LSB Colossians 3:25 - 4:6 Acting like who we are.

NASB77 Col. 3:25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. 4:1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven. 2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; 3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; 4 in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. 5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.

If you were paying attention last week, you might have noticed that we didn't quite finish chapter 3. We didn't make that clean break and fresh start into chapter 4.

It turns out that this little 25th verse is an important pivot point for us. A bridge into the final things Paul wants to say to these christians at Colossae. And actually verse 1 of chapter 4 is the final point in Paul's discussion of christians submitting to each other in every possible situation you might find yourself in.

Then in vs. 2 Paul begins his final exhortations for these christians.

By way of reminder, our previous couple of weeks looked at authority and submission in all of the categories we might encounter in this life. Inside the home and outside the home. Christians are submitters, not rebellers.

Our relationships with our spouses, with our children, and with our employer, or as it were slave owners. All of these interactions have roles and require submission to someone else's authority.

Our culture prizes and worships absolute personal autonomy. There is no sky god. I am in fact god. I decide what I will and won't do. I submit to no one.

We laughed about Shirley Temple's little song about the spinach. But what I failed to mention that is very telling is that if you google that song in order to get the lyrics correct, you'll find that in 2026 our culture praised little Shirley for leading a revolt against parental authority regarding spinach. That's the 2026 value of the song. Shirley was a visionary rebeller ahead of her time.

Good for Shirley Temple leading all the children of the world into a spinach rebellion. For 2026 culture that's the best part of the whole scene. Revolt against parents. Revolt against bosses. Revolt against spouses. Revolt against any and all challlenges to your absolute personal autonomy.

And so Paul's imperative commands bring only dread and thoughts of revolution to our generation. Wives disobey and break down your husbands family leadership. Children disobey your parents. Don't eat that spinach! Slaves rise up in revolt against your masters.

Satan loathes order. Satan loves revolution and anarchy. How's that working out for us? I really can't tell you because I ignore 98% of the fake news. But the clips I see look pretty scary. As I write this this morning there is news from Canada about a transgender man in a dress posing as a woman shooting and killing 11 adults and children including his own mother.

Paul weighs in on rejecting God's designs for families and workplace. Paul says there are consequences to rejecting God's designs.

25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

When you reject God's design for His creation, there will be consequences. What a thought.

When you challenge a policeman's authority over you, that policeman may ultimately need to shoot you. If that happens, this book supports the cop. *He beareth not the sword in vain*. God given authority for order which is for our thriving and good.

When you challenge your parents authority and disobey them, you will be a meanie, when you're old. Actually if you challenge and disobey your parents, it's quite normal and no one will be surprised later when a policeman is required to eliminate your public adult rebellion and revolt with lethal force.

This is creation order beloved. God has built consequences into His creation. They are automatic.

An interesting story in the news this week. A 16 year old girl who wanted to be a transgender boy had her breasts surgically removed. Well, now she's 20 and feels quite differently about things. So she sued the doctors for doing that to her when she was a minor. She is awarded 2 million dollars. Very well, but her body is permanently altered and there's no going back.

There are consequences to rejecting God's creation order. Always.

I picked on my mom a little bit two weeks ago. She was sorry and she was forgiven for abandoning my dad, but there's no way to recover the loss afterwards. God forgives us for our rebellions when we later repent, but there's no way to unscramble the eggs. We live with our messes.

25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Revolt against God's design, His order, His laws, always always always has

consequences. He built it into His universe. That's why Paul says there's no partiality.

Rebellion against God's design works the same as gravity. If you jump off the edge of a 10 story building you ***will*** hit the sidewalk. Every time. God doesn't have to sit up in heaven and decree, that guy is going to slam into that sidewalk as punishment for rejecting my gravity that I designed into creation.

No. God made gravity automatic. You jumping off requires no further action from God. Rejecting these submissions to authority in marriage and family and work relationship is like defying gravity.

So Paul isn't saying; God's up there and He's going to punish you if you don't obey these things. Paul knows that the consequences are built into God's creation order.

Peter addresses this idea of suffering when we make our own mess. No sympathy for that kind of suffering. No cred when you're getting the recompense that you deserve.

1 Peter 2:20 *How is it to your credit if you are beaten for doing wrong and you endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God*.

And again; 1 Peter 3:16,17 *keeping a clear conscience, so that those who slander you may be put to shame by your good behavior in Christ. 17 For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil*.

God is impartial to christians who rebel. If christians jump off of 10 story buildings, gravity continues to work as designed. Being a christian won't help.

Now, if the world beats us up because we're following the commandments of this book; ***that*** honors God. But if the world beats us up because we

were driving 80 in a 65 zone, please don't drag God into it. We endure the consequences of disobeying authority.

If you get fired because you're spending your time preaching the gospel instead of doing the work you were hired to do, I'm going to align myself with your employer. That's why Paul wrote this stuff.

4:*1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.*

This is the final completion of these authority and submission guidelines. And it's consistent with the other 2 areas.

Wives are to submit to their husbands creation-order-by-design, position and role as head of family. But husbands make that easy for her by loving her and always having her best good as your motivation. It's easy to follow a husband who, like Christ, would give up his life for the benefit of his wife.

Children obey your parents, but dad's, don't make that impossible for them to do.

Slaves obey your masters, but masters, be fair and just in how you treat those slaves. Masters, make it easy for the slaves to submit. Fathers make it easy for the children to submit. Husbands, make it joyful for your wife to submit.

The greater role and responsibility in all of these roles is the person who is being submitted to. In each case, they have the responsibility to make it a joy for the person who is assigned the submissive role.

I've often recounted my experience in my career of having two bosses with equal authority. One was a narcisistic egomaniac sort of personality. And one always had my best interest truely at heart. They could both order me to go do the same task, and I hated doing it for the ego guy and loved going

above and beyond for the true leader.

I used to analyze the irrationality of that. It was all about leadership style. I don't know if the fellow that always lived within God's revealed design stated in these verses was a christian or not. But the result was automatic. Everyone loved working for him and hated having to acquiesce to the abusive guy.

Husbands, be that leader that it's a joy to follow. Dad's be the leader that the kids can't wait to try to please. Bosses, be the leader that makes work joyful and fun with our best interest always in sight.

*1 Masters, grant to your slaves **justice** and **fairness**, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.*

I can't move on until I point out a contradiction here. Our world whines ad infinitum ad nauseum about justice and fairness. We never get anything done because we're fighting about injustice and inequality. We've almost ground ourselves to a halt over justice and equality. In Satan's cosmos there is no solution to the problem, because the world's problem is based in breaking God's law of covetousness.

How ironic that a slave owned by a godly christian slave owner has the only real chance at fairness and justice this world will ever see. Think about that one. Jesus is the great equalizer. When Jesus is in charge, you're better off being a slave to a slave owner also under Jesus authority, than being a free man in Satan's world systems.

Now we move into Paul's final instructions to the christians at Colossae. This is very consistent in Paul's letters. When he's closing out the letter, he fires off some staccato things we all need to be continually doing. Rapid fire imperatives. Bang bang bang bang. Like the cops in the cop shows when the bad guy draws his weapon. They always seem to put 4 rapid fire bullets into him. Kill him 2.8 times.

Like the final words to the Thessalonians; 1 thess. 5:16 *Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophetic utterances. 21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil*.

Vintage Paul. And his final requests to the Colossians is similar;

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

Praying, for Paul, was not unlike radio contact between a moving military force on the ground that is in continual contact with headquarters command.

We liked (mostly) to watch the TV series; Seal Team. The elite navy seal teams that drop in out of the sky and carry out a mission in enemy territory. There is continual radio contact with the command central.

That's how Paul views prayer. If you've stopped praying, you obviously are not in the battle. In Paul's mind, prayer should be constant. E. T. Phone Home. What's my next move? Enemy combatants in enemy territory would need to be alert. At all times. Continual contact with home base.

with an attitude of thanksgiving; This is so important! This is imperative!

There is never a nano second that God is still allowing you to breathe that we should not be thankful. We just read it in the same command to the Thessalonians. Thankfulness is the will of God for you.

If we drive the pickup off the road and up a tree; we are to be thankful. When we gun through a yellow that turns to red while we're still in the intersection, and then we see the red and blue lights come on, we are to be thankful.

I'm getting to the age that one of these trips to the doctor, I won't be hearing that I'm in good health; anymore. Sooner or later the news comes. My mom had a favorite uncle who went out and mowed the lawn one hot southern california day, came in, poured himself a glass of cold lemonade, took a nap, and never woke up. Uncle Fred. We should all be that lucky. Most of us aren't. When the bad news comes, will we be obediently thankful?

It's easy for me to be thankful right now. I'm still in full stride and God has showered me with fullness of life. I'm having a wonderful retirement. I enjoy the company of the best friend in the world. My wife. You folks all seem to love me. Easy to be thankful. But nothing lasts in this world. Especially when you're 73.

Grace always gives me better than I deserve. I don't even want to think about what I really deserve. An attitude of thanksgiving is the antidote to pride. Thanksgiving comes from the humility that understands every next heart beat is a grace I don't deserve.

And it's an order. It's God's will for each of us to have thankful hearts. Check your own please. Thankfulness is the gateway to humility. Thankfulness is the humble recognition that we deserve nothing, except perhaps judgement.

3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; 4 in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

Paul went to heaven a long time ago. But the principle here remains. We are to be praying, at all times, for those who are on the front lines, expanding God's kingdom into Satan's territory in this world.

In our case, that's Larisa. And it's Gary Myers. And it's Daniel and Jhansi Avula. Those folks depend on this exact prayer that Paul asked for the

Colossians to pray for him.

Notice in verse 3 the plurality. Paul doesn't say pray for me, he says pray for us. Pray for the team that's on the front lines opening up new territory for Christ's advancement in this world. And Paul tells us how to pray for that.

Pray for new doors of opportunity to keep opening up for expansion.
3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;

And then in verse 4. This is very logical. Paul's already in prison for preaching the Word of God, which is Christ. So no surprise that Paul asks for a continuation of the boldness, the correctness, the clarity that already sent him to prison.
4 in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

Paul says, in your prayers for me, pray that I will be boldly uncompromising in saying the things in a clear and bold way, that we know can land us in jail.

Paul's as human as you or me. He struggled with the possibility of compromising the message so he wouldn't suffer yet another flogging, and another trip to jail. He asked these christians to pray for his courage. And the correctness, the clearness of the gospel message.

Clarity is what lands you in jail. The world has this romantic idea of a Jesus which they've created according to their own image. A Jesus that just loves everyone no matter what they're doing or how they are living. An accepting Jesus who doesn't judge what anyone is doing.

When you preach the real Jesus, the world gets angry. They don't want the Jesus that is exclusive. The Jesus who declares; *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me*. John 14:6

The world does not want to hear "“*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.*” Acts 4:12

Those exclusive claims caused the world to crucify Jesus and to beat and imprison the apostles. Listen again to Paul's request in verse 3.

that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned

Are we included or excluded in that request. Is that solely for Paul? Or should each and every christian be making that same request for the same action?

How does that work for ordinary every day christians? I think the key that unlocks this is how distinctive from the rest of the world our christian experience makes us. Are we radically different from the world? Are we distinct? Radically distinct?

In my lifetime it's gotten easier and easier to be distinctively set apart from the world we live in. Even 40 years ago, occasionally at a restaurant, an older couple would walk up and say how nice it was to see a family with well behaved happy kids all enjoying a meal out.

These days it's getting rather spectacular to witness a happy functional family with an actual mom and dad and some ordinary kids who are secure and happy in their roles. That's highly irregular.

No, we aren't all Paul's. We aren't all church planters. Most of us are just living painfully ordinary but well ordered lives. But we are distinctive from the rest of the world. And when the opportunity happens we need to be ready to provide answers about our distinctive differences.

Paul's words; *so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ* are

required of every breathing christian. Our purpose in Christ's kingdom is to advance His cause somehow. That's actually our top priority. Worklife and playlife and family life and all the minutia is secondary. Our primary purpose that God has left us in this world to do is; *so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ*

Paul knows and understands we aren't him. So how do we advance the cause of Christ as ordinary orderly citizens?

Here is what Peter says; 1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*:

That's why we are to be distinctively separate from this world. The difference that the hope I have in my salvation, should make me set apart from this world enough that someone might want to know more about ***that*** difference.

Why is it that your wife seems to be happy and secure in her role and your kids seem to be well adjusted and happy and respectful. How is that even possible in 2026? What exactly is going on down at that church you go to? You're like a throwback to 1926. Can you explain?

Paul presupposes that we will be distinct enough, separated from this culture enough that people will want to know why? Paul says to you and me, vss 5,6 written to ordinary christians set apart from how this world lives;

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward ***outsiders****,* X3 *making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.*

There's a great illustration of both this and the imperative to pray always. In the old testament; Nehemiah. In chapter 1 of Nehemiah, he gets the report

that the remnant that has gone home to Israel from Babylon is not doing well. Everything is broken. The city wall is torn down. The gates to the city are burned with fire, And the people are depressed.

So Nehemiah prays continually for his homeland that he loves.
From Nehemiah 1:The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. *1 Now it happened in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year—and I was in Susa the capitol—*
2 that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped and remain from the captivity, and about Jerusalem.
3 They said to me, "The remnant there in the province who remain from the captivity are in great calamity and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire."
4 Now it happened that when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.
5 I said, "I beseech You, O Yahweh, the God of heaven, the great and fearsome God, who keeps the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,
6 let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your slave which I am praying before You today, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your slaves, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father's house have sinned.

That's a perfect example for us to follow of praying continually for the advancement of God's kingdom. And then in chapter 2, God answers and brings the opportunity.

A word of warning; God answers prayers by using us to be His answer. So when you pray for God to do something or change something that aligns with His will, He may shove you into being the catalyst for that answer. Prepare to get involved in what God is going to do.

Nehemiah was the cup bearer for the king of Babylon. He was the wine taster. And if you're the king of Babylon you probably pick out someone

who is sharp and enjoyable and fun to be around to be your wine guy.

So after this news that has made Nehemiah weep and pray continually for his homeland, when he goes in to the king with the kings wine, he can't hide his sadness. And it affects the king. And if the king hired you for your Jimmy Fallon cheerfulness and you're weepy, your head might just roll.

Neh. 2:1 *Now it happened in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.*
2 So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart." Then I was very much afraid.
3 I said to the king, "Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste and its gates have been consumed by fire?"
4 Then the king said to me, "What would you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.

It illustrates for us the continual prayer and also the little momentary silent prayer. The moment arrives. And you pray silently with the indwelling Holy Spirit, *give me the right words. Even if my head has to roll, it was you who sovereignly arranged this event, now surprise me with the words that come from my mouth.* Something like that.

You can go and read the rest of the story. It's pretty amazing. God worked on that kings heart to make him send Nehamiah home to rebuild the wall and the gates of the city, with letters from the king and money for materials and permission. What a story of prayer and God intervening because of prayer.
And the little quicky silent prayer when the king demands an answer.

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each

person.

Nehemiah was a statesman. Daniel was a statesman. We christians need to spend time studying these old testament saints that God used mightily and copy their mannerisms in dealing with those that they were in direct submission to.

Christians, we need to learn how to conduct God's business with a little bit of class. For Nehamiah, the first words out of his mouth, after the instant in the moment prayer, were; "*Let the king live forever*.

Listen. If you belong to Jesus, you actually rank higher in this world than the king. Jesus told the disciples, don't be surprised when you end up in the presence of kings and rulers, explaining God's business, which trumps theirs.

But we are statesmen for God. We are ambassadors for the true King of this world, who will soon come here and remove the evil usurper, and reign here in righteousness.

That's our position. We outrank the rulers of this world. Positionally. But that doesn't mean you don't have a little class in your interactions with them. A little statesmanship goes a long way. We are ambassadors of the King.

Nehemiah was a class act. Daniel was a class act. I'm not seeing much of that these days.

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.