

## **4:2 Steadfast in Prayer**

### **Watchfulness the Key.**

Chrysostom: Paul realizes that continuing in prayer can frequently produce restlessness. Therefore he writes, “watching,” that is, be sober, avoid wandering. For the devil knows, yes he knows, how great a good prayer is. Hence, he presses heavily on us as we pray. And Paul also knows how careless many are when they pray. Thus he says “continue” in prayer, as something that takes hard work, “watching therein with thanksgiving.” For let this, Paul says, be your work, to give thanks in your prayers both for the seen and the unseen, for his benefits to the willing and the unwilling, for the kingdom, for hell, for tribulation and for refreshment. This is how the saints normally pray, giving thanks for the benefits shared by all. Homilies on Colossians 10.1

### **The Watchfulness of Faith.**

Augustine: When the blessed apostle was reminding us of the importance of prayer, he also reminded us at the same time about being watchful: “Be persistent in prayer,” he said, “being watchful in it.” Impure love, brothers and sisters, compels those who are possessed by it to keep awake; the shameless person watches, in order to seduce; the evildoer, in order to harm; the drunkard, to drink; the bandit, to slay; the self-indulgent, to spend; the miser, to hoard; the thief, to steal; the robber, to smash and grab. How much more, therefore, love ought to remain awake in holy and harmless people, if iniquity can extort wakefulness from the criminal and the corrupt? Sermons 223j.2

## **4:3 And Pray for Us Also**

### **Paul, Human and a Sinner.**

Augustine: Schisms arise when men say, we are righteous; when they say, we sanctify the unclean, we justify the wicked, we ask, we obtain. But what did John say? “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”<sup>4</sup> You will say, but may not holy men ask on our behalf? May not bishops and rulers ask on behalf of the people? Look at the Scripture, and you will find rulers commending themselves to the people’s prayers. The apostle says to his people, “Praying also for us.” The apostle prays for the people and the people for the apostle. We pray for you, my brothers, but you should also pray for us. Let all the members pray for one another, and let the Head intercede for all. Homilies on 1 John 1.8.2.5

## ***4:5 Conduct Yourselves Wisely Toward Outsiders***

### **Wise as Serpents.**

Chrysostom: “Redeeming,” he says, “the time”: that is, the present time is short. Now Paul said this because he did not want them to be crafty, nor hypocrites (for this is not a part of wisdom, but of senselessness). What then? In matters where outsiders are not harming you, don’t give them an opportunity.... If you are going to experience conflict with the outside world, Paul writes, let the conflict have its origin in your preaching—and not in any other source. Homilies on Colossians 11.7

## ***4:6 Gracious Speech, Seasoned with Salt***

### **Requirements of the Effective Preacher.**

Chrysostom: Here, too, a man needs a loftiness of mind far beyond my own littleness of spirit, if he is to correct this disorderly and unprofitable delight that ordinary people enjoy. He must try to divert their attention to something more useful, so that church people will follow and defer to him. He should not be governed by their desires. It is impossible to acquire this power except by these two qualities: contempt of praise and the force of eloquence. If either is lacking, the one left is made useless by the divorce from the other. If a preacher despises praise yet does not produce the kind of teaching which is “with grace, seasoned with salt,” he is despised by the people, and his sublime words accomplish nothing. And if he is eloquent but is a slave to the sound of applause, again an equal damage threatens both him and the people, because through his passion for praise he aims to speak more for the pleasure than the profit of his hearers. On the Priesthood 5.2.10

### **Dependent upon Christ.**

Anonymous: An old man said to a brother: Do not measure your heart against your brother, saying that you are more serious or more continent or more understanding than he. But be obedient to the grace of God, in the spirit of poverty and in genuine love. The efforts of a man swollen with vanity are futile. It is written, “Let the one who thinks he stands be careful lest he fall.” 11 Be in your spirit seasoned with salt—and so dependent upon Christ. Sayings of the Fathers 15.55.12

## **4:7 *Tychicus a Messenger***

### **Paul's Strategy.**

Chrysostom: Admirable! How great is the wisdom of Paul! Observe, he does not put everything into his epistles, but only things necessary and urgent. In the first place, he doesn't want his letters to be unnecessarily long. Second, his messenger will be more respected if he too has something personal to relate. Third, in this way Paul demonstrates his affection for Tychicus; if he did not feel this way, he would not have entrusted him with the news of his affairs. In addition, there are some things that are best not mentioned in writing. Homilies on Colossians 11.13

## **4:9 *Onesimus, Faithful and Beloved***

### **The Letter to the Colossians Late?**

Chrysostom: Holy, indeed, are all Paul's letters. But those he writes behind bars are especially advantageous for the reader. Those include, for instance, the letters to the Ephesians and Philemon, that to Timothy, that to the Philippians and the one before us. For Colossians was written while Paul was imprisoned, since he writes in it: "for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak." But this epistle appears to have been written after that to the Romans. For he wrote to the Romans before he had seen them, but this letter later, near upon the close of his preaching. And it is evident from this that in the epistle to Philemon he says, "Being such a one as Paul the aged,"<sup>16</sup> and makes request for Onesimus. But in the Colossian letter Paul sends Onesimus himself, as he says, "With Onesimus the faithful and beloved brother." Homilies on Colossians 1.17

## **4:12–13 *Epaphras Has Worked Hard***

### **"Striving" in Prayer for You.**

Chrysostom: And he says, "always striving for you in prayers." He did not write simply "praying," but "striving," trembling and fearing. "For I bear him witness," Paul says, "that he has much zeal for you." Homilies on Colossians 12.18

## **4:18 Remember My Fetters**

### **The Christian Way.**

Chrysostom: Hear Paul's chains, and you will understand that to be in affliction is no proof of being forsaken. Would you wear silken robes? Remember Paul's chains, and these fine clothes will appear to you more worthless than the rags of a menstruating woman. Would you array yourself with gold trinkets? Listen in your mind to Paul's chains, and trinkets will seem to you no better than a withered bulrush... Would you daub yourself with pastes and pigments and similar things? Think of Paul's tears: for three years, night and day, he continued to weep.... What fountain will you compare to these tears? Homilies on Colossians 12.21