



Growth Group Questions
November 10, 2024
“Gracious”

Context:

Colossians, along with Ephesians, Philemon and Philippians, is considered one of the Prison Epistles and was more than likely written while Paul was imprisoned in Rome. Colossae had once been a prominent city, but after the Romans began to rule the road system was changed and Laodicea became the more prominent city. Hierapolis, Laodicea and Colossae formed a triangle of cities.

The church was probably founded during Paul’s third missionary journey when he was in Ephesus. A man named Epaphras (Colossians 1:3-8) had visited with Paul and became a believer and returned home. This was around 53-55 AD. Now, seven to ten years later Paul writes this letter from Rome and Epaphras is with him.

After spending a couple of verses on prayer, Paul calls the believers to live wisely because the people in their community needed examples of Godly wisdom. A wise person’s “words and language” will be filled with grace and seasoned with salt. As Paul writes this, he is thinking about how people speak with those outside the faith community. Are believers seeking out ways to build others up? Were the Colossians making sure that their language and actions were not a stumbling block to the outside world?

Paul says you need to show wisdom by seasoning your conversations with salt. Their words needed to show forth the winsomeness of the faith. It is implied that if we want to make sure our speech about God is not bland, then we need to get close to Jesus, so that God’s word can help “season” our lives.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:13) Jesus had shared that his followers were the salt of the earth and their task was to preserve enhance his message of good news. Paul uses this same image in challenging the early church to “season” their words with “salt” as they shared the message of Christ.



Scripture:

Colossians 4:2-6

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. 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.

Matthew 7:1-6

7 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. 3 “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. 6 “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces.

“Contempt is the unsullied conviction of the worthlessness of another.” - Arthur Schopenhauer, Counsels and Maxims, Volume 2

Ephesians 4:29

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

1 Peter 3:13-16

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats[a]; do not be frightened.”[b] 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.



Questions:

1. In this week's sermon, Pastor Paul spoke of how we are to live gracious lives. What does it mean to live a gracious life? What does it look like?
2. What Bible verses help you to understand what Jesus meant when He said that we should let our conversations "be always full of grace and seasoned with salt"?
3. Pastor Paul said that "graciousness grows in the soil of God's grace"? What does that mean to you?
4. What does it mean to be "tone deaf" to the people around us, and how does that impact our ability to lead a gracious life?
5. What does it mean in Matthew 7:1 when Jesus says: "Do not judge . . ." ? Does that mean we are never to judge the actions of others?
6. Restate Matthew 7:1-5 in your own words to interpret what you believe Jesus was saying.
7. Pastor Paul cautioned us against living a life marked by a critical spirit. What is a critical spirit?
8. What strategies can we use to combat the development of a critical spirit within ourselves?
9. In 1 Peter 3:15, we are told to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." What does that mean to you?
10. What can you do to become more gracious in your dealings with others?

Sermon Questions:

1. Is there a "plank" in your eye that is distorting how you "see and interact" with others?
2. Where do you need to be more gracious this week?

