

Colossians 4:2-6

Discussion starter

- One of the remarkable things we discover in the Bible is that God wants His people to be involved with Him in His mission to save sinners. What exactly is our role in that mission? What role are you currently playing?

Recap

Read Colossians 4:2-18.

- Does anyone have any questions, points of interest to raise, comments to make about any aspect of the passage?
- This is Paul's conclusion to his letter to the Colossians. Can you see any words, ideas or themes mentioned here that Paul has touched on in the main body of the letter?

Paul's role in God's mission

- What is Paul's role in God's mission? You might like to look up Acts 17:22 and following to see Paul exercising his role in God's mission.
- Who do you see in the church today exercising a similar role in God's mission? How do they go about the exercise of this role?

Looking deeper

No where in the New Testament are all Christians described as or called to be evangelists. Evangelists (like prophets and pastor-teachers) are given a special responsibility to 'prepare God's people for works of service' (Eph 4:12). The evangelist has a special role to play as a 'proclaimer' of the gospel (like Paul). The only references in the New Testament to 'the evangelist' are found in Acts 21:8, Ephesians 4:11 and 2 Timothy 4:5 and these refer to specific people only. Does this mean then that those of us who are not evangelists have no speaking role to play in God's mission to save sinners? Not at all. It is, as you'll see below, a different kind of speaking role to the one the evangelist has.

Our role in God's mission

- If we take the Colossians to be representative of all Christians, then what does Paul say in vv 2-6 about our role in God's mission to save sinners? Use the following table to help you.

Role	Verse	Details
Prayer		
Godly living		
Speaking		

Prayer

- Who in our context (St Mark's / St David's, Sydney, Australia, the world) should we be praying for? In line with vv 3 & 4, what sorts of things should we be praying for?
- Pause for a few minutes and pray for those we know, or know of, whose specific role is to proclaim the gospel to unbelievers.

Godly living

- How might godly living play a role in bringing unbelievers to faith in Christ? You might like to look up Matt 5:14-16 and Titus 2:10.
- How should the knowledge that your life is an advertisement for Christ shape the way you live the Christian life?

Speaking

- What kind of speaking role does Paul have in mind for all Christians?
- Can you think of any examples from your own experience where you have observed Christians speaking '**un**graciously' to unbelievers about Christian things?
- While Paul is concerned about the manner of our responses to unbelievers, he is also interested in the substance of our answers. Are you confident that you could answer your unbelieving friends' questions about Christianity? For example, could you:
 - explain what the gospel is and why you believe it?
 - answer questions about why God allows suffering or what happens to people of other religions?
 - mount an argument for Jesus' resurrection, or the historical reliability of New Testament?
- How can we go about the task of equipping ourselves to be ready for unbelievers questions?

Note to leaders: Could you please ask people in your group if they would be interested in attending a course at church that could help them to answer these sorts of questions. Please let Jaime or Stuart know if there are sufficient numbers of people who are interested.

- Praying, godly living and answering unbelievers' questions are three important roles that Paul expects all Christians to exercise in partnership with God as he seeks to save sinners (there are others but that is for another time). What practical things can we do as individuals and as a church to ensure that we are all playing our part in God's mission?

Spend some time praying about some of the issues raised during your discussion.