

Sermon: Firing Up

Text: Colossians 4:2-6

Introduction:

I think we would all agree that sharing our faith with others (evangelism) can sometimes be one of the most challenging things that God has asked us to do as a Christian.

- Why is that? Why do people struggle so much with sharing their faith?
- What has happened in the times when you have shared your faith with others? Was it well-received? Were you met with rejection?
- Is evangelism something that is only meant to be done by those who have the gift of evangelism?
- What role do you think prayer plays in our sharing of our faith?

Let's back up for a minute, and simply think about the kinds of conversations that we have with others on a daily basis.

- What types of conversations do you have?
- Who do you typically interact with?
- What form do those conversations take? Are they typically face-to-face, or are they conducted through texting, emailing, or social media?
- How has Covid impacted the kinds of conversations that you have? Do you find yourself far more reluctant to speak with others?
- What impact has masks had on your interactions? Are you more hesitant to try to "fight through" the barrier of the mask—and actually strike up a conversation with someone else?
- When was the last time you had what might be considered a "deep" conversation?
- How worried are you about offending others by what you say?
- What do you think it looks like for "iron to sharpen iron" in terms of the kinds of conversations you have? Do you wish you had more of these conversations?
- How angry do you tend to get in your interactions?
- Is there a difference between the way you speak with a family member versus the way you interact with a friend or another type of casual conversation? Why do you think that is?
- Are there times in your typical daily routine that you interact with a neighbor or someone that you don't know (an "outsider" as Paul calls them in this text)?
- What are some examples of these "outsider" conversations? Are most of these types of conversations very brief—and with people that you'll never see again (for example the server at the drive-through window)? Given the fact that you'll probably never interact with these people again—does it really matter how you speak to them or what you say?
- Can you think of a conversation in your life that has really stuck with you (you still remember it clearly, even after all of these years)? What was it about that conversation that made it so memorable?

Examination:

- Read **Colossians 2:2-6**

- What did Paul instruct the believers to do in verse 2? How easy is this to accomplish in your own life?
- Discuss what connection you see between your (a) prayer life; (b) wise conduct; and (c) opportunities to speak with others about Christ.
- What does it mean to be devoted to something or someone and what does it look like in real life?
- What does it mean to be a good neighbor? What about those who are just “different” from you? How should you be a good neighbor to them?
- Talk about where you live—your neighborhood. What is it like? Do you have neighbors that live near you or are you more secluded?
- Do you believe that God can use you in your neighborhood, or do you think that’s just a really nice thought?
- Paul places a lot of emphasis in this passage on prayer. I’ve heard it said that the “original speaker” in prayer is God. What do you think that might mean? If that’s the case, what might that mean for us as we pray?
- What from this passage (these five verses) guides you in what you should pray about? Are these things you pray for currently? Which of these do you think you might add to your prayer time?
- Who should we pray for (v. 3)? Why?
- When you are outside your home—in the yard, at the grocery store, etc.—do your actions and words reflect that of Christ?
- Do you look for opportunities to talk with your neighbors? What holds you back from conversing with them regularly?
- Are your prayers more “me” centered or more “we” centered?
- How do we “season” our conversations with “salt”?
- I am convinced that one of the main reasons we hesitate to begin a conversation with someone else about God is the fear that they will ask us something we don’t know the answer to. Verse 6 addresses that issue. And yet, the verse doesn’t seem to be talking about our ability to give the “right” answer—or our grasp of theology. What do you think Paul is talking about when he mentions “knowing how to answer everyone”?
- I’ve run across a simple four-word approach to living out the message of Colossians 4:2-6 in our daily lives: Pray. Play. Stay. Say. Talk about this with your group. What do you think this means? How can this be an effective strategy in reaching your neighbors for Christ? How can you begin putting this plan into action this week?

Application:

My encouragement to you this week is to deepen your life of prayer so that you are connecting with God throughout your day. And as you engage in various conversations—see them as “divine appointments” that are orchestrated by God. Thinking specifically about your neighbors, begin praying for them by name (if you don’t already). Commit to taking time to visit with them and look for ways to help them out. Make a point to conduct yourself well before not-yet-Christian neighbors to earn an opportunity to someday talk with them about your faith.