

****NOTE: this week's manuscript is a brief outline. Dan was planning to preach, but became sick over the weekend, so Emerson filled in last minute (thanks, Emerson!). Please see the video recording of this week's message for full content.**

Intro Colossians series. Last week of it. And today we're in Colossians 4:2-18. And talking about **MISSION**.

ILLUS: One example = Going to Japan and hearing why those missionaries go: "They need God"

And time and time again the theme that God has been impressing upon me is **MISSION**.

But...despite all that I still feel like I fall short. And I feel like it's hard.

ILLUS: Tinker Street restaurant, tattooed waitress, shared about lack of belief, and I couldn't think of anything good to say! It made me feel like a failure!

That really broke my heart afterwards thinking about it. So, I prayed and asked God for forgiveness and have prayed for that girl.

Mission isn't easy: for reasons both personal (fear perhaps) but also cultural.

ILLUS: Recently, our staff got some training from a guy named Trevin Wax from the North American Mission Board, one of the largest mission organizations in the world, and he discussed how today it feels like...

- The Church is in crisis**
- We're in a spiritual battle**
- The gospel is opposed**
- The gospel is challenged**
- The gospel is a fragile vase**
- We are weak and frail**

But here's what I've realized: There is a conspiracy. A conspiracy by the forces of darkness that are out there trying to rob you and me of any and every ounce of **missional intent** we might have.

So my question: **How do we live into our missional "sent-ness" that Jesus has for us despite the personal and cultural barriers that accost us??**

And it's with this that I think Paul has three things for us: **(1) Missional Prayer; (2) Missional Interactions; and (3) Missional Relationships.**

1. MISSIONAL PRAYER

Colossians 4:2-4, "2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should."

ILLUS: Israel is taken into captivity; Daniel **PRAYS 3x A DAY**; thrown into den of lions; saved.

ILLUS: In the NT, scene where man comes to Jesus with his SON having seizures, falling into fire or water, and he had been brought to the disciples, but this time the healing was to no avail. And what does Jesus say? **THIS KIND CAN ONLY COME OUT THROUGH PRAYER AND FASTING.**

If I were to sum this point up and wrap it in a bow, I'd say this: We need the power of God poured through us in prayer if we want to be a missional people. You cannot save your kids from corruption in your own strength. You cannot keep them unstained from the world. You cannot architect renewal in your neighborhood, your workplace. You cannot fashion your own vehicle to transformation into Christ's image.

Look at what Paul says:

- “Devote yourselves to prayer”**
- “Pray for us”**
- “Pray for an open door for our message”**
- “Pray that I may proclaim it clearly”**

As Jesus said, there are some things in life that only **COME OUT THROUGH PRAYER AND FASTING.**

So, are you praying? Who are you praying for? Are you operating in your own power or in the power of God? How much of your missional fear is birthed perhaps out of prayerlessness? What would it look like to bend down and PRAY?

1. **MISSIONAL PRAYER**
2. **MISSIONAL INTERACTIONS**

ILLUS: Redemptive Edge from Jon Tyson

- COMFORT** - we love comfort; you think “this feels nice, this is working for me”; people like that you’re spiritual.
- CAUTION** - people say, “oohh...I see you’re taking your faith a little seriously”; the tone changes; “I see you started going to every week.”
- CONCERN** - “Hey. Are you good???” Is that a cult? I feel like you’re becoming a little unbalanced
- CRITICISM** - I’m now attacking the way you’re following Jesus; MY comfort zone feels threatened or it seems too intense for me.
- DARKNESS** - people are like, “They’re lost. They’re off their rocker.” And people are SO nervous here.
- BUT...This space between CRITICISM and DARKNESS, we call the **REDEMPTIVE EDGE**
 - The place where heaven and hell are at WAR for the outcome
 - In individual heart or world as a whole
 - This is the point of contact between light and darkness
 - The place where Jesus did his ministry!
 - Criticism:
 - Jesus eats with sinners
 - Jesus gives women positions of ministry influence
 - Jesus heals on Sabbath (man w/ withered hand)
 - Darkness
 - Jesus goes to Samaria
 - Jesus goes to the demoniac; no house; lived in tombs; demon-possessed; in chains
 - Jesus goes to the Decapolis; known for paganism and partying

Two questions on this: (1) Where do you think Jesus lived?? (2) Where do you think Jesus wants to take you to?

“The deepest motive for mission is simply the desire to be with Jesus where he is, on the frontier between the reign of God and the usurped dominion of the devil.” -Lesslie Newbigin

Look, here’s all I’m trying to convey: Jesus is calling you and me to missional interactions. Or, as Paul says, HEY, remember...**Colossians 4:5-6, “5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”**

Paul says...

- “Be wise”** = be discerning
- “Make the most”** = be intentional
- “Let your conversation be always full of grace”** = be kind
- “Seasoned with salt”** = be an enhancer (*seasoned* with salt, NOT doused with salt, not bland either)

When it comes to missional interactions, I think a lot of times we leave it to the Church, to the program, to the system, to the strategy. But that’s not the call of God on your life. The Kingdom of darkness would love nothing more than for you to vacate your spiritual responsibility of living missionally.

In the end there are no missional programs, ONLY missional people.

So, where are you on the continuum? Where do you think Jesus is living today on that continuum? Are you bold enough to join him? Do you have the courage to live on the redemptive edge?

That's the location of our call.

1. **MISSIONAL PRAYER**
2. **MISSIONAL INTERACTIONS**
3. **MISSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Colossians 4:7-14, "7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 9 He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. 10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) 11 Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. 13 I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. 14 Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings."

Let me just list off these people for you because this reads like these people's spiritual resumé:

- Tychicus** = a dear brother, faithful minister, fellow servant, being sent to encourage hearts
- Onesimus** = dear, faithful brother functioning as messenger
- Aristarchus, Mark, & Justus** = co-workers for the kingdom of God, a comfort
- Epaphras** = servant of Christ Jesus; wrestling in prayer for you; working hard for you
- Luke + Demas** = fellow gospels senders sending greetings

And I feel like I have to ask: How often in life do we worry about padding our vocational resumé without any attention given to our spiritual ones? Like if your friend was an ancient church planter, minister and he's writing a letter to encourage a church he's fond of...what would he say about you?

- Joe** says "Hi." He just got the Anthony Richardson Colts jersey and wants you to know you're invited to his Fantasy Football league.
- Sheryl** says hey too. She wants you to know she made it to church once this month and that you should keep up the good work.
- Are we content with that?

No! What kind of relationships are we cultivating here? What kind of vision do you have for your life where the horizon of missional involvement is 1x a month church attendance and Fantasy Football invitations.

No, I think God has more for us.

VIDEO of Rick and Julie May.

CONCLUSION

Trevin Wax continued and said it's a bit paradoxical because...

- The Church is in crisis, yet stable**
- We're in a spiritual battle, yet the outcome is secure**
- The gospel is opposed, yet advancing**
- The gospel is challenged, but it always challenges the world and the evil one**
- The gospel is not a fragile vase; it's more like a bulldozer**
- We are weak and frail, but the strong gospel empowers us**

I'm not sure if you realize this, but you and I live in the suburbs. And we actually get critiqued. You realize that. Some people can be really cynical about suburban living and suburban churches. (And not always without warrant!). You know what the critique is? That we're too comfortable. That we're escapists. That we only concern ourselves with happy little programs, as we look for positive emotional reinforcement, that is low on obedience and missional living. And, for some churches that's true. Some churches are more like country clubs than missional communities.

And here's what I'll say to that: Not this church.

We have a legacy of mission.
We have a heart for mission.
We will pray for mission.
We will be missional.

Here's my hope: That we bring people to know the Lord Jesus; That we call people to obedience and surrender to the Lord Jesus; That we get ourselves uncomfortable to help the broken and needy; That we roll-up the sleeves and love the unlovable; That we send people out to plant churches where there's a spiritual vacancy; That we'd send missionaries out to cultivate gospel fruit around the world; That our neighbors know that The Creek is a holy huddle, a community offering the welcoming embrace of Jesus Christ; That we won't just go to the nations, but we'll welcome the nations who are coming to us.

That's who we'll be. But to get there, we'll need:

1. **MISSIONAL PRAYER**
2. **MISSIONAL INTERACTIONS**
3. **MISSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

PRAY / PORCH / PRAYER / COMMUNION / OFFERING