



A new creation focus through Colossians ...

## Prayers for Open Doors

The inspired record of the book of Acts, when looked at from the side of the disciples of Christ, is a record of prayer followed by preaching. The prayer was necessary, and really set in motion the conditions for the success they had from preaching the word. Before Jesus began His ministry, He prayed and fasted. Before the preaching on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples prayed. They prayed as recorded in the fourth chapter of Acts, and they were able to preach the word of God with boldness when the building shook; the apostles preached in the temple, were jailed, then

preached again; "and every day in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42). Before Paul and Barnabas were sent out on the first missionary journey, specifically targeting the Gentiles, the key brethren fasted and prayed. The example is pretty clear: get the praying in so the preaching can get going!

- ◆ **Door for the word** — The apostle Paul was encouraging the brethren in Colossae to devote themselves to prayer, exhorting them to keep alert in those prayers with an attitude of thanksgiving. He then added a focus, saying, "praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that I may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned" (Colossians 4:3). Preaching and teaching the gospel is hard work. So many people have to be worked through to find those who are truly interested. Many times, it seems that there is a brick wall in front of the teacher/preacher. But sometimes what the scripture often calls "an open door" avails, when people in a certain area are receptive to the gospel. When that happens, the faithful deliverer of the word of truth must be prepared to charge through that door, because it may be awhile before another one opens. Hence the apostle was imploring the brethren to pray that one of those doors would open again for him.

*May God open  
the doors, and  
may we speak the  
mystery clearly!*

- ◆ **Speak forth the mystery** — When the apostle Paul worked in an area, he did not hold back on what he was preaching. To the elders at Ephesus, he affirmed that "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable," and that "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:20,27). Earlier in this epistle, the apostle had explained that his goal was to "fully carry out the preaching of the word of God," which he then explained as the "mystery ... which is Christ in you." The apostle's mission was not simply to deliver a message on forgiveness of sins which comes through immersion in the name of Jesus Christ. He knew he needed to also preach *the mystery*, the indwelling Spirit. Without preaching the mystery, the message of the Christ is extremely incomplete, truncated after the first step, cutting off the teaching necessary for the growth of the Christian. But when the indwelling Spirit — Christ in you, the hope of glory — is preached, then all the doors of understanding and growth are opened for the saints. It is not surprising, then, that Satan should oppose this message which results in transformation and victory for the saint, and that this would be the reason "for which," as the apostle comments, "I have been imprisoned." He also was expressing his desire that the saints pray that, concerning this mystery, "in order that I may make it clear as I ought to speak" (Colossians 4:4). Because the preaching of the indwelling Holy Spirit is on a level of spirituality that is higher than forgiveness of sins, it requires much clear teaching to bring the significance of its truths to the brethren.

May God open for us the doors for the word, that we might speak forth the mystery, and that we may make it clear in our speech as well!!

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