better; don't be deceived or distracted. We have all we need in Christ, for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells.

2. Faith in Christ (Col 1:1-14)

Memory Verse: Go over the memory verse – Col 2:10 (get a few to quote it from memory)

Revision: *Who brought the gospel to Colosse? What was he like? (1:7; 4:12-13)* Epaphras brought the gospel. He was a servant of Christ, who fervently prayed, and had a deep concern for Christ's church.

What is one of the main purposes of Colossians? (2:6-10) Paul wanted to encourage the Colossians to not look elsewhere or move on to something else, but to see that in Christ we are complete.

Read: Colossians 1:1-14

Thanks for Faith and Love

In his greeting (1:1-2), how does Paul describe the Christians at Colosse? [discuss]

He describes them as "holy", "faithful", and "in Christ". Christians are to be holy – living a life "set apart" for Christ; they are to be faithful – constantly exercising faith in Christ; they are "in Christ", for through faith in Him they are part of "His body" (1:24) and His kingdom (1:13). Christians are all about Christ.

Even though Paul had never met the Colossians (2:1), what does he thank God for? (1:3-4)

He thanks God for their faith in Christ, and their love for fellow believers. The only faith that counts is faith in Christ, and it will always show itself through love for other believers (cf. John 13:34-35).

What causes us to have faith in Christ and to have love for fellow believers? (1:5-6)

It comes from hearing the gospel, then understanding the gospel and the hope that is in it (ie, through Christ, forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, eternal life), and then rightly responding to it.

What phrases does Paul use to describe the gospel in 1:5-6?

Paul describes the gospel as being the "word of truth" (1:5), and the "grace of God" (1:6).

How do these phrases relate to Jesus, since the gospel is all about Jesus?

The "word of truth" is all about Jesus (cf. Luke 24:27); indeed, He is the truth (John 14:6). The "grace of God" comes to us through Jesus (John 1:17); the one and only who is full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

As the gospel is shared and people respond to it, what is it doing? (1:6)

It is bearing fruit and growing. The gospel is not some static knowledge. It is dynamic and life-changing. It is the power of God to salvation (Rom 1:16), and it is life transforming. It grows, both in our life, and also in the life of others as we pass it on - like Epaphras did for his people at Colosse (1:7).

Prayer for the Faithful

Besides thanking God for the Colossians, Paul also told them his prayer for them (in 1:9-14).

What did he specifically pray for? (1:9-11)

Paul prayed that they might know God's will and be strengthened with God's power.

Besides asking God that we might know His will, how can we practically discover it?

There is nothing mysterious about God's will. We can discover it by reading God's word. As we read the Bible with the help of the Spirit, we will be given spiritual wisdom and understanding to know it.

What's so important about knowing God's will? (1:10)

Only by God's will can we live worthily for the Lord, please Him, bear fruit for Him, and know Him.

What's so important about being strengthened by God's power? (1:11)

It enables us to endure, to be patient, and to thank God, no matter the circumstances (cf. Acts 16:25).

What things are we to thank God for (with joy) according to 1:12-14?

- God our Father has qualified us, through Christ, to have a glorious inheritance (salvation)
- God our Father has rescued us from Satan's kingdom and has brought us into Christ's kingdom
- Christ has redeemed (delivered) us from sin and Satan and has brought us into His kingdom.
- Christ has forgiven us of our sins through His death so that we can be qualified for our inheritance.

Reflection: *What characterises your life? Faith? Love? Prayer? Thanksgiving?*

How much time do you spend in prayer for believers? What kind of requests do you make?

Consider what God has done for you in Christ. Are you thankful? Does it show?

Memory Verse: Colossians 2:9

"For in Christ all the fullness of the deity dwells in bodily form." (NIV)

Summary: **Grow in your faith in Christ, in your love for God's people, in your prayer for fellow believers, and in thankfulness to God for what He has done for you in Christ.**

3. Supremacy of Christ (Col 1:15-29)

Memory Verse: Go over the memory verses – Col 2:9-10 (get a few to quote it from memory)

Revision: *When we hear and rightly respond to the gospel, what two things become evident, which we thank God for? (1:3-4)* We should have FAITH in Christ, and LOVE for fellow believers.

In Col 1:9-11, what two things does Paul pray for in regard to the believers at Colosse? Why? He prayed they might know God's will, in order to live worthy lives that please the Lord. He also prayed for them to be strengthened by God's power so that they might endure. Let's pray this for each other.

What does Paul thank God for, with great joy? (1:11b-14) He thanks God for the riches of our inheritance, our rescue from Satan's kingdom, and our redemption; all accomplished through Christ.

Read: Colossians 1:15-29

His Person (Col 1:15-18)

After mentioning what God has done for us in Christ, Paul then goes on to declare glorious and towering truths in regard to the person of Christ. Who is Jesus? What do we learn in 1:13-18?

- 1:13 - He is the Son of God, and is loved by the Father
- 1:15a - He is the very image (precisely) of the invisible God the Father (cf. Heb 1:3)
- 1:15b - He is first over all creation (the word "firstborn" here doesn't mean first in birth order, but first in rank; cf. David being called the firstborn when he was the youngest in the family – Ps 89:27)
- 1:16 - He is the Creator of all things (cf. John 1:3, Heb 1:3), and all things were created for Him
- 1:17a - He existed before anything; elsewhere, He is declared to be eternal (cf. Mic 5:2, Rev 22:12-16)
- 1:17b - He sustains and holds the whole universe together by His powerful word (cf. Heb 1:3)
- 1:18a - He is the head of the church
- 1:18b - He is the first one to have been raised from the dead and to live forevermore

What are we meant to conclude when we consider who Jesus is? (1:18b)

Jesus is to have the supremacy (first place) in everything – in our lives, our families, our church; and even in our world, for it was all made through Him and for Him. He is the rightful King.

Consider also Col 1:19 and 2:9. Who else is Jesus?

Jesus is not only the King, but He is God. Even on earth He was God – His name Emmanuel means "God with us". God fully dwelt in Him, and He bears the full character of God (cf. John 1:1; 14:8-11).

His Work (Col 1:19-23)

Not only does Paul highlight the true person of Christ, but also what He has done for us.

According to Col 1:19-23, what has Christ done for us (or, what is the "work of Christ")?

- Through the blood of His cross, Christ has reconciled us to the Father – we are at peace with God
- Through His death on the cross, Christ has made us holy, blameless and beyond reproach before God

How are we expected to view Jesus in relation to what other religious leaders have done?

Jesus is supreme: only His death has reconciled us to God and rescued us from Satan and sin (1:13-14).

Despite the enormity of Christ's sacrifice for us, what must we do to benefit from His death? (1:23)

We must have faith in Christ (in who He is and what he has done for us), and not only that, but we must continue in faith. Note the emphasis of "continue". What does that imply? [discuss and cf. Matt 24:11-13]

His Gospel (Col 1:24-29)

What is the gospel that Paul was made a minister of, and which he suffered for? (1:23-24)

The gospel is the message of who Christ is (1:15-18), and what Christ has done for us (1:19-23).

What else do we learn about the gospel in 1:25-27?

It is the word of God (1:25b), the mystery of God (1:26), it reaches to all people (even Gentiles), and it proclaims the "hope of glory"; which is "Christ in you" (ie, when we trust in Jesus, He lives in us).

What should be our purpose in proclaiming the gospel? (1:28-29)

It is to present every person perfect in Christ; ie, it is to see people saved and sanctified through Christ.

Memory Verse: Colossians 1:13-14

"For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (NIV)

Summary: Christ is supreme – He is King, and He is the only One who can rescue us from sin.

4. Complete in Christ (Col 2:1-19)

Memory Verse: Go over the memory verses – Col 1:13-14 (get a few to quote it from memory)

Revision: *In light of who Jesus is (Col 1:15-18), what place should He occupy?*

Jesus is to have first place in everything, because all things have been made through Him and for Him.

What two things have been done for us in Christ, according to Col 1:19 and 1:22? We have been reconciled to the Father, and made holy, blameless and beyond reproach before Him through the cross.

What does Paul urge us to do in order to benefit from Jesus' death in Col 1:23? We must not only trust in Jesus, but also continue in the faith, and not be moved from the hope of the gospel.

Read: Colossians 2:1-19

What riches or wealth of understanding does Paul want Christians to have in 2:1-3?

He wants us to understand the mystery of God, which is Christ, and to realise that everything we need for the Christian life is found in Christ. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

What danger does Paul warn about in v4?

We are not to be deceived into thinking we need something more than Jesus or are missing out on something apart from Jesus. He is both supreme and sufficient (Eph 1:3). *In what ways can be tempted to think we are missing out on something? <discuss>*

Verses 6-10 form the heart of the letter. According to vv6-7, how are we to proceed in the normal Christian life? <discuss> Just as we received Christ Jesus as Lord, we are to continue to live with Christ Jesus as Lord and grow in Him. Just like a tree grows from its roots, and a building rises from its foundation, so we are to grow in Jesus and never move away from Him (1 Cor 3:10-11). Instead of looking for something new, we are to hold onto the gospel which we have been taught.

What danger is Paul concerned about in v8?

He is concerned that Christians might wander off and be kidnapped by deceptive philosophies. How? By thinking there is something more to Christianity than receiving Jesus as Lord and growing in Him.

Besides affirming the deity of Christ in vv9-10, what point is Paul making?

Since Jesus is the fullness of God, and believers are in Him, then we have all the fullness human beings can ever possess! There is no next step, or set of rules or practices to follow to have a higher, fuller, deeper knowledge of God. Everything we need is in Christ.

In Paul's time, some taught that, in addition to Jesus, adherence to OT laws like circumcision was required to be a true member of God's people. What does Paul say about this in vv11-12?

We have already been circumcised in Christ – not the removal of skin, but the putting off of the sinful nature. We don't need some external marker to be true members of God's people. Faith in Christ is sufficient (Gal 3:26-29). *What "external" markers do people try to insist on today? <discuss>*

According to vv13-15, what has God done for us in Christ through the cross? <discuss>

We were dead in our sins, but God made us alive in Christ. We have been forgiven, our certificate of debt has been cancelled and the powers and authorities have been disarmed and defeated by Christ.

What does Paul say about those who add "do's" and "don't" to Christ in vv16-17?

Placing restrictions on what Christians can eat or drink, or treating some days as more holy, might give the appearance of religiosity, but such things are empty and useless in drawing us closer to God (Mark 7:15, 1 Tim 4:1-5, Col 2:20-23). Don't chase the shadows, but cling to the reality, found in Christ. *What sort of rules do people place upon Christians today that were not required by Jesus? <discuss>*

What danger does Paul warn about in v18?

Paul warns about the danger of seeking visionary or spiritual experiences of God apart from or beyond Christ, including worship of angels and other powers. Don't be lured by the promise of a deeper, fuller spirituality based on visions, special worship or other experiences. You are complete in Christ!

What is the problem when we seek something more from mystical experiences (v19)?

We have lost connection with our Head, who is Christ. Everything we need is in Him (John 15:4-5).

Memory Verse: Colossians 2:6-7

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." (NIV)

Summary: Don't be deceived - Christ is supreme and sufficient, and you are complete in Him.

5. A New Person in Christ (Col 2:20-3:11)

Memory Verse: Go over the memory verses – Col 2:6-7 (get a few to quote it from memory)

Revision: *According to 2:6-7, how are we to proceed in the normal Christian life?*

Just as we received Christ Jesus as Lord, we are to continue to live with Him as Lord and grow in Him.

According to 2:9-10, how can we be sure that we don't need anything more than Jesus to experience the fullest possible relationship with God? Since Jesus is the fullness of God, if we are in Christ, we have all the fullness human beings can ever possess! Everything we need is found in Christ.

What is the problem with adding rules to Jesus, or seeking spiritual experiences apart from Jesus? We are being deceived (v8), chasing shadows (v17) and have lost connection with our Head (v19).

Read: Colossians 2:20-3:11

False Spirituality (2:20-23)

What is the problem with submitting to religious rules like "Do not handle, taste or touch" in order to achieve a higher, fuller, deeper relationship with God (vv20-22)?

They are worldly (v20), based on human commands and teaching (v22) and just empty and deceptive philosophy (v8). We have died to such things – we are now to live with Christ Jesus as Lord (v6).

What does Paul say in v23 about seeking a deeper and more vibrant spiritual life through experiences like exotic worship, religious rules or harsh physical discipline?

These practices might appear religious, but are of no spiritual value. They don't bring a deeper experience of God, because they fail to deal with our real problem – our sinful nature (cf Mark 7:17-23).

True Spirituality (3:1-11)

In Col 3:1-4, Paul makes some important statements about our position before God as believers in Christ. What things are already true of us (vv1 & 3)?

We have died to our old life, been raised to new life in Christ, and our life is now hidden with Christ in God (Eph 2:1-7). In other words, we have been united to Christ.

What things are still to happen to us in the future? (v4)

When Christ appears, we will appear with Him in glory. We have a great hope (1 John 3:2).

In light of our present position and our future hope, what does Paul call us to do in vv1-2?

We must set our hearts and minds on things above, not on earthly things. Our life should reflect what we already are (Phil 3:20). Where is your mind fixed? What is the longing & focus of your life? <Discuss>.

Christ not only gives us new life – He is our life (v4). Read Phil 1:21. Can you say, "For me to live is Christ..."? Is this evident in your daily life? How? <discuss>

Since we have already been united with Christ by faith, what does Paul urge us to do in v5?

We must put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature, because these are inconsistent with our new life in Christ. This is where the struggle for true spirituality lies – not in abstaining from food or treating the body harshly, but putting to death our sinful nature (Rom 6:5-7, 6:11-14; Gal 5:16-17, 5:24-25). We are to live with Jesus as Lord (Col 2:6-7), not our sinful nature or the principles of this world ruling us.

How difficult do you find it to "kill" some of the things mentioned in v5? <share together>

What reasons does Paul give in vv6-7 for putting to death the things of our sinful nature?

The wrath of God is coming on such things, and we have been saved from God's wrath and a life ruled by sin and dead in sin. Our life must reflect what we now are, not what we once were (Rom 8:9-13).

What other things does Paul exhort us to get rid of in vv8-9?

Anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language, lying and such things as these. *What thoughts, attitudes or behaviours do you need to work on? Is there something in particular you need to get rid of? <discuss>*

According to vv9-10, why must we get rid of these things? <discuss>

We must get rid of these things because they belong to our old self, which died with Christ. There is no place for them in our new self. We are being transformed into the image of Christ (Rom 8:28-29). True spirituality involves putting to death whatever betrays our union with Jesus and our new self.

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:2-3

"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." (NIV)

Summary: You are a new person in Christ and being transformed into His image – so live like it.

6. A New Life in Christ (Col 3:12-4:1)

Memory Verse: Go over the memory verses – Col 3:2-3 (get a few to quote it from memory)

Revision: *What may appear spiritual, but is actually a false spirituality (Col 3:20-23)?*

Following rules that forbid this or that may appear spiritual, but such outward conformity to man-made rules is false spirituality – it doesn't impress God, it doesn't clean us of sin, or curb our sinful desires.

Rather than setting our mind on man-made laws, what should we do (Col 3:1-4)?

We should be setting our heart and mind above - on Christ. Only in Him is there true spirituality.

As we do that, what should we be seeking to do here on earth? (Col 3:5-11)

We should be seeking to be a new person which is consistent with our identification with Christ – that means putting to death our sinful nature, and putting on Christ's new nature – this is true spirituality.

Read: Colossians 3:5-4:1

"Put on" New Behaviour (3:12-17)

In 3:5-8, Paul gives a list of sinful behaviour. Where does it come from? (cf. Mark 7:20-23).

It comes from within. We are not inherently good, as philosophy would teach us. We have been born with a sinful nature. As a Christian, this is what we need to constantly put to death by the Spirit (Rom 8:13).

But besides daily putting to death our old sinful nature, what else are we to do? (3:12-14)

We are to clothe ourselves with (put on) godly virtues – the very nature of Christ. This new way of behaving comes through the work of God's Spirit in our life (cf. Gal 5:22-23).

What should motivate us to put in the effort of putting off the old and putting on the new? (3:12)

In the light of how God chose to save us, and to make us clean through Christ, and because of His great love for us, we should want to put on the new; it's not because of law and commandment, but because of grace and love. (for eg, cf. Rom 12:1 – it is the mercy of God that should cause us to be a living sacrifice).

One quality, seen in Jesus, is highlighted in v.13. What is it? Why should we be like this?

We are to be forgiving, because we have been forgiven much through Christ. Jesus even taught that if we don't forgive each other, God won't forgive us (Matt 6:14-15). *Do you have anything against another?*

What is the overarching characteristic that is behind this godly behaviour in Christ? (3:14)

It is love - love for each other (cf. Matt 5:44; Matt 22:39; John 13:34-35). God is love, and we are to love.

In 3:15-17, Paul highlights three essential instructions for believers. What are they? [discuss]

- We are to let peace (God's peace) rule our heart – not strife. This enables oneness in Christ's church.
 - We are to let Christ's word dwell in us richly – that means reading God's word and living out those words; it means coming under God's word so that it teaches, admonishes and gives us godly wisdom.
 - We're to do everything in the name of Jesus, and through Him, to have a heart of thanks to God.
- So, peace, truth and thanksgiving should mark our lives – it is part of the new way we are to live.

In 3:16 we read of singing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs". How should we do that?

According to the context, we should sing songs that reflect God's word dwelling richly in us; ie, we are to sing about God's truth so that these songs teach and admonish us. We are also to sing with gratitude.

"Put on" New Relationships (3:18-4:1)

In this next section, Paul wants to urge believers to "put on" new relationships; ie, our relationships are to change as we follow Christ. In 3:18-4:1 what do we learn for different ones?

Wives: they are to submit to their husbands; ie, respect and honour them – not usurp them.

Husbands: they are to love their wives – gently, not harshly.

Children: they are to obey their parents – in everything; without disrespect and grumbling.

Fathers: they are not to embitter or irritate their children through poor parenting, and so discourage them.

Slaves (employees): they are to obey their masters in everything; even when the boss isn't looking.

Masters (bosses): they are to be just, right and fair in looking after their slaves (employees)

Consider the references to the Lord in 3:18-4:1. In all our roles/relationships how are we to live?

We are to live by pleasing the Lord, for it is the Lord Christ whom we are to serve. This is what our new life in Christ is all about. One day, Jesus will reward us if we faithfully follow Him and obey His word.

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:13

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (NIV)

Summary: We have a new life in Christ, and we are to daily put off the old and put on the new.

7. Declare Christ to the World (Col 4:2-18)

Memory Verse: Go over the memory verses – Col 3:13 (get a few to quote it from memory)

Revision: *What are we to daily "put off" and "put on", with the help of God's Spirit (3:5-14)?*

We are to put off (put to death) our sinful nature, and put on (clothe ourselves) with Christ's character.

In 3:15-17, what three things should be happening in our regenerated heart?

We should let Christ's peace rule our heart, we should allow Christ's word to dwell richly in our heart, and through Christ, we should have gratitude to God springing from our heart.

In all our various roles/relationships what should be the over-riding truth? (3:23-24)

We serve the Lord Christ – whether we be a wife, husband, child, employee, or employer.

Read: Colossians 4:2-18

Be in Prayer (4:2-4)

As Paul ends his letter, what does he command the Colossians to do? (4:2-4) Why?

He commands them to pray – they were to be devoted (persist) in prayer. Prayer is something we must not neglect, as it is so important. Yet it can happen, especially as we live in this world, where we have the danger of living by sight rather than by faith. Consider what Jesus taught us in Luke 18:1-8.

In prayer, we are to be "watchful and thankful" – watchful for what and thankful for what?

In the light of the previous chapter, we are to "watch" that we are not getting caught up with earthly things (3:2), and that we are not allowing our earthly nature to rule us (3:5). Pray if we see ourselves drifting into worldliness. We are also to be thankful for what God has done for us in Christ and the new life we have.

In 4:12-13, we have the example of Epaphras, who was the first one who brought the gospel to Colosse. What do we learn from him in regard to prayer?

Epaphras was always praying, and even wrestling (labouring earnestly) in prayer. Prayer was hard work, as he wrestled for the Colossians that they might stand firm in God's will.. Also, prayer is not just bringing to God our personal requests, but praying for others; especially for fellow believers (cf. 1:9-12).

In 4:3-4 Paul encourages them to pray for him. What were they to particularly pray for?

They were to pray for Paul to have opportunity to declare the gospel, and for Paul to proclaim the gospel clearly. Such prayer is much needed as we minister the gospel – we need opportunity and clarity.

Be Wise (4:5-6)

In 4:5, Paul gives another important command as we live in this world. What is it?

We are to be wise in the way we live, and especially in regard to outsiders (ie, unbelievers).

In what context are we to be wise? Is it to do with money or investment, or the way we parent, etc?

We are to be wise in the way we live in regard to being a witness for Christ; that's what he means when he says "making the most of every opportunity". Since the primary purpose of our life is to be a witness for Christ, we are to be especially wise when it comes to this.

What ways can we be wise as we share the Lord with others?

We can be wise in many ways – not doing things that would cause us to be a stumbling block to others; not being worldly but living our new life in Christ in order to shine Christ; being clear about what the gospel is, and declaring it clearly to others, etc.

In 4:6 Paul has some instructions on "your conversation". What is the context of this instruction, and how should we speak?

Paul is still thinking of how we should behave wisely toward outsiders, and especially in the context of evangelism. As we converse with outsiders, we are not to be rough or rude. Instead, we are to be gracious, both in our words and our response. Grace is what causes our conversations to be "seasoned with salt"; ie, flavoured and made attractive. Cf. 1 Pet 3:15 – we are to share with gentleness and respect.

Be in partnership (4:7-18)

Read 4:7-18. Paul lists a whole lot of people. What is common for them all?

They are all in partnership with the gospel, doing their bit to declare Christ to the world. May we too be doing our bit, together with fellow believers, in declaring the supremacy of Christ and new life in Christ.

Memory Verse: Colossians 4:5-6

"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." (NIV)

Summary: Declare Christ to the world: be in prayer for this; speak and act wisely as His witnesses.