

Lifestyle of the Sent Saints

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Colossians 4:5-6

As we begin today I just want to say that I am just so thankful as we just saw the video of VBS. Last night, right before I went to bed I was on Facebook and I saw the behind the scenes of Billy and Bubba. I think about all the technology that we now have and I am reminded of our pastor, Kory Cunningham. Probably around 20 years ago now when he was the youth pastor, he wanted to have videos that explained the youth workers and he did something that we called HBC Cribs. It was like a spin-off of MTV Cribs. He and his wife, Katie, would go into where people were living and he went to my house. This was before I was married to Brandy so it was a bachelor pad. It definitely needed Brandy's touch. If you ever see the video you will shake your head. Then he went to Logan Stout's dorm room when he was living with Cody Brown. He went up there and filmed and it was supposed to be funny and based off the show MTV Cribs. Now, MTV Cribs was going into a celebrity, a rapper, or a movie star's home. You could see their house and see what it was like to live in a famous person's "crib" aka their house. As much as I hate to do this, if you think back and go back further in time which is going to make me sound old, MTV Cribs is kind of like a show that was popular in the 80s and 90s that was called The Lifestyles of the Rich and the Famous which was hosted by Robin Leach. This show wasn't just for celebrities. It was for anybody and everybody around the world. You were going to see what it was like to have a lifestyle who was rich and famous.

The reason why I say all of that is because Paul is getting ready to finish this letter up and he isn't going to talk about the lifestyles of the rich and the famous, he is going to be talking about the lifestyle of those who are sent. Basically what he is doing in the last couple verses is exactly what we say every single week and that is that you are not dismissed, but you are sent. He is saying in verses 5 and 6 that you are sent. But he's not just saying you're sent, he is describing the lifestyle of what it means to be sent

and that is what we want to do this morning. We want to describe the lifestyles of the sent saints.

We have three points this morning about the lifestyle of the sent saints. We need to do three things.

- 1. We need to go from the private prayer closet to the public square**
- 2. We need to lose our lost accent**
- 3. We need to be able to give a tasty answer**

With that being said, let's stand and read Colossians chapter 4, verses 5 and 6.

Scripture:

Colossians 4:5-6 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Point 1 – We need to go from the private prayer closet to the public square

A couple weeks ago Kory talked about Paul and the importance of prayer. Now we see in verse 5 that we must walk. What does it mean to walk? Walk is not me just walking back and forth on the stage. It means it's a lifestyle. This is the way we live day in and day out. We must walk in what? It says wisdom. What does wisdom mean? Wisdom means that you are rightly able to apply knowledge. So you can be or I can be really smart, have a lot of knowledge, but make dumb decisions or act like fools. Wisdom is not only having the knowledge but being able to make the right decisions. As Christians we believe the source for us to grow in living a wise life is Christ.

Now, look with me at John chapter 1, verse 1. What does it say? It says this, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That Word means Christ. So, why doesn't John just say Christ? Why does he say Word? When we take a look at what that word means it means the divine source of all wisdom and understanding. So John is trying to draw out in the first part of his gospel is that Jesus is the

answer. He is eternal. He was there at creation and all of life's answers find their source in Jesus Christ. So when we think through what it looks like to walk in wisdom, the more we know who Jesus is the more it should transform our minds and hearts to have a desire to live like him. Therefore, based on our knowledge of him we make wise decisions and those wise decisions are not just supposed to be here at Hardin Baptist Church in our prayer closet. What does it say? It says that we walk in wisdom towards outsiders. The lost and dying world needs to see our lifestyle. They need to see how we are walking like Christ.

There was a pastor many, many years ago that came from New York and went down to Alabama. Once he got there, there was a guy who was not a believer in Christ and that person was curious about this pastor so he hired a private detective to follow this pastor around. He followed him around and after so many weeks the private detective goes back to the guy in Alabama who isn't a believer and says this, "This is my report on the pastor that you wanted me to follow. He practices what he preaches." The man in Alabama who was not a believer came to Christ because he saw the way this pastor lived. That is what we're called to do. When we're in God's Word, when we are praying, when we are hearing these sermons week in and week out, it is meant for our lives to be changed so that we become more like Christ each and every single week. And it's not just so we grow closer to Christ but for others to see who Christ is.

As we think through this what is the next phrase? We are to walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. When we leave this building trying to walk in wisdom toward outsiders we see each and every single opportunity that God gives us as an opportunity to share his good news. That is basically another way of saying this- time has been purchased. Time is limited. It has been bought. Think about going on a vacation. You spent money for that vacation and no matter what the weather is you want to do something on that vacation because you spent money to make the most of your time. This phrase, "making the most of our time" says that Christ has bought this time for us. It is limited and we need to see that his sovereign hand has put us on this spot to be used by him.

Take a look at Paul as he writing this letter. Where is he? He is in prison! We learn in Phillipians that the entire imperial guard knows about Christ while Paul is in prison. No matter if it's a good situation or a hard situation, Paul was looking at every opportunity as a situation for him to share the good news of who Christ is. We should be absolutely no different.

Let's look at another story I was reading about this week. It was a few decades ago in maybe the 1960s. There was a situation where this lady was attacked and there were 38 people that walked by this lady being attacked and not a single person called the authorities. People researched this later on and they realized and understood this phenomenon called the bystander effect. The bystander effect just means that the more people there are at a certain place when a certain situation like that is occurring the less likely people will do anything. See, we can be tempted when we leave this building and see people in a restaurant or see people where we're working out that we're just another person. No! God has put people in your path. You're not meant to just be a bystander, you are God's workmanship put in a spot to share the good news of who he is.

That is what Paul is wanting to communicate here. We're going from the private prayer closet to the public square to be used for His glory.

Point 2 – We need to lose our accent

If we're going to really be used by his glory it isn't just a lifestyle of action. It's also a lifestyle of words and that is what this next verse is all about. "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." We talk differently. We lose our lost accent. That is point number two. If we are really going to live this out we lose how we used to talk and gain a heavenly accent.

Now, what do I mean by lose a lost accent? Let's think through this. I am originally from southern Illinois and southern Illinois folks have an accent. Now, I say this with love. I've been in Murray, Kentucky for about 25 years. It's been a long time now. When you cross that river the accent picks up a little bit. People go from saying you guys to y'all. I went to a basketball game in western Kentucky because Carlisle County was playing and I love Carlisle County. Some of my best and dearest friends are from Carlisle County. The way I said Carlisle and the way the other fans said

Carlisle was totally different. I literally couldn't understand what was being cheered at the game. Now I have picked up the accent and I'm a full Western Kentuckian. Fast forward to a trip we took where I took a group of college students to New York City. We're in the elevator and we're just talking. These people are watching us and wanting to listen to us. I thought maybe they wanted to hear about Christ so we continued to talk and then someone in the elevator says, "Excuse me, are you guys from Australia?" It was the accent! They had literally never heard people speak from Western Kentucky. They thought we were from a foreign country. Here is the point- as Christians we are called to live in such a way where we no longer have an earthly accent. We have a heavenly accent. We should sound different from the way the world and culture is talking today. Whether it be on social media, to our neighbors, or to our family we are taught to live out and communicate in such a way where it is grace centered.

So, what does it mean to be grace centered? It says in verse 6 to let your speech always- that means through good times, that means through bad times or trials- be gracious. I think Christ is the example of what it means to have gracious speech. In Luke chapter 4, verse 22, it says he speaks with grace. Now, I want you to see how Christ speaks on the cross and how we're supposed to follow him. Let's turn to 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 21 through 25. I want you to see this, "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return..."

Let me ask you this. When someone disrespects you, whether it be your family, whether it be your job, or whether it be your sports team, what do you want to do? Go right back at them. But what does Christ do? He does not do that. Let's continue, "...when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." There is healing going on because grace is being extended by what Jesus does for us on the cross. But Jesus is not silent on the cross, as the world is reviling him, Jesus talks with grace. When you turn to Luke

chapter 23 you will see Jesus on the cross and I want you to see what Jesus says. We have some women that are broken and crying because Jesus is experiencing the excruciating pain of the cross and he says this in verse 28, "But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Then he continues to talk about what is coming their way. As he is taking on the sin of the world he is ministering to others. In Luke chapter 23, verse 34, as the reviling and mocking is incurring, what does he say? Verse 34 says this, "And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."" And then you see that they cast lots to divide his garments and it continues on.

There were some bad guys right next to him on the cross. One of them was a thief and he was interested in wanting to know more about who Jesus is and wanted to be in paradise with him. What does Jesus say in verse 43? Verse 43 says this, "And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."" Jesus is getting to breathe his last breath in these last two verses. Verse 46 says this, "Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. 47 Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!"" You see not only what Jesus is doing on the cross but how he's walking on the cross meaning how his lifestyle is showing on the cross. He is responding with wisdom in these verses not with reviling in return. He asks the Father to forgive them for they know not what they do. He is weeping and yet the situation leads into a thief on the cross and a centurion wanting to know more and wanting to experience Jesus, and they do! They experience the grace of Jesus Christ. The world is wanting to give him wrath. He takes on the wrath so that you and I can experience grace and his words give evidence towards that. We are called to respond in the same exact way. Now, what does that look like for us? How does that look on a day to day or a week to week basis?

Well, I have four kids and a wife. It's summertime and Brandy, my wife, wants to bake a cake. Now, this is something you may not know about me, but I'm high maintenance. Brandy is not. When we first got married she was couponing and doing all of that type of stuff. But not with this cake. This cake we were going bougie. This cake was going to have the really

expensive ingredients. While she was working on this cake the house smelled awesome. Again, it's summertime so it is just perfect. The cake is done and it is sitting on the oven. I'm not there and she has to run some errands with the four kids. They leave and come back. When she comes back she sees our dog, a black goldendoodle named Princess Leia. Princess Leia decided she was going to get on the oven and sample the lemon blueberry cake. Now, in that moment Brandy has a trial. She is tempted to talk with her old accent of being lost. She is being tested and she has to think about how she is going to respond because there are four children watching her and she trusts in the Father's plan. She calmly gets down in the floor, picks up that lemon blueberry cake with the expensive ingredients, and she throws it away. Now, she did not ask the Father to forgive the dog because she didn't know what she was doing but yet at the same time, what was controlling her speech? What was controlling her conduct? Her love towards the Father and her love towards her children.

Here is my point- in the days to come there are going to be situations. They could be with your spouse, with your children, or with the people you're working with. It could be with your neighbor or somebody driving down the road. You're going to be tempted to go back to speaking like you did when you were not in Christ and when that trial comes, when the temptation comes, when the test comes you have to think and remember what Christ has done for you. You have to remember how he hung on that cross for you. By his wounds you have been healed. All of us went astray like sheep but now we have returned to him because of the grace that has been given to us and because of that the way we talk is now different. The goal is for us to respond in the way Jesus would so that a lost and dying world asks this question, "where are you from? Are you from a foreign country?" When that moment comes we have an answer and not just any answer, but a tasty answer to give.

Point 3 – We need to be able to give a tasty answer

It says this in verse 6, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt." John Piper seasoned with salt means it's supposed to be tasty. We have tasty words to give people. Picking back up in verse 6, "so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." Now, what does it mean to have tasty words? It means that our heart has been so captured by Christ that when these moments occur we're able to give an answer

about who he is with joy. Think about this. When someone or something has really captured your heart it's not hard to talk about it. There has never been a grandparent that has struggled to talk about their grandchildren.

I was with somebody a while back who was retired and had bought a house in Arizona. He was so excited about it. He had a security camera up and showed me the cactus and the pool. He was just so excited about his house and he wanted to talk about it. As Christians the radiance of Christ should be overflowing in us. And let me say this. What we need to be like is not a salesman, but satisfied customers. Let me explain the difference. A salesman makes it all up to you. Well, it's not all up to you. The only hope for someone to come to Christ is the Holy Spirit changing their heart. The pressure is off. I've been in situations and I know I'll have one this year no doubt where someone will want to debate and discuss Christianity with me. When they do I just ask this question- if I could prove to you right now without a shadow of a doubt that Christ raised from the dead, if I could show it to you right now with 100% proof, will you believe? Do you know what happens every time I've asked that question? Do you know what their response is? It is either I don't know or no. So I always wonder why am I even having the conversation with them? No matter what I say or what I do I'm not going to win and even if I win I'm not going to win.

The only way I know how to do this is by being a satisfied customer. I was once blind but now I see. Every time I get in His Word no matter how good or hard life has been I've never regretted it. He has never let me go! That is what it means! The more we understand who He is, even though we don't always have the answer, we can be satisfied customers in such a way that we delight in Christ and share who he is. Does that make sense? John Piper has another quote that says, "God is most glorified when we are most satisfied with him." When we are truly finding our satisfaction in Christ we can't help but talk about him. Yes, there are going to be times and situations where we don't know and we mess up but the more we find our hope in him the more it puts us in a spot for God to use us. Now, we can't change the hearts but God uses us to change hearts. What I want you to hear, what I want you to feel, what I want you to see, and what I want you to understand is this. When you live this out it makes a

difference. It really does! You should be ready to give a response as you walk and as you talk to give an answer.

I was listening to a podcast made by my college roommate, Robert Cunningham, about masculinity. It was so interesting and after I listened to it this week I called him to talk about it to make sure I understood it right. He said there is research right now about the three types of fathers in our households today. So this is just in general it obviously doesn't cover every single situation but this is what the research shows. When a father and husband is truly trying to read the Word, live it out, walk in wisdom like we are talking about this morning, and is faithful in church he is the best type of father. His children and wife are truly experiencing love, are being well taken care of, and are growing in a good home. Do you know what the second type of father is? Secular fathers meaning they are not connected to church but they love their children. Do you know what was number three? I'm going to put this in quotes, "nominal Christian fathers" meaning they aren't a true Christian but they profess Christ and they don't live it out. They aren't striving to walk in wisdom. They may go to church but they live completely differently throughout the week. These fathers are actually doing hard to their family. Right now, men in this church, how you are living could either be tremendously helping or hurting your wife and children.

We really need to take these verses seriously. This should be convicting! It should convict us to have the desire to live the Christian lifestyle. With that being said, you may think... *Ok, I know I've messed up. I know I've struggled, but Chris, I'm trying! I'm getting in the Word. I'm showing up here. I'm trying to impact my spouse, my children, and my parents, but nothing is happening. I don't know what else to say. I don't know what else to do. What is the answer to that?* This is what I want to say to you. I want to encourage you to just continue to show up. Just keep showing up!

I was thinking back to a friend of mine named Michael. I was in a fraternity in college and I was at the fraternity house one night when Michael came up to me and said he wanted to talk about Christ with me. Now, this is like the last person in the world I wanted to ask this question of me because Michael at the time was on the debate team for Murray State University. He was ranked nationally in debating. I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed.

I don't know how to debate. If you debate me even if you're wrong you'll still beat me. I had no idea how I was going to handle this, but he asked so we meet and I do the only thing I know to do. I take him to Los Portales, we get into the Word, and we open to Ephesians. We started studying Ephesians. I was preparing for some type of debate. I was nervous because I just knew he was going to ask a question and I wouldn't have any idea how to respond. He actually reads it and likes it. So, we meet again. Then we meet again and we meet again. I finally say, "Do you want to go to church?" Now, Michael is from St. Louis and he is Catholic. Hardin is a little different than the Catholic church in St. Louis. I wasn't sure how he would respond to coming here but sure enough he likes it and he wants to come back. One Sunday I'm saying goodbye and I think we're going to go out to lunch but he grabs me and says, "I think I want to come to Christ." I had no idea what to do. So, what do I do? I go and find Ricky. I literally start running around the church trying to find Ricky. I knew he was probably talking to somebody and I interrupted that conversation and say, "Michael wants to come to Christ." Michael comes to Christ. He gets baptized and so on and so forth.

So, I start feeling pretty good about myself. I ministered to him for about a year and I start thinking I did pretty good and about that time pride creeps in. There was a girl on campus at Murray State that comes up to me and says, "I heard about Michael coming to Christ." She said, "I want you to know that I saw his lostness in class and I decided to start praying from him that day." She gave me the date and it was literally right around the day that he came up to me and started asking about Christianity. Right then is when I realized that I did nothing. I messed up in so many ways. He initiated to me. I didn't initiate to him. I felt so ill-equipped to get into the Word with him. I should have invited him to church a lot sooner than when I did. When he was ready to come to Christ I nothing was even in my head. All I could think about was John 3:16! I had to get somebody else to help me out. I had a little pride from that and the Lord literally humbled me with that too because really it was God moving upon Michael's heart causing somebody to pray for this to occur. I wouldn't trade that for the world! The joy of being a part of God's work, that lifestyle is so much better than anything else this earth has to give us. It is! Do you know what it's like for me to call Michael? I call him usually once or twice a year. It's awesome. I'm getting old now. I used to be like the big brother but now

I'm like the father to these college students. One of his daughters is thinking about coming to Murray State and could be at this church. It's awesome!

This is what it's all about. No matter how ill-equipped you feel, you might not know the answer, and no matter what the struggle might be just keep showing up. Keep praying. Keep being there. The joy that the Lord will give you not only as you're doing his work, but even if it takes a month, a year, a decade, or 50 years, it's so glorious when you see those people come to Christ. That is what we want at Hardin. Kory Cunningham made a video about HBC Cribbs so the youth could be exposed to who we really are outside of this building. What we are saying here is this- when we say you are sent, saints, the world needs to see your house. Your children need to see your house. They need to see that you walk in wisdom towards outsiders. Think about Robin Leach. Robin Leach gave an interview and they asked him why he thought the show as so popular. Robin said this, "when they watch the show they think deep down inside that maybe I can have what they have." We want to live in such a way where the rich and famous of America and the poor and outcast of America see us and the joy that only Christ can give by the way we walk and the way we talk and then they ask us this question, "Can I have what he or she has?" Amen? The answer to that question is yes! Yes, but not because of anything they did or we did but because of what Christ has done for us. That is what we are called to do. That is what we want here.

Now, as we conclude this service, I want you to really think about what it means to be a sent saint. How are you doing in walking in wisdom toward outsiders? How are you doing with your speech? Is it filled with grace? Is it tasty and seasoned with salt? Are you giving answers to each person you come in contact with? I don't want you think about only yourself, but I want you to think about others in this body of Christ as well and pray for all of us as we think about not being dismissed, but being sent. Pray we truly demonstrate the lifestyle of being a sent saint to a world that desperately needs to hear the news of Jesus Christ.

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