

The Book of Colossians

Theme:

"ALL YOU NEED IS CHRIST!"

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Date: 11-11-18

Lesson: 8

Text: Chapter 4:2-6



TEXT:

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.

5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. **6** Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

STUDY NOTES:

(vv. 2-4) 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.

-Prayer (**Lk 11:1-13; 18:1-8**)

-Open door for the Gospel (**Matt 7:7,8; Acts 14:27; 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 1:12; Rev 3:8,20**)

- the mystery of Christ (**Rom 11:25-36; 16:25; 1 Tim 3:16; Eph 1:9; 3:3-6; 1 Cor 15:51**)

(vv. 5,6) 5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

-Be wise (**Eph 5:15,16**) and Use every opportunity; Graceful talking (**Eph 4:29**)
and Salt (**Mt 5:13; Mk 9:50**)

-Giving an answer for your faith (**1 Pet 3:15**)

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. The mystery of Christ comes to us through the means of grace, because we cannot see Jesus with our eyes yet. So why does this make the divine service so essential and vital in the healthy life of a Christian?
2. Where are the open doors for our congregation to walk through here in Norman?
3. What are the ways in which we as Lutherans train ourselves to speak and answer others for Jesus?

“16. *The mystery.... We confess...In the flesh.* I call Christ the very reality of Christ—Christ in the spirit. To have Christ in the person is to have nothing. Rather, we must make use of Him. The Enthusiasts say: “Christ is on the cross. Therefore He is not visible in the Sacrament, in Baptism, in the Word.” That is an ignorance of Christ; it is to not know how to use Christ. To have merely the fact of Christ is to speak metaphysically of Christ, as I say about Him that He has flesh and hair. Rather, the function for which He died is remission of sins. The use for which He baptized is in the sacrament—for the forgiveness of your sins. The thief would not have had the remission of sins had he not come to the Word “today” (Luke 23:43).

Just to look at Christ accomplishes nothing. The Word is added in the Sacrament, and through it His Passion becomes spiritual and is poured into our hearts, etc. But Christ once believed must still be believed, that is, with the reality His use in spirit. I don't want the Christ the Enthusiasts have. They have the sort of Christ that makes them hold the Gospel and the sacraments in contempt as symbols. They keep this for themselves that Christ suffered on the cross, but this they must believe happened in spirit.

Where do they get this foolish notion from? Through the Word? They want to oppose others. Christ is among them not in His work and energy. **This mystery has been revealed through the Word.** Yet He is not palpable. We do not see him. None of our senses catch Him; and yet we must believe. Therefore **this is a mystery.** There is nothing more hidden; there is nothing more apparent. If I must apprehend this, it is indeed obscure, and yet Christ is more apparent than the sun.

Here we have some clear contradictions. It is “great” through its publication, through the Word, through signs and miracles. Nothing has been more hidden through its comprehension. After all, human wisdom does not grasp it, the flesh flees from it, and reason abhors it. Let them wrestle with it; that will give them something to study so that they may forget the other uselessnesses.

I call Christ a mystery in fact, work, or spirit. I do not do this as the Enthusiasts do. They call Christ a mystery in spirit, so that a person can perceive it. But to have Christ known and possessed, to make use of Him, as what He Himself has done—that function we have in us. But because no one knows Him except the man who feels Him in his heart, **He is called a mystery.** It is a magnificent mystery because it is so well known, so clear.

I believe that “flesh” here can be taken for the personal flesh of Christ. I think, however, that Paul says this in general: that Christ indeed appeared in His own proper Person, yet it would have been of no avail, had He not appeared through the Word. As Simeon said (Luke 2:30): “Mine eyes have seen.” We also read (John 1:29): “Behold the Lamb of God,” that is, this has been revealed everywhere through the Word. If you wish to interpret this as referring to Christ's flesh, that's fine, but it would have been useless [without the Word].

I interpret this as the combining of the personal flesh and the external Word, by which He is preached to our carnal ears. This, you see, is the flesh. “In the flesh” means, then, among carnal men, because it must remain in this way so that this mystery may be similarly very hidden and very well published.”