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SERMON TITLE

From Renewal to Mission

SERIES

A Fresh Start

DATE

3/1/2026

KEY SCRIPTURE

Colossians 4:2-18

SYNOPSIS

You were not saved just to be rescued. You were saved to be sent.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ From Renewal to Mission

Colossians 4:2–18

Over the past several weeks, we've been talking about renewal. We've seen how Jesus gives us new life, a new identity, a new way of living, and new relationships. God has been doing a renewing work in us. But Paul shows us today that renewal is never the finish line. God also has a mission for us. You might hear the word 'mission' and picture someone in a jungle with a backpack and a machete. Good news — today's mission doesn't require a passport. Bad news — it does require getting out of your comfort zone. Renewal is just the starting line.

Today, we're talking about moving **from renewal to mission**. As Paul brings this letter toward its close, he turns our attention outward. He shows us that renewed lives are not meant to stay private. They are meant to be lived on mission, together. In other words, **you were not saved just to be rescued. You were saved to be sent**. Jesus said in **John 20:21**, "As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you." That is what this passage is about.

☞ Here is the central truth of this section: **When God changes your life, He invites you into His work**. So, let's talk about that. Before Paul talks about how we live or what we say, he starts with something even more foundational. He starts with prayer. Because in the Christian life, everything else flows from our relationship with God. Paul shows us first that living on mission begins with persistent prayer.

☞ **PERSISTENT PRAYER** (*Colossians 4:2–4*)

If we want to live on mission, it starts with staying connected to God. Paul says, "**Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.**" That word "devote" means to stick with something even when it is difficult. It is the same idea as perseverance or persistence.

Paul is not talking about quick prayers before meals or emergency prayers when life falls apart.

☞ He is talking about a steady, ongoing relationship with God. **Prayer is not meant to be a spare tire. It is meant to be the steering wheel**. Now, some of us treat prayer like a GPS — we only turn it on when we're already lost, and then we argue with the directions. **1 Thessalonians 5:17** says, "Pray without ceasing." That doesn't mean walking around with your eyes closed all day. It means living in constant dependence on God.

Paul says we should be **watchful** in prayer. That means spiritually alert and paying attention to what God is doing. It means recognizing temptation, needs, and opportunities. Jesus told His disciples in **Matthew 26:41**, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." **Prayer keeps us awake spiritually.**

Paul also says we should be **thankful**. **Gratitude keeps prayer healthy**. When we forget gratitude, prayer turns into complaining. Some of us are very gifted complainers. We can complain about traffic. About weather. About coworkers. About our phones. About our phones



being too slow when they're faster than any computer from ten years ago. Thankfulness re-centers us.

Then Paul makes his request personal. **"Pray for us... that God may open a door for our message."** He's in prison, but he doesn't ask for comfort. He doesn't ask for release. He asks for opportunities. That's remarkable. He knows what Jesus said in **Matthew 9:38**: "Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers."

Paul believes God opens doors. And if God doesn't open them, no amount of effort will. I've learned this in ministry. Some conversations happen easily. Others never seem to go anywhere. **☞ Some hearts soften. Others stay closed. Prayer goes ahead of us. Before we speak to people about God, we speak to God about people.**

Imagine trying to push open a locked door. You can push harder. You can get frustrated. You can even hurt yourself. But until someone unlocks it, nothing happens. Prayer is asking God to unlock hearts. We don't have the key. He does.

Then Paul reminds us that prayer doesn't just connect us with God, it prepares us to live wisely in the world. When we are connected to God, it changes how we walk among people. So after persistent prayer, Paul calls us to purposeful living.

☞ CAREFUL CONDUCT (Colossians 4:5)

Renewed people live differently. Mission shows up in everyday choices. After prayer, Paul talks about our behavior. **"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders."** By "outsiders," he means people who don't yet know Christ. Paul is reminding us that people are watching our lives. **☞ Whether we like it or not, we are living testimonies.** Which is a little terrifying, honestly. Because I've seen how some of you act in traffic. If that's your testimony, we may need to revisit things. **Matthew 5:16** says, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." That doesn't mean showing off. It means living authentically. Just be real about your faith.

Then Paul says, **"Make the most of every opportunity."** Literally: redeem the time. In other **☞ words, don't waste gospel moments.** Sometimes opportunities come quietly. A coworker shares a struggle. A neighbor asks a question. A friend opens up. Those are divine invitations.

Paul knows that our lives speak, but he also knows that our words matter. How we act opens doors, and how we speak often determines whether those doors stay open. That's why he moves next from our conduct to our conversation. He calls us to be marked by gracious speech.

☞ SEASONED SPEECH (Colossians 4:6)

Paul says, **"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt."** Grace means **☞ kindness, humility**, patience. Salt means **truth**, substance, **wisdom**. We need both. If you only



have grace, you become vague. If you only have truth, you become harsh. Jesus was full of grace and truth. We should be too.

Proverbs 15:1 says, “A gentle answer turns away wrath.” Some Christians think being bold means being rude. It doesn’t. Rudeness is not a spiritual gift. Speak with grace and truth. Paul is talking about relational, gracious, thoughtful conversation. Real people. Real listening. Real love... Live wisely and speak graciously.

At this point, Paul could have ended the letter. He’s covered prayer, character, and witness. But he doesn’t stop there. Instead, he starts naming people. Why? Because he wants us to see that none of this is meant to be lived out alone. Living on mission is always a team effort. That’s why Paul points us next to faithful partnerships.

☞ **FAITHFUL FRIENDS** (*Colossians 4:7–17*)

Paul names people. It sounds like the end credits of a movie. Tychicus. Onesimus. Epaphras. Aristarchus. Honestly, I feel a little bad for anyone named 'Bob' in the first century. Very hard to be memorable. 'And also Bob was there.' But these names matter. They remind us that Paul did not do ministry alone. God never intended renewal to be private. Mission is always shared.

☞ **Christianity is a team sport.**

Ephesians 4:16 says the body grows “as each part does its work.” Everyone matters. For Paul, some carried letters. Some prayed. Some traveled. Some taught. Some encouraged. Epaphras “wrestled in prayer.” Luke was a scribe and a doctor. Mark had failed earlier but was restored. ☞ Onesimus had a broken past but a new future. **God uses imperfect people.** That should encourage you. You don’t have to be impressive. You just have to **be faithful.**

Many people think church is like a movie or a show. There are a few people on stage. Everyone else watches. But church is more like a family business. Everyone helps. Some cook. Some clean. Some teach. Some pray. Some give abundantly. Some encourage. There are no spectators.

☞ **Only participants.**

Finally, as Paul closes this letter, he reminds us of something crucial. Even with prayer, wisdom, good words, and strong community, ministry is still hard. Following Jesus still costs something. That’s why he doesn’t end with instructions. He ends with grace. Paul points us finally to sustaining grace.

☞ **GOD’S GRACE** (*Colossians 4:18*)

Paul ends with these words: **“Remember my chains. Grace be with you.”** He is suffering. He is restricted. He is uncertain. And yet he talks about grace. Grace saved him. Grace sustained him. Grace strengthened him. Renewal and mission both depend on grace. We don’t do this in our own strength.



☞ **2 Corinthians 12:9** says, “My grace is sufficient for you.” Here’s the truth: **Ministry is hard. Following Jesus is costly.** There are seasons of joy. And seasons of exhaustion. We don’t survive on willpower. **We survive on grace.** I don’t know about you, but I’ve tried willpower. It works great — right up until it doesn’t. I’ve had more ‘fresh starts’ than I have calendar years. Willpower runs out. Grace doesn’t.

When you put all of this together, Paul gives us a picture of what a life on mission really looks like. It is rooted in prayer, shaped by wisdom, expressed through gracious words, strengthened ☞ by community, and sustained by grace. This is how **God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary purposes.** And this is the life He is inviting each of us into. It’s how God works. Not through celebrities. Not through perfection. Through faithful people who depend on Him.

The Christian life is like a relay race. You receive the gospel. You carry it. You pass it on. No one runs the whole race alone. We run together.

Now, here’s some questions for you to consider as you apply this message to yourself.

First, **how is your prayer life?** Is prayer central—or optional? Are you talking to God regularly, or only when things go wrong?

Second, **who are you praying for?** Who in your life needs Jesus? Pray consistently for them.

Third, **are you living wisely?** Do your actions help people see Jesus—or distract from Him?

Fourth, **how are your words?** Are they gracious? Are they thoughtful? Are they truthful?

Fifth, **are you connected?** Are you serving with others, or drifting into isolation?

Over this series, we have seen that God has given you have a fresh start. You are new. But God did not stop there. He says, “Now come join Me.” Join My mission. Join My work. Join My story. You don’t have to be perfect. You only need to be willing. He says, “Let’s go.” From renewal to mission. From being changed to being used. From being restored to being sent.

☞ So, pray faithfully. Live wisely. Speak graciously. Serve together. Depend on grace. And **trust that God will use your life—right where you are.** Because a fresh start is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of a life on mission with Jesus.

Spirit of the Living God