***Colossians 4:5-6 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.***

 We are in the city of Colossae in Asia Minor, what is now the southwest corner of modern-day Turkey, this morning. This once great city has been devastated by earthquakes twice in the last 50 years. The population is reeling. The city is trying to rebuild, people are suffering, the industry that made them wealthy, that of producing valuable dyed dark red wool cloth, is in decline. Rome, with Nero as emperor, is demanding more and more tax. Persecution is on the rise. Church leaders are being rounded up. Faithful followers are being martyred. The once thriving Christian church at Colossae is faltering in Faith and Paul, from his prison cell, writes a letter that still applies to us today. Make no mistake – the Christians were not faltering because of the distractions around them, but because of the priorities within them. We don’t falter in our walk because of the world around us, but because of what we make priority within us. Spirit or Self – only one can rule the heart. Priorities identify the ruler.

 Verse 5 starts *Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside*. *Walk*, an action. It doesn’t say Sit. Christian’s are to be active in Faith. *In wisdom*, in strictness of Faith, knowing the Truth of Jesus and walking in that Truth through a world seeking to draw us into perversion and sin. In Matthew 10:16, Jesus says, “*Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*” We’re called to walk in Wisdom, available only by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, through the middle of a wolfpack! Wise and gentle. *Toward,* not avoiding, offering an outward example to *those who are outside.* Those who are outside are non-believers and we are called to walk toward them, in wisdom, with the Gospel in hand.

 Verse 5 ends *redeeming the time****.*** This has the idea of buying up the time, rescuing the time from loss, seizing the opportunity, not wasting time. I saw a saying this week that said, “Satan is far better at redeeming time than we are. He snaps up all that we waste.” That is painfully true. While we watch TV, surf Facebook, complain about all that others aren’t doing, and point out faults, Satan is grabbing every extra minute, working hard because he knows his time is running out. I have bad news folks…. Our time to make an impact for Christ is running out too… are you redeeming the time? Are YOU redeeming the time? God is not going to ask you about anyone else. What you did with the money, talents, time, and love I gave… **you**?

 Verse 6 starts *Let your speech always be with grace.*Let communications always spring from a place of grace. Let motives be right. When we speak towards those who are outside, the non-believers, our motivations must spring from graciousness and love, desiring deep in our souls to speak the Truth of Jesus so our neighbor might know the Truth, and the Truth will set him or her free in Jesus.

 Verse 6 continues *seasoned with salt****.*** Our Grace must be done with prudence, which brings us back to wisdom. Salt represents our knowledge and Faithfulness concerning the Gospel. In Matthew 5:13, Jesus calls believers to be salt, using our Walk to season every interaction, “*You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.* We are to be gracious, but always remain strictly true to the Faith, never wavering. Paul is speaking to those wavering in Colossae… and He is speaking to all those wavering in the Faith today.

 Verse 6 ends *that you may know how you ought to answer each one****.*** We must always be ready to give a good answer to non-believers. Sometimes that answer is in the words we speak. More often it is in the actions we take. Always, it is in the witness we are for the Gospel of Christ.

 This week, let’s consider our witness. Is it memes on Facebook only? Is it lacking graciousness? Is it lacking salt? Is it sitting and not moving? Each of us has a circle of ministry, influence on non-believers. We all have opportunity. Are we moving toward or backing up? Paul knew the many challenges and distractions all around the people of Colossae and, he knew that those very challenges and distractions presented a hotbed of opportunity for the Seed of the Gospel. Are we planting Seeds of the Gospel in this hotbed of opportunity we find ourselves in today? God has placed you in your circle of ministry. What have you planted for Him lately?