



JULY FOCUS

BUILD Bridges



Prayer and the Proclamation of the Gospel

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BUILDING BIBLICAL BRIDGES WITH ALL PEOPLE THROUGH WISDOM, GRACE, AND INTENTIONALITY

Colossians 4:3-6

“Meanwhile, praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”



INTRO TO COLOSSIANS

- Written by Paul during Roman imprisonment - along with Ephesians and Philemon
- The Church in Colossae was founded by Epaphras
- Addressed heresies combining mysticism, dualism, and legalism - the Bible must be the lens through which we view everything
- Main message: **Christ is enough**
- Goal: **Encourage authentic Christian living**

GNOSTICISM - A THREAT TO THE EARLY CHURCH

"SINCE THEN, YOU HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH CHRIST, SET YOUR HEARTS ON THINGS ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD" - COLOSSIANS 3:1


Definition: Gnosticism (from Greek gnosis, "to know") taught that salvation came through secret spiritual knowledge, not faith in Christ

Core Beliefs:

- Jesus was not fully God in bodily form
- Salvation is gained through enlightenment, not grace

Why It Matters Today:

- We must ensure the Bible shapes our worldview, not the reverse
- Faith, not philosophy, is the foundation of Christian life



Definition: (Idiom) Improving relationships, especially between those who differ

How: Through communication, understanding, and trust.

Biblical Approach: Modeling Christ-like behavior in all relationships (Wisdom, Grace, Words Seasoned with Salt). **Prayer** and **faithful witnessing** are among the greatest tools for building bridges between God and others

Theme: Proclaiming the gospel is both a **duty** and a **delight**; our speech must reflect the truth and grace of Christ

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BUILD BRIDGES?



Colossians 4:3-6

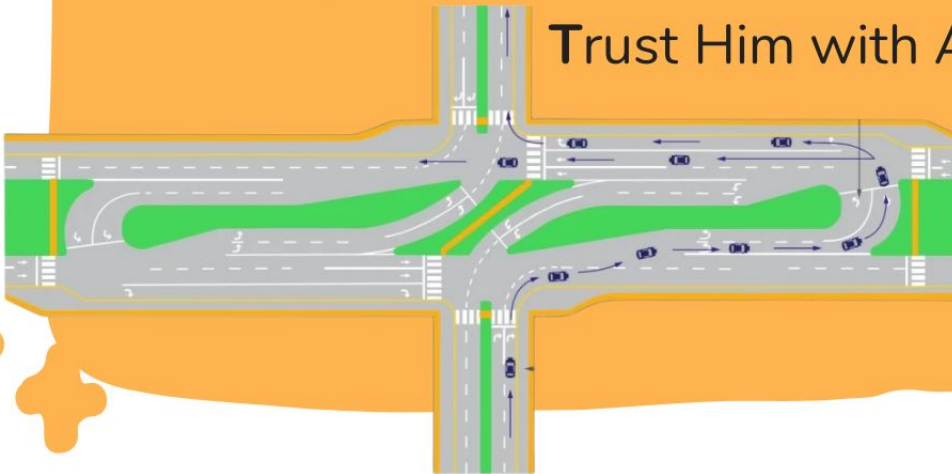
RCUT - RESTRICTED CROSSING U-TURN

Relationship with God


Communication with Him in Prayer

Understand His Personality and Characteristics

Trust Him with All Your Life



DO THE
BIBLE
PUSH!
THROUGH THE WALLS OF
THE ENEMY

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1. **Understand** the connection between prayer and the gospel proclamation
 2. **Learn** how Paul modeled bold, Spirit-led speech
 3. **Explore** how our conduct and communication influence our witness
 4. **Practice** wisdom, grace, and urgency in evangelism

SUNDAY SERVICE

MAIN OBJECTIVES

Colossians 4:2-6




PRAYER IS A BRIDGE

Colossians 4:2

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; ”

What is Prayer?

- Two-way communication with God
 - Involves adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication
 - A way to **align our will with God's** and **hear from Him**
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PRAYER IS A BRIDGE

Proverbs 15:8 - “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.”

Key Takeaways:

- Divinity wants a consistent relationship with humanity
- God allows us to build a bridge to Him through prayer, reading and meditating on His word, and by obedience and dependence on Him

DEVOTED TO PRAYER

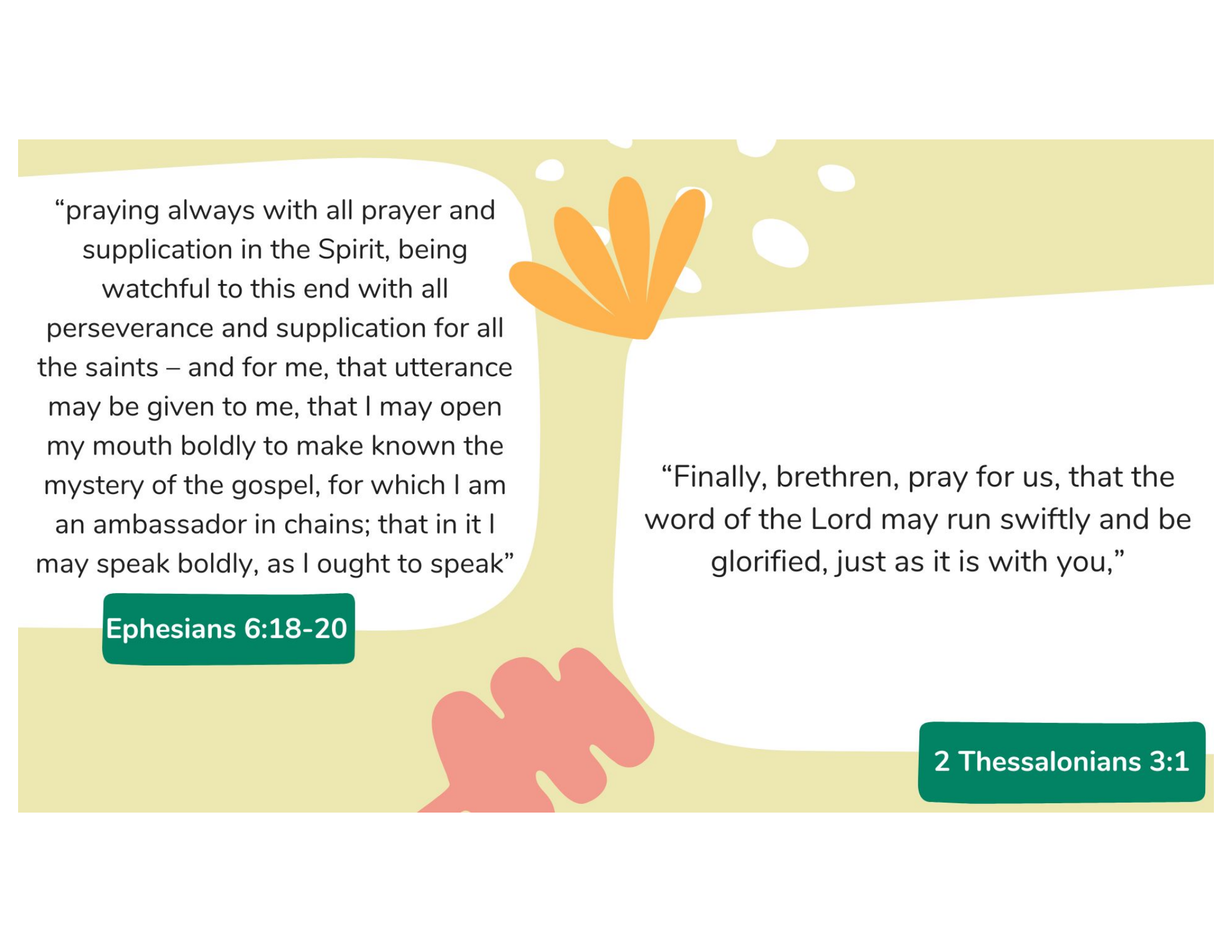
PAUL'S MODEL OF PRAYER

Colossians 4:3-4

“...meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

Paul's Example:

- Asked for **open doors** to speak the gospel
- Desired clarity, oldness, and Spirit-led speech - even while in chains
- Saw adversity as an opportunity
- Desired to proclaim the Mystery of Christ

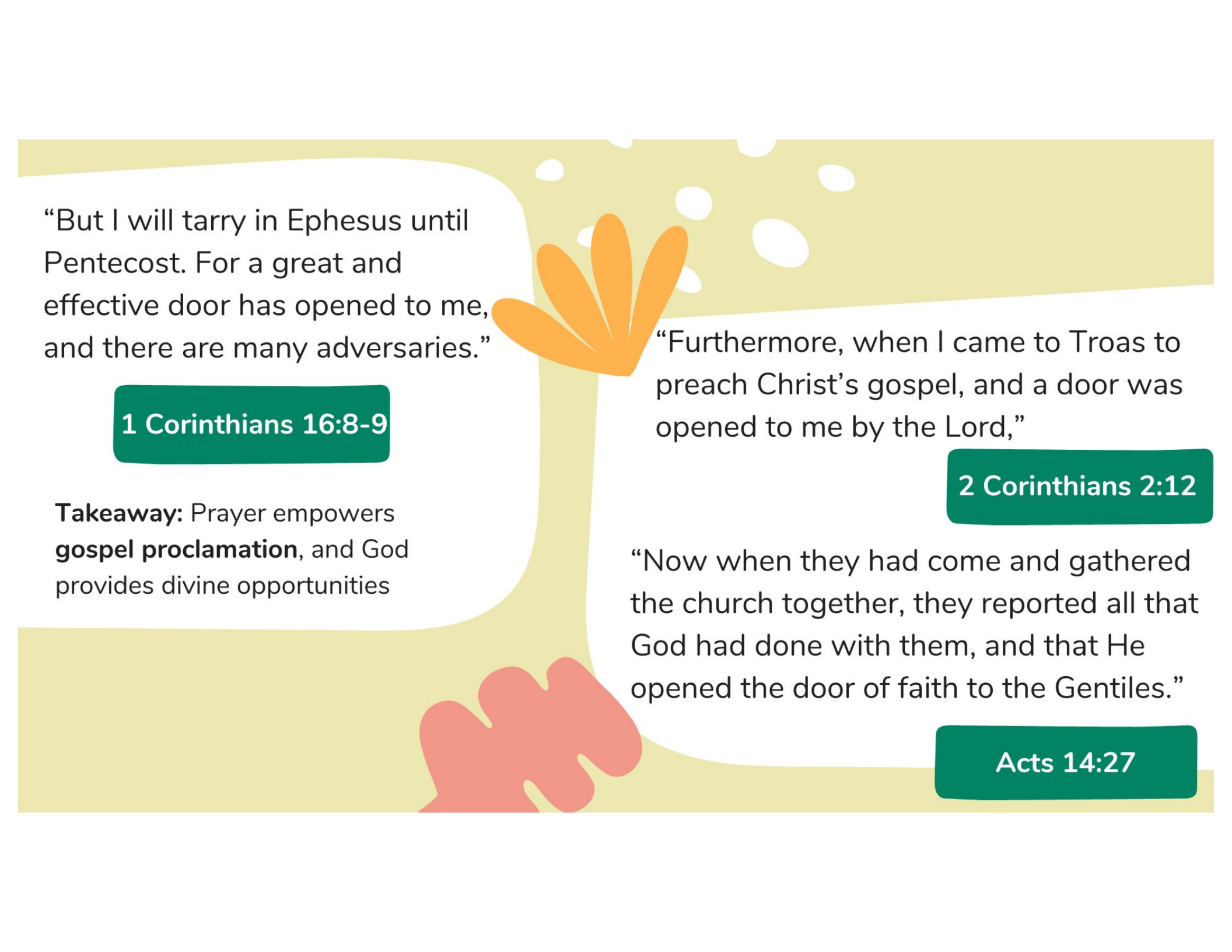


“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints – and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak”

Ephesians 6:18-20

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,”

2 Thessalonians 3:1



“But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”

1 Corinthians 16:8-9

Takeaway: Prayer empowers **gospel proclamation**, and God provides divine opportunities

“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord,”

2 Corinthians 2:12

“Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”

Acts 14:27

WHAT IS THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST?

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentile in the flesh – who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands – that at the time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity...

Ephesians 2:11-22




WHAT IS THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST?

“...And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwellingplace of God in the Spirit.”


Ephesians 2:11-22





“Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles’. And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, ‘Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!’”

Key Point

- Paul stood firm in bold obedience
 - We are no longer strangers but part of God’s household
 - Christ has broken down every dividing wall, Jews and Gentile united in Christ
 - The gospel is for **all people**, and Paul faced opposition for proclaiming it
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WHAT IS THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST?

Acts 22:21-22

PROCLAMATION REQUIRES COURAGE

“If I am out of prison today, I will preach the gospel again tomorrow, by the help of God.”

John Bunyan

Reminder:

- Preaching in adversity reflects **true commitment**
- Prayer + Word = Bold, Spirit-led evangelism (Acts 6:4)

Pray For:

- Preachers to live the Word
- Spirit-led utterance
- Listeners to be transformed



WHY THE CHURCH EXISTS



“It is easy to think that the Church has a lot of different objects—education, building, missions, holding services. Just as it is easy to think the State has a lot of different objects—military, political, economic, and what not. But in a way things are much simpler than that. The State exists simply to promote and to protect the ordinary happiness of human beings in this life. A husband and wife chatting over a fire, a couple of friends having a game of darts in a pub, a man reading a book in his own room or digging in his own garden—that is what the State is there for. And unless they are helping to increase and prolong and protect such moments, all the laws, parliaments, armies, courts, police, economics, etc., are simply a waste of time. In the same way the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time.”

C.S. Lewis,
Mere Christianity



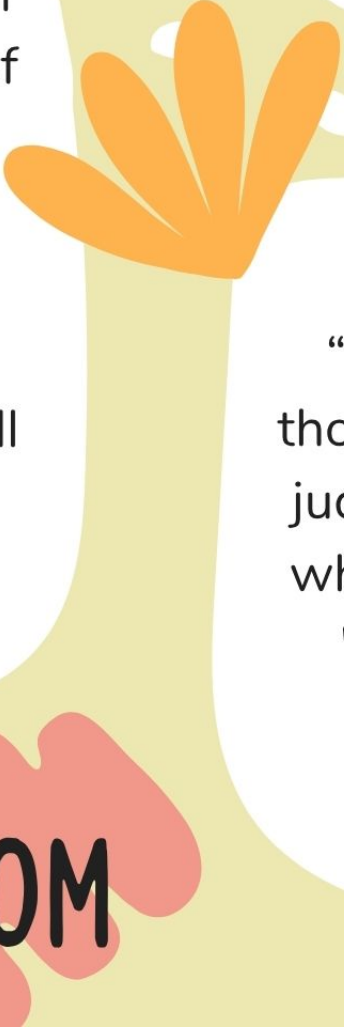
WALK IN WISDOM

Colossians 4:5-6

“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.” Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

Key Application

- Our conduct is our first sermon
- Make the most of every opportunity to witness
- Your **life must preach Christ**



“He said to them, ‘The privilege of intimately knowing the mystery of God’s kingdom realm has been granted to you, but not to the others, where everything is revealed in parables. For even when they see what I do, they will learn nothing, otherwise they would repent and be forgiven.’”

Mark 4:11-12 (TPT)

WALK IN WISDOM

“For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judge. Therefore, 'put away from yourselves the evil person.'”

1 Corinthians 5:12-13


LET YOUR SPEECH BE SEASONED



Colossians 4:5-6

“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

Speech that Builds Bridges:

- Gracious, not judgmental
 - Wise, not arrogant
 - Kind, not compromising
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WISE WITNESSING



Matthew 10:16




“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”

Paul & Jesus both emphasized:

- Salt = Preserving truth
- Light = Shining in darkness
- Witnessing requires both **truth** and **tact**

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE



Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Key Reminder:

- Salt = Preserving truth
- Light = Shining in darkness
- **Our speech and lifestyle** must reflect the gospel

WALKING THE WALK AND TALKING THE TALK

Mark 9:50

“Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves and have peace with one another.”

Speech That Destroys Bridges:

- Harshness
- Hypocrisy
- Silence in the face of sin

We must be diligent to conduct ourselves in a manner that doesn't jeopardize our testimony.



Colossians 4:2-6

- Sin is still sin (Ezek 18:20)
- Hell is real
- What they need is **not religion**, but redemption
- **Sound the alarm** and extend the invitation

Pray For:

- Open hearts
- Divine appointments
- Boldness and wisdom
- Love to overflow from your witness

Before you talk to someone about God, talk to God about them

- Repair broken relationships as a bridge for gospel sharing

URGENCY OF THE GOSPEL

PRAYER COMES FIRST

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL MEANS:

- **Devotion** - Prayer prepares the heart
- **Boldness** - Speak with clarity and courage
- **Wisdom**- Live and walk intentionally
- **Grace** - Speak with compassion
- **Salt & Light** - Let your life and words reflect Christ