Praying Like This 7.5.09

[2] Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. [3] 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- [4] that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. Colossians 4:2-4 ESV

Overview of the Text: At the end of the letter, Paul is offering some further or final instructions to his hearers. The first command (*"continue steadfastly in prayer"*) has two directives ("*watchfulness"* and *"thankfulness."*) The second command is for more opportunities to clearly proclaim the Gospel.

"Continue steadfastly in prayer" To be consistently, persistently devoted to prayer.
Could this be said of my current practice of prayer?

"being watchful in it" "staying awake" in prayer, keeping alert; "eyes open" prayer.
Are my eyes open to the prayer needs around me?

"with thanksgiving." "Communion." Having an "attitude of gratitude" in our prayers.
Does my prayer life include praise and thanks or is it mostly simply telling God what I need?

Practical Steps in the Right Direction:

1. Steadfastness:
    a. Adjust your perspective (1 Thess. 5:18).
        i. Prayer is not limited to the folding hands and closing eyes.
    b. Start where you are.
        i. Jesus will work with what you have. Think loaves and fishes.
    c. Plan for success.
        i. You need a plan and some people to help you.
2. Watchfulness:
    a. Begin by paying attention to what is going on around you.
    b. Slow down enough to actually see what is going on.
3. Thankfulness:
    a. Listen to your prayers. *Is there thanksgiving and praise or only requests?*
    b. Start with the Gospel. (Remember the word in this text.)
    c. Read the Psalms. This will give us a picture of the greatness of God.

"At the same time, pray also for us" Keep up the general prayers. Add some specifics.
Paul & his missionary friends we will meet in v. 7-18.

"that God may open to us a door for the word" To grant opportunity.
"to declare the mystery of Christ" Preach the Good News of the Gospel.
"on account of which I am in prison" His current status. Cost for preaching the Gospel.

Is it my habit to pray for opportunities for the Gospel to go out through others?
Is it my habit to pray for opportunities for the Gospel to go out through me?

"that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak." His desire to make the Gospel clearly known.

Am I communicating the Gospel? Is my communication of the Gospel clear?

How the Gospel Gets "Garbled:"

1. Other things get attached to it. (Jesus + anything else)
2. Our fear of man clouds the *whole* truth.
3. Our walk doesn't match our talk.

What am I doing that could garble/obscure the Gospel?

Applying the Gospel:

1. Pattern: Jesus never faltered in His watchfulness, thankfulness & steadfastness in prayer. He never faltered in His communication of the Good News.
2. Payment: Jesus died for our prayerlessness and failure to communicate.
3. Power: Jesus, through His Spirit empowers us to pray this way and clearly communicate his Message.

What is God calling you to change in regard to what you have heard today?

Are you looking to Jesus as your Perfect Pattern, Payment and Power for those changes?

Works Consulted: *Expositor's Commentary, NIV Application Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, ESV Study Bible, Previous sermon by Dustin Neeley*