

## ULC Sermon Study Resource

*Greater Than: Isolation*

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**Prayer:** Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

**Icebreaker:** What can you thank God for this week? How are you celebrating Thanksgiving?

**Reading:** Colossians 4:2-18

**Outline:** We thrive in the midst of isolation by praying with thanksgiving, walking in wisdom, and committing to community.

- I. Pray with Thanksgiving (v. 2-4)
  - a. Praying *with thanksgiving* helps us focus on who God is and what He has done.
  - b. We can be thankful for people even when we're isolated from them, as Paul does when writing this letter from prison.  
**Q: How does Colossians 1:3-14 show the thankfulness in Paul's prayers?**
- II. Walk in Wisdom (v. 5-6)
  - a. Wise speech is gracious and "seasoned with salt" (an idiom for compelling).
  - b. Walking in wisdom entails life and speech that is tactful yet bold, gracious and true, and prepared to give an answer.  
**Q: Why is it important to walk in wisdom towards outsiders?**
- III. Commit to Community (v. 7-18)
  - a. Sending greetings from the people Paul has partnered with may be confusing or feel meaningless to us, but it shows the personal connections and community of the church.
  - b. Ministry is lived out in community. Paul's appeal to "remember my chains" asks the Colossians to pray for him, work for the Gospel, and think of those suffering for the faith.  
**Q: How can we commit to community when we feel isolated ourselves?**

### Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) Are you feeling isolated right now? What is causing this isolation?
- 2) Why is it so hard to be isolated? How can we still pray with thanksgiving despite our isolation?
- 3) How can we wisely "make the best use of the time"? (v. 5)
- 4) What would it look like for you to be wise in speech? How can you speak with grace and "salt"?

### Suggestions for further study:

- Philippians 4:4-7 **Q: How does thankful prayer help us receive God's peace?**
- James 3:1-18 **Q: What does this passage teach us about wise speech?**
- Hebrews 12:1-2 **Q: How do we walk surrounded by "a cloud of witnesses"?**

**Closing Prayer:** "Gracious God, in so many ways during this era of pandemic, social media, and individuality we find ourselves isolated and disconnected from one another. We pray that you would bring healing to this stark reality and free us from the prison of our isolation through the forgiveness of your son Jesus. We ask for forgiveness that overcomes the sin separating us from you and from each other and speaks to our deepest realities and longings. Let us live lives in communion with one another and with you, and remember that we are never fully isolated because of what you offer us in your son Jesus. Lord, may we be a place where His forgiveness reigns supreme. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen."