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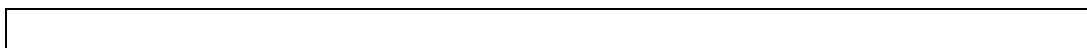
**SUFFERING AND PERSECUTION OF THE
SAINTS AND THE GREAT EVIL OF THE SO
CALLED
“prosperity gospel”**

by

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[BOOK 107 – Part 1]

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THE BLASPHEMOUS NATURE OF THE SO CALLED “PROSPERITY GOSPEL”

Satan hasn't needed to invent new evils for thousands of years, for man's Old Sin Nature is well known to him, as in the Garden of Eden he began his path of deceit for mankind by leading our ancestors astray after their own human desires for independence, power and knowledge rather than obedience to the Lord's clear commands.

As all marketing executives understand, greed and the desire for influence, power, wealth and ease are the universal desires of all members of Old Sin Nature dominated mankind. Greed, as one crooked businessman pointed out to me one day, is the only dependable human emotion and drive. Like all lust, greed is **not good**. It is a great evil that despises and abuses all others for the sake of the greedy person's lust being met.

The Bible has warned against this satanic evil from the beginning, but we see it written large in our modern church, where prosperity, power/influence, position in time is seen as more important than heavenly rewards. The catch cry of these new preachers of unrighteousness is, “have it now and have it later”, or “have it now and don't think about later!” God's Word from the beginning has warned against these servants of the enemy and their viewpoint, but it has satanically deceptive force, and it always has power behind it to those who want an easy life and a comfortable journey through this life. What is the true Christian message?

Many prefer the “Broadway” of life's pleasures to the narrow/constricted and thorn surrounded mountainous path that the Lord tends to call his disciples to follow. Some live in the palaces of this world like Daniel, but most of us are called to walk with Ezekiel and Jeremiah the “narrow/constricted path” that all too often involves suffering, sickness, and pressure filled situations.

Paul also mentors these things as we will see below as we look at his testimony from his earliest days in **Galatians 4:12-16**, **1 Corinthians 4:9-16**, **2 Corinthians 11:13-31**, then at the time of maturity of ministry while under house arrest in Rome, **Philippians 2:3-4**, **3:7-10**, **Colossians 1:24-26**, then finally we warns us about conditions in the “last days” in **2 Timothy 3:1-17**, and calls us to stand with apostolic power and certainty with Jesus on the narrow thorn surrounded mountain path that alone leads to eternal life. **2 Timothy 4:1-8**. We will explore these below and the highlighted references are to be read aloud in your home/study group. Reflect as a group on each of the bible passages and follow up this study in the EBCWA website Bible Book Commentaries and examine the passages in detail as a follow up to this booklet. Our challenge is to biblical thinking about the days we find ourselves in.

Even Daniel suffered many pressure situations, although living in a palace, and we see him facing the den of lions in his 80s. Paul specifically mentors the “narrow path” Jesus calls us to walk, and all through his ministry he warns against the “fake” Broadway Road that the majority have always taken. It's a

constant battle through mankind's time on this temporary planet between the fake and the real – the “narrow way that leads to eternal life” and the “broad way that leads to eternal destruction”. The majority will sadly follow after satanic religious deception, like our present “prosperity gospel”, but this booklet is a trumpet call in these last days to all believers who wish to walk in spirit and in truth and honour the Lord rather than satisfy their lust for ease.

This is not me being dramatic, it is sad and biblical truth, so please believer hear the Lord's call to your heart. Read also the short paper at the end of this booklet – and set up your ministry Jesus' way! Then read our “Servant Leadership” book and walk in the path that Jesus calls us to, the “apostolic faith”. **Jude 3.** “The faith once delivered to the apostles”.

Matthew 7:13-23. “13. *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

14. *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

15. *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

16. *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*

17. *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*

18. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

19. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

20. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

21. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

22. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

23. *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

Proverbs 6:16-23. “16. *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:*

17. *A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

18. *An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,*

19. *A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

20. *My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:*

21. *Bind them continually upon thine hear and tie them about thy neck.*

22. *When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.*

23. *For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*”

Do you not tremble when you read Jesus words? He isn't challenging the liberal theologians for they are obviously unbelievers and are mockers of biblical truth, as Peter points out before his own martyrdom. The enemy have always been mockers, from the days of Noah, **3 Peter 3:1-9**. The Lord addresses the danger of the self and satanically deceived and very directly tells us that, “as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the last days”. **Matthew 24:37**.

Deception was and remains Satan's main tool to rob God's people of their joy and service and deceive religious unbelievers to their eternal judgment. People who have followed after a false “prosperity gospel” message actually believed it was God's truth they were following, (and they sound more like Pentecostal Pastors) are in grave peril for they are eternally lost!

Let us approach this subject with godly fear and trembling, for we seek God's path, for it alone guarantees eternal life. We need to have “fear of missing out” on God's path, God's power, God's purpose in this life. **Hebrews 2:3, 3:7-19, 4:1-2**. We are told very clearly that persecution and pressures may await us on our “narrow/constrained mountain path” with the Lord through life, and that these things are not the sign of us being in sin but are the sign that the “prince of this present world” may “hate” us for Jesus' sake. The Lord reminds us that the Holy Spirit is given as the “Comforter” in all such pressures, not as the “money counter” to count our wealth and success!

John 15:18-27. *“18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

23. He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

24. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

25. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”

In this world Jesus told us we will have “trouble” not prosperity as the norm, but that through the power HE gives us through the Holy Spirit within (**2 Timothy 1:7, 1 John 4:4**) we can be overcomers against all pressures that will come in God’s power and provision. God’s provision to achieve all he calls us to do will always be “abundant” as Paul and the others found, and we are called to faith-rest our lives in that divine provision to achieve the divine purpose. **Hebrews 11:1-3, 12:1-3**. Let us walk “our mountain/tough path”, called, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit alone for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11:1-3 *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders received witness. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”*

Hebrews 12:1-3 *“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.”*

2 Timothy 1:7 *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”.*

1 John 4:4 *“Ye are of God little children and have overcome them, because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world”.*

John 16:33. *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”*

The Lord will supply all we need in order to fulfil the divine commission for our lives, but never to fulfil self centred prayer lists that are based on our lust for ease, wealth and plenty, but the Lord will always “fill up” all we need for worship, service and the needs of others and ourselves to do the on-going work. We are called to God’s constricted and thorn surrounded mountain path, and it is His Will we are now here to do, and so it is HIS responsibility to provide us with all we need to accomplish His task! We do His will, and He pays the bills!

In the Lord’s will and upon His path for us in life it is about service – it is all about “others” – for we are here to show Jesus’ love and care for the eternal salvation of others. We cannot do God’s work in human strength, and we are not meant to – God provides His Power to strengthen, His Love to encourage, and the calm of mind that we need amidst the pressures that will inevitably come. Let us challenge ourselves as we begin our study. What is our heart’s

desire? Is it for personal ease or the glory of the Lord? Do we want to be famous, or do we want to bring glory to His Name?

Philippians 4:10-19. *“10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every-where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

14. Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

15. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

16. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

18. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

19. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

20. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Some may be called to walk a path where they have great wealth, but as a millionaire believer friend of mine said to me one day – “John, this wealth is a daily burden for I must be a good steward of what God has given me for his glory and not be distracted by what I could spend money on for myself”. So, if we have great material prosperity at times, we give thanks and pour it out to the Lord’s work, for all he gives is for service, not self-centred temporary enjoyment. Nothing in the Church Age is for us it is all for the church body and to bring glory to The Lord not us. Who gets the glory from what we do? We can enjoy and say grace and blessing over nice food, clothes, cars, and houses but like Daniel we praise God for any palace and seek God’s path and glory in every opportunity our unique path provides.

Notice Paul’s words in the letter to Philippi above. He is under pressure as many times as he is “abounding”, for in all circumstances, and in all situations, he is seeking the glory of the Lord and expecting the Lord to “come through” with all he will need to do the work. The Lord always does! Its never however about our lust-based desires, but about God’s Plan and our desire to fulfil it 100% in our short lives.

PAUL IS OUR MENTOR IN SPIRITUAL POWER UNDER PRESSURE

Paul calls us all to be “followers of him”, in his first letter and in his Prison Epistles, and right to the end he mentors a believer pouring out his life as unto the Lord. He encourages the believers to follow his doctrine and his life example, exactly following Jesus’ instruction that it is the “fruit” of lips and life that prove a person is worthy to follow.

Galatians 4:12-16 *“12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.*

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”

Philippians 3:13-17 *“13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.”

Paul reminds the Galatians that they are to always remember they are “crucified together with Christ”, **Galatians 2:20ff**. This means standing with the Lord and with the apostles, ready to suffer, endure pain, endure public shame and disgrace, be ready to be separated from others in this life, and finally die to the things of this world and lay our lives on the line for Jesus and his Church.

Paul was always contrasting the Fake and the Real and encouraging believers to be discerning and spot the phoney preacher-prophet before they were led astray by them into danger and death. Note his words in **2 Corinthians 11:13-31**. Read these words together as a home group or church and ask yourselves – is this the testimony you hear today? This man suffered and he didn’t complain or act as if it was the result of his sin, or that God was unfair. He celebrates his path of pain and pressure! This is the walk of faith we are called to!

1 Corinthians 4:9-13, 16, 6:3 *“9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.*

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place;

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?”

Philippians 2:3-4 *“3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

It is always about our service to “others” never about our rights and our personal pleasures. We are called to holiness not worldliness and Paul mentors the mental attitude required to hear the Lord’s “well done good and faithful servant”. Paul was ready to lose all, and he did, but he gained blessing beyond words forever. Are we ready to follow Paul and embrace the “fellowship of His suffering”? by this he means the suffering of the Lord that we may be asked to understand a little deeper – and the only way this can occur is to endure suffering ourselves. James and Peter articulated these things even before Paul.

Philippians 3:7-10 *“7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;”

Colossians 1:24-26 *“24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.”

James 5:8-11 *“8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure.”

1 Peter 2:19-21, 4:13 *“19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.*

20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

4: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

THE LORD CONSISTENTLY URGES US TO EMBRACE ANY SUFFERING IN FAITH

Habakkuk 2:4, *“Behold, his soul that is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith”.*

Mark 11:24, *“Therefore I say unto you, whatever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them”.*

Galatians 5:1. *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage”.*

In case we miss it in the New Testament, the Lord has made sure we are challenged in both Testaments to walk by faith, under guidance from the Holy Spirit and the Word alone. As I grow older the Lord has “hammered” into me this truth, reminding me daily through suffering and testing circumstances that I am not smart enough to run my own life, nor guide my own paths. I need God’s thoughts, God’s direction, God’s protective love to encourage, God’s power in my life, and I need to be living in accordance with His Plan for my brief time here, or my life has no value eternally whatsoever.

Isaiah 55:6-9, *“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts re not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

Jeremiah 10:23-24. *“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walks to direct his steps. O Lord correct me, but with justice, not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing.”*

In case we have any doubts about the apostolic message being the same as the Lord’s words we have Luke’s account of Paul’s ministry below, where he notes his message to the earliest churches after the Lord had raised him from the dead, when he was stoned to death at Lystra. Note the text here, for Paul has apparently been killed by the mob and then raised from the dead – and he just relaxes and keeps ministering – he doesn’t make himself a celebrity – there is one Celebrity – the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no self-centredness with the apostolic ministry and there must not be with ours if we wish to be apostolic. **Jude 3.**

Acts 14:19-28 *“19. And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.*

20. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21. And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

22. Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

24. And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25. And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

26. And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

28. And there they abode long time with the disciples.”

Dealing with pressure situations and growing spiritually through faith applied in the Holy Spirit’s power was the “norm” for the apostles and their expectation for all the new believers. We believe that this remains the Lord’s expectation for us all. We are to grow in the “grace and the knowledge of the Lord”, **2 Peter 3:18**, and be ready to follow our Lord into any situation he calls us to walk through with his hand in ours. God’s power, God’s path alone – for there is no other path of any eternal significance!

Everywhere we walk in his plan for our life we have the filling of the Holy Spirit to comfort us and the Lord beside us for living fellowship, but it may be through fire and great darkness at times. It is His Light and His Word and Spirit that comforts us in such places. Hear Peter and Paul’s encouragement and see and understand clearly the true nature of the “normal” Christian walk

through this present world. Let us be truly “apostolic”, like Jesus and like them.

1 Peter 2:18-22. *“18. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.*

19. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:”

1 Peter 4:12-19. *“12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

Romans 5:1-11. *“1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4. And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10. *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*
11. *And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”*

Paul's expectation was that pressure situations would be normal for the believer under satanic attack in the intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict that follows the Cross, the Empty Tomb, and Pentecost. The victory of the Cross and Empty Tomb has defeated Satan strategically, but we are still urged to keep our armour on, for the defeated enemy is rage filled at his defeat and he seeks to destroy any careless believer who does not go about armed in the Spirit! **Philippians 4:4-7, 1 Peter 5:5-9**. Peter builds on James earlier words, **James 4:7-10**. If believers do not understand these things at the centre of the present stage of the “Angelic Conflict” they will not be obedient to the Lord, will not keep themselves safe and will become casualties rather than be “overcomers”.

We now walk the Lord's victorious spiritual battlefield in this world, and the ultimate eternal Victory is assured for the Holy Spirit filled believer, but alertness is called for each and every moment of every day, for **the enemy's troops still walk about and they remain malice filled**. Do a word study of the military command words, “alert”, “stand” and see how many times believers are given “orders” that would be appropriate to troops on a battlefield, not any parade ground or holiday camp. The false “prosperity gospel” deceptively urges believers to live as if the enemy is “bound” and there is no battle to fight daily just fun to be had! This is a satanic deception and anyone following this lie will become a casualty in the angelic conflict.

In this present world we are living still on a battlefield where the Lord Jesus Christ defeated the enemy of mankind, but where the enemy is still fighting any rear-guard actions he can to distract, maim and kill believers. This present world is not a holiday-camp where we relax, but remains a battlefield, where deceptive enemies lie to us, pretending they are no threat but will disable and kill the unwary and spiritually unarmed. The “Marriage Supper of the Lamb” is our relaxing time and that is to come, but only after the Church is with the Lord in heaven. Revelation 19.

Until that eternal relaxation and celebration time we are called by the apostles, “soldiers” and “ambassadors” of the court of heaven in still enemy occupied territory, even though it is the blood soaked ground of the Lord's victory over sin and death. Evil is spiritually defeated but yet to be fully removed. We are 100% sure that it will be finally defeated and removed – but that is the Lord's Second Advent and until then we are his soldiers and ambassadors, and we have our “daily orders” as soldiers do (below).

So let us stand to attention before each day's battles – as the soldiers of the Lord - and let us hear his “Daily Orders” for those of us in the Church Age and be 100% obedient to his commands to us. We prove our love by following his orders, not being deceived by the agents of the enemy who have infiltrated the churches.

WE FOLLOW JESUS! AMEN!

John 15:14, *“You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you”.*

2 Corinthians 11:13-15. *“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.”*

CHURCH AGE “DAILY ORDERS” FOR ALL BELIEVERS

Ephesians 6:10-18. *“10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

James 4:7-10. *“7. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

8. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

1 Peter 5:6-10. *“6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

7. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9. Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10. *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

11. *To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”*

James 1:12-19, 26-27. *“12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

13. *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

14. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

15. *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

16. *Do not err, my beloved brethren.*

17. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

18. *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.*

19. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:*

26. *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*

27. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”*

James is very blunt about the reality of pressure, the “normal” nature of trouble and temptation, and the need to stand against it without blaming anyone else, and then he warns us of deceptive enemies pretending to be friends. We are warned firstly to be wary of the great dangers coming from rich people who will abuse the saints, and the danger for the saints being deceived by riches.

James 5:1-6, 10-11. *“1. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.*

2. *Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten.*

3. *Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.*

4. *Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.*

5. *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.*

6. *Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.*

10. *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.*

11. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

Paul speaks also of "deceitful lusts", **Ephesians 4:22**, whereby believers are coned into following after things that do not matter and ignoring the eternal things that will actually bring glory to the Lord Jesus. He speaks confidently of our victory in Christ Jesus, and he assures the Roman Church that they can never be separated from the Love and Power of the Lord Jesus Christ even though they will most certainly go through great pressure situations and many may give their lives for the Lord.

Romans 8:35-39. *"35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 12:10-15. *"10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

11. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

12. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

14. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

Many in this church suffered and died in the persecution of 65-67 AD including Peter and his wife, and Paul, possibly Timothy also, and many, many others in and around Rome. The pagan writers of the time recorded how nasty the deaths were of many, and how even the pagans came to hate Nero due to his self-centred and malicious murder of believers.

The author of Hebrews reminds us that we are all being cheered on from the stands of eternity by all the great saints of the past, Hebrews 12:1-3 (above and below), who watch with interest our struggles and triumphs as we battle our way through the angelic conflict. In a battlefield who isn't fighting? The answer is of course = the coward, and also those who stay out of the fighting for other reasons than cowardice, like being an agent of the enemy, or just self-centred laziness or lusts.

What are we to make of people who speak of and seek after wealth and power now as their right before the sight of the saints who gave their lives for the Lord? What must the saints of the past who suffered and died for their testimony say in heaven as they watch and hear the prosperity focused

believers and make believers of today? Hebrews Chapter 11! What are we to say in light of the multitude of believers who even today are giving their lives for the Lord in many lands and suffering great want?

Do we accuse the holy martyrs and suffering saints of being sinners? Are they in error because of their present poverty and suffering? Are believers who suffer today in sin, do they lack faith, or are they just being asked to walk a harder path than us at this point, and may they possibly even win more eternal rewards than us?

Hebrews 11:32 – 12:3. *“11:32. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:*

33. Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

34. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38. (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40. God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

12:1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

We are on dangerous ground here if we accuse any poor or sick believer of being in error, for Job’s counsellors were all prosperity gospel preachers and accused Job of sin, and our Almighty God condemns them all to death, and Job’s prayer for them alone saved their lives! **Job 42:7-10.** The whole book of Job opposes the “prosperity gospel” message, for the preachers of all such nonsense are roundly condemned by the Lord, as being in satanic (though well meaning and sincere at times) error! God does not applaud sincerity, only truth!

Job 42:7-10. *“7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.

10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.”

God forbid that we insult the martyrs of yesterday or today – and yet this is exactly what the prosperity gospel preachers do every time they praise their own big cars, Lear Jets, palatial homes and lavish lifestyles and seek more money from God’s people to pay for their lust filled “expenses”.

In light of this Biblical discussion, what are we to expect as we face the “last days” of this present age? Sadly, it is to see more and more of these falsehoods proclaimed by deceived and deceiving men and women. The satanic nature of the prosperity gospel message is clear when you realise that every dollar given to these so called “ministries” is a dollar that isn’t going into a genuine ministry that is bringing glory to the Lord.

Every person deceived by this evil message is sadly a person who later walks away from the Lord feeling “let down” by the false promises of the slick preachers of what I call “cash-Christendom”, and yet they have never met the real Jesus who is with us in trouble and distress. Was Jesus wrong when He said, “in this world you will have trouble, but be of good courage ...” **John 16:33.**

Let us tell ourselves the truth brethren and stand against this old evil in its new guise. Let us silence the “counsellors/persecutors of Job” who abound in our own day. We are well warned that we will have many of them about! The “last days” are days when the enemy’s deception reaches an all time high, but we are warned and can be ready and stable as Paul was.

2 Timothy 3:1-5, 4:1-5. *“3:1. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*

2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4. Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

4:1. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2. *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*
3. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*
4. *And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*
5. *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*
6. *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.*
7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*
8. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”*

Let us choose our company believers! Let us select the company of the genuine saints like Job and the apostles of the Lord, not these make believer “aints”, in their white suits and patent leather shoes, who preach evil for their own benefit and the robbery of the genuine Church and her missions. This is Satan’s strategy – for every dollar given to the dodgy work or fakes robs a genuine godly ministry of its support.

Let us select our company and be comfortable with the words of the apostles and stand in the apostolic faith. **Jude 3**. We stand with our brethren who have suffered and died for their faith down the years and lest we stand ashamed before them and our Lord we do not seek a rose covered path through this life, but we seek the Lord’s only path for us, and whatever that brings to us.

We welcome any wealth that comes for if it comes from the Lord it will be provision for ministry, not funds for self centred pleasure. We seek the blessing and abundance of the Lord’s provision for His Worship and Work, not our rest and relaxation. One great modern saint who gives millions of dollars a year to ministry said, “I have learned that the more I shovel out to the Lord, the more the Lord shovels back into my businesses, and the Lord always has a bigger shovel than me”. If we are prospered, as this man was in the Lord, it is to pour blessing to the glory of Jesus, not buy another new car to add to our garage full of classic cars!

We stand as the Lord’s soldiers, fully armed and filled with the Holy Spirit ready to worship, serve and minister to the saints, and we look to heaven for our provisions and our ever-lasting rewards. We stand with Paul not the fakes of the money making satanic religious circus we see in so many places.

REAPING AND SOWING

The preachers of the “Prosperity Gospel” will often quote from selected passages and draw “principles” from them but beware that the text they quote is not taken out of its context, and so does not actually teach something significantly different to the things these men and women are arguing. Always read the book a text is from and keep it in the context of the whole message of the human author of scripture, for they were Holy Spirit led to place things carefully and systematically.

2 Peter 3:14-18. *“14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 18. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”*

Favourite texts for the false preachers to **twist** are **Malachi 3:8-10, and 2 Corinthians 9:6**. They are representative of the others they will use, and so I will address them briefly here to underline the message that we have already seen above. The key background message of all the Scriptures, Old Testament and New Testament, is that God blesses us that we might be a blessing to others, and that the “blessing” may be material for some, but it may not, but whatever the Lord blesses us with, it is never for self centred enjoyment, but to pour out blessing to others to the glory of the Lord Jesus name and the uplifting of his Church.

Let us examine the principles of Malachi chapter 3. The first thing to notice about this chapter is it speaks of the Coming of the Lord to Israel as their Messiah. It speaks of the first messenger who announces the Lord (John the Baptist – Elijah figure) and the prophetic word given here in 399 BC was fulfilled 100% in the Lord’s first Advent 29-32 AD.

It is a strong condemnation of the hypocrisy in the days of Malachi, and right through to the days when the Lord himself will come. Pharisaic hypocrisy was a major target for the Lord’s attention in his First Advent. The Lord told many parables relating to money and giving and challenged religious and legalistic hypocrisy in every way. These challenges remain relevant to us and the two Biblical Doctrines relating to GIVING are below, set out by points to follow this up, for we are all challenged to “give as unto the Lord”, and do so until he returns, or we join him through the door of death. Remember Stephen’s

words, “I see Jesus”. **Acts 7:55-56**. We do not enter the “great unknown” at death but fall into the arms of Jesus, our loving Saviour and Lord.

Remember, the Jewish “tithes” were not just ten percentage gifts, they were actually the “income tax” for the temple upkeep, the Feasts, and the poor in ancient Israel. In the Doctrinal summaries below this is spelled out more fully, but the annual tithes, depending on the year in the agricultural cycle, could be a ten percent payment, or up to 23.3% in some years, including a gift for the “poor of the land” also. Free will offerings were always on top of the basic “tithes”.

The problem in Malachi’s day was that the people were lying about their annual agricultural business profits and so were “robbing” the temple and the Levites of the needed funds to keep the temple sacrifices, feasts and charity work operating. The temple and the sacrifices spoke of the coming Messiah and so it was vital that they operated properly as they prepared for his arrival and spoke of His person and His work!

To fail to fulfil their obligation to support the Levites, the Temple, and the poor of the land, was to “rob God” of the witness to the coming Messiah and to show contempt for the Mosaic Law and the Lord’s plan for Israel as the “light bearer nation” before the gentiles. It was a serious insult to God, just as believers today failing to support the local church, and its work, and their pastor, and yet expect the church to “be there for them”.

The key issue is what is to be our mental attitude as we give? Do we give in grace and gratitude, in joy at what the Lord has poured out upon us, or do we calculate our giving to the percentage point and give “what is required”? Paul speaks about this, following up the many parables of the Lord, in 2 Corinthians chapters 8-9, and these chapters are referred to below in the two doctrinal studies on “Giving”.

It is our ministry’s position that we give in grace and gratitude, not in legalistic calculation of what is the “correct amount”. We believe that as Church Age believers, following the parables the Lord told, the teaching of the apostles, and the example of the Early Church, we are to give “abundantly”, as the Lord has prospered us, and we are able to give, and that giving may be in time, talents, spiritual gifting, goods or money. It is always to be “with joyfulness and gratitude in our hearts”, not a calculator in our hand.

Malachi’s people had a strict calculation to stick to in order to support temple, Levites, Annual Feasts and the poor of the land, and they were robbing God by not meeting that requirement, but they were being challenged to give far more as a “free will” offering also on top of any obligatory tithes. We pay our taxes to the State, so all our giving is “free will offering”, and it is to be with joy. As Paul reminds us, “God loves a cheerful giver”. **2 Corinthians 9:7**.

The issue for Malachi, and as the Lord’s prophet, the issue for the Lord, is that their slack giving of the tithe is a reflection of their slackness in love towards the Lord their God and God’s people. They need to return to the right level of

love towards the Lord first, well before they re-open their wallets. (Verse 7 – Revelation 3:19-22.) Malachi will go on to describe the sort of lifestyle of the “lover of the Lord” who will be speaking often of the Lord, not just calculating their minimal possible offering! **Malachi 3:16-18.**

The issue is not that the Lord will “double their investment” with him in giving. The issue is that if they get their love for the Lord right, then they will meet their obligations towards his holy temple and the Levites who run it, and they will support the poor! As James identifies, building on the Lord’s words, recorded in Matthew chapters 6 and 25, if we get our heart right towards the Lord, we will have all else right. That means we will give to the Lord’s work, and we will support our poorer brethren! **James 1:22 – 2:26.**

That means, as Paul notes in 2 Corinthians 8-9, that we will pour with joy all we are able to give towards the Lord’s work. As the Lord has prospered us so we will give. That means we will not try to give when we actually need to receive, as we have no money, but even if we have no money at this point, we will still give, but it will be our time, energy, work, or some other thing. Whatever we give it will be given with joy not with any expectation of getting back, and we will give without a calculator in our hands.

The Lord will meet our needs so that we can meet the needs of the churches, but note here, it is the meeting of needs not the meeting of lusts or “wants”. We give freely and with joy, and we must be ready to receive if we have need to at times, without embarrassment, if we face the famines that this world brings at times. When we cannot give money we give time, skills, energy, worship and counsel.

The prosperity gospel preachers miss the obvious here, that we are to support each other, for good and spiritual brethren are at times “financially poor” and will need our help and we may need theirs at some point. The Jerusalem Church helped the others early on, but later needed help to deal with a famine there. They were not spiritual in wealth and carnal when they needed help – they were spiritual both times, and so were the others who received help from them, and then later financially helped them. The believer needs to be ready to “abound” and “be abased”, and that means we are to be ready to receive gifts from others and then give gifts as we are able later. **Philippians 4:10-13.**

Any prosperity we have here is to “pour out” to the glory of the Lord, and any need we have is to be poured out before the Lord, **1 Peter 5:5-10**, knowing that He will meet our needs in accordance with the riches that are in our relationship with Christ Jesus. **Romans 9:23, Ephesians 2:2-8, Philippians 4:19.**

We are to be relaxed about wealth and goods, seeing them as mere “details of this present life”, and be ready to give them away to assist the Lord’s work and people, and ready to receive them from others when we have need. “Things” are no indication of spirituality, they are just “details” to be used or received to do the work we are called to do on this walk through this very

short life. Spirituality is walking in the Holy Spirit, not a matter of wealth or the lack of it!

Let us stand with the apostles ready to pour ourselves out to the glory of God and the blessing of our brethren and let us stand against those who wish to make the churches into money making rackets to feed their own and other's lusts.

We are here living on this temporary planet for the glory of the Lord Jesus – and so let us use all we have for His Glory and seek any way we can find to assist his saints, our brethren that all that blesses us might be a blessing to others.

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DOCTRINAL STUDIES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH

1. The Christian life can be divided into three sections or stages.
 - a) Stage 1 - Salvation.
 - b) Stage 2 - The Christian Walk
 - c) Stage 3 - The Christian in Heaven.

2. Man has three means of obtaining knowledge:
 - a) Faith - to believe or trust that something is true
 - b) Reasoning - using human logic to deduce that something is true
 - c) Experimentation - to test and prove something to satisfy yourself that it is true

3. The only acceptable method of gaining grace is by faith, since this means depending upon God without our human merit.
 - a) Stage 1 - Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved - salvation (Acts 16:31).
 - b) Stage 2 - Trusting in the promises and principles of the Word of God - the Christian walk.
 - c) Stage 3 - Trusting in God's provision - Heaven.

4. To illustrate belief and unbelief we follow the Jews from the plagues in Egypt to crossing the Jordan:

Incident	God's Promise	Scripture	Response	Result
Last plague	Passover Lamb	Exodus 12:21-30	Trust	Jews spared last plague.
Egyptian Army	Red Sea Crossing	Exodus 14:1-31	Trust	Moses leads Jews over Red Sea.
No Water	Water	Exodus 17:1-7	Trust	By striking rock (Christ) water obtained.
Gold Calf	God's Doctrine	Exodus 32:15-28	Distrust	Sons of Levi (Priests) slaughtered for leading
Quails	Manna	Num 11:10-33	Distrust	Many deaths due to quails
Giants	Enter Canaan	Num 13:1-14:38	Distrust	Death of fearful spies. Wandering in desert
No water	Water	Num 20:2-13	Distrust	Moses strikes rock in disobedience. Will

				not enter Promised Land.
Wanderings	Cross Jordan	Joshua 3:1-17	Trust	Israel crosses Jordan on dry ground

5. Salvation faith is the complete trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for your sins and rose from the dead to give you eternal life. (Acts 16:31, Romans 4:20-25)

6. Anything added to becomes works, and therefore nullifies faith (Romans 4:4)

7. Faith is shown outwardly by confession with the mouth. (Romans 10:9-10)

8. Since faith does not depend on our own abilities, anybody can believe. Even little children (Matthew 18:2-4)

9. Assurance is by faith (Hebrews 10:22)

10. Faith is trust which does not ask to know all about God but believe all that God has said.

11. Salvation faith receives Christ as Saviour and Lord. (John 1:12, 3:16, 3:36)

12. Faith of salvation is the complete trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as having been delivered from our transgressions and raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:20-25)

13. By Faith God gives the soul assurance of the reality of things never yet seen by the natural man. (Hebrews 11:1-3)

14. The triumphs of faith in daily life are illustrated for the believer in Hebrews 11:1-39. Abel, Noah, Moses etc.

15. Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)

16. Faith is the only non meritorious means of understanding things the other being rationalism and empiricism.

17. To become like a little child is an analogy to faith as a young child only has faith. (Matthew 18:2-4)

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH – OVERCOMING BY FAITH

1. By faith learn to accept conditions as God's will for life and be thankful - Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 5:18
2. By faith maintain fellowship with God, walking in the light - 1 John 1:7
3. By faith consistently day by day examine your conduct, confessing all known sins - 1 Corinthians 11:28, 31, 1 John 1:9
4. By faith receive the Word of God daily as being more necessary than daily food - Matthew 4:4; 5:6, 2 Peter 3:18
5. By faith approach the throne of grace boldly in every case of need, requesting aid, casting every care on Him - Hebrews 4:15-16; 1 Peter 5:7
6. By faith resist the attempts of Satan and he will flee from you - Ephesians 6:10-13, 1 Peter 5:8
7. By faith maintain the habit of thinking and meditating on spiritual values and priorities - Philippians 4:6-9
8. Walk by faith and not by sight - 2 Corinthians 5:7

CHRISTIAN LIFE – AMBASSADORSHIP

1. An Ambassador does not appoint himself, he is appointed by the nation he represents, the king he represents, the person he represents. We are appointed by God. (2 Corinthians 5:20).
2. An Ambassador does not support himself. We are sustained and protected by God (Philippians 4:19).
3. An Ambassador does not represent himself. We represent God on earth. (Matthew 28:19-20).
4. An Ambassador does not belong to the nation to which he is sent. Positionally we are in heaven, experientially we are in the world (Philippians 3:20, John 15:19).
5. All Ambassadors have instructions in written form. We have the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 4:1-2).
6. An Ambassador representing his country does not treat any insult as personal. (Matthew 5:11-12).

7. When an Ambassador is recalled from a country it is tantamount to declaration of war. After the Rapture there will be massive warfare on earth. All Christians will be recalled at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIVING

1. Giving is an important part of spiritual life. It includes your attitude, the giving of yourself, your capacity as well as your possessions. Giving is as much a part of worship as praying, singing, listening to teaching, observing the Lord's Table, reading the Word. It is a function of priesthood for team work and often to sustain the work of leadership.

2. Basic Principles of Giving

(a) Old Testament Giving - this giving was grace giving just as it is in our age. (Proverbs 11:24,25)

(b) New Testament Giving - (2 Corinthians 9:7) also grace giving.

(c) Tithing - this means ten per cent. It was a form of income tax in Israel. Offerings or giving were above this. Tithing was for all Jews, offerings for believers only. It should be remembered that Israel was a theocracy.

[i] In Israel two tithes were required annually

[ii] Tithe 1 - for the maintenance of the Levites (Numbers 18:21, 24) Civil servants in a theocracy.

[iii] Tithe 2 - for national feasts and sacrifices (Deuteronomy 14:22-26)

[iv] Every third year a third tithe was required:-

[v] Tithe 3 - for the poor of the land. (Deuteronomy 14:28, 29) Social security. In (Malachi 3:8-10) it mentions tithes and offerings, the tithes to be brought to the storehouse or treasury.

(d) The time to give - the first day of the week. (1 Corinthians 16:2)

(e) How much - as God has prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2)

3. General Scripture on Giving. (2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9)

(a) 2 Corinthians 8:1-8. Contrasts the Macedonian givers to the Corinthian givers, the former having been made poor by Roman oppression gave liberally. The Corinthians, the richest Church in Greece, gave sparingly.

(b) Giving is an attitude of grace and inner happiness rather than compulsion or the amount donated (2 Corinthians 8:2)

(c) Before money is given you must give yourself. (2 Corinthians 8:5)

(d) Giving is as important an act as any other act in the fellowship. (2 Corinthians 8:7)

(e) Giving is love giving not law giving (2 Corinthians 8:8)

(f) Giving depends on being oriented to grace, the prime example being the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

(g) Money given in the Lord's service must be properly administered. (2 Corinthians 8:19-21)

(h) If you give in grace you reap bountifully. If you give in legalism or with strings you reap sparingly. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

(i) How to give. Giving is a reflection of your character, by grace not habit. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

(j) God has given unto us his unspeakable Gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15, 1 Peter 2:24)

(k) Giving should be regular. 1 Corinthians 16:2.

(m) As we are prospered so we give: God provides the capital with which to give. 2 Corinthians 9:7-10.

(n) Mature believers are most effective givers. 2 Corinthians 9:10. Generosity of mind leads to generous giving. 2 Corinthians 9:11. Philippians 4:14-18.

(o) The pastor's logistical support comes from giving: He makes an issue out of the word never money, if he does his job God will provide the money. Pastor provides spiritual food and receives money for physical needs. Mutual blessing is thus assured, as the people show their appreciation for the ministry of the word. 2 Corinthians 11:7-9, Philippians 1:3-5, 4:10, 4:14.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIVING – STEWARDSHIP

1. As all provision is from God it is the believer's duty to be a wise steward of not only his money but his time and talents. In this manner true orientation to grace is shown.

2. Your relationship with allocation of your talents, time and possessions to God will determine the quality of your Christian life. Acceptance of grace as the basis of giving should become the basis of generous giving. (2 Corinthians 9:6).

3. As believers in the Lord we give in a spirit of graciousness and gratitude, for we have received from the Lord without measure, and so we pour all blessing/giving we can towards others in the same spirit with which we have received from the Lord. We never give as a "deal" to get more back, but always freely as we have received, so we give to others and the Lords work.

4. There are five reasons for giving to the work of the Lord.

a) That God's work might be supported. (1 Timothy 5:17-18)

b) That God might be glorified. (2 Corinthians 9:12)

- c) That needy saints might be provided for. (Acts 2:44-45, 11:29)
- d) That other Christians might be challenged. (2 Corinthians 9:2)
- e) That the giver's life might be blessed. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

5. Giving alms to the poor:

- a) In the Bible, almsgiving means giving to the poor.
- b) The Pharisees distorted the principle of giving by making a public display. The Lord Jesus rejected this pride. (Matthew 6:1-4).
- c) When we give alms we have to do it in secret, so that we honour God and not ourselves. (Matthew 6:1-4).
- d) The giving of alms to the poor is encouraged. (Luke 12:33; Acts 10:2,4,31) and will be rewarded (Matthew 6:1-4).

CHRISTIAN LIFE – HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST JESUS

1. Believers are said to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).
2. The same Greek word is used in (John 3:12) where the word 'things' is mentioned.
3. The heavenlies is the area of the believer's spiritual experience as identified with Christ in various ways:-
 - a) Divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)
 - b) Life (Colossians 3:4; 1 John 5:12)
 - c) Relationships (John 20:17; Hebrews 2:11)
 - d) Inheritance (Romans 6:16,17)
 - e) Service (John 17:18; Matthew 28:20)
 - f) Suffering (Philippians 1:29; 3:10; Colossians 1:24)
 - g) Future glory (Romans 8:18-21; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10).
4. The believer is a heavenly man and a stranger or pilgrim on the earth. (Hebrews 3:1, 1 Peter 2:11).
5. The believer is an ambassador from Heaven. (2 Corinthians 5:20).

CHRISTIAN LIFE – IMITATE CHRIST

1. Imitation is the foundation of discipleship, the surest and quickest method of training - 1 Corinthians 4:16
2. The Corinthians could imitate Paul, for he was imitating Jesus Christ. In context the imitation has to do with self sacrifice for the cause of the ministry - 1 Corinthians 10; 23-33, 11:1

3. As the believer imitates Christ he reflects the character of the invisible God. Here the imitation relates specifically to God's love expressed in forgiveness - Ephesians 4:32, 5:1-2
4. Peter illustrates the fact that the minister of God's Word is to be an example to those he teaches - 1 Peter 5:2-3
5. To become an example you first must be an imitator. - 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
6. Imitation is the primary teaching method of Jesus Christ - 1 Peter 2:21
7. The call of "follow me" was used by ancient rabbis to call their disciples to a life of learning by imitation - Matthew 4:19, John 21:19,22, Philippians 3:12-17.
8. The principle of imitation is conformity. - Matthew 10:24-25; Luke 6:40
9. This principle was fulfilled when the training of the disciples was finally completed. - Acts 4:13
10. The quest of the pastor teacher must be to imitate Christ and to be imitated in the faith. - Hebrews 13:7

CHRISTIAN LIFE – NOT OF THIS WORLD

1. The believer has a different position. (1 Corinthians 15:22). In Adam all die but in Christ shall all be made alive.
2. The believer has a different birth. (John 3:5-7, Titus 3:5). Natural generation versus regeneration. All are born into the world. Believers only are born again. This places one outside the framework of the devil's world.
3. The believer has a different service. The unbeliever serves his father the devil. (John 8:44) The believer serves Christ. (John 13:16, 15:20)
4. The believer has a different purpose. (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, Romans 15:6). The unbeliever in the world system is seeking some form of self gratification. Believer is under the form of God glorification.
5. The believer has a different power. (Galatians 5:16). The energy of the flesh versus the power of the Spirit. The satanic doctrine versus the power of the Word of God.
6. The believer has a different way of life. (Ephesians 4:22, 2:13). The world's way of life is religion and legalism. The Christian way of life is supernatural.

7. We have a difference in destiny. (John 3:36, 3:18). The World is headed for the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. The believer is headed for heaven.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OBEDIENCE

1. Obedience is better than offerings (1 Samuel 15:22; Proverbs 21:3; 28:9). If we are not in God's will, any "worship" we offer is unacceptable.

2. Obedience is something you have to learn. The basic training in obedience has to start in childhood. As it says in (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16) "Honour your father and your mother." (Proverbs 4:3,4; 22:6; 29:15-17; Hebrews 5:8)

3. Teaching your child obedience is an act of love (Proverbs 3:12; 19:18; 23:13-14).

4. We have to obey those who are in authority over us (Exodus 20:12; 22:28; Leviticus 19:3; Deuteronomy 5:16; Romans 13:1-5; Ephesians 6:1-5; Colossians 3:18-22; Titus 3:1).

5. Those in authority have been put in that position by God (Romans 13:1).

6. Obedience to those in authority is obedience to God (Proverbs 24:21; Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:23-24; Romans 13:5).

7. Disobedience to those in authority is disobedience to God (Romans 1:30; 13:2).

8. But when we are ordered to do something that is against God's Will we have to disobey (Acts 4:19; 5:40-42).

9. The fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) is the only commandment with a promise (Proverbs 10:17; Ephesians 6:1-3). Social life in a society is only possible when the people in it have learned to obey.

10. If this commandment is ignored, if the authority of the family is denied or not exercised, society will quickly slide into anarchy (Isaiah 3:12; Proverbs 29:21; 30:21-23; Romans 1:30).

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMER

1. Definition of an overcomer - "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that

Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4,5). It is seen that an overcomer is a believer and we become overcomers at the point of salvation.

2. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" - believers will live with God in heaven forever. (Revelation 2:7)

3. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" - believers will not be subject to the lake of fire. (Revelation 2:11)

4. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" - believers are accepted by God on the basis of His provision. (Revelation 2:17)

5. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star" - believers will rule over the nations and will be honoured. (Revelation 2:26-28)

6. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" - believers are justified and sanctified by the death of our Lord and their names are permanently in the book of the living. (Revelation 3:5)

7. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" - believers will have access to the Holy Places of God and will eternally be identified with Jesus Christ. (Revelation 3:12)

8. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" - believers will reign with the Lord Jesus Christ. (Revelation 3:21)

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMING BY FAITH

1. By faith learn to accept conditions as God's will for life and be thankful - Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 5:18

2. By faith maintain fellowship with God, walking in the light - 1 John 1:7

3. By faith consistently day by day examine your conduct, confessing all known sins - 1 Corinthians 11:28, 31 1 John 1:9

4. By faith receive the Word of God daily as being more necessary than daily food. - Matthew 4:4; 5:6, 2 Peter 3:18

5. By faith approach the throne of grace boldly in every case of need, requesting aid, casting every care on Him. - Hebrews 4:15,16; 1 Peter 5:7

6. By faith resist the attempts of Satan and he will flee from you. - Ephesians 6:10-13, 1 Peter 5:8

7. By faith maintain the habit of thinking and meditating on spiritual values and priorities - Philippians 4:6-9

8. Walk by faith and not by sight - 2 Corinthians 5:7

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PILGRIM

1. A pilgrim is a sojourner in a strange place; a stranger in a foreign country.

2. The believer is a pilgrim in this world as our real home country is a heavenly one (John 15:19 Ephesians 2:19; 1 Peter 2:11).

3. This is illustrated in the lives of the patriarchs (Genesis 47:9; Exodus 6:4; Hebrews 11:8-10; 13-16).

4. When the people of Israel were living in the promised land they were, from a spiritual point of view, still pilgrims (Psalm 39:12; 119:54).

5. So too are Christians, even when living in peace and prosperity under a Christian government (Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:34).

6. The life of a Christian is a pilgrimage. This theme is worked out in great detail in John Bunyan's well-known allegory, "The Pilgrim's Progress".

7. Our heavenly home will not come gradually. The existing system will be destroyed and replaced by God Himself (2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 3:12; 21:2,10).

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SOLDIER: CHRISTIAN SOLDIER IN EPHESIANS 6

1. General Scripture Ephesians 6:11-17.

This passage relates to the armour which the Roman soldier wore and analogises its use into the spiritual realm.

2. USE OF THE ARMOUR Ephesians 6:11

"Put on the whole armour of God." Ephesians 6:11a. We are instructed to "put on" (ENDUO Gk) - this means "to clothe" - it is a command by God to the

Christian soldier. We are to "clothe ourselves" or to "dress ourselves". "Whole armour" (PANOPLIA Gk) - the complete armour "of God" (THEOS Gk) true source of the armour is God.

The whole armour of God is given in Ephesians 6:14-17. It comprises:-

- a) The Belt of Truth Ephesians 6:14a
- b) Breastplate of Righteousness Ephesians 6:14b
- c) Boots Ephesians 6:15
- d) Shield Ephesians 6:16
- e) Helmet of Salvation Ephesians 6:17a
- f) Sword of the Spirit Ephesians 6:17b

PRINCIPLES:

- i) The Roman soldier wore all his armour for his own safety and protection.
- ii) When the Roman soldier was highly disciplined he ruled the world.
- iii) When the Roman soldier became degenerate the Empire declined and fell.
- iv) The Roman soldier was in the army 7 days a week.

3. SPIRITUAL ANALOGY

- a) As Christian soldiers we wear our armour for our own safety and protection.
- b) When we are highly disciplined in the Christian life we are very effective in our warfare.
- c) If we become degenerate or apostate our Christian witness and effectiveness declines and we become casualties in the spiritual warfare.
- d) The Christian soldier is in the battle 7 days a week. A part time soldier never amounts to an effective soldier.

"That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:11 b.

"to stand" (histemi (Gk) - to hold your ground. We are in a spiritual warfare and the purpose of the armour is to hold our ground against the foe. "the wiles (methodeia dia Gk) - tactics, cunning or fraud" "of the devil" (diabolos Gk).

We therefore have the whole armour of God to enable us to stand firm against the devil's tactics.

PRINCIPLE: By learning the tactics likely to be employed by your opponent the Christian soldier is able to go on the offensive using the sword of the Spirit - the Word of God. (verse 17).

4. THE ENEMY (Ephesians 6:12)

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high places. "

"Wrestle" - "the wrestling" (he pale estin Gk) hand to hand combat not wrestling as a sport. "not against flesh and blood"

– not against other members of the human race, but against:-

- a) PRINCIPALITIES (arche Gk) Ruling demons.

b) POWERS (exousia Gk) - Demons with authority, officers in the demon army.

c) RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD (kosmokrator Gk) - world rulers, demons close to the seats of government such as the demons of (Daniel 10:13, 20).

d) SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES (pneu matikos poneria Gk) - the demon army.

Quite clearly our fight is against a spiritual foe. From Hebrews 2:7 we know that as human beings we are inferior to angels. Therefore in order to have success against superior forces we must have God's armour.

5. BE PREPARED (Ephesians 6:13)

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand. "

Since the resurrection ascension and session of Jesus Christ the attack of Satan has moved from the line of Christ to the individual believer. Our dependence on the whole armour is imperative yet many believers reject part or all of the armour.

There are many casualties as a consequence.

We are again exhorted to put on the whole armour of God.

6. THE BELT OF TRUTH (Ephesians 6:14a, Isaiah 11:5)

"Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth."

The Roman belt was a wide girdle of leather worn around the waist from which hung the scabbard for the sword and loops for rations and equipment. The leather belt was supported by a cross shoulder strap studded with metal plates with thick leather strips hanging down to protect the lower body. The belt therefore was the basic armour on which the defence of the soldier was based.

PRINCIPLE: Our basic defence is the truth contained within the Word of God. The sword of the Spirit hangs securely to the believer by means of the promises contained within it. The greater our trust in the truth of God the greater our protection against the enemy.

7. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Ephesians 6:14b, Isaiah 59:17)

"and having on the breastplate of righteousness."

The breastplate (thorax Gk) was usually made of leather overlaid with metal strips. Shaped like a sleeveless coat it was in the higher ranks often covered with gold or silver. The belt held the breastplate firmly in place, its primary function being to protect every vital area of the soldier's body.

PRINCIPLE: The righteousness of Christ protects us. We stand in his righteousness alone. He gave us his righteousness at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). Our continued protection through his righteousness is through the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) (See topic Holy Spirit: Filling of the Spirit).

8. THE BOOTS (Ephesians 6:15, Isaiah 52:7)

"And your feet shod, with the preparation of the gospel of peace".

The boots (caligae Gk) were made of hobnail studded leather soles 15mm (1/2") thick secured with a leather tie over the instep and round the ankles. Good footwear is essential for the soldier with infantry still being essential even in these days of sophisticated armaments.

PRINCIPLE: In spiritual terms the feet are often analogised to service. The feet take one towards the enemy. The gospel of peace is a direct attack on the enemy. Peace in this context talks of reconciliation between God and man. (Romans 1:1 4-16, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

9. THE SHIELD OF FAITH (Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4)

"Above all taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

The Roman shield (thureos Gk) was shaped like a door being made of glued planks wrapped in canvas or calf skin, the top and bottom edges being protected by iron. The shield was the most active of the defensive armour carried by the Roman soldier. Loss of shield often meant death to the soldier.

PRINCIPLE: The Christian soldier's shield is walking actively in the promises and principles set out in the Word of God. If we do not use our faith we can become spiritual casualties. Using the shield of faith we can claim -the 7,000 promises for the Christian walk including Isaiah 41:10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 4:4.

10. THE HELMET OF SALVATION (Ephesians 6:17a; Isaiah 59:17)

"And take the Helmet of salvation."

With the exception of the standard bearer who wore a wolf's head, every Roman soldier wore a metal helmet (perik Gk) usually of bronze over an iron skull cap. This protected the most important part of the soldier - his head.

PRINCIPLE: Before a person can be a soldier for Christ, he has to be born again. He has to wear the helmet of salvation. One of the wiles of the devil is to make the believer feel that he has lost his salvation. If a believer loses his assurance of salvation he takes his helmet of salvation off and is totally vulnerable to the attack of the foe.

11. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT (Ephesians 6:17b), "and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

The sword referred to is the machaira or Roman short sword. The sword represents the basic offensive weapon for close combat. It was only effective when out of its sheath.

PRINCIPLE: The sword in its sheath is potentially devastating but it is only effective when it is used to combat and defeat the enemy. We must therefore conquer using principles, promises and doctrines from the Word of God.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

1. Ultimately, all suffering is a result of the sin of Adam.
2. God is sovereign and allows even undeserved suffering to come upon the world for a reason (Romans 8:28)
 - a) To bring people to a point of helplessness where they call out to Him
 - b) To test and develop faith, so bringing glory to Himself.
3. There will be no suffering for believers in eternity (Revelation 21:4).
4. Unbelievers will suffer forever in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:12-15).
5. Suffering can be caused by:
 - a) Discipline for your own sins
 - b) The effect of the sins of others on you - gossip, war, crime
 - c) Self-induced suffering as a result of your own actions – e.g. sickness from smoking, poverty from poor stewardship
 - d) The sovereign will of God - health, weather.
6. Premises of Suffering for all believers:
 - a) All suffering is designed for blessing in the Christian walk (1 Peter 1:7, 8, 4:14)
 - b) Even discipline is designed to restore fellowship (Hebrews 12:6)
 - c) Suffering follows the principle of grace (Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:18).
7. Purpose of Christian Suffering:
 - a) To receive discipline for carnality or backsliding (Psalm 38)
 - b) To glorify God (Job 1:8-12, Luke 15:20, 21)
 - c) To illustrate doctrine (Book of Hosea)
 - d) To learn obedience (Philippians 2:8, Hebrews 5:8)
 - e) To keep down pride (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 - f) To develop faith (1 Peter 1:7, 8)
 - g) To witness for Christ (2 Corinthians 13:4)
 - h) To demonstrate the power of God (2 Corinthians 11:24-33, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 - i) To manifest the fruit of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 4:8-11)
 - j) To help others who suffer (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

k) From indirect action - because other believers get out of fellowship (Romans 14, 1Corinthians 12:12, 13, 26, 1Samuel 21, 1Chronicles 21).

8. Dealing With Suffering - Applying Spiritual Daily Orders:

To be a believer is to be associated with suffering. It is not a strange thing, it is our duty, and we are to take it as a soldier takes the rigours of a long campaign; without complaint, and with dignity and strength.

The five "Daily Orders" for the battle against the adversary, to be applied in the church age, in the power of the Holy Spirit are found in 1Peter 5:8,9. They will protect us against the cunning of the "lion".

a) **Be Sober!** - At all times be self controlled, not under the control of any emotion, or any other substance(drink or drugs), but only by the Holy Spirit. Romans 13:11-13. 1 Thessalonians 5:6 -8.

b) **Be Vigilant!** - At all times, stay awake to danger, don't relax your guard, don't get careless.

c) **Resist!** - Stand up to, resist, oppose everything he stands for. Zero tolerance of evil is to be the standard for our lives. Also refer, Luke 4:3-12, Ephesians 4:27, 6:11-13, James 4:7.

d) **Be steadfast in the faith** once delivered to the apostles! Be unbreakable, stand as a solid mass of soldiers resisting attack. Stand with the apostolic doctrines, and their practices. As a local church be united, stand together, tight and committed to each other.

e) **Keep on knowing you are not alone!** All believers suffer pressures when they stand for their Lord.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – THANKFULNESS

1. In everything we are told to give thanks. In **1 Corinthians 1** Paul gives thanks for a number of items concerning God's provision.

2. Thanksgiving for grace (v 4).

3. Thanksgiving for spiritual wealth (v 5).

4. Thanksgiving for witnessing (v 6).

5. Thanksgiving for spiritual gifts (v 7).

6. Thanksgiving for ultimate sanctification (v 8)
7. Thanksgiving for divine faithfulness (v 9):
 - a) Faithful to forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9)
 - b) Faithful in not allowing too great a temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)
 - c) Faithful is He who calls you (1 Thessalonians 5:24)
 - d) Faithful in keeping us from evil (2 Thessalonians 3:3)
 - e) Faithful even when we are unfaithful (2 Timothy 2:13).

CHRISTIAN LIFE – THINKING BIBLICALLY

1. We must think with Holy Spirit filled discernment. Refer SPIRITUALITY.
2. Our discernment is determined by the amount of God's Word we have read, understood and applied into our lives. Colossians 1:9-11. Refer EBCWA CD or website for detailed study Colossians 1.
3. Our human IQ is of no significance in thinking biblically, for the Holy Spirit will teach us as we seek to learn and are obedient to what we learn. 1 Corinthians 1:19- 2:16. Refer EBCWA CD or website for detailed study of 1 Corinthians 1.
4. To think biblically we must apply what we know. James 1:21-25. Refer EBCWA CD or website for detailed study of James 1. There is no such thing as knowledge that remains unapplied, for such "knowledge" is simply self deception.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – STABILITY

1. God is able to keep us and bless us (Ephesians 3:20, Hebrews 7:25).
2. Stability comes when we know God; when we have grown up in his Word. Maturity brings with it stability (2Peter 3:18, 2Timothy 1:12).
3. The alternative to a stable life of faith is to be tossed about by every pressure; this occurs when there is no doctrinal application in the life (James 1:6, Ephesians 4:14, Revelation 3:8).
4. Believers need stability to stand fast against the wiles of Satan who is a danger to those with no doctrine: We are told to:
 - a) Stand fast in the word 1Corinthians 16:13.

- b) Stand fast in our liberty Galatians 5:1 cf. Romans 14:1ff, 8:9-13.
 - c) Stand fast in one spirit (no pettiness) Philippians 1:27.
 - d) Stand fast in the Lord (in fellowship) Philippians 4:1.
 - e) Stand fast in doctrine 2 Thessalonians 2:5, 16,17.
5. Strength and stability comes in a close relationship with the Lord. By faith we stand: 2 Corinthians 1:24, Psalm 59:17, 62:7, 144:1.
 6. God has supreme power at His fingertips for us. Isaiah 59:1.
 7. Our faith should stand secure in this power, for we are kept by it in all things, therefore we should be confident. 1Corinthians 2:5, 1Peter 1:5, John 16:33.
 8. God is able to make us stand through the work of the Holy Spirit upon the word in our lives. Romans 14:4, Jude 24.
 9. Strength and stability come from the impact of the Holy Spirit's work upon the word in our life as we believe and apply it, e.g. Sarah Hebrews 11:11, Paul 2 Corinthians 12:8-10.
 10. Profile of the stable believer under pressure 2 Peter 1:3-16.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING

1. Physical walking is analogous to the faith rest life: step by step. Romans 14:5,6, Ephesians 5:16-18, James 4:13-15.
2. Being regularly filled with the Spirit and feeding on the Word are similar to walking as we move forward in a balanced and stable manner.
3. Attacks on believers occur when they are caught off balance. Romans 13:13.
4. Walking depicts the pattern and function of the believers life in time. Philippians 3:18, Ephesians 4:17.
5. It can also represent a backsliding believer who are said to be walking backwards. Ephesians 4:17.
6. We are all told to:
 - a) Walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16, 25
 - b) Walk in the faith. 2 Corinthians 5:7, Colossians 2:6, 4:5

c) Walk in doctrine. 3 John 3.

d) Walk in the truth. 2 John 4

7. Walking is an analogy for spirituality

a) Walk not after the flesh. (Romans 8:4)

b) Walking in Love. (Ephesians 5:2)

c) Walking in newness of Life. (Romans 6:4)

d) Walking worthy of our vocation. (Ephesians 4:1)

e) Walking worthy of the Lord. (Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12)

f) Walking honestly as in the day. (Romans 13:13)

g) Walking in good works. (Ephesians 2:10)

h) Walking in light. (Ephesians 5:8, 1 John 1:7)

i) Walking in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 2:6)

j) Walking circumspectly. (Ephesians 5:15,16)

k) Walking as ye ought. (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING AND LIVING IN THE LIGHT

1. Light is a metaphor of God's manifestation in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and his work - John 1:4, 8:12, 9:5, 12:46.

2. The Lord's coming was prophesied in Isaiah 49:6 cf. Acts 13:47.

3. Light was seen in the darkness of the world - Matthew 4:16, Luke 2:32.

4. The Lord brought life and light to the gospel - 2 Timothy 1:10.

5. We as believers are light bearers - Matthew 5:14-16, or sons of the light - John 12:36. The Lord is to be seen in us.

6. We are children of the light - 1 Thessalonians 5:5, 1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 5:8, John 11:9,10.

7. Doctrine is the light of the soul - 1 Peter 1:19.

8. Satan is an angel of light and the distorter of the truth - 2 Corinthians 11:14.

9. Satan's strategy is to outshine the true light with his own false gospel - 2 Corinthians 4:3-6.

10. The Lord's resurrection body was composed of light - Matthew 17:2.

WORLD

1. World under control of Satan:

a) ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)

b) god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4)

c) he deceives the world (Revelation 12:9).

d) Satan is filling the world with his propaganda (1 Timothy 4:1).

2. Jesus Christ created earth (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18). He gave control to original mankind (Genesis 1:28) but man lost it at the fall (Genesis 3:6).

3. Sin and spiritual death are the basis of Satan's rule over this world. Therefore, God so loved the world that He gave a Saviour (John 3:16), hence Christ as a title in this connection. Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5).

4. Therefore Christ is the saviour of the world (John 3:17; 4:42; 1 John 4:14). The Saviour who gave His life for the world (John 6:33); hence Christ has a title in this connection. Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5).

5. Therefore Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33), so that the believer can overcome the world (1 John 5:4,5).

6. Consequently believers in Christ must not love the world (1 John 2:15,16). Nor must believers conform to the world (Romans 12:2). Worldliness is what you think, which may be demonstrated by what you do.

7. World control by Satan will stop at the Second Advent. However, believers will continue forever (1 John 2:17).

8. Also, the Word of God abides forever (1 Peter 1:23,25), and is designed to overcome the ruler of this world (1 John 2:14). Therefore, not conforming to the world and overcoming the world are accomplished through Bible doctrine, by which God has made foolish the wisdom of the world (1 Corinthians 1:20; 3:19).

9. It is therefore of greatest importance that the believer's attitude is based on the Word of God (Philippians 2:5; 2 Timothy 1:7; Isaiah 26:3,4; Philippians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 10:4,5; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 1:5,6,8).

10. Backsliding is characterised as friendship with the world (James 4:4).

WORLDLINESS

1. Worldliness means to follow the beliefs and philosophy of man rather than that of God

2. Worldliness is the opposite of godliness; it is thinking/doing in opposition to God's revealed word. Titus 2:11-14.

3. All people are faced with the constant choice of following God's way or the world's. Romans 5:12, 3:19, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Ephesians 2:12, James 1:27, 2 Peter 1:4, 2:20.

4. Satan is the "prince of this world", and has power to deceive those who are negative to God's plans. John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Peter 5:8,9.

5. We must not love the world, 1 John 2:15-17.

6. We must hate all the world stands for, in thought and in deed. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 11:30-32, Galatians 6:14, James 1:27, James 4:4, 2 Peter 1:3,4, 1 Corinthians 3:18, 19.

7. We must not return to our old behaviour patterns, Ephesians 2:1-7.

8. This evil world system and the prince of this world will be condemned. Matthew 18:7, John 12:31, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Peter 3:7, 2 Peter 2:1ff.

STARTING A NEW MINISTRY

If the Lord leads us to establish a new mission, it is with the power of the Holy Spirit **ALONE** that it must be established. If God does not build the house those that labour do so in vain. We must trust in God's purpose, plan and power, not ourselves, and depend upon prayer power not marketing or asking others for resources. Our first principle is therefore PRAYER for the Lord to open the doors and provide what is needed directly to enable HIS work to be done. Ministry is God's Work, not our works for God. Spiritual power only!

It is also an EBCWA principle that we do not ask anyone for money. We are a Faith Mission, and that means we pray, we work, we announce what God is doing, and leave provision to the sovereign will of the Lord. If resources are not there, we cannot advance, and we do not advance, for it is the Lord's harvest, not ours. If we cannot move forward through lack of funds, in the Lord's Sovereign Plan, it is because another has that job, or we are not ready.

We pray and wait, but we do not ask others for funds. Paul sets the example in **Acts 16:6-12**.

If we feel "led" to establish a ministry, but resources are lacking locally, we must get upon our knees and seek the way the Lord wants it established. Our experience is that it will be done without large buildings needing to be purchased, or any equipment initially. God has led us to establish Bible Colleges in ways that do not have any administrative costs, and where the Lord provides the money for the pastors to do what is required on a weekly basis.

EBCWA Operating Principles

1. If the Lord leads us in a direction the Lord will provide for us there if it is truly His Plan and His time for the plan to be executed. Pray for the Lord's provisions alone.
2. Do not ask any man for money, simply announce the ministry and advance into it in prayer, seeking the Lord's provision as you go. God rarely gives lots of money to establish things but seeks our walk of faith to ensure things are provided when needed in a way that honours Him and brings glory to His holy name. Jesus gets the glory – not any others.
3. Gather prayer warriors around you immediately, and have them pray daily for the needs, but open your eyes and seek the humble brother/sister with the loaves and fishes, not the "Rich Young Rulers" who hold onto their wealth. God works through the poor and rich people, but only those who commit themselves to him with all they have.

4. Do not seek a trouble-free path, for it will probably not be the Lord's path. **Matthew 7:13-23** tells us that the Lord's path is always the "narrow/constricted" way. We have to squeeze through tight places on His path in prayer and with perspiration at times. Pray, trust, wait, and move as the door opens and you have the resources to advance through it.

5. Do not wait for a full bank account, for what is "full"? Step out and minister as the door opens and you have the opportunity and the funds to arrive at the place of ministry and speak there. If you cannot reach the place, you are not meant to be there. Be ready to personally work in manual labour, your trade, or in any task that you can, to fund your own ministry. All ministries must be LOCAL and supported locally. Do not fall into the "American Prosperity Gospel" trap, for it is a lie. We stand with the Apostle Paul, and he worked by day and preached by night. **Acts 18:1-3, 19:8-12, 1 Cor 4:9-16, 15:9-11**

6. EBCWA was established with this Pauline (and biblical) mental attitude. Paul didn't pray over handkerchiefs, he sweated as he worked, and it was those sweat cloths that healed the sick. Many men and women today seek "sweat-less" ministry, but God's Holy Word indicates that such are fake and crooked. God works with those who sweat in the work! If you are not ready to do that you must find another group to work with.

7. EBCWA began with myself (Dr McEwan) very ill, and very poor, through inability to work. We were given premises to use (we never owned them and moved on from them four years later) and started without any funds above those needed to get the building useful. I provided my own transport (or was driven by students) and each person their own bibles and study books, and we started. God blessed greatly as we advanced, but not with money in abundance, just enough to advance to the end with joy in our hearts.

8. In the prisons of Southern Africa we see the same things happening today (2010-2024). The prisoners have a Bible from the Bible Society, and note paper and a pencil, and the lecturer has a study book and their Bible, and they begin with nothing else. We now provide the notes on USB to be down loaded onto any Prison computers, and the Power Points to use when teaching the Diploma Course if the facility has a projector and computer, but these are not needed. In your local situation, my beloved brother and sister, just start with a set of notes and your Bible open, but start with prayer and work with prayer, and end with prayer. We found that the prison authorities themselves provided printing cost of the text books for prisoners as the courses advanced, but only when they saw the "fruit" in the lives of the prisoners. **Matthew 7:13-23**. Prisons were transformed by the Diploma Course and the prison officers provided help for the men and women they once despised and feared, who they now saw were their brothers and sisters in Christ.

9. **STARTING OUT** - Prepare yourself by studying the Course from the USB or website. Be ready to teach it. Pray for the People, and the Premises as I did all those years ago. Step out to meet the needs with your Bible open

and the notes under your arm, and see the Lord provide for what the poor need in your local area. If it is Bibles, pray for that need to be met. If it is for pencils and paper, pray for that to be met, or transport, pray for that.

10. Do not wait for computers, power point projectors, or cars to drive you to the place of ministry! If they are there use them, but do not depend on expensive technology, use the simplest things, for Satan finds the simplest things the hardest to oppose and destroy. Be like Paul, work and provide for your own team yourself and advance into the God anointed ministry.

Trust God, build a local ministry and serve the local churches.
Do not depend upon foreigners, for they will be cut off easily by the enemy.
Trust the Lord alone and keep as low cost as you can, for Satan finds it hard to eliminate poor people who have no support structures to destroy.

We have prayer and we can work and perspire in the Lord's work.

Let us do that and trust God alone. If God builds, no man can tear down!

Jesus our Lord can be trusted.

Your brother in the Lord,

DR JOHN C MCEWAN (DEAN – EBCWA)

14 August 2024 Auckland NZ – the “ends of the earth”.

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



“DAILY BATTLE ORDERS”

**FACING DIFFICULTIES UNDER MAXIMUM
PRESSURE ON THE PILGRIM PATH**

by

DR. JOHN C MCEWAN

[BOOK 107- Part 2]

14 August 2024

**“I waited patiently for the Lord
And He inclined unto me
And He heard me.**

**He brought me up out of a horrible pit
Out of the miry clay
And He set my feet upon a rock
And established my goings.”
(Psalm 40:1-2)**

**“But now, thus saith the Lord who created you O Jacob,
and He who formed you, O Israel,
Fear not
For I have redeemed you
I have called you by my name
You are mine.**

**When you pass through the waters
I will be with you
And through the rivers
They shall not overflow you
When you walk through the fire
You shall not be burned
Neither shall the flame kindle upon you**

For I am the Lord your God...

Fear not for I am with you...

**I even I am the Lord
And beside me there is no Saviour.”
(Isaiah 43:1-2, 3, 5, 11)**

**“For my thoughts are not your thoughts
Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.”
(Isaiah 55:8)**

WHEN A YEAR KNOCKS YOU TO YOUR KNEES

This year 2024 has been an incredibly pressure filled year for myself, my local church, and my support circle of friends and family. The old year ended and new one began with three bathroom floods, at the church and both our home bathrooms, each one creating significant damage and ensuring I didn't have a desperately needed holiday. The pressures have just increased by the month since that January start, and the Covid-flu alone has given me two weeks "holiday" to enable me to write these words to encourage my heart – my prayer is you will be encouraged.

The stress has been financial, physical, mental, and spiritual, with sanity feeling very fragile at times. Criminals attacked my wife's car in our driveway and stole personal items and significant damage to property and trees required work. We were warned by the Lord of the enemy's malice, **John 15:18ff**, but it is still upsetting when we face it as fully as we have through this year. Left hip pain needing urgent surgical intervention aggravated the pressures through these months and serious Covid flu stopped my first scheduled surgery which just added to the upset. Having noted these things, I feel ashamed of my sadness at my own hurt and debility, for in this same time frame two wonderful male friends have died of painful and debilitating cancers. My pain is now easing but will return in another area of my body as I age, but through the pressures I affirm, I am here to serve my Lord who suffered and died for me.

As many in my immediate circle have faced these powerful challenges to faith, I reflected upon our earlier EBCWA Book 107 – "Suffering and the Prosperity Gospel" and realised I needed to revisit this subject and address the serious and painful pressures I and others had faced this year by directly hearing the Lord's encouragement even more powerfully than before through the words of the Apostles. Book 107 was a good introduction to the theology of suffering but this year's stress load has demanded a "master class" be taken. So, Like all old Naval Officers, I begin with my "Ship's Daily Orders" and as believers in the Lord we have five basic daily orders to apply every day.

"**Daily Orders**" for the battle against the adversary, to be applied in the Church Age, in the power of the Holy Spirit are found in **1Peter 5:8,9**. They will protect us against the cunning of the mangy satanic "lion" who will otherwise play with our hearts and minds.

Firstly) Be Sober! - At all times be self-controlled, not under the control of any emotion, or any other substance(drink or drugs), but operate only by the Holy Spirit's filling power. **Romans 13:11-13. 1 Thessalonians 5:6 -8.**

Secondly) Be Vigilant! - At all times, stay awake to danger, don't relax your guard, don't get careless and trust evil people. **John 2:24-25, 1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Peter 5:8**

Thirdly) Resist the enemy/temptation to fear! - Stand up to, resist, oppose everything the enemy stands for. Zero tolerance for fear and evil is to be the standard for our lives. Also refer, **Matthew 10:26-31, Luke 4:3-12, Ephesians 4:27, 6:11-13, James 4:7.**

Fourthly) Be steadfast in the faith once delivered to the apostles! Be unbreakable, stand as a solid mass of soldiers resisting attack. Stand with the apostolic doctrines, and their practices guiding you. As a local church be united, stand together, tight and committed to each other. **2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 3:14, 6:19, 1 Peter 5:9.**

Fifthly) Keep on knowing you are not alone! All believers suffer pressures when they stand for their Lord and He is always at our side, and the Spirit is always within us. **Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 3:6-7, 2 Timothy 1:7, 1 John 4:4.**

SQUARING OUR SHOULDERS TO THE MARCH FORWARD

So having taken our "daily battle orders" seriously we then hear the author of Hebrews and apply his words into our hearts in prayer and determination.

Hebrews 12:11-13. *"11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

12. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

Our goal is to stand with the apostles not with the paper-back writers of our modern wealth saturated world who feel all pressure is personally unfair to them. The apostles stood firm against the enemy and against the elements. When I consider Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians 11:24-30 I am embarrassed of my complaints to the Lord for the pressures of this year, for while they have been severe testing of mind, body and spirit, Paul looks on from heaven (**Hebrews 12:1-3**) and encourages me to square my shoulders and keep being obedient on my pilgrim road and doing what the Lord has required of me, and leave my outcomes to the Lord, who loved, loves, and always will love and care for me.

2 Corinthians 11:24-30 *"23. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

24. *Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*
 25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*
 26. *In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*
 27. *In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*
 28. *Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*
 29. *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?*
 30. *If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.”*

We will address this challenging subject biblically, being challenged and encouraged by the “apostolic faith”, which is our standard for operations. We will not minimize our suffering and that of our friends by just tritely quoting verses but keep our pain always alongside that of the apostles, for we are called to be like them on our own personal journey through life. **Philippians 3:17**. We are to stand and fight in the angelic conflict and so hear the Lord’s words, “well done, good and faithful servant”, not win accolades from the governmental ministry of retirement for dying at a boring old age having achieved very little, but very wealthy in the world’s goods. **Matthew 25:21-23**.

As we reflect upon this very uncomfortable subject I can hear some say, “Stop John, for if we tell people in evangelism that they may suffer these things on their pilgrim journey many will pull back from personal commitment to the Lord”! We simply must tell the truth in evangelism and not seek easy and casual dedications, but whole-hearted and total commitment. We forget to our peril that our Lord calls us to commit to Him just as He committed to us – to bear our Cross, to not pull back from the hard task of ploughing the field, and plough to the end in our field of service.

The Lord hides nothing from his disciples; they are bluntly told to take up “their cross” and be ready to “plough their assigned field to the end”. **Matthew 10:38, 16:24. Luke 9:62**. Both images are those of hard work, pain and extreme suffering. Check the context of every quote I refer to below please, and so see that I am not twisting the Scriptures out of their context. Maybe we have been too influenced in the past by the marketing executives rather than the truth telling apostles....

In these very difficult days we have entered we must be genuine and walk in Holy Spirit power alone; these are not days for pretence and play acting. There are plenty in modern Christendom who preach “abounding” but few who help us in the “abasing” (**Philippians 4:11-13**) and we have been facing a lot more “abasing” situations than “abounding” ones this year so far. Can we “give thanks in all things” as the apostles urge us?

We must be 100% biblical in our reflections upon this subject of the, at times, toughness of our personal pilgrim road, and I will quote and reflect upon the

texts of Scripture noted below, for I seek to be apostolic not acceptable to a newspaper or social media platform. I quote good bible commentators at times when their reflection encourages or challenges, but it is always “back to the text” before application.

Personally, this present year has been so hard, like David I have watered my bed with tears many nights (**Psalm 6:1-7, 139:7-8**) and felt my mind falling apart at times the stress was so great, and so I seek God’s path alone, for the truth alone will set me free from fears, doubts and despair. It is genuine apostolic faith alone that will bring us all through the severe testing times that appear to be unfolding around us today. **2 Timothy 1:7** must be our motto daily. Join me as we face our hard road together with the Lord and the apostles.

THE TEXTS THE LORD HAS LED ME TO FOR THIS REFLECTION

James 5:10-11 *“10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.*

11. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

Luke 6:20-26 *“20. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.*

21. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

John 14:27, 16:33 *“14:27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

16:33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

1 Corinthians 4:11-16 *“11. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place;*

12. And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13. Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

14. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

15. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”

Philippians 2:5-8, 3:7-14, 4:11-13.

“5. Let this mind be in you,

which was also in Christ Jesus:

6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

3:7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

4: 11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Colossians 1:24-26

“24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

25. *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;*
26. *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:"*

1 Peter 4:12-13 *"12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

We will pick up the context of each passage and reflect on their significance for our daily walk under the very real pressures that appear to be increasing in our world daily. Even unbelievers are buckling under the political pressures and worries flowing from world events and one atheist friend said to me last week that she was suicidal because of worry. Let's be biblical and relax into the Lord's arms – we need to show those without hope that there is hope, but it is in our loving and loved relationship with the Lord alone.

Notes

JAMES URGES US TO BE STRONG UNDER PRESSURE

James 5:7-11

[B] EXHORTATIONS (Verses 7 – 11)

7. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. 9. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. 10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. 11. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

KEY WORD

Patient	Makrothumeo	(aorist active imperative) Patiently endure, be big souled, to endure anything and never give in.
Coming Waiteth	Parousia Ekdechomai	Coming, revealing, appearing of the Lord. (present middle indicative) To wait, as a normal thing.
Receives	Lambano	(aorist active subjunctive) Expectation of receiving
Rains	Huetos	Two rains were expected, one in Oct/Nov for the grain to germinate and begin its growth, the latter rains in April/May for ripening of the grains.
Stablish Draweth	Sterizo Eggizo	(aorist active imperative) Stabilise, strengthen yourself. Perfect active, indicative; draws near – with eternal consequences for all of mankind.
Grudge	Stenazo	(present active imperative) Stop groaning and moaning about others focus on your race alone.
Condemned	Katakrino	(aorist active subjunctive) Judged by the Judge.
Standeth	Istemi	(perfect active indicative) He is standing ready to act in a final manner.
Affliction Patience	Kakopatheis Makrothumia	Suffering hardship and evil. Big souled - never to give in and quit or moan.
Endure Pitiful	Hupomone Polous	Standing up under pressure without budging Full of pity for us.

Merciful plagchnos
 Oikteiro Very kind, full of mercy.

ANALYSIS AND BACKGROUND

"No-one ever had a golden tongue who first did not have a silver ear".
Criswell, 1975.

In this first letter of the New Testament James brings the challenge to face directly the abuse and assaults from evil and at times wealthy powerful people. We are to leave God to judge them for their abuse of us, but we are to keep our heads up, focused on our Lord. James reminds us that our Lord and God is characterized by love, care, mercy, and patience over us, and He is waiting to bless us, but will we live so He can as we walk through the assaults, abuse and hurt we face on our pilgrim road?

As the Lord waits to bless us so we must learn patience, but it is not the weak and pathetic patience of the person who is so weak that all they can do is lie still and hope for deliverance. The patience that is spoken of in this passage is a robust faith-based confidence that looks to the perfect, stable character of God as our ground of stability under maximum pressure from evil people and difficult circumstances. It is characterised by the two Greek words we met above; **makrothumia, (big souled) and hupomone (standing up to the worst pressure without complaint).**

Both were military virtues in the ancient world and their production in the recruits was the focus of all military training then as it is now. The Christian, whether seen as a soldier, a farmer, or an athlete, needs these characteristics to be successful, and they are character traits that emerge only under testing pressures. Refer also to Paul's words, in **1 Corinthians 9:7, 24-27, Colossians 1:11, 2 Timothy 2:3 -13, also Hebrews 12:1-13.**

Patience is only possible if it is "natural", that is, it grows from within as the "normal" thing to experience, given the full reality of what you face. It is normal for the farmer to be patient for she/he has learned that the rains come and that if they plant on the basis that the rains will come then they can relax and get on with other tasks while they wait, for she/he knows, they will come; it is a natural law the farmer trusts in. Just so for the believer with the Lord. It is natural and normal for a spiritual believer, who truly knows the Lord to have faith in the Lord's provisions and trust Him to provide and lead through the testing times he or she faces. The full reality of what we face in our time on earth involves the faith-based expectation of the reality of God's character and provision for us being expressed in loving care in the very midst of every testing/trying circumstance.

Of the believer's patience H W Beecher said, "Oh impatient ones, did the leaves say nothing to you as they murmured when you came hither today? They were not created this spring but months ago, and the summer just begun will fashion others for another year. At the bottom of every leaf stem is

a cradle, and in it is an infant germ, and the winds will rock it and the birds will sing to it all summer long, and next season it will unfold. So God is working in you, and carrying forward to the perfect development all the processes of your lives." It is the mental attitude that expects God to rebuild us from within in fire.

The personal relationship that is behind our patience is expressed in our prayerful relaxation into the arms of the perfect character and person of the Lord. The event that is behind our mental attitude of patience and endurance, is the expectation of the certain return of the Lord for us, and the certainty of His provision until that occurs. As we think of the Lord's certain return, we are reminded that the Lord has all history in his hands, and that means He has the daily details of our lives in His control also.

Verse 7 The hard work of the farmer is rewarded only in the Autumn when the harvest comes, but all the toil is worth it then. Just so with us, the trials and tribulations of this life find their full and final meaning and bear their complete fruit at the end of our life when we meet our Lord face to face. We can leave our wealthy oppressors (verse 6) in the Lord's hands for judgement when the Lord's plan calls for the judgment to fall, we, on the other hand, are in his hands for spiritual blessing and provision, and finally for eternal rewards. Testing times bear present fruit in our ministry and changed attitudes, but the full reward is to come. The best in Christ is yet to come!

"The assurance of the Lord's coming is intended to colour our whole perspective on life. We shall fix our hearts deliberately upon the Lord's coming which will give us stability in the face of all the hard knocks meted out to us." (Prime, 1983).

Verse 8 James repeats the message about the Lord's Second Advent, and adds the additional command to be, also like the farmers, stabilised in our hearts (emotions) as well as our actions. Focus the mind, and you will be stable in the emotions and the thinking processes, but without clear focus you will be as unstable as a leaf in the wind, or a wave in the sea (**James 1:6, 2 Timothy 1:7**). All athletes today are trained in the art of focusing the mind on their game or event. The difference between winning and losing in sport is often determined by the focus and mental commitment of the winning team. The Christian's mental attitude is centred and stabilised in the expectation of the Lord's return.

"Nothing strikes such fearfulness into the human heart as anxiety due to uncertainty about ultimate issues". (Tasker, 1967). We have no such need for uncertainty; we know God's plan and he is going to return for us, and this is our hope and confidence. **Acts 1:11**. Also refer to **Mark 13:32-37, 1 Thessalonians 4: 10-12, 18, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 1 Peter 4:7, 2 Peter 3:11, 1 John 3:3**.

"As we live in the expectancy that he will return something will happen to our lives and there will be a purity that God will build into us that will equip us to face the pressures that come against us in this life." (Draper, 1971). A well

trained and fit athlete without clear focus and stability of mind and emotion will never win their event or game, just so with us in the game of life. In verse nine James goes on to illustrate the behaviour of the losers in the game of life; they are the moaners, focused on self not the task before them!

The principles are clear; no focus = no victory, no emotional stability = no successful performance. "Spiritual heart trouble will result in weakness, timidity, and ineffective service for Christ. Patience is good exercise to insure the health of the heart." (Lightner, 1979). We stabilise our heart and mind only in the Word of God which reveals to us God's plan, and He is coming again. He is drawing near as we reflect on these very verses – does that reality move you to work, worship and witness? If it does not, you have not understood the truth fully. **James 5:9** – "He is at the door..."

Verse 9 "Few take grumbling seriously, but God does take it seriously!" (Prime, 1983). We must heed the Lord's words in **Matthew 7:1, 2**, and not be hasty to condemn our fellows. "If we start using the sickles on each other, we will miss the harvest". (Wiersbe, 1979). The thought of the Lord's return should purify our lives, especially if He is "at the door", for he will test our works, (1 Corinthians 3) and we all have enough to say grace over in our own lives without ever criticising our brethren. Reflect again upon the two perfect tenses in these verses above.

To bitterly complain about anything is to doubt God's plan and provision; he does all things in accord with his plan, and we are to trust him. **Romans 8**. One complainer was heard to say, "Oh I wish I had never been made. A friend who overheard her replied, "My dear lady, you are not yet made, and you are quarrelling with God's processes". (Lightner, 1979). The challenge of James to us directly is to keep the "eternal life perspective" in the midst of all the troubles we will face in space-time. Jesus stands at the door of eternity, ready to burst into time again. **Matthew 24:8**. Are we like good soldiers, fully armed, ready for our Commanding Officer's inspection, with no fear of any investigation into our conduct in the months beforehand?

Verse 10 We are to draw on the strength and example of earlier saints and emulate their example. "The Lord was obedient and it led to the cross. The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you." (Wiersbe, 1979).

Look back into the Word and draw strength from the examples of others. Some suffered and died but they were kept through all that they endured by the care of the Lord and they entered his blessedness in eternity in the end. So will we, be it in old age and advanced years, or as the early martyrs through flame and sword. **Hebrews 11** is a chapter that centres around this theme.

"What befalls you is not unknown to him. And the sufferings that you experience are not strange in his eyes. He is just bringing you to glory....Blessed are they who endure, who keep their faith, who look up in

prayer, who glorify God in suffering or in tears. Blessed are they who look up in faith, who trust him through it all." (Criswell, 1975).

Verse 11 Job's endurance was the strength of one who would not blame God for his adversity, who would not lower himself to the cheap, simple and wrong theology of his friends who believed that he must have sinned to have suffered so. Job expected God to vindicate him, and even though he moaned and questioned at times he was steadfast in his expectation of vindication and he took his moaning directly to the Lord. **Hebrews 4:16, 1 Peter 5:7-9**. Job was unswervingly loyal to God, for he knew, and he remembered through his pain, that **God Loved** him and that "his redeemer lives". **Job 1:21, 20:10, 16:9-21, 19:25-27**.

"Patient endurance can sustain itself on the conviction that hardships are not meaningless, but that God has some end or purpose in them which he will accomplish, if sufferers only are brave enough to hold fast to him." (Moffatt, 1963). Endurance leads to deliverance and keeps our heart in the meantime. **Matthew 10:22, 24:13, Luke 21:19**.

Job is one of those fathers in faith that demonstrates that true faith 'works out' in the life of the person. All training of soldiers is for battle, and there are no medals awarded for parade ground training only for bravery under fire. We are in the Lord's army, and we are here on earth to fight a spiritual warfare; and we are in battle to win not just engage in shadow boxing. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Ephesians 6:10-20, 1 Timothy 1:18**.

"You cannot persevere unless there is a trial in your life. There can be no victories without battles; there can be no peaks without valleys. If you want blessing you must be prepared to carry the burden and fight the battle.. . . God never wastes the suffering of his saints. Job met God in a new and deeper way (Job 42:1-6). God was glorified and Job was purified through this difficult experience. If there is nothing to endure, you cannot learn endurance." (Wiersbe, 1979).

What does the nature of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, teach us about him and about our own best response to him in the midst of pressures? The end or purpose of the Lord in Job's case is clear, it is to teach us that he does not change and that we can depend on his love, pity and mercy.

APPLICATION

"James does not discourage protest against wrong or the effort to remove evil. But there is a residuum of suffering and pain in the cup of all of us. When all else is done, in the end of the day, we must drink that cup." (Robertson, 1964). Refer to the Commentary on **Colossians 1:24-26** below.

When we face serious suffering, is it with the spirit of patience and endurance? These fruits of the Holy Spirit are the required daily virtues for a stable Christian life under the pressures of the world. If we have great pressure and suffering to face we must face it with endurance, knowing that

the Lord has this as part of his plan for us and that in the end we will see it, and that he is coming for us. Are we to be Christ centred or problem and worry centred? Some answers to very painful and real questions will only be seen from beyond space-time – can we trust the Lord and wait for the answers to our pain?

These truths of the Lord's person, work and plan must be more real to us than our present pain and suffering. The farmer must work in all weathers and under all circumstances, and so must we, without complaint, and looking towards the next event, the Lord's return for us. We have limited time here, and it is always too short for too much groaning or moaning! We take our groans to the Lord, assured of a hearing of our heart. **Romans 8:26, 1 Peter 5:5-10.**

"Don't groan at your lot, don't grouse at your fellow Christian, for you will assuredly be condemned for such things. In any case how infinitely wiser and happier it is to leave things in his hands, and to await his decision upon things and people." (King, 1974).

Do we trust him, or do we trust what we presently see as if that's all to see, for that is the basis of all our moaning? James challenges us to trust and obey, that in Jesus our trials are not meaningless.

Are we brave enough to trust him on the basis of his revealed character rather than what we see before us in our present hurtful situation? **Genesis 50:20, Job 42:12, Romans 8:28.**

Are we ready to learn from God and are we ready for the blessings that only come to those who live out their faith under pressure. "It was easy for God to give Job twice as much substance and affluence as he had before. God proposed to give Job double of everything he had, including his grace and his love. And to do that, Job had to suffer, for grace and love do not come any other way than through great trial and great suffering" (Criswell, 1975).

We are called daily to let faith work out in trust and confidence in God, in the midst of the trials of every day! We are beloved of the Lord our God. "Shabbat Amen" – Rest in Faith – rest in the beloved's character and promises, for underneath are the everlasting arms. **Deuteronomy 33:27.**

PARAPHRASE

"Brethren, Endure and stand up under the pressures of anything and everything that happens to you, looking to the coming of the Lord. Look closely at the example of the farmer who every season waits for the plants to grow and be harvested at their appointed times. (He knows the laws of nature and waits for the regular rains.) Like the farmer, (knowing the nature and laws of God) be patient, stabilise your emotions and mind, for the Lord's coming is imminent always. Do not moan against each other, the true judge stands at the door. For your example look at the prophets of old. They spoke in the Lord's name and yet they also suffered greatly, but patiently endured their

suffering. God's counts those truly happy who learn endurance. You have heard about the patient endurance of Job, and you have seen the nature of God, which is full of pity for us and very kind towards us."

Notes

OUR LORD'S WORDS CHALLENGE AND ENCOURAGE

Luke 6:20-26, John 12:20-31, 14:27, 16:33

Luke 6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, **Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. 21. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. 22. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. 24. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. 25. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. 26. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.**

KEY WORDS

Lifted	Epaio	Lift up [Aorist Active Participle]
Eyes	Ophthalmos	Eyes
Disciples	Mathetes	Disciples
Blessed	Makarios	Inner happiness, Blessed
Poor	Ptochos	Destitute
Yours	Humeteros	Pertaining to you, Yours
Is	Eimi	Keeps on being
Kingdom	Basileia	Kingdom
God	Theos	God
Hunger	Peinao	Hunger [Present Active Participle]
Now	Nun	Immediately, Now, At this time
Filled	Chorazo	Literally to fodder, Be fed, Satisfied [Future Passive Indicative]
Weep	Klaio	Weep, Wail aloud [Present Active Participle]
Laugh	Gelao	Laugh [Future Active Indicative]

Are	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Indicative]
Men	Anthropos	Man
Hate	Miseo	Love less, Hate [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
When	Hotan	Whenever, While
Shall Separate	Aphorizo	Separate, Depart, Sever, Divide [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
From	their	-
company		Not found in the original
Shall reproach	Oneidezo	Reville, Defame [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Cast out	Ekballo	Cast Out [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Your	Humon	You, Your
Name	Onoma	Name
Evil	Poneros	Evil
For	Heneka	Because, For the sake of
Son	Uihos	Son
Man	Anthropos	Man
Rejoice	Chairo	Rejoice, Be glad [Aorist Passive Imperative]
Day	Hemera	Day
Leap for joy	Skirtao	Leap for joy [Aorist Active Imperative]
Behold	Idou	Behold, Lo
Reward	Misthos	Reward
Is	-	Not in the original
Great	Polus	Great
Heaven	Ouranos	Heaven
For	Gar	Because, For
In the like manner	Kata Tauta	Standard manner
Did	Poieo	To do [Imperfect Active Indicative], Keep on doing
Their	Autos	Their
Fathers	Pater	Father
Prophets	Prophetes	Prophet
Woe	Ouai	Woe, Alas
Unto you	Humin	To you
That are rich	Plousios	Abounding in riches, Wealthy
For	Hoti	Because
You	have	Apecho
received		Have, Receive [Present Active Indicative]
Consolation	Paraklesis	Comfort
Who are full	Empletho	Satisfied [Perfect Passive Participle]
Hungry	Peinao	Hunger, Crave [Future Active Indicative]
Laugh	Geleao	Laugh [Present Active Participle]
Mourn	Pentheo	Mourn [Future Active Indicative]
Weep	Klaio	Weep [Future Active Indicative]
Speak	Epo	Speak [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Well	Kalos	Well
So	Kata Tauta	Standard manner
Did	Poieo	To do [Imperfect Active Indicative], Keep on doing
False Prophets	Psuedoprophetes	False Prophet

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Luke's report is direct but addresses only four of the eight beatitudes, and then gives four woes (given by the Lord but not noted by Matthew) to balance these. We do not know why Luke gives only four of the eight beatitudes in Matthew, or why Matthew does not give the four woes in Luke. One can only say that neither professes to give a complete report of the sermon and that the Divine Author, the Holy Spirit guided them in this way. Luke is emphasizing the balanced options in line with the power of the initial "beatitudes" and cursings on the two mountains under Joshua, and this balance is also very Greek and his audience would understand this. He knows that the Gospel of Matthew is out there to add in the other items he leaves out. **Deuteronomy 27:9 – 28:19, Joshua 8:33-35.**

Verse 20 Here we see the Lord Jesus Christ looking out over his disciples; both the central twelve and the hundred or more regular followers. This is a direct statement to the disciples as he says, "Blessed be ye poor", or in more modern English "Blessed be you poor ones". Jesus chose twelve disciples and sent them out poor and often persecuted to serve humanity. Even those like James and John, from a wealthy family, were not to trust their family resources for ministry, but depend only upon the Lord's instructions and follow them, not trust the family bankers.

Also reflect, they may have been materially poor, but they had also realised that they were spiritually deficient and could only work by God's grace. Wickedness may appear to be materially "blessed" at times, but the end of the determined "wicked" one is always destruction, but the poverty of the believer in Holy Spirit power is able to handle anything the enemy throws at them.

As a study group pause and reflect upon these passages to reinforce the observations above.

Psalms 37:16-17, 113:6-9, Proverbs 16:19, 19:1-2, Isaiah 29:19-20, 57:15-18, Zephaniah 3:12, Zechariah 11:11-13.

These unsaved, wicked and wealthy people are unlikely to respond to the gospel and be saved, however those who are poor and have a more realistic viewpoint of themselves and the future, may respond to the gospel and become converted. It is for them that the Kingdom of God exists; that is for those who are ready to respond to the message. James 1:9-12. Under pressure we face that daily choice – will we respond to the Lord and seek God's grace, or will we delude ourselves into thinking we are self-sufficient.

The disciples also went out materially poor, having to rely on the Lord and the Lord's people to sustain them. If they had gone out rich many might flock to the banner on the basis that they might themselves get rich. The Lord did not ever preach a prosperity gospel message, and it is always a danger to truth – it comes from the enemy. Trusting the Lord alone, and His Spirit will bring the best out of each person and build their spiritual power over time under that pressure.

Verse 21 The second and third beatitudes are contrasted with the present state of pressure being faced by the believers and the reality of the future. The contrast is heightened by the Greek adverb “nun” which means “right now”, or in the present. Here we see the disciples hungering after the Lord and his work, even to perhaps their physical detriment, only to be later satisfied fully by the result of their service, which by the Lord is turned into joy. **Psalm 42:1-2, 63:1-7, 65:4, 143:3-6, Isaiah 44:3-8, 55:1-3.**

The word filled was originally used for giving fodder (chortos) to animals, but here it is spiritual fodder or food, and the result of taking in spiritual food is always joy, even in the most difficult places and times, and these difficult times are expected to be the “norm” for the believer’s service. **Psalm 6:6-9, 126:5-6.**

Difficulties are best faced with the awareness of our “hunger” for the things of God. A hunger for the Word and for prayerful fellowship will always be satisfied in the ministries of the Holy Spirit and it is this living fellowship that makes the rough road smooth. **Luke 3:4-6.**

Verses 22-23 For the Christian there will be both separation and ostracism at times from the world, but incredible fellowship in the Spirit with those who love the Lord as we do. The reference here is to excommunication from the local synagogue congregation as well as from social interaction and financial dealings. This was a real sacrifice and a social penalty for standing for the name of Christ then as there is today in many places.

In the phrase “Cast out your name as evil”, the verb is used in Aristophanes, Sophocles, and Plato, of hissing an actor off the stage. The name of “Christian” or disciple or “Nazarene” came to be a byword of contempt as shown in the Acts. Jesus foretold what will befall those who are loyal to him in the days to come. The Acts of the Apostles is a commentary on this prophecy. Being despised is hurtful, but “normal” in the devil’s world.

The phrase “Son of Man” is Christ’s common designation used even by Jesus of himself. The only other passages where Jesus is referred to as the Son of Man is the case of Stephen in Acts 7:56, and John’s reference to Him as such in Revelation 1:13 and 14:14.

Both “Son of God” and “Son of Man” apply to him. **John 1:50,52, Matthew 26:63.** Christ was a real man though the Son of God. He is also the representative man and has authority over all men. Jesus says that this action of persecution will be common practice for unbelievers in all of history and cites what the Jews did to their prophets. The Greek word Poieo translated “did” in verse 23 is in the imperfect tense, which means that they kept on doing it. Hebrews 11:32-39.

Verses 24-26 Here we see people who are seeking wealth as the primary goal in life, others seeking self-satisfaction, seeking mirth only,

seeking power over others, and seeking a reputation. How well this reflects the state of attitude that is dominant today with these “lusts” driving social media and most unbelievers. People still chase after the things that do not last into eternity, and few seek the things that matter eternally. Maybe this is one of the things that suffering teaches us.

People who do not realise that they are spiritually destitute do not see the need for salvation. They are like the Laodicean church in **Revelation 3:14-18**, *“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.”*

It is of interest that the rich Pharisees and Sadducees were the chief opposers of Christ, as of the early disciples later [**James 5:1-6**]. The verb “apecho” from evidence from papyri shows that it means “received in full”. The word “consolation” is the Greek word “Parakaleo” to call alongside, to encourage, help and comfort. The rich have been comforted by their riches and their power and influence they provide, but that is all the comfort that they will receive – they have eternity to regret their short-sighted choices. **Isaiah 14:9-11, Revelation 20:11-15.**

The results of this short-sighted comfort however are seen in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus where the rich man has received comfort in his physical life and rejected or simply ignored spiritual opportunities. The result is that the Rich Man is to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. **Luke 16:19-31, 12:16-26.**

The unbelievers have all their good things and happiness here and now, in perishable objects. In the future their inward craving will be as strong as ever, but the materials of satisfaction will have gone forever. We also see the danger of flattery or taking too much notice of what pleasing things others tell you. Jesus points out that their fathers did the same things to the false prophets. They spoke well of false prophets, and this fact is a challenge as we feel out-voted by the majority and considered wrong or foolish by the majority. **Isaiah 30:8-11, Jeremiah 5:23-31.**

In addition, if you are doing a proper job with witnessing you will not be universally popular, as the Cross and the gospel message is an offence to the unsaved. **John 15:18ff, Romans 5:15-20, Galatians 5:11.** If you are receiving universal commendation you may be acting as a false prophet. This is not an invitation to be obnoxious and unpopular, but it’s the Lord challenge not to value anyone’s opinion other than his own. Under pressure we are

always to look up and ask the Lord the questions rather than baffle ourselves further with the opinions of others.

APPLICATION

You can search for the rest of your life for inner happiness, but you can only find it if God guides you to do his work, and you accept His power in your weakness, and walk in his path for you. Whether we have comfort or not during times of testing depends on our understanding and application of doctrine into our life at the time of the suffering.

The major problem in the Christian life is our ignorance of God's Plan and provision. Under pressure the key is to keep reading and applying the Scriptures, only then we will be spiritually satisfied.

By listening to the flattering words of others one can be distracted from seeking the Lord as one can feel self-supporting and have the attitude "I did it my way", whereas in order to have a relationship with God we have to do it His way and one good thing about pressure is that it focuses our mind on what God alone can provide for us.

Notes

JOHN 12:20-31 Glorification Comes through His Sacrifice

20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: **21** The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. **22** Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. **23** And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. **24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. **25** He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. **26** If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. **27** Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. **28** Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. **29** The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. **30** Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. **31** Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

KEY WORDS

Were	Eimi	Keep on being [Imperfect Active Indicative]
Certain	Tis	Some
Came up	Anabaino	Come up, Ascend [Present Active Participle]
Worship	Proskuneo	Worship [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Feast	Heorte	Feast
Came	Proserchomai	Come into the presence [Aorist Active Indicative]
Was of	Apo	From
Desired	Erotao	Ask [Imperfect Active Indicative]
Saying	Lego	Say [Present Active Participle]
Sir	Kurios	Lord, Master
Would	Thelo	Wish to, Desire [Present Active Indicative]
See	Eido	See [Aorist Active Infinitive]
Cometh	Erchomai	Come [Present Middle Indicative]
Telleth	Lego	Tell [Present Active Indicative]
Tell	Lego	Tell [Present Middle Indicative]
Answered	Apokrinomai	Answer [Present Middle Indicative]
Saying	Lego	Say [Present Active Participle]
Hour	Hora	Hour
Come	Erchomai	Come [Perfect Active Indicative]
Son	Uihos	Son
Man	Anthropos	Man
Should glorified	be Doxazo	Glorify [Aorist Passive Subjunctive]
Verily	Amen	Truly denoting a point of doctrine

Say	Lego	Say [Present Active Indicative]
Except	Ean me	If not, Except
Corn	Kokkos	Corn, Grain
Wheat	Sitos	Wheat
Fall	Pipto	Fall [Aorist Active Participle]
Ground	Ge	Earth, Ground
Die	Apothnesko	Die [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Abideth	Meno	Abide, Stay
Alone	Monos	Alone, Single
Die	Apothnesko	Die [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Bringeth forth	Phero	Bear, Carry [Present Active Indicative]
Much	Polus	Much
Fruit	Karpos	Fruit
Loveth	Phileo	Love [Present Active Participle]
Life	Psuche	Soul, Life
Shall lose	Apollumi	Lose [Present Active Indicative]
Hateth	Miseo	Love less [Present Active Participle]
World	Kosmos	World
Keep it	Phulasso	Preserve, Keep [Future Active Indicative]
Life	Zoe	Life
Eternal	Aionois	Eternal
Any man	Tis	Anyone
Serve	Diakoneo	Serve [Present Active Subjunctive]
Let him follow	Akoloutheo	Follow [Present Active Imperative]
Am	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Indicative]
Servant	Diakonos	Servant
Shall be	Eimi	Keep on being [Future Middle Indicative]
Serve	Diakoneo	Serve [Present Active Subjunctive]
Father	Pater	Father
Will honour	Timao	Honour
Is my	Mou	My
Soul	Psuche	Soul
Troubled	Tarasso	Troubled [Perfect Passive Indicative]
Say	Epo	Say [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Save	Sozo	Save [Aorist Active Imperative]
Hour	Hora	Hour
For this cause	Dia Touto	For this
Came	Erchomai	Come [Aorist Active Indicative]
Glorify	Doxazo	Glorify [Aorist Active Imperative]
Name	Onoma	Name
Came	Erchomai	Come [Aorist Active Indicative]
Voice	Phone	Voice
Heaven	Ouranos	Heaven
Saying	-	Not found in the original
Have glorified	Doxazo	Glorify [Aorist Active Indicative]
Will glorify	Doxazo	Glorify Future Active Indicative]
People	Ochlos	Multitude, Crowd
Stood By	Histemi	Stand by [Perfect Active Indicative]
Heard	Akouo	Hear [Aorist Active Participle]
Said	Lego	Say [Imperfect Active Indicative]

Thundered	Ginomai	Began to thunder [Perfect Active Infinitive]
	Bronte	
Other	Allos	Others
Said	Lego	Say [Imperfect Active Indicative]
Angels	Aggelos	Angel
Spoke	Laleo	Speak [Perfect Active Indicative]
Answered	Apokrinomai	Answer [Aorist Passive Indicative]
Said	Epo	Say [Aorist Active Indicative]
Came	Ginomai	Come into being [Perfect Active Indicative]
Because of	Dia	Because of
Your sakes	Dia Humas	For you
Is	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Indicative]
Judgment	Krisis	Judgment
Shall the	Ho	The
Prince	Archon	Ruler
Cast out	Ekballo	Cast out [Future Passive Indicative]

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Verses 20-23 The Lord teaches in the porch of Solomon - **John 10:23**. There is circumstantial evidence that this may also have been the location where the giving of the Spirit occurred at the Feast of Pentecost. Under pressure we ought always to remember that every event occurs in the plan and the Lord is weaving the hardships and baffling things into his tapestry – faith means we are ready to wait to see what the Lord will do over time with us and with our difficult and at times baffling and painful circumstances.

There were Greek converts to Judaism there and they said, "Sir we would see Jesus", to Philip. They were keen to see what to do with their lives as they had seen the cleansing of the Temple and wondered what it meant. They came to Philip as Philip had a Greek name. He came from Bethsaida in Galilee and probably spoke Greek fluently. They politely asked for an interview with the Lord. Many people think their faith is an excuse for arrogance and bad manners; please learn from these men, politeness is godly, especially when under pressure. The literal translation of their statement was, "we have resolved in our minds, and our one concern is to see and speak to Jesus". They were heading in the right direction, so must we.

The word "thelo" means to desire. It is in the verbal form of the present, active, indicative. They were saying, "We keep on desiring to see Jesus". It is not an emotional desire alone; it is a desire that flows from their thinking. They say that they want to get to know Him and Philip does what we are all supposed to do, share the contact with another and lead the people under Holy Spirit conviction to Jesus, so they hear His Word and are able to express their free will on the basis of facts and biblical doctrine. The perfect tense of "came" at the start of verse 21 is very poignant, for the action of Philip in following up the Greek's approach has eternal benefit to them all. Under pressure it's easy to get mentally distracted onto the pain we are feeling and miss the task we have to complete for eternal benefit to others. Suffering

reminds us that it's not ever about us, it's always about others and what we are here to do for others in our Lord's name and for His glory.

The Greeks were always made to feel that they were second class believers in Judaism. They were converts or proselytes and had joined the religion of Israel. They were always only allowed into the outer court, the Court of the Gentiles. The Jews were and still are often racist and superior in attitude to non-Jews. If you were a Gentile in this day especially, you were never good enough, and often made to feel it. Feeling pressure can make any negative attitudes stronger as the "Fight-Flight" response is triggered and we look for others to blame or even to hurt to vent our deep inner hurt – it will solve nothing. We must resist that primal response and seek the Lord's will in the situation to be a blessing in spite of any pain or distress we may be feeling.

These people are conscious of the fact that they might not be able to even meet with Jesus. They therefore do not presume to just walk up to a Jewish rabbi and speak to him. The Lord may appear to be rude here (he isn't), for he does not even look up but continues teaching, but what He says is interesting. Remember, He had just cleansed the Temple and drawn people's attention back to the truths that the temple taught by its sacrifices and structure.

In verses 23 and following the Lord says He is going to do something quite different. He is going to cause the Greeks to come before Him face to face. The Greeks will no longer be seen as "second class" in the spiritual realm, for everyone will be equal. The Lord is going to talk about the purpose of the Temple system, and remind the Jewish people present that they are "light bearers" with their revelation, for it is for all mankind, not to be hidden away for them only.

The Lord now comments on everything that He has done, and He notes that the hour is now come (perfect tense – with eternal benefits for all mankind), the time of culmination has arrived, the last phase of God's plan for mankind's salvation is about to begin. The Lamb has come to his Temple for the last time and the Son of Man is going to be glorified through all that will follow over the next days and weeks. The people listening to Jesus this day will see the fulfilment of all the first Jewish Feasts of the Mosaic Law. Firstly, Passover will be fulfilled in his sacrifice, then First Fruits by His Resurrection, the Feast of Unleavened Bread will be fulfilled, and then in 50 days the Feast of Pentecost will be fulfilled in this very place.

Verses 24-26 When the Lord says "verily verily", He is saying, "Truly, Truly", this is doctrine, make a note of it. These are promises and challenges to us today. They are promises to the Greeks that were listening then. The Lord is saying that even this (the whole temple system) will pass away. In effect He is saying, "I am going to do something different and you must follow me, not the old system now". We must follow Him "outside the camp".
Hebrews 13:13.

As the Lord carried his cross and walked outside the city so must we. We must follow Him and have no part in religion and its organisation. The Mosaic system played its part, but that part was to lead to this time, and when it was over, fulfilled in Jesus, then the system was “over” also! All is changed by challenge – will it be for the good, for our good, or will we resist change and not make good decisions?

The Lord focuses his attention in this discourse upon His humanity because it is in His humanity that He is going to go to the Cross. He will go as the perfect man. The grain of wheat is the thing which falls into the earth and dies. It ceases to become a seed and becomes a sprout and becomes a new plant or new life. He is saying two things simultaneously here.

Firstly, “I am no longer going to be what I am now, I am going to change”, says the Lord. At the cross/resurrection he is going to change. He is firstly going to be sown in the ground; his body will be buried after His death on the Cross. When He rises from the dead, He is not going to be the same again. He is going to be in a new body; His old one will have been changed. Through our own suffering situations we are also to change so that we may be a blessing to all who observe us on our pilgrim journey.

Secondly, the Mosaic System will be changed, by the fulfilment of all the first cycle of Feasts, and the expectation of the fulfilment of the second cycle of Feasts at his Second Advent. The Temple as a “fold” will be replaced by a new spiritual group, the flock of the Lord, the Church. Out of His death is going to come new life and a new way of spiritual living – in the permanent filling of the Holy Spirit. The animals offered in the Temple over the years before only covered sin, the Lord came to take away the sin of the world. The Greeks have come with a question which they want to ask the Lord. However before the Greeks actually asked the question they had their question answered by the Lord. This is so often the picture of our own lives facing pressure situations and deep and painful questions; as we bring them before the Lord they are answered. In pressure prayer must double-up in power and frequency.

As Greeks, even though they had accepted Judaism, and were “Jewish proselytes” they were seen by most Jews as second class citizens. They had joined Israel in religion but had never been truly accepted. They could come to the Temple but only go half way, in the sense of them being restricted to the Court of the Gentiles. The Lord focuses their attention on Himself and what He is going to do for them all in the future. All troubles make us short sighted, but Jesus gets these Greeks to look out to what is about to happen, rather than just see where they are.

The Son of Man is going to be glorified in the victory on the Cross, and it is going to begin a change that will be total for spirituality. The Cross is not a defeat, rather it is the prophesied victory, and this is doubled at the resurrection. This victory was being proclaimed by all the sacrifices and all the Feasts of the Mosaic Law, and when the victory occurred, all the sacrifices and Feasts were to be seen in light of Jesus person and work, not by

themselves at all. It is the spiritual death of Christ, which paid the penalty for sin, and all this was portrayed through the temple sacrifices. He died for our sins for the three hours, bearing personally our sins on the Cross, crying out "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

At the end of this period He said, "It is finished, Father into thy hand I dismiss my spirit". It should be noted that the spirit is not taken from Him; he gives it up to the Father (he cheats the very angel of death itself – for he has defeated Satan 100%!). However, He suffered separation from the Father during those terrible three hours, as your sin and mine was poured out on Him. Over these three hours He pays the penalty for all mankind and wins salvation for us. The sting of death is sin. The Lord has defeated sin and death on the Cross. The resurrection is the evidence of completion!

The phrase the "blood of Christ", sums up the total work of the Lord on the Cross. This penalty was so horrible that God the Father clothed the scene in darkness. During that darkness the problem of our sins were solved. He obtained the victory as a man, the "Son of Adam", on the Cross. It is the Son of Man who is on the Cross. It is also of course, God and man who is hanging there on the Cross – our perfect mediator – equal with both parties. We share in this victory through our union with Him. We are raised in him into a superior position to the angels through his suffering work for us. What might our suffering do for us? The fruit of my own suffering this year is this book.

We share in the spoils of victory through our position by faith now "in Christ Jesus". He portrays this sharing through the analogy of the ear of wheat. Corn in the ancient world was wheat. Here we have the single grain of wheat illustration with the single grain being Christ. It has its life locked within it by a strong outer coating. This outer coating breaks, the wheat ceases to be a grain of wheat, and it becomes a short stalk of wheat. At maturity the one grain becomes many grains. The grains are multiplied through the "death" of the single parent grain. Are we prepared to live this reality out also?

The wheat must change its form (not its nature) to produce more wheat. The Lord says that He is going to change, he is going to die on the Cross and be raised in eternal body. He says that His death is going to produce newness of life not just for Him as God-Man but for all who enter into union with Him. The new body is the new body of the church.

He began this passage with the analogy of the shepherd and the sheep. We are part of the flock, and in this second analogy, we are the seed in the pod, and it is all because of what He did for us. "He in us, we in Him". As the grains on the stalk share in the nature of the grain that died in the ground, so we share in the character of Him who died for us.

Notice that the Lord always taught with a picture so that all could understand. Word studies are very important too. The ear of wheat was attached to the stem, the stem to the root and the root came from the seed that died. This will be the Lord's message in John 15. We are intimately involved in his suffering on our behalf and may be asked at times to share a little of His suffering. Will

we square our shoulders and, in the strength the Holy Spirit gives bear the burden the Lord gives us to bear?

Paul takes this up in Romans 11. In that passage he sees that we also have the stem of Israel, in the person and work of Christ, the Messiah, and that he is the true root into which we are grafted. Paul uses the grape vine analogy, which is also used by our Lord in John 15. The root is Christ, we are grafted on into that root. We are to be the productive seed pods that through the filling of the Holy Spirit become fruitful, bringing glory to His Holy Name forever.

We are an ear of corn/wheat; we are part of the plant. **John 15:1-17**. If we draw life at all it comes from Him. As believers we are in union with Christ and that makes us wheat and keeps us wheat. We do not change from wheat to tomato. We are part of His plant and not something else. The Lord tells us and tells the crowd that He is going to be new life to them whether we are Jew or Greek. Israel considered itself the, be all and end all, but Christ said that all of you can be part of Me, and that he is the "one" – that means all people are equal in Him.

Here we have a contrast of attitudes, this world and eternity as a contrast. Man faces a choice, to love life here and lose it eternally, or hate (not be distracted by) life here and gain it eternally. He is talking about new life, which is going to be available in Him. This passage does not mean to love and hate. The Greek word for love is "phileo" which means to delight in, to be emotionally attached and involved. Let us be very clear what the Lord means here about "loving this life".

It is not the attached love of "agape", nor the sexual love of "eros", or the mateship love of "storge". It is a love which is desiring to prolong itself, fearing death and clinging to life. You have got many scientists who are trying to prolong life. They love life and fear death. Paul says, It is such a gain to die any way the Lord decides. All the things that are a gain in this life are going to be over one day. All the details of this life are left behind at death. If that is what you are living for when you die you are going to lose everything. If you are living for things which last forever you have lost nothing at all.

John Wesley was on a boat crossing the Atlantic when there was a great storm, and he was scared stiff of dying as the boat looked as if it was going to founder. There was a small group of Moravian missionaries on that boat. They had been living with Count von Zinzendorf. He saw that these people were quietly singing hymns and praying, and yet this Anglican minister was hanging on with white knuckles filled with fear. The Moravians when asked, said that they were not concerned with death, as they were in God's hands and that death was nothing to them. Wesley decided he needed to get his life right and he spent time with these people's founder later, and this was a significant part of the transformation of his own life and values. Difficulties focus our minds on eternal values as long as we really think them through.

"Apoluo" means to loosen from an ultimate source, or to be released from. This is like slipping the cable of a ship to sail off into the ocean. It is going to

drift away from you, and you need to act. Is it going to be a good thing for you to do. If you greedily hang on to everything you want in this life you are going to lose it. Wherever your treasure is there is your heart also. **Matthew 6:19-34.**

The word translated hate is "miseo". It is the present, active, participle. It is the same as in Luke 14:26. Miseo does not mean exactly to hate in our terms, but to put in second place. Miseo = to place in order of priority behind someone or something else. It is to recognise that the details of our very temporary physical life are secondary to something far more important. Here are contrasted two objects, one you love, one you have given a second priority to. Every testing circumstance presents this valuation issue also – for in the test what will we value and what will we trade happily away?

This does not mean going around saying that you hate being alive, or that you despise your life. The most important thing in life is doing His will, when, and where he wants, in obedience. The challenge is to assign the will of the Lord top priority in this life as in the next, or is your desire to selfishly get what you want out of life at every moment of time?

In verse 26 note the question. Will you follow me asks the Lord? Are you a genuine sheep? Are you in the Lord's will? To produce good spiritual fruit we need to deal with sin in our life, and sort out life priorities. Make our decisions on what matters and show what we truly value and then do what we are called to do whatever the cost to ourselves.

The Lord makes three points to the Greeks:

[a] The death of the Lord on the Cross will be providing salvation for all who will believe in Him.

[b] Our relationship with God through Christ is more important than anything else. If we glorify Him in this way everything else will be added unto us.

[c] If we follow Him, we will be in the place of blessing and service.

Verses 27-31 This continues the conversation between Jesus and the disciples with the Greeks over-hearing. One commentator calls this, "the agony of glory". There is a great cost to the Lord in going to the Cross – for the first time in eternity purity must be saturated in sin and evil, and fully bear its burden in order to destroy it fully. For the first time in eternity the Father turns away from the Son, as sin is too awful to look upon. Do we see our sin as this awful, or are we minimizing things still? Suffering situations remind us of the fallen nature of our world – Jesus met us right there and solved the sin and death question – can we relax into this?

Do we see that suffering and great stress at times is a part of our journey due to the sin of Adam? There is nothing personal here, just the reality of the legacy of the Fall.

At the end of the passage in question he hides himself from the crowd. He leaves the people to think through what he has said, rather than simply react to it. All Satan's attacks since this day have been to obscure the meaning and significance of the Cross, and this continues to be Satan's thrust.

Satan was trying desperately to stop the Lord from getting to the Cross at this point - for he suspected/knew what it would mean for him - he would lose his power. He tried to stop Jesus from going to the cross. Satan's main strategy was to tempt the Lord to take the crown without the cross, and when that failed he tried to kill him before he got there. Stand amazed at what the Lord bore before He even got to the Cross; he should have been dead before He got there, such was the evil thrown at him. All satanic malice was thrown at our Lord – but he “sets his face” to go through it for us! It is this determination that we must find within ourselves as we face difficulties and testing.

It is apparent that Satan was "hell bent" in trying to prevent the Lord getting to the Cross, because he knew what would happen there. From the temptations of Matthew 4 to the last blow of the Roman soldiers the Lord was attacked. Satan's power is the power of death, and he is called the angel of death. The Lord even cheated him on that. When the payment of sin was made, the Lord will say, “it is finished, Father into thy hands I dismiss my spirit”.

The angel of death had no power over Him; He gave His spirit to God. **John 19:30 - 1 Corinthians 15:56** - the sting of death is sin, but with the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, victory is won over sin and death. Through this victory, every woman and every man has a possibility to defeat the power of death in union with the only one who has defeated death. Can you glimpse some of the riches that we have “in Christ Jesus”, and can you now draw on them in your present difficulties? He did this for us, so can we bear our pain now as we look to Him?

Verse 27 "My soul is troubled" - tarasso - means agitated, troubled, grieved. This is the same word used at the disturbing of the water at the pool of Bethesda. This is the first of four perfect tenses that underline the importance of the events here. The Lord's anguish had eternal results, for he went through the anguish to glory, and so must we at times on our pilgrim journey, and we have the Holy Spirit to assist us. This is real suffering He faced, and we are at times asked by the Lord to share that suffering – real soul anguish as we face testing circumstances.

The angelic voice is also with “eternal results and consequences”, for the events about to unfold will have human and angelic significance. The fallen angels/demons are certainly doomed, with their master Satan by the Lord's victory on and through the Cross, and the elect angels rejoice with us in the perfection of the person and work of Jesus.

The Lord was in anguish, He knew what was going to happen, the pain that He would have to bear, the terrible pain as God being separated from His Father for the first time in eternity. As the sinless one He was experiencing the

pain beyond words upon His sinless body, experiencing the pain of the judgement that was yours and mine and He freely bore that for us. Can we adopt this mental attitude to our trouble? Seeing it as a window possibly into His love for us.

Much of the preaching of today is about the physical suffering, but it is the spiritual suffering that made Him cry out. He cried aloud when your sins and mine hit him. "My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?" The Lord was forsaken because He was bearing your sin and mine. For the first time in eternity he is going to experience spiritual death, and it was for us, that you and I might not be ever separated from living fellowship with God. It is that living fellowship right now that helps us in our difficulties and anguish.

The Lord also saw what was going to happen to the Temple, City and people in August of 70 AD. The estimates of the numbers that were killed at the time vary greatly, but Josephus who was there, records that the blood was so thick that the Roman soldiers slipped over in it and the bodies were piled so high that they had to climb over them to kill some more. Those who rejected their Messiah paid a terrible price for it.

"The hour has come", Jesus says, the time for the Cross. The Cross/Resurrection is the Key to the First Advent, not an accident or miscalculation on Jesus' part. The purpose of the incarnation was the Cross on which the Lord came to die. His primary aim in coming to the earth was to go to the Cross and break down the sin/death barrier between God and man. If He was just a great teacher, a great leader, you would still be in your sins. Everything points to the Cross and culminates in it.

The Lord quotes from Psalm 42. The rejection of the Lord and their hatred to Him was a great anguish to Him. In Isaiah 53:3, he is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. In verse 10 of that chapter, it says that his soul was an offering for sin. What the Lord is going through is the anguish of love. He is doing all that is necessary for these people, salvation is a free gift because of the Cross. But see what it cost the Lord, for it was not free for Him. In the middle of the anguish of the Lord there is victory certain. There is also hope. So it is with our own suffering, right now! It can change, mature and educate us in many things.

Verse 28 The Lord asks for God the Father's name to be glorified. If he had asked to have been delivered from it, it would have caused us not to have salvation. The Lord committed Himself to the Cross. The Lord has done this for you - what should your response be? Given His work for us, what are we prepared to do in our service for Him and His people the Church?

Here we have the Lord Jesus Christ putting His own life as a secondary consideration after the Plan of God and our salvation. He has placed His life on the altar putting Himself second so that you and I might be first. He chooses to break the perfect fellowship with His Father so that we might have the opportunity to choose life, as an unbeliever to believe and as a believer to change our life.

Verse 29 The crowd speculates as to the source of the noise with some thinking it was thunder whilst others thought it an angel. The Father spoke at the Baptism of our Lord, on the Mount of Transfiguration and at this point. It is of interest how people reacted to it. Some took the natural source of the noise as thunder demonstrating that they did not believe in the supernatural. Others say "it was an angel"; they spiritualise, trying to make it ethereal and harmless.

However the truth is, His glorification has begun, and it will continue with His name being lifted up, and the Father's name will be glorified, and the process will continue through the Resurrection to the Ascension, the Session and the Day of Pentecost. The Lord will be glorified at the right hand of the Father, and at the Second Advent, as the next phase of the Plan to unfold. At this moment the Lord indicates that the Cross is a transaction between eternity and time so that the creatures of time might become creatures of eternity. Glorify - "doxazo" - to recognise, to honour or praise. The Father will glorify the Son but it will be through the Cross; the way despised by men.

The voice came for the disciples in verse 30 to be strengthened, and for the unbelievers to be convicted. The perfect tenses of the verse in verses 29-30 are making that point – the eternal consequences of what is "said" are to be taken seriously. The gospel message itself has two sides, two reactions, and two eternal destinies, both freely chosen by each person. One is glory, and the other is judgement. Here again we have the choice that each person must make coming out. This was a sign, and the signs were for the Jewish leadership and people to realise how fatal the wrong choice would be. They had a choice of the possibility of salvation, or the certainty of temporal judgement in 70 AD and eternal judgment on each of their deaths. Spiritual Choices are eternal in their significance.

Verses 31. The Cross is the judgement turning point for this world. This phrase starts with the word "nun" which means, right now. Several days before the Cross the Lord is so certain of victory that it is announced "now" before it happens. The prince of the world shall be cast out. Satan is to be judged – it is absolutely certain. Victory is certain before the Cross and the gospel message now announces the completed work of Jesus for the salvation of the lost, the reliability of the Lord's promise of salvation to all who come in faith, and the absolute certainty of eternal judgment for all who reject his grace provision.

"Ekballo", is in the future, passive, indicative, which means it is a future certainty with someone receiving the throwing out. The "someone" receiving judgment here is Satan. It must be remembered that Satan is not equal with God in any way, since he is going to be thrown out like a ball, and it is certain. His power is purely in deception, as the Holy Spirit filled believer is superior to him now. **1 John 4:4, 2 Timothy 1:7.**

The cross is the pivot of all history; it is the point on which everything comes to rest. Man is given hope in relationship with the Lord, their Saviour and King.

Satan is given his sentence of doom, which is confirmed at the Cross. This is one of the reasons that Satan hates us, because we are saved through the Cross. You are the receiver of God's grace, and he is the subject of God's judgement. You will be with God forever, and Satan and all his crew will be in the Lake of Fire forever.

What does the Cross mean to us? Many Christians live in darkness. They know Him but do not allow the light to shine fully into their life. Let us ensure we are not like the people who rejected him in any way at all. Shun and flee from even the "appearance of evil", and that means from any retreat under pressure from any objective the Lord wants you to achieve – in His power move forward and do the work – in His power you shall not fail or fall. **1 Thessalonians 5:22, 2 Timothy 1:7.**

Notes

JOHN 14:21-31

PEACE IN THE MIDST OF PRESSURE

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. 25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. 28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. 30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

KEY WORDS

Keepeth	Tereo	Hold, Keep [Present Active Participle]
It is	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Indicative]
Loveth	Agapao	Love [Present Active Participle]
Loveth	Agapao	Love [Present Active Participle]
Loved	Agapao	Love [Future Passive Indicative]
Love	Agapao	Love [Future Active Indicative]
Manifest	Emphanizo	Exhibit, Manifest [Future Active Indicative]
Saith	Lego	Say [Present Active Indicative]
Lord	Kurios	God, Lord, Master
How is it	Ginomai	To become something [Perfect Active Indicative]
Manifest	Emphanizo	Manifest, Exhibit [Present Active Indicative]
World	Kosmos	World
Answered	Apokrinomai	Answer [Aorist Passive Indicative]
Said	Epo	Say [Aorist Active Indicative]
Man	Tis	Anyone
Love	Agapao	Love [Present Active Subjunctive]
Will keep	Tereo	Keep [Future Active Indicative]
Words	Logos	Word
Father	Pater	Father
Love	Agapao	Love [Future Active Indicative]
Will come	Erchomai	Come [Future Middle Indicative]
Make	Poieo	Make [Future Middle Indicative]
Abode	Mone	Residence, Abode, Mansion
Loveth	Agapao	Love [Present Active Participle]
Keepeth	Tereo	Keep [Present Active Indicative]
Sayings	Logos	Word
Word	Logos	Word
Hear	Akouo	Hear [Present Active Indicative]
Is	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Indicative]
Sent	Pempo	Dispatch, Send [Aorist Active Participle]
Things	Tauta	Things
Spoken	Laleo	Speak [Perfect Active Indicative]
Being present	Meno	Present, Abide [Present Active Participle]
Comforter	Parakletos	Comforter
Which is	-	Not found in the original
Holy	Hagios	Holy
Ghost	Pneuma	Spirit, there is no word in the Koine Greek for Ghost
Will send	Pempa	Send [Future Active Indicative]
Name	Onoma	Name
Teach	Didasko	Teach [Future Active Indicative]
Bring remembrance	to Hupomimnesko	Put in mind, Bring to remembrance [Future Active Indicative]
Whatsoever	Hos	That
Said	Epo	Say [Aorist Active Indicative]
Peace	Eirene	Peace
Leave	Aphiemi	Leave [Present Active Indicative]

Give	Didomi	Give [Present Active Indicative]
Giveth	Didomi	Give [Present Active Indicative]
Give	Didomi	Give [Present Active Indicative]
Let not	Me	Not
Heart	Kardia	Heart
Troubled	Tarasso	Trouble, Agitate [Present Passive Imperative]
Afraid	Deiliao	Be Afraid [Present Active Imperative]
Heard	Akouo	Hear [Aorist Active Indicative]
Said	Epo	Say [Aorist Active Indicative]
Go away	Hupago	Go away [Present Active Indicative]
Come again	Erchomai	Come [Present Middle Indicative]
Loved	Agapao	Love [Imperfect Active Indicative]
Rejoice	Chairo	Rejoice [Aorist Passive Indicative]
Said	Epo	Say [Present Active Indicative]
Go	Poreuomai	Go [Present Middle Indicative]
Greater	Meizon	Greater
Told	Ereo	Say [Perfect Active Indicative]
Come to pass	Ginomai	Become something [Aorist Middle Infinitive]
Come to pass	Ginomai	Become something [Aorist Middle Subjunctive]
Believe	Pistueo	Believe [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Hereafter	Eti	After this
Talk	Laleo	Talk [Future Active Indicative]
Much	Polus	Much
Prince	Archon	Ruler, Prince
World	Kosmos	World
Cometh	Erchomai	Come [Present Middle Indicative]
Hath	Echo	Have and hold [Present Active Indicative]
Nothing	Oudeis	Nothing
Know	Ginosko	Know [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Love	Agapao	Love [Present Active Indicative]
Gave	Entellomai	Give commandment [Aorist Middle Indicative]
commandment		
Even so	Houto	In this way
Do	Poieo	Do [Present Active Indicative]
Arise	Egeiro	Rise [Present Passive Imperative]
Let us go	Ago	Go [Present Active Subjunctive]

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

It is always a good pattern to have every church service start with a call to worship out of the Scriptures. The church service should start and end with the reading of God's Word. It is also good to give encouragement from the Word, showing that where the believer is walking in accordance with the Lord's Plan for their life they are totally safe in the Devil's world. It is good to start with two readings, one from the Old Testament and one from the New. The passage we look at now is one of those that provide great encouragement as we face difficulties on our daily pilgrim journey.

Verses 21 - 26 We are challenged as to whether we are living up to the standards using the things that God has given us or are we living as miserable sinners masquerading as saints? What fellowship is most dominant in our life? Do we fellowship with Him on a daily and moment by moment basis or are we regularly out of fellowship with Him? Pressure situations require immediate and close communications with our Lord and that is built up by the daily habit of close fellowship in the Word and Prayer.

Paul says that he wishes that the mind (the way of thinking) that was in Christ Jesus, might be in us. **1 Corinthians 2:16, Philipians 2:3-5.** The Lord was willing to accept the will of the Father in His life right to the very end. We have a relationship in Christ. In that relationship we have great responsibility. How are we living is a question that is to be constantly asked of Christians. Are we walking in the "Mind of Christ", or are we following our own imaginations? In times of great pressure, it is that habit of putting the Lord first that makes the painful decisions easier and faster.

Those who are going to have any responsibilities in the church, either as a pastor or a lady leading a ladies Bible study, are always going to be giving people the truths and of the grace of God. You will be always giving God's people the challenge of living worthy of the grace of God. This isn't even possible to do unless you are walking in the grace of God yourself. If you are faithful in your teaching of the Word, you will notice that not all will like you, for attitude to the Word of God divides people! **Matthew 10:34-36, Romans 8:7, James 4:4.** In all pressure situations our own saturation in the Word of God is incredibly protective against doubts and fears.

The greatest pain we can experience on our journey is people walking away from fellowship with us. You should not be surprised when people will no longer walk with you. People decided not to walk with the Lord because He challenged them, and our biblical challenges will offend some. **John 15:18-27, Galatians 4:16.** Success in the ministry does not mean that you necessarily have a large congregation. If you judged the Lord's ministry on the basis of numbers you would say that He was not successful, (which is blasphemous), but pause and reflect upon the "numbers game" for a moment. **John 17:2-24.**

The Lord had thousands hearing him early in his ministry, and receiving healing and miracle ministries, but there are only a few hundred at the end, after the Resurrection! It is not numbers of people 'tagging along', but devoted, committed and Holy Spirit filled people we should be seeking as our companions – they will always be few but they will be choice companions – value them and grieve for those who walk away, but do not be distracted by them. Let there be no slowing of our advance as pressures strike us; let us keep advancing forward prayerfully.

We have the Father and the Son with us, the Holy Spirit in us, and so we need to ask ourselves, are we the Father's joy in our present work and words? We are often not our Father's joy due to the sin of unbelief/doubt in our life, with our heavenly Father having to discipline us from time to time. We

need to write **Hebrews 3:7-11, 4:1-3, 12:4-17** in the margin of the Bible at this passage. We have not resisted unto blood. At time we may be under great tribulation, but most of us have difficulty because we have forgotten God's warnings or just under stress wandered off the path. When you are chastened by the Lord, due to some act or state of foolishness, deal with this in the power of the Holy Spirit and don't be a whim – for you have not been asked to die – yet.... When we are facing real combat hatred from the enemy, then we can smile, knowing this is our called battle and so we can immediately call on all divine resources to fight and win.

We should give thanks that we are not a “fake” pretend make-believer; we are a child, and that is why we feel conviction and at times real opposition from the enemy. The reason that many so called “believers” can sit in church and not be convicted of sin, or face no real suffering, is that they are “make believers” and not true children of God. No matter how awful our earthly father was, our heavenly father is wonderful. We do not enjoy the suffering associated with conviction or opposition at times, but we do learn from it if we seek the Lord’s will and power through it. **Romans 8:28** always applies.

If you are dealing with some sin in your life deal with it before God, that you might become holy, set apart for the next service to be rendered. “Make straight paths for your feet”. Do not go into places where you are easily tempted or distracted. Resist evil and do not go to a place where you have fallen before unless the Lord leads you back in power. You fight temptation firstly by avoiding going to all places of danger for your Old Sin Nature.

Many believers are foolish in their choices at this point. If we wish to resist temptations, we firstly avoid all known areas of trouble for us; there are places we stop going to until we have built more power. As a male alcoholic you do not fight your battles against alcoholism in a tavern; you stay home and read to your children and pray with your wife! The Lord always prefers to deal with us in a positive way rather than discipline us, but discipline is necessary for wayward children.

Let us challenge ourselves in these matters and not make the Lord’s job harder – be obedient Christian – feed on the Word and apply it into the fabric of your daily life. The enemy and the world itself will create enough pressure, let’s not add to it!

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. 25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,

whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Verse 21 We are told about how to get a deeper spiritual life. The word hath, is "echo", which means to have and to hold. An example of this is, once you have given a child an Easter egg, the child "echo"s the egg. It holds onto it with all its strength. In context you have the Word of God, and specifically the commandments of the Lord, and you are having and holding fast those commandments.

The word for Commandments is the word "entole", and this word means "sayings"; that is, all the doctrines that the Lord has taught. To keep is "tereo", which is a military word, which means to set a guard over something. We have then the right attitude as we have the mind of Christ - **1 Corinthians 2:14.**

Solomon in Proverbs sought after and expressed this God given wisdom. **Proverbs 1:7, 3:1-10.** When we open God's Word we need to pursue the doctrines of God's Word. Seek after wisdom with our whole heart and soul, and guard it. Let us protect our soul from evil. Do not let the evil of unbelief overcome the good the Holy Spirit can do; keep trusting that the Lord will resolve the difficulties you are facing.

Verse 23 This tells us that if anyone loves the Lord then they will keep His words and the Father will come and abide with her/him but the Lord states clearly, that the person who "does not keep My sayings does not love me". There are four repetitions of this principle. This principle is repeated more often than any other doctrine in this section. By repeating it on a number of occasions the Lord is underlining it. It therefore must be one of the most important of the principles of the Scripture. To reject God's Word and turn your back on Him is to turn away from the only Saviour, and the only person you can be turning to is the enemy - Satan. Disobedient believers may kid themselves that they are not working for the enemy, but every time we fall back to an unbiblical standard or behaviour we are in effect doing the enemy's work!

Note also - We are told to love the Father, we are told to love the Son, but nowhere in Scripture are we told to love the Holy Spirit. The significance of that is that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to magnify the Son and glorify Him and the Father through His plan. The Holy Spirit is our fellow worker and our source of power; we are to utilize his power, not worship him as we worship the Father and the Son. There is one way we do "worship" him however, and we see that below.

The Holy Spirit never draws attention to Himself. This is why we never pray to the Holy Spirit. We pray through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. There are different responsibilities in the Godhead and the differences are lessons for us, especially as we face difficulties on the pilgrim road.

The Holy Spirit is given to you as a teacher and as your comforter. He is your coach. You heed Him in your soul as you have heeded Christ in the body. As you keep on holding and applying the Word of God you will keep on having fellowship with Him. He will make His abode in us and bring to remembrance those things that the Lord has said.

The challenge for your Christian life - **Ephesians 5:18** - "Be filled with the Spirit" – there is no other path to victory over troubles that God's provided power. We must be Holy Spirit filled at all times to be effective in troubled days; anything short of that is "wood, hay and stubble production" territory.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. In only two dispensations does the filling of the Spirit occur, in (a) Church Age (b) The Millennium. In this topic we contrast the characteristics produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit in these two ages.

2. Church age spirituality is not characterised by ecstasies - Millennial spirituality is characterised by ecstasies. (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22,23 (Church) Joel 2:28, 29) (Millennium). We do not chase after emotionality in today's world – we chase after obedience to the commands of the Lord in the Spirit's power.

3. During the Church Age Jesus Christ is absent from the earth and therefore ecstasies is detrimental to the believer; we are walking, and working in his power, not emoting and relaxing. The day for relaxing and enjoying all emotionality will come, but it is not now – now is the day of battle and witness.

4. While Christ is absent from the earth the believer is His ambassador and as such must produce the very character of Christ which is only possible through the filling of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22,23). We are here to stand for the Lord, and do His work until called home.

5. The production of the character of Christ under pressure is not the core instruction in the Millennial Kingdom because Christ is present on the earth. It is a safe environment, when presently it is not safe – it is a battlefield still, even though the battle is won!

6. The filling of the Spirit in the Millennium is to appreciate Christ who is present, and this is done by way of ecstasies then.

7. Ecstasies, or feelings, are never the criteria for salvation or spirituality in the Church Age; the "Fruit of the Spirit" is the sign of spirituality for our time period and the fruit is always for service and blessing others – the time for self-focused pleasure is the Millennium and then in heaven, for then our task is completed and we can indeed relax from our labours. Today we need obedience to "Daily Orders" for battlefield survival and productivity, and that is why facing suffering and difficulties squarely is required until we are called home at the end of our assignment here. **2 Timothy 4:6-8**.

Verses 25 - 26 In this passage we are reminded of many things, pre-eminently our position and responsibilities, as well as what is the nature of fellowship. Fellowship rests on obedience to the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let the Holy Spirit be your comforter rather than your judge. Note clearly these principles on prayer. All prayer must be addressed to the Father, spoken in the name of the Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The "Holy Ghost" is in fact the Holy Spirit. There was some academic rivalry between the three universities which supplied the scholars to translate the King James Version of the Bible with some using Ghost and others Spirit. The word Ghost is a translation of the Greek word "Pneuma" which is correctly translated Spirit thus the Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit the third personality in the Trinity.

How do we worship the Spirit? We in effect "worship" the Holy Spirit, when our life is controlled by the Holy Spirit. You do not praise Him with words; you praise Him with deeds of worship to the glory of the Father and Son. However, you praise both the Father and the Son with both words and deeds. The Holy Spirit is not the primary object of worship; He is the power for worship. In order to provide a suitable worship service, you need to provide in your service things that are legitimate worship, and get the principles of these verses correctly applied. Now we see one of our key verses in its wider context.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. 28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. 30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

The subject here is peace, the peace that passes all understanding. As we look at this passage remember it occurs just before they all arrive at the Garden of Gethsemane, the time before He went to the trials and the Cross. In the final hours before the Cross, He spent time with the disciples talking about what they had in and through their relationship with Him. The Lord's focus was on others not on himself at this point. Only when he has prepared them does he turn to his own inner anguish in the prayer we have in John 17.

In verses 18 - 26 the Lord is talking about the relaxed mental attitude of a person who knows God's Holy Character, who has drawn close to Him and is dependent on Him. Everything that is in chapter 14 is there to prepare the disciples for the Cross, and the dark days when He is in the tomb after it. This is something that they are going to have to cling to, to carry them through.

The Lord teaches them about peace and this is what they will need when they look at the Cross. Nothing ever happens by accident with the Lord. The Lord says that even in conditions of catastrophe you can have peace. This is an offer which these men are not going to take up for a day or so. They are going to get their peace on the Feast of Firstfruits, on the Sunday morning as they understand the Lord's victory more. Truth brings peace when it is relaxed into.

The biblical message of faith is - Trust His Word ahead of your experiences and what you are seeing right now. You can see what is happening physically by your eyes, but you cannot see what is happening spiritually "behind the scenes". It is however just as real, whether you can see it or not. If you are a child of God and walking with Him, everything will work out. The worst possible thing that we can think of is going to work out, and it will do so for God's children, always to the glory of God.

The Lord then gives us the amazing promise. "Peace I leave behind with you". The whole construction of the Greek language is that there is a strong contrast between what the Lord says is peace and what the world considers peace. The peace the Lord gives you and I, gives peace and confidence, whatever the situation, rather than the peace of this world, which is at best temporary gap in war, or temporary prosperity that will always end. Jesus' Peace never ends!

What state of peace are we living under today? We trust him for the most important thing in our life, which is salvation, we should be able to trust him for the more minor ones, like our houses, our jobs, our finances, and our other daily worries. We cannot lose the peace of God, for it is not ours to lose; it is there in our relationship with Him, but all too often not utilised by believers. Peace from Jesus - it is now ours; the only question is, will we believe Him, and pick it up and enjoy it?

"Let not your heart be troubled", is the present passive imperative of "parasso"; the passive means to receive the action of the verb. Do not receive anxiety, grief, worry, doubt, or fear. Do not let your soul to be opened up to anxiety by lack of faith in the Lord's ability to deliver. Earlier in the chapter he says that you should garrison your soul with God's Word, and we garrison the soul against anxiety and fear. The result will be that you will be strengthened against these things.

If you are upset about a person's gossip about you, you have considered that person's opinion more important than another people's opinions, or God's opinion of you. You have allowed them to upset you. You have opened up your defences and allowed yourself to be attacked, by treating their opinion as valued. Do not allow the tranquillity of your soul to be upset by people of no consequences, when compared to God's opinion of you! You are God's child, and so His opinion alone is of eternal value. Trust God's Word rather than things that you can see, feel, hear or touch. Do not let the enemy rent space in your head! Give doubt and fear no foothold in the soul.

Neither let it be afraid - present active imperative of "deilliao ", this is a word for a mouse. Do not be like a mouse when you face a crisis. Do not run from danger; face it. When we face a crisis, it is not a question as to whether it is too big for us, the question to ask is, if it is too great for God. It is, of course, never too big for God. It is God's peace that is given to the believer. We must live in the sphere of God's peace; we must trust in His Word and live in it.

You must also trust his assessment of your life ahead of the negative things that can attack you. Do not be a mouse. In the ministry it is easy to resign, and walk away from the troubles that will come, but it is required of the Lord, that you tough it out. This does not mean in your own strength, for that isn't all that "tough", it certainly isn't tough enough for the Satanic attacks that can come. It means, be strong in the Holy Spirit!

The Lord is saying in this passage that you are going to have your hold on his peace tested, but if you really knew what was happening you would rejoice, for he has all things in his hands. If the enemy attacks you at least it proves you are a nuisance to him – you are doing something right when you are facing testing situations.

Note his statement – “The Father is greater than I”. What does this mean? Is the Lord God? – yes, He is. Is he less than the Father? “No”. In His humanity He is under authority to the Father's plan, but he is not less than the Father. He has already told the disciples that they are going to panic at the Cross, because they will think that it is all out of control when it is not. He may appear weak on the Cross, but in his weakness he will defeat Satan, and the Father has all the mighty power needed and He will be using it all.

If they really knew what was going to happen on the Cross, they would rejoice. Jesus said that he was telling them this in advance so that when they saw these things happen, they would later believe these vital truths. There is no “power crisis” with Jesus, for the Father's power is there, and his is there, just held back, for in his weakness as a man he is going to defeat Satan thoroughly.

The Lord is going to be arrested in a few hours, but He is not worried at all. He is in the Father's hands, just as we are. The Lord is talking about the arrest by Satanic forces, and of course it is Satan who is indwelling Judas, and Satan is the prince of this world. Satan will do his worst this night and the next day, but he will be defeated as “prince of this world” and he no longer has this title – the Lord is “King of all kings and Lord of all lords” – Satan is just a liar/deceiver now.

Satan is a prince of evil but through Christ we have a superior position to him, and the Lord is the king of all. We are all royalty now, and we are “in Christ” superior to Satan, for Christ is "king of all kings and Lord of all lords". **1 Peter 2:9-10, 1 John 4:4.** Any pressure situation of difficulty is not “Satan getting at you”, for he has no such power over you. Difficulties come within God's Plan for your life and the enemy may attack us only by divine permission, and as

such it can only be for our blessing long term! We claim this doctrinal truth and advance expecting God to deliver.

Because of our position “in Christ Jesus” we are positionally superior to Satan’s power. **1 John 4:4**. The so called “prince of this world” has been defeated, he has no power over us now, except to confuse and depress us, if we let him, through sin or ignorance. We must remember where we stand and where he is and rejoice in the difference. The Cross is a demonstration of the love of the Son for the Father, for the Spirit, and for us, and in his weakness, he had the power to defeat the enemy thoroughly. The Cross is our emblem of victory, have we thanked God for it today?

The Last Supper is concluded with this statement, and they arise and walk down the stairs into the street.

A few hundred metres away Judas is talking to the priests trying to organize the arrest so it can occur in the upper room, but Jesus has other plans. He is totally in control of timing here, while the evil men panic and try to organize themselves.

The Lord is walking calmly, for he is in control. They will pass the Temple where Josephus tells us that on the gates of the Temple were large vines carved. As they pass by at the start of the next chapter he is going to draw their attention to the carvings here and say that He is the true vine and they are the branches. We are connected to Him, and woven into His Eternal Plan, and so every difficulty we face is to be faced in affirmation of His Plan and Power. Let us affirm our expectation of the Lord deliverance in power at the right time in the Plan.

Notes

JOHN 16:16-33

16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. 17 Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. 23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. 26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. 28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. 29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. 30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. 31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

KEY WORDS

Little while	Mikron	A small space of time
See	Theoreo	See, To view attentively [Present Active Indicative]
Again	Palin	Again
See	Optomai	See, Watch from a distance [Future Middle Indicative]
Because	Hoti	Because
Go	Hupago	Go
Father	Pater	Father

Said	Epo	See [Present Active Indicative]
Disciples	Mathetes	Disciple
Is	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Indicative]
Saith	Lego	Say [Present Active Indicative]
See	Theoreo	See, To view attentively [Present Active Indicative]
See	Optomai	See, Watch from a distance [Future Middle Indicative]
Go	Hupago	Go [Present Active Indicative]
Said	Lego	See [Imperfect Active Indicative]
Is	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Indicative]
Saith	Lego	See [Present Active Indicative]
Cannot tell	Eido	Perceive, Understand [Perfect Active Indicative]
Saith	Laleo	Say [Present Active Indicative]
Knew	Ginosko	Know [Aorist Active Indicative]
Were desirous	Thelo	Desire [Imperfect Active Indicative]
Ask	Erotao	Ask [Present Active Infinitive]
Said	Epo	Say [Aorist Active Indicative]
Enquire	Zeteo	Enquire [Present Active Indicative]
Among	Meta	Among
Said	Epo	Say [Aorist Active Indicative]
See	Theoreo	See, To view attentively [Present Active Indicative]
See	Optomai	See, Watch from a distance [Future Middle Indicative]
Verily	Amen	Point of doctrine
Say	Lego	Say [Present Active Indicative]
Shall weep	Klaio	Weep [Future Active Indicative]
Lament	Threneo	Lament [Future Active Indicative]
World	Kosmos	World
Rejoice	Chairo	Rejoice [Future Passive Indicative]
Sorrowful	Lupeo	To be sad [Future Passive Indicative]
Sorrow	Lupe	Sorry
Turned	Ginomai	Come into being [Future Middle Indicative]
Joy	Chara	Joy
Woman	Gune	Woman
Is in travail	Tikto	Be in labour [Present Active Subjunctive]
Hath	Echo	Have and hold [Present Active Indicative]
Sorrow	Lupe	Sorrow
Hour	Hora	Hour
Come	Erchomai	Come [Aorist Active Indicative]
As soon as	Hotan	As soon as
Delivered	Gennao	Is delivered [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Child	Paidon	Child
Remembereth	Mnemoneuo	Remember [Present Active Indicative]
Anguish	Thlipsis	Anguish, Trouble
Man	Anthropos	Man
Born	Gennao	Born [Aorist Passive Indicative]
Have	Echo	Have and hold [Present Active Indicative]

Will see	Optomai	See [Future Middle Indicative]
Heart	Kardia	Heart
Shall rejoice	Chairo	Rejoice [Future Passive Indicative]
No man	Oudeies	No one
Taketh	Airo	Take away [Present Active Indicative]
Day	Hemera	Day
Ask	Erotao	Ask [Future Active Indicative]
Nothing	Oudeies	Nothing
Say	Lego	Say [Present Active Indicative]
Shall ask	Aiteo	Ask [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Name	Onoma	Name
Give	Didomi	Give [Future Active Indicative]
Asked	Aiteo	Ask [Aorist Active Indicative]
Ask	Aiteo	Ask [Present Active Imperative]
Receive	Lambano	Receive [Future Middle Indicative]
Be	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Subjunctive]
Full	Pleroo	Full [Perfect Passive Participle]
Spoken	Laleo	Speak [Perfect Active Indicative]
Proverbs	Paraimia	Proverbs, Parables
Time	Hora	Time, Hour
Cometh	Erchomai	Come [Present Middle Indicative]
Speak	Laleo	Speak [Future Active Indicative]
Shall shew	Anaggello	Show [Future Active Indicative]
Plainly	Parrhesia	Openly
Shall ask	Aiteo	Ask [Future Middle Indicative]
Say	Lego	Say [Present Active Indicative]
Pray	Erotao	Request, Pray [Future Active Indicative]
Himself	Autos	Himself
Loveth	Phileo	Love [Present Active Indicative]
Loved	Phileo	Love [Perfect Active Indicative]
Believed	Pistueo	Believe [Perfect Active Indicative]
Came out	Exerchomai	Come out from [Aorist Active Indicative]
Came forth	Exerchomai	Come out from [Aorist Active Indicative]
Come into	Erchomai	Come [Perfect Active Indicative]
Leave	Aphiemi	Leave [Present Active Indicative]
Go	Poreuomai	Make a journey, Go [Present Middle Indicative]
Said	Lego	Say [Present Active Indicative]
Speakest	Laleo	Speak [Present Active Indicative]
Speakest	Lego	Say [Present Active Indicative]
Are sure	Eido	Know [Perfect Active Indicative]
Knowest	Eido	Know [Perfect Active Indicative]
Needest	Echo	Have and hold [Present Active Indicative]
Any man	Tis	One
Ask	Erotao	Ask [Present Active Subjunctive]
Believe	Pisteuo	Believe [Present Active Indicative]
Camest from	Exerchomai	Come out from [Aorist Active Indicative]
Answered	Apokrinomai	Answer [Aorist Passive Indicative]
Do ye now	Arti	This day
Believe	Pisteuo	Believe [Present Active Indicative]
Cometh	Erchomai	Come [Present Middle Indicative]

Come	Erchomai	Come [Perfect Active Indicative]
Shall be scattered	Skorpizo	Scatter [Aorist Passive Subjunctive]
Every man	Hekastos	Every one
Own	Idios	Own, this relates to the non attendance at the Athens democratic meeting where the person involved was considered to be an idiot.
Leave	Aphiemi	Leave
Alone	Monos	By themselves, Alone [Aorist Active Subjunctive]
Am	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Indicative]
Is	Eimi	Keep on being [Present Active Indicative]
Spoken	Laleo	Speak [Perfect Active Indicative]
Might have	Echo	Have and hold [Present Active Subjunctive]
Peace	Eirene	Peace
Shall have	Echo	Have and hold [Present Active Indicative]
Tribulation	Thlipsis	Tribulation
Be of good cheer	Tharseo	Have courage, Be of good cheer [Present Active Imperative]
Overcome	Nikao	Overcome, Get the victory [Perfect Active Indicative]

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. 17 Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

In verses 16-22 the Lord Jesus Christ warns his men of what is to come. For a while they will continue to see Him, then they will not see Him.

He says that for a while the disciples will lament but their sorrow will turn into joy. When Jesus will be crucified, the disciples will be overwhelmed by bafflement, sorrow and fear. Others such as Caiaphas and Annas will be happy because they will think that they have had a great victory. This state of affairs lasts for three days while the tomb is guarded by the soldiers from the Temple Police. Just like all suffering situations however, all is not how it appears to the unsaved, nor to the temporarily baffled believers.

After the three days it is the fallen world that will be worried and her evil leadership will be confused, and the disciples will rejoice from that day for the whole of eternity. The tables are turned and they will be turned forever. This state of affairs continues today, the world may appear to be winning now, but it will lose in the long run. We may appear to be facing bafflingly strong opposition, with incredible pressures on us at times, but we will win forever. Let us keep the “eternal life perspective” in our suffering situations for the solution is not visible half way through.

You and I can always be assured – we will have joy in the morning. **Psalm 30:5, Lamentation 3:23.** It was the resurrection that changed the men and women that went to the tomb. The Bible records the victory and details the evidence for all we express our faith and hope in, and so it is His book, and we must know it and apply it in our lives and apply it in joy. This chapter should be paired with Romans 6 and **1 Corinthians 15:16-22.** These are the foundation walls of our earthly dwelling in the midst of pressures.

The topic at the end of this vital chapter on witnessing is, the comfort and security of the believer, that provides the foundation for our stable witnessing in Holy Spirit power. The joy of the resurrection reality is the power and assurance behind our giving of the gospel message. We speak with confidence of his past victory at the First Advent, and with equal certainty of his coming again at the Second Advent.

In verses 20 - 22 we will see that the disciples will be broken men the next day, but within three days they will be in joy and within fifty days they will emerge in power to the world with a message that will transform the world, the resurrection message!

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. 26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. 28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

In verses 23 - 24 they have been told that the Lord's return from the dead will bring joy, now they are told how to get even more joy, or 'complete joy'. This reminds one of Romans 5:1 - 11, where Paul speaks of the 'much more' love of the Lord for us. Note the perfect tenses in this section. The Lord has “spoken” (with eternal results), and they have “loved” and “believed” in Him with eternal results! Our faith is in the right person and His completed work on our behalf and it changes our space-time walk and our eternity!

The doctrine and reality of the resurrection will give them joy, but there is even more joy through every answered prayer that will be offered in resurrection confidence from that glorious day onwards. Powerful, Holy Spirit led, and focused prayer always produces answers that will fill up the soul with joy. This involves a maturity of faith and a closeness of fellowship with the Lord, where the believer is thinking God's thoughts and so every prayer is in accord with the will of the Father.

The Lord's will for us is clear from **John 10:10, 15:24**; He wants us to have joy filled up within us. He wants us to receive his joy, not the temporary fun of this present world, but the deep joy of spirit that is eternal. The Greek verb in this verse is in the perfect, passive, subjunctive, indicating firstly the permanent results of prayer, secondly the fact that we receive joy from God, and it has eternal results, and thirdly that it is a matter of choice.

The subjunctive mood reminds us that we may decide not to apply the Word of God into our lives, and so miss out on the blessings that are ours through powerful prayer. The next verses repeat a principle that we have seen before; the unity of the Father and Son in the plan of salvation for mankind and our part in the plan.

In verses 25 - 28 the Father does not need to be persuaded or cajoled to answer prayer from His children, when it is offered in Jesus Name, in accord with His will and revealed plan. Prayer is not laying hold of God's reluctance, it is the confident application of God's revealed desires towards his children. Prayer is not, and must not sound as if it is, grovelling, pleading or begging! Believing prayer is meant to be relaxed and confident, even in the midst of adversity, suffering, loss, and pain!!! **Matthew 6:7**.

Our prayers should not resemble pagan's prayers in any way! In contrast to their antics, we should be calm, confident, stable, and secure in our approach to God. If we sound and look like the prophets of Baal we are out of line 100%! A good study of what to do and what not to do is found in the following incident in the life of Elijah. **1 Kings 18:16 - 39**. Believing prayer is an expression of confident fellowship, with its stability coming from the understanding of the doctrines within God's Word. Prayer is based firmly in the revealed truths about God's Character, Plan, Purpose, and will for our life.

It's source of power being the application of our assurance, which stems from knowing God's policy and plan and our destiny forever with him.

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. 30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. 31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

In verses 29 - 33 the disciples are overjoyed and believe they can see his meaning clearly now. They are wrong of course, but they will be sorted out by events, and so the Lord doesn't correct them here. This is an important principle for us all as teachers; there are times when the crowd appears to have the truth, but you know they have not. At times you immediately explain further, but there are other times when you relax, for the Holy Spirit will correct them over time through experiences. Their statement in verse 30 is a surprise, for the Lord has said other even more direct things that this, but here they all re-affirm their faith in the Lord's Messiahship, its just they do not see that the Cross must come before the Crown.

In verses 31 - 33, the Lord identifies that they will all be blown away by events, but that will be alright for they will learn. Their scattering will not be the end. This is a wonderful thing, our failures do not stop the Lord's use of us; once we have confronted our failures, prayed to Him, he will pick us up and lift us back to the heavenlies where we belong! This is incredibly encouraging under pressure, for we often buckle and complain, but confession restores us, and blessing can flow again. God never gets irritated with us!

Pause and be warned by these verses believer, for the disciples are filled with emotional enthusiasm, but they will still fall apart within hours! Emotion does not protect or prepare us for trials; only knowledge of and belief in the facts will protect us from despair. God's plan is going to work out, and our stability is in direct proportion to our faith in that fact!

We need to reread verse 33 for a good reason. So many forget that the Lord does not promise us a clear run in life. It will not be a trouble free stroll through the Garden of Eden! We are not in Eden but serving the Lord in the midst of the enemies camping ground within a fallen world, even though the Lord has beaten sin and death at the Cross and Resurrection, the enemy is still "prowling around". There are troubles, trials and attacks, for we are in the Angelic Conflict, not the Angelic Holiday Camp. Let us keep on telling ourselves the truth and facing reality by right choices.

The so called "prosperity gospel" preachers are liars of the worst kind, for they set believers up to be knocked over by pressures they do not see coming. We may suffer and we may die for the Lord and his truth, but there is blessing and joy in the midst of this awfulness, if we, like the early church, apply verses like these.

Peace in the midst of pressure is the Lord's promise to his disciples, not freedom from troubles!!! The Lord has given them doctrinal teaching in order that they may 'have peace'. This is the present, active subjunctive of the verb, 'echo', meaning 'to have and hold'. The subjunctive mood again reminds us that this peace is only potentially the believer's possession, each of us must apply the Word of God to our life ahead of our fears. It's a choice! Happiness is a choice!

The Lord's next words are also direct and a challenge to relaxed mental attitude; 'Be of good cheer'. Literally, 'keep on being courageous!' Present, active, imperative, of 'tharseo'. This was the command of the general to troops before battle. The reason for such a command of the Lord to us all, is that he has, 'overcome the world' as shown in the perfect, active indicative of, 'Nikao'.

He has already overcome the world-system of Satan in the past, with the result that He has overcome it forever. The Cross and Empty Tomb will be the openly obvious triumphing over Satan and all his supposed power and might! The running shoes are named after this Greek verb, "Nike", the God of victory. Note the form of the verb here; this is absolute assurance, the results of the Lord's victory go on forever, the Lord has done it, and so it is sure!

Notes

PAUL'S EARLIEST THOUGHTS ON OUR SUBJECT OF PRESSURE

1 CORINTHIANS 4:7-16

“ 7 For who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive? Now if you received it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it? 8. Now you are full, now you are rich, you have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God that you did reign, that we might reign with you. 9. For I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men. 10. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong: you are honourable but we are despised. 11. Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place. 12. And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it. 13. Being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off scouring of all things unto this day. 14. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons, I warn you. 15. For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16. Wherefore I beseech you, be you all followers of me.”

KEY WORDS

Differ	diakrino	present, active, indicative; to judge between the two, to make distinctions.
Receive	lambano	orist, active, indicative; receive.
Received	lambano	orist, active, indicative; the same as above, at a point in time received.
Glory	kauchamai	present, middle, indicative; boast.
Full	korenum i	perfect, passive, participle; to receive satiation, to be full completely up so no more is needed.
Rich	plouteo	orist, active, indicative; are you enriched, you have become rich (yourselves).
Reigned	basileuo	orist, active, indicative; you have reigned, taken authority to rule.
Reign		same as above.
Appointed	sumbasileuo	orist, active, subjunctive; in order that we might reign together.
Spectacle	theatron	theatre, play spectacle for others to watch.
Fools	moroi	foolish people, objects of ridicule.
Wise	phronimos	sensible, smart thinking.
Weak	asthenes	without strength, weak and ill.
Strong	ischuros	strong as a mighty warrior
Honourable	endoxos	noble, honoured, distinguished, respected.
Despised	atimos	without honour, without respect.
Hunger	peinao	present, active, indicative; we keep on being hungry.
Thirst	dipsao	present, active, indicative; we keep on being thirsty.
Naked	gumniteuo	present, active, indicative; we keep on being scantily clothed, just having a covering.
Buffeted	kolaphizo	present, pass, indicative; we keep on being hit with closed fists, insultingly smacked.
Certain	astateo	present, active, indicative; we keep on being homeless.
Labour	kopiaio	present, active, indicative; we keep on working hard, as slaves, to the point of exhaustion and weariness.
Working	ergazomai	present, active, indicative; we keep on working with our hands dirty (the Greeks despised those who did manual labour - they were "losers" as far as they were concerned.
Reviled	loidoreo	present, passive, participle; abused with words, treated like politicians at a rally.
Bless	eulogeo	present, active, indicative; we keep on blessing.
Persecuted	dioko	present, passive, participle; pursued, hunted like animals.
Suffer	anechomai	present, middle, indicative; we keep on enduring, bearing up under the pressures.
Defamed	dusphemoo	or some MSS have blasphemeo present, passive, participle; they keep on defaming, or lying about us.
Entreat	parakoleo	present, active, indicative; we keep on beseeching, entreating, urging.
Filth	perikatharomata	garbage, most filthy rubbish. Also used of the worst criminals who would be killed as a sacrifice to cleanse a

		city of evil.
Off scouring	peripsema	the scum from the washing process.
Shame	entrepo	present, active, participle; not for the purpose of shaming you.
Warn	noutheteo	present, active, participle; I keep on warning you that you might change your minds.
Instructors	paidagogos	child trainers, slaves with sticks to beat the child when it did not pay attention.
Begotten	gennao	aorist, active, subjunctive; to brought you to (new) life.
Beseech	parakaleo	present, active, indicative; I keep on exhorting you, urging you on.
Followers	mimetes	imitators, followers of the pattern you see.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Paul is just a “little bit” sarcastic in these verses, but it is good-humoured sarcasm, with a purpose of recalling these people to the truth by really underlining their foolishness. He asks question after question, in the Socratic manner that the Greeks would have recognized immediately. He questions them to bring them to the conclusion he wants them to draw from his argument so far. This conclusion is that they need to remain humble and focused on their Lord and Saviour. Their present wealth and respect will not last long.

Verse 7. “Who has authorised you to make distinctions between yourself and another in the service of the Lord?” The Lord is the only one who can give orders in his army, and he is the only one to give the rewards for service, so who are you believer if you compare yourself to anyone else? So firstly, Paul makes clear all are convicted of the error of making false comparisons, then he moves on to underline the foolishness of forgetting who you are, and why you are who you are!

We are all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, members of his body. How did we get there? By God’s Grace, through faith! Was anything because of who we are? Was anything because of our merit? All we have as believers was received by grace. If we think on that for a moment we see Paul’s point immediately; there is nothing to boast of in Christ Jesus, but through grace there is much to glory over! “It is written” – we are secure in His Character and His Word!

Verse 8. These Corinthians think they are pretty good - “full/satisfied”. They believe they are special, and they don’t feel they lack anything as individuals and as a church. They are right, but it is not because they are “special” but because all believers in the Lord are special and recipients of God’s grace. These people are most concerned to be seen to be the best. They are “rich” in material things, and they are “rulers” in their own eyes. They are the “big boys” of the world and they love their position, but Paul is going to warn them to get their thinking sorted out – with permanent results.....

Verse 9. Paul has reflected on their attitudes, their desire to be seen to be the leaders, the rulers, the wise and noble ones, and he has seen something in his own life that can correct them. In God's economy the leader is the servant of all! In God's economy the leader is the one who is prepared to die first, or suffer instead of, in place of, the church members. Jesus made this very clear, and this underpins all our thoughts on our own suffering in pressure situations. If we are leaders, we are called to serve others and be ready to pay the price – and that may mean undeserved suffering. **Matthew 20:25-28, 23:8-12, John 13:2-17.**

If you want to be a ruler in God's church, then train as a gladiator trains, Paul states, for that is the arena of service for leadership. To lead the Lord's people you must be ready to become the spectacle of all the pagans, to be the one they all mock, to be the one they all spit at, to be the one they come to see die a painful death. In his language Paul reminds them all that we are part of the "Angelic Conflict", and are being watched by angels and men. We are in the Amphitheatre of life, the Arena of space and time. Our true performance here is being observed from heaven; not just what people see from the outside! **Hebrews 12:1-3.**

Verse 10. Paul now brings out further the sad contrast between the Corinthians, in their arrogance, and the apostles in their humility of service.

We are Fools for Christ's sake (as the pagans see it)

You are "wise" (as the pagans define it)

We are "weak" (without physical strength in human terms)

You are "strong" (athletic - in the gym)

We are "despised" (without the respect/honour of the world)

You are "respected members of your society".

Paul believes in dealing with criticism with overwhelming evidence of its falseness. He is making sure that the people hearing this letter for the first time are so hit by the truth that they repent immediately of their foolishness. He aims at their correction; he is not trying to win the debate but demolish their arguments so that they are transformed by the truth and follow him back onto "the way of Christ".

Verse 11 - 13. The next three verses are to be the "last straw" to break their arrogance and their hearts, as they see the contrast between their attitude and manner of life, and the attitude and manner of life of the apostolic band. Each of these characteristics of service has an understood opposite which characterizes the Corinthians way of life. Let us fill them in, as the people would have in their minds as they heard Paul's letter read aloud to them. The apostles are hungry and thirsty. - "Yet we in Corinth are well fed and have plenty to drink".

The apostles are regularly being beaten up. - “Yet we in Corinth are safe as we walk the streets”.

The apostles are without a permanent home. - “Yet we in Corinth are all safely in our own homes”.

The apostles are doing manual labour to support the work. – “Yet we in Corinth would consider such work beneath our dignity as cultured Greeks”.

The apostles are, like Jesus, being verbally abused. - “Yet we in Corinth are walking around without abuse”.

The apostles are, like Jesus, blessing those who curse them. - “Yet we in Corinth would abuse people who insulted us!”

The apostles are, like Jesus, willingly suffering persecution. - “Yet we in Corinth would be offended at this”.

The apostles are, like Jesus, being lied about. - “Yet we in Corinth would rush to the law courts in such a situation”.

The apostles are not letting anything stop their entreating of others to be saved. Nothing distracts them - “Yet we in Corinth would take all things personally and fight back”.

The apostles are being treated worse than the worst criminals, as filth on the street. - “Yet we in Corinth would be terrified of being treated this way, for we love our comfortable life of respect and civility”.

Paul’s principle point in this section becomes clear when we list his statements as we have here. He wants them to see that the call to follow Christ Jesus is the call to service as a slave, a call to suffer as the Lord did, a call to be as insulted and abused as he was. Respect from the world will be won at times, but the “normal Christian life” is about being on the receiving end of the world’s hatred, for if they hated our Lord, is it any wonder that they will hate us? **John 15:18ff.** Paul’s message is clear. “Choose your company Corinthians!” **Jude 3** – stand with the apostolic faith and example!

Verse 14. Paul’s purpose is not that they might feel shame and embarrassment, although they will, for feelings are of no significance, and are never a worthy objective to aim for. Change of heart and mind is what Paul aims for. Paul did not care what emotion they had as a result of their confrontation with the truth, his sole concern is that they change their hearts, minds and behaviours. He has never forgotten who they are, and they are his spiritual sons and daughters; he loves these people and seeks their good, not their shame. He is so concerned that he keeps on warning and will do so until they change their minds. Their rebellion is serious, for their sin of pride and arrogance is stopping the Lord’s work in that place, and the pride obstacle must be removed totally.

Verse 15. Now, there are not 10,000 Bible teachers in Corinth. Paul is using clear exaggeration to make his point. They may have many who follow him, but he started this church, and he alone looks upon them as his children. He has the great privilege of saying that he was the one who led them to the place where they were born again. What a privilege it is to lead people to Christ. Once they come to knowledge of the Lord, they must not be left to flounder around, they must be taught and encouraged and corrected. The sign of true love is that you will risk falling out with that person to tell them the truth. Paul has put his relationship with them on the line here. He wants to see them become again the true children of God in motive, thought, word, and deed.

Verse 16. For this reason, he keeps on urging them to change their minds and behaviours, and to then devote themselves to imitating the life and witness of his own life. This remains our challenge under pressure also.

APPLICATION

Let us ask the questions of ourselves that Paul demands be asked by the Corinthians. Let us examine ourselves today as he will later tell them to do in his next letter. **2 Corinthians 13:5.**

1. Are we making false distinctions between believers, and casting our judgments on those we feel don't measure up to our assessment criteria? Do we act as if we know better than our Lord and master? Or, Do we assess others for church safety, correctly in accord with the Lord's instructions, by biblical "fruit" criteria only? **Matthew 7:13-23.** We must spot "evil" quickly or the church is not safe!
2. Do we boast about our spiritual gifts as if we earned them, or as if they are "ours" by right, rather than grace gifts of the Lord for our use in service of him?
3. Do we see ourselves as "complete", lacking nothing, as spiritually rich and satisfied, needing no more grace from God, but content with where we are? We are "complete" in Christ Jesus, but Paul is concerned that these people have stopped looking daily to the Lord for his grace provisions.
4. Do we seek opportunities to exercise rulership over the Lord's people, or do we wait until the Lord opens up opportunities, or lifts us up to serve?
5. Do we see our place in the Angelic Conflict, and do we ensure our lives are lived, understanding we are living "in the sight of the angels"?
6. Are we prepared to be considered as "fools" for Christ's sake, or are we so concerned about what people think of us, that we reject any path that appears to pagans as "strange"?

7. Do we seek to be known as “wise” by pagans, or as evangelists of Christ?

8. Do we seek strength in the gym, but not spiritual strength in service? Being fit is not wrong, and Paul trained hard in the gym, but he was prepared to be weak that spiritually he might achieve the Lord’s goals for his life. Where is our heart, where our motivation? Are all things, even legitimate ones, in captivity to the service of Christ?

9. Are we ready to be hungry and thirsty, that we might keep doing the Lord’s work? Do we value our creature comforts ahead of our obedience to the Lord?

10. Are we ready to cast aside our financial security if the Lord calls us to serve him in a strange place? Are we ready to sell our house and close down our credit facilities? Paul had gone from respected Rabbi to itinerant preacher, without a roof over his head that he owned. He would end his life asking for his only cloak to be brought to him in jail before winter, so that he could keep warm. (Refer studies of 2 Timothy in the Pastorals). Do we want to be “fat cats” in our society, or are we prepared to put aside earthly wealth to win heavenly rewards? We may not be asked to do this, but are we ready for the Lord to ask?

11. Are we ready to do anything, or do we consider some jobs “beneath” our dignity? There is no such thing as, “the dignity of the clergy”. We are all to be ready to do manual work.

12. When we are reviled, do we bless, or bitterly argue back? When verbally abused do we return in kind or pray for God’s solution?

13. When we are lied about do we get distracted by defending ourselves or do we keep right on preaching the truth?

14. When treated like garbage in the streets do we keep our focus on the Lord’s assessment of us, or are we offended, or upset? Paul is calling us beyond what is “normal” to feel, to an eternal life perspective. This is our foundation to be able to handle any suffering down track. Let’s ensure our foundation is well laid in the Spirit.

Can we, like Paul, urge others to follow our life example? Do we have a life that is worthy of following? Are our daily behaviours worthy of imitation? This is a strong passage of condemnation, and if it feels like that, take the criticism and make the changes in life that need to be made so that you can say with Paul, “follow my example”.

Lifestyle leadership goes hand in hand with lifestyle evangelism. The witness of the life must back up the witness of the lips and must precede it!
Ephesians 4:17, 5:1, 1 Corinthians 4:16.

PARAPHRASE

“For who gives you the right to make distinctions between each other? And, (think for a moment), what do you have and hold (as believers), that you did not receive first(from the Lord)? Now, if you received it, why do you now boast as if you did not receive it(as a gift from God)? Now (in your own eyes) you are complete, now you have enriched yourselves , you have reigned as kings in our absence, and I wish before God, that you did, in truth reign, that we might reign along with you. For (the truth is), that God has set us as apostles in a position of inferiority, as we are reigning with you, but in death, for we are made a spectacle for the world to watch, and for angels and men to observe. We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are the “wise ones”. We are weak, but you are the strong ones. You are respected and honoured, we are without honour and respect. Even right to this present hour we keep on being hungry and thirsty. We are without good clothes, we are being insultingly hit with closed fists (often). And in addition we have no secure place to live each night. And we labour as ordinary workers, doing manual labour with our own hands, and when we are verbally abused we return blessing, and when we are persecuted, we stand up under the pressure and endure it. They keep on defaming our name, but we keep on urging them (to face the truth). We are treated as the worst of criminals, as the most filthy garbage swept off the streets, yes, such treatment continues right to the present day! I do not write these things to you to shame or embarrass you but to warn you so that you change your attitudes. For though you have ten thousand teachers in Christ, you do not have any more than one father in your faith, and that is me, for in Christ Jesus I was the one who brought you to newness of life through the power of the gospel. For this reason, I keep on urging you all, be imitators of my example in life and faith!”

Notes

PAUL REFLECTS FURTHER FROM HOUSE ARREST IN ROME

Philippians 2:5-8, 3:7-14.

[A] IMITATING CHRIST – CHAPTER 2. verses 1-11

2:1 "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies,"

2:2 "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

2:3 "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

2:4 "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

2:5 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

2:6 "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:"

2:7 "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:"

2:8 "And being found in the fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

2:9 "Wherefore God has also highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"

2:10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;"

2:11 "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

KEY WORDS

if	ei	if and it is true
consolation	paraklesis	solace, exhortation, encouragement
comfort	paramuthion	comfort, consolation
love	agape	unconditional love
fellowship	koinonia	participation, fellowship, communion
bowels	splagchena	bowels, inward affection, emotions
mercies	oiktirmos	merciful compassion
fulfil	pleroo	[aorist active imperative] : to fill, to
make full		
joy	chara	joy
like-minded	phroneo	[present active subjunctive] : to mind
the same thing		
having	echo	[present active participle] : to have
and to hold		
love	agape	unconditional love
accord	sumpsuchos	joint-soul, accord
mind	phroneo	[present active participle] : to mind
the same thing		

strife	eritheia	contention, strife or quarrel
vainglory	kenodoxia	desire of vain glory, empty glory
lowliness	tapeinophrosune	lowliness of mind, humbleness
esteem	hegeomai	[present middle participle] : to think,
consider, or regard.		
better	huperecho	[present active participle] : to be
above, to surpass,		
themselves	heautou	of own self
look	skopeo	[present active participle] : to view,
inspect		
every man	hekastos	each
others	heteros	others of a different kind
let this mind	phroneotouto	to think or be of one mind
you	humin	to you
being	huparcho	[present active participle] : existing,
subsisting		
form	morphe	form, inner being
thought	hegeomai	to lead, account, esteem.
robbery	harpagmos	a snatching away
be	eimi	[present active infinitive] : to be
equal	isos	equal to, the same as
made	ginomai	[aorist middle participle] : to become
something one was not before		
reputation	kenoo	[aorist active indicative] : to empty
took	lambano	[aorist active participle] : taking
form	morphe	form
servant	doulos	slave
likeness	homoioima	something made like – with the
essence of		
found	heurisko	[aorist passive participle] : find
fashion	schema	scheme or outward appearance
humbled	tapeinoo	[aorist active indicative] : to make low
became	ginomai	[aorist middle participle] : to become
something that one was not before		
obedient	hupokoos	submissively
death	thantos	death
cross	stauros	stake
highly exalt	huperupsoo	[aorist active indicative] : to lift up
above		
given	charizomai	[aorist middle indicative] : to grant as
a favour		
name	onoma	name
knee	gonu	knee
bow	kampto	[aorist active subjunctive] : to bend
in heaven	epouranios	in heaven
in earth	epigeios	on earth, terrestrial
under the earth	katachthonios	belonging to the world of the
departed spirits.		
tongue	glossa	tongue, language

confess out the same	exomologeō	[aorist middle subjunctive] : to speak
Lord	kurios	lord, master
glory	doxa	glory
Father	pater	father, ancestor

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Verse 1 This verse has four first class conditional phrases in the Greek text. The first class conditional phrase can be translated, “If...and it is true...” To powerfully translate this verse correctly we could say, “There is, as you all know with absolute certainty, in Christ wonderful encouragement. There is Comfort in his love, there is Fellowship in the Holy Spirit, and there his deep mercy filled compassion in love for us all”. These things are the “given truths” of our position in Christ, and they must be affirmed aloud when we face pressure situations, so that the enemy hear our certainty of deliverance and our faith in the Holy Character of God towards us.

The word translated “consolation” means “encouragement, exhortation to advance, comfort under pressure that all will be well”. It is a word able to be used of soldiers in the line of battle being urged by their Commanding Officer to face the enemy and stand with assurance against the demonic forces. **John 16:22-24, Romans 5:1-2, 15:12-16, 2 Corinthians 1:5-7, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, Hebrews 6:16-20, 1 Peter 1:6-9.** “Be assured” is our Commanding Officer’s word to us, for he is with us forever, and we will be with him forever in glory; there is no reason for fear to grip our hearts.

The idea of “comfort of love” is very strong also. This word is best translated as “comfort-consolation under pressure, or when facing loss”. It is literally “in (his) love”. It is part of the encouragement of the soldier in the line facing the enemy, and is the Commanding Officer’s reminder that his love for them all is such that any loss will be consoled and made right in the end. It is his love that guides every order he gives us, and so there can be no losses in following his orders that will not be made good a hundred fold, either in time or eternity.

All tears and tearful situations are resolved immediately in heaven. **Revelation 7:17, 21:4.** There are no unanswered questions then, and no sadness about what happened here on the earth, for all that saddened for a time is understood, healed fully and solved a hundred fold with blessing and glory. **John 15:10-15, Ephesians 4:30-32.** In the midst of pressure this is a fact too often ignored. Final answers may await heaven, but they await us!

The deepest need for all of us is genuine fellowship that satisfies the soul and gladdens the heart in dark places. I see people in my clinic every week who face the depressing power of loneliness, and the only powerful start point for their recovery is salvation and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit within, who can minister Jesus’ presence into their heart. **John 14:16-20, 16:7-15.** People

will fail us at times, but the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us. **Isaiah 41:17, 55:7, Hebrews 13:5-7.**

The last point of encouragement to challenge the Christian Soldier to stand firm against the demonic forces is the assurance that grace and mercy will continue towards them to meet every need in their life. God's deepest loving affection is towards us and our needs for affirmation, approval, acceptance, affiliation, and affection. The Lord's "great love wherewith he loved us", **Ephesians 2:4**, doesn't stop at salvation.

We are now under the "much more" love of God. For if he loved us as sinners so much that he sent his Son to die for us, will he love us less now that we are his children? This has been called by some, "the logic of grace and mercy". **James 4:6.** Hear Paul's words in Romans 5.

Romans 5:8-11 *"8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.
11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."*

Verse 2 Look at Paul's request to these believers. Please - Fill up the reservoir of my joy right now! Fill me with joy so that there isn't room for anything else! Whatever way we say it, catch Paul's earnest entreaty and indeed his most urgent order that they fill up his joy by working together in the filling of the Holy Spirit. It is the joy of every Holy Spirit filled pastor that their people serve the Lord in unity with the plan of the Lord, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and the mutual love of the Lord Jesus for each of them. As we get the Lord's people to live and work as he did we get power flowing in the church, and it is that which fills up the godly pastor with joy. **John 3:27-29, 2 Corinthians 2:1-4, 7:4-7, 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.**

Think the same things about Jesus as we do! The subjunctive mood of the Greek verb reminds us that this instruction has potential in it, but they must make their choice to do it, and maybe they will and maybe they won't! We must make the choice to work together with our brethren and do so with joy in the Lord and unity of purpose in Christ Jesus. **1 Peter 3:8-9.** It is easy to agree in the Lord, for it requires only focused and passionate prayer together to seek the Lord's unity and focus forward for His service. Brethren, let the Holy Spirit do his work and bring you to "like mindedness".

Having the same love. Keep on having the same unconditional giving love that the Lord had towards you and have it overflowing to others around you. Remember how the Lord loved you, and deal with others that way in Christ Jesus. Have one accord about what you are here on this temporary planet to achieve. Be focused upon the Lord's purposes and have a joint spirit to achieve what the Lord wants, not what any men desire. "One mind" means

unity in the way you think because you think in accordance with the doctrines of the Word of God. **Romans 12:1-2**. Transformation by the work of the Holy Spirit upon the Word is lasting and powerful transformation.

Romans 12:1-2 *“1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
2. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

Verse 3 Paul is serious and direct; “Let nothing be done in strife or pride!” The pathetic desire for glory that doesn’t last afflicts many in our world, and they seek fame, power, money or the approbation of the rich or powerful. What fools they are, and yet so many believers get “hooked” by this addictive way of thinking. They value the opinion of people who will be food for worms, just like them a few years hence! The opinions of men are irrelevant, but the “well done, good and faithful servant”, of the Lord is of eternal value and significance. **Matthew 25:21-23, 2 Thessalonians 3:13**.

It is always helpful to examine our motives and thoughts on a regular basis and ensure we are still “in the faith” area of thinking and have not strayed into carnality. **2 Corinthians 13:5, 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, 2 Corinthians 10:4**. People who have a contentious spirit need to humble themselves before the Lord, for strife and empty quarrelling is always of the devil, never from God. Whenever believers find themselves in a quarrel with another saint who loves the Lord, they must immediately get on their knees and pray themselves back into unity around the Word and the purpose of the Lord.

“Vainglory” is an old English word, but it beautifully sums up the emptiness of the praises of men. There is only glory from God, never from men, for all that comes from men is passing as the wind. Instead of man’s vainglory the believer is urged to seek a lowliness of mind that seeks to lift the Lord Jesus up. Instead of trying to lift yourself up, seek to lift up the ministries of all around you and let the Lord get the glory in all things. **1 Peter 5:5-10**. By blessing others you bless your own ministry, for the Lord lifts up the humble, but he humbles the proud. **Psalms 9:12, 10:17, Proverbs 3:1-8, 13:10, 16:18-19**.

Verse 4 Inspect each other’s work for approval, not for small faults. Look at what others are doing and encourage and support them as you can see that the Lord is being praised and honoured by them. This verse does not encourage you or I to support so called “ministries” that do not honour the Lord, nor does it encourage us to support “make believers” who are “false brethren”.

We are told directly not to even greet those who claim to be believers but whose lives or belief systems are clearly unbiblical. The warnings against such people are strong, and we do not encourage others lightly or without discernment, but when we know a person or group are brethren, let us be

obedient and encourage them. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Galatians 2:4-5, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 17, 2 John 9-11.**

Verse 5 Paul lifts up our goal for this life and he does it clearly and simply. He desires of us what the Lord wants from us; that we might have Christ-like minds and think as Jesus thought. It is the humility of the Lord that gripped Paul, as he saw what the Lord had done as creator, and yet he became a creature, and entered his creation, even though it meant his own death on the Cross. **John 1:9-11, 14, 3:16-36.** We have the same choice that Satan had, and the same outcomes.

Satan decided to allow pride to fill his heart, **Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:1-19**, and so he rebelled and set his heart after evil. Man may select the pride option also, and reject the claims of his creator, and those who embrace this choice enter also into evil and join the demons on their path to the Lake of Fire. **Revelation 20:5-15.**

The alternative to the satanic path of pride and death is humility and servanthood. There is no middle ground between them. We are either with the King of all kings and Lord of all lords, or we are with the prince of this world. **John 12:27-33, 14:27-31, 16:7-15, Acts 4:12.** It's all about our choices – how will we respond to our challenges?

Verse 6 This verse was the start point for one of the great Church History controversies about the nature of Christ. Is the Lord in his incarnation fully God and fully man, or does he just have the “form” of a man, or does he have limited divine attributes? One verse out of its context creates a pretext which will open the door to heresy. The early church believed strongly that God had stepped into history, and that the Lord was in some way, unknowable to us at this point, both fully God and fully man.

This is the heart of the biblical doctrines of the “Kenosis” and the “Hypostatic Union” (both these concepts are to be studied in the doctrinal section below). It is a crucial doctrine for salvation, for only if the Lord is fully God and fully man can he be equal with both parties and so can win our salvation.

The Lord's nature is part of the divine plan to win salvation for man and overcome the eternal consequences of the sin of Adam. Only by the Lord being the unique person of the universe could he achieve the cancelling out of Adam's Sin and deliver salvation to mankind. The Lord's equality with the Father wasn't a matter of “attempted robbery”, as Satan's had been, for the Lord Jesus was God from the beginning. He didn't need to be pride filled, just reality focused, for he was God, and always will be.

The great mystery of the incarnation is that in some way unexplainable to man at this point, the Lord Jesus Christ is now seated on the throne of heaven as man! What Satan tried to do as the greatest of angelic beings has been achieved by the Lord Jesus Christ as the inferior creature (lower than the angels). **Hebrews 2:5-18.** Can you see why Satan hates us believer? Read

through the Hebrews section below, as I believe it is Paul's next explanation of what he is saying here in the Prison Epistles.

Hebrews 2:5-18. *"5. For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.*

6. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?

7. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

17. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

The great Angelic Conflict has the nature and status of mankind at the centre of it. Satan, as the most superior creature ever made, fell through pride. He failed and was defeated and cast down to the earth. Man was then placed upon the earth, as an inferior creature to Satan and his demons. The big question behind this universe is the fairness of God in judging Satan and his demonic forces who all followed him in his rebellion. The "test case" is mankind, for if inferior man can accept the grace offer of salvation, then Satan could/should have and been saved himself through humility by faith, but he would not...

Every Woman and every Man's salvation proves that God is righteous and just in condemning Satan and all his billions of demonic forces, for if the inferior creature (us) could be saved by faith, so could Satan have been. His

persistent refusal to accept faith, grace and mercy leads to the Lake of Fire, and all mankind who have sided with him will join him there. The nature of Christ as fully man is a crucial part of this plan to execute justice upon all who stand against their maker. Remember in our suffering we are always “test-cases” of salvation and sanctification, and our response to our present difficulties proves again how we as an inferior creature to the angels proves God is righteous in judging the enemy. When we win the battle against the temptation to accuse God of unfairness in our present suffering, we rebuke Satan and his crew.

Verse 7 The Lord emptied himself of the prerogatives of deity to achieve his goals within the divine plan for man’s salvation. The Lord still was fully God, but to win our salvation he had to with-hold certain attributes so as to achieve the Cross and Resurrection. An example of this would be his glory, which if it flashed forth would have evaporated the earth. The disciples got a glimpse of this on the Mount of Transfiguration and it blew them away! **Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:1-10, Luke 9:27-36.**

His glory flashed out again in the Garden of Gethsemane as he was about to be arrested, and it caused the entire company of soldiers to fall over backwards. The Lord’s point here was that he could have resisted their arresting him. **Matthew 26:47-56, John 18:4-11.** Refer to the BTB study on “Kenosis” below and reflect on the Lord’s suffering through his entire ministry and be ready to “go without” as He did to win glory and achieve the plan.

He became a servant as a man, and a servant to man. This is the heart of the doctrines of the Hypostatic Union and the Kenosis, namely their application to our own mental attitude. That has been Paul’s theme throughout the letter and will remain so. He is teaching about the Christian soldier’s mental attitude in Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians. He wants us to see that while he can be their mentor in these things, **Philippians 3:12-19**, the Lord Jesus Christ is our mentor in servant-hood.

We are to see that the call of the Lord is to service for mankind by delivering them the truth about their Saviour and the truth about the only significance that their life can have, as his servant. As we reflect on the fact that he is our servant, let us devote our energy to being servants without complaint as we serve Him under pressure that can at times bring us to our knees, for that is the right place to be facing the tempests of space-time.

Remember, even memorise, the following key texts that amplify these principles:

Matthew 6:25- 34 *“25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?
27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?”*

28. *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:*

29. *And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

30. *Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

31. *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

32. *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

33. *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

34. *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."*

Matthew 20:20-28 *"20. Then came to him the mother of Zebedees children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.*

21. *And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.*

22. *But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? They say unto him, We are able.*

23. *And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

24. *And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.*

25. *But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.*

26. *But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;*

27. *And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:*

28. *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

John 13:1-17 *"1. Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

2. *And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;*

3. *Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;*

4. *He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.*

5. *After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

6. *Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?*
7. *Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*
8. *Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*
9. *Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*
10. *Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.*
11. *For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.*
12. *So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?*
13. *Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.*
14. *If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*
15. *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*
16. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.*
17. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."*

Verse 8 Having taken the outward body of a man, he resembled an ordinary man in all respects, and so he was despised by many as just "an upstart man", claiming more than he was entitled to claim. It is interesting to reflect that the followers of Satan were the ones who accused the humble Lord of glory of arrogance! The Lord's most cutting attacks were upon these pious hypocrites for their evil, for they were truly satanic men. **Matthew 23:13-29.** The Lord was attacked for making the claim that he was God, and yet he was, and yet he also humbled himself more than any other man and submitted to the Cross. **John 8:48-59.**

The Lord proves himself to be superior to all angels, as a man, by his humility on the Cross and so is lifted up, in his humanity, to heavenly places as ruler of the Universe as the God-Man. He had always been ruler as God, but now as Man he sits on the throne! Satan's doom is sealed, and so is the doom of all demons and men who have been deceived into following him. **Hebrews 4:14-16, 8:1-3, 9:27-28, 10:10-22.**

Verse 9 The Lord as God-Man is exulted above all who were made. As God he was the creator, but as God-Man he is exulted through his battlefield victory over sin and death. This is too hard for us to fully understand now, but Paul urges the Philippians to rejoice in the mystery now and rejoice later in heaven when all is seen "face to face". He has already spoken about how hard it is to understand all these things to the Corinthians. **1 Corinthians 13:12.** We can get a glimpse now of these realities, and that is all we need to praise his name and rejoice in his victory and share the fruits of that victory in our lives here and now, and then forever. **Acts 4:12, 16:31, Ephesians 1:17-23.**

Verse 10 The end of the Plan of God is absolutely certain, and it is the final and full victory of the Lord over all demons and all fallen mankind, and the restoration of his lordship over all the creation itself until a new one is made by him to replace this whole tired old universe. **2 Peter 3:10-18, Revelation 20:1- 22:20.** Note the verse closely, for the certainty is that “every knee shall bow”. There is no doubt at all, for all angelic knees and all human knees will bow.

None will raise any of the objections that are raised by arrogant men now about why they are justified in rejecting Jesus. At the “Great White Throne Judgement” there will be no-one who does not bow their knee. All will know, but too late for salvation, that they were 100% wrong in all things relating to Jesus. **Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 20:10-15.**

Verse 11 Everyone will confess aloud that Jesus Christ is Lord of all. There will be no dissenters that day, for all will be required to tell the truth, and all deception will be swept away. The demons now know that Jesus is Lord and they tremble, **James 2:19-20**, but they still deceive and lie to man, but in that final day all deception is over and fallen angels and fallen men must accept what they have refused to accept in time. Jesus is indeed Lord and King, and he will be worshipped throughout all eternity in joy by all who have stood in the truth through time. Revelation 21-22.

APPLICATION – PERSONAL

Be encouraged believer. Be encouraged on the basis of God’s Loving Care for you. Be encouraged to stand firm against the demonic forces in the power he gives in the filling of the Holy Spirit, and in the assurances we gain from the promises of God’s Holy Word.

It is a truly stupid thing to be proud in the presence of God. Let us be careful of pride and arrogance relating to others. Let us humble ourselves and lift up others, so that our promotions come from the Lord alone.

Be of one mind with your brethren so that you might all join together and be focused upon the Lord alone. In my present distress I am challenged to encourage my genuine brethren in the Lord in their work at all times I am able to do so. Look for ways to build up others in their ministry to honour the Lord. Do not seek to lift yourself up, but let the Lord do that as you honour him and seek opportunity to bless others.

Humility is the test for each of us. Will we accept our creaturely nature and submit to the Creator our Saviour? Will we join the Lord Jesus Christ in his humility, or will we stand, for a time, with Satan in his arrogance, and then join him in the Lake of Fire forever?

APPLICATION – PASTORAL

Pastors, let us ensure the Lord's people under our care know the "logic of grace and mercy" by heart. Let us ensure that they see and hear the love of God in our churches every week.

The Hypostatic Union and the Kenosis are difficult concepts for space-time limited men and women to understand but they are crucial for the believer to have a concept of. Our own acceptance of our humanity depends upon understanding why we are here as human beings "a little lower than the angels" upon the earth, and it all centres around these doctrines.

Understanding the Angelic Conflict and seeing why the Lord's incarnation was as it was, is very helpful to ministry and focus for the active believer. Pastors, we must teach these things and teach them well. We are here to rebuke the enemy, not succumb to any pressures that come from the enemy's side.

Let us teach with power the truths that correct all people's arrogance and so convict all of their sin in rejecting their Saviour and Lord. The acceptance of the truth alone will save each person and the truth alone will deliver them from the deception and temporal power of satanic forces. The truth will set us all free, and so let us teach it as often as we can for every time we do we build up our confidence and assurance for later testing circumstances.

Notes

NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH – BUT THE LORD’S PLAN AND POWER ALONE

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER 3 VERSES 1-11

3:1 "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed it is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

3:2 "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."

[3:2]

3:3 "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

3:4 "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:"

3:5 "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;"

3:6 "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

3:7 "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

3:8 "Yea doubtless, and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"

3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

3:10 "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"

3:11 "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

KEY WORDS

finally	loipon	finally, the remaining, the rest
rejoice	chairō	[present active imperative] : rejoice,
joy		
write	graphō	[present active infinitive] : to write
grievous	okneros	troublesome, lazy
safe	asphales	secure, firm, certain
beware	blepō	[present active imperative] : to
behold, to see		
dogs	kuon	a dog or hound
evil	kakos	evil
workers	ergates	a worker or workman
concision	katatome	a cutting down
are	eimi	[present active indicative] : to be
circumcision	peritome	a cutting round, circumcision
worship	latreuō	[present active participle] : to worship
publicly		
spirit	pneuma	spirit
rejoice	kauchomai	[present middle participle] : to boast
confidence	peitho	[perfect active participle] : to
persuade		

flesh	sarx	flesh
have	echo	[present active participle] : to have
and to hold		
confidence	pepoithesis	confident, persuasion
flesh	sarx	flesh
thinketh	dokeo	[present active indicative] : to think
trust	peitho	[perfect active infinitive] : to
persuade		
circumcised	peritome	circumcised
eighth day	oktaemeros	eighth day
stock	genos	offspring, race, genus
tribe	phule	a tribe
touching	kata	down to, norm or standard
law	nomos	law, ordinance, custom
concerning	kata	down or over against, as to
zeal	zelos	zeal
persecuting	dioko	[present active participle] : to pursue
church	ekklesia	that which is called out
touching	kata	down to, norm or standard
righteousness	amemptos	blameless
is	ginomai	[aorist middle participle] to become
things	tauta	things
were	eimi	[imperfect active indicative] : to be
gain	kerdos	gain
counted	hegomai	[perfect middle indicative] : to lead
out, account		
loss	zemia	loss, damage
count	hegomai	[present middle indicative] : to lead
out, account		
loss	zemioo	to cause or suffer loss
excellency	huperechon	[present active participle] : the
pre-eminence		
knowledge	gnosis	knowledge
suffered	zeimoo	[aorist passive indicative] : to cause
or suffer loss		
dung	skubalon	excrement
win	kerdaino	[aorist active subjunctive] : to gain
found	heurisko	[aorist passive subjunctive] : to find
righteousness	dikaiosune	rightness, justice
law	nomos	law, ordinance, custom
faith	pistis	faith, faithfulness, steadfastness
having	echo	[present active participle] : to have
and hold		
know	ginosko	[aorist active infinitive] : to know
power	dunamis	ability, power
resurrection	anastasis	a standing or rising up
fellowship	koinonia	fellowship, communion
sufferings	pathema	suffering, affection
conformable	summorphoo	[present passive participle] : to make
of the same form		

death	thantos	death
any means	pos	any how
attain	katantoo	[aorist active subjunctive] : to come,
arrive		
resurrection	anastasis	a standing or rising up
dead	nekros	dead

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Verse 1 Paul was clearly thinking as he began the dictation for this chapter that it would be his last section, but news arrived or overnight he was reminded of something and restarts the letter. This is a reminder to flexibility of thinking on all our parts. We need to be ready to change our direction or focus at the last minute under the Holy Spirit's direction.

Personally, I do not fix the final content of my preaching messages before entering the pulpit to speak, although my power point may remain the same for each of the two morning services, I am always ready to be led by the Holy Spirit to give a totally different emphasis in each service. Even though the power point presentation and the notes handed out before may be the same, the presentation will be different. It must be, because the crowd is different, and so there will be slightly different emphasis needed for each. How flexible are we in our ministry? Pressure situations demand flexibility of thinking but stability in the basic principles applied. Holy Spirit led only, and always.

Pauls' "last word" is "rejoice in the Lord". It is a great final greeting to anyone as you sign off. Now he has much more to say, but he will come back to this theme and urge rejoicing again in Chapter 4. "Rejoice in the Lord at all times brethren", even when we cannot rejoice in all situations, we can rejoice in what God will do with them as we walk with Him. **Romans 8:28-36**. Paul wasn't embarrassed at his repetition of principles like this because it is helpful to really hear and apply these truths. We all need to rejoice in all things, for the Lord will bring us through them all.

It is no trouble to Paul to remind them to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and allow the fruit to form true Christian character within them. It is not any trouble at all to him to encourage and exhort the Lord's people. This is another sign of a true pastor-teacher; they are never exhausted or tired of the work of ministry. True pastors may be tired in the work, but never of the work! Paul loves these people and wants the best for them and the best is always going to involve rejoicing.

Believers who do not rejoice in the Lord are not speaking to him often! Fellowship with the Lord is the only "safe" (secure, firm, stable) place to be in this life. Where-ever we are we are safe when fellowshiping with the Lord in joy. **1 Peter 1:12-16**. "The joy of the Lord is our strength" under pressure. It is okay to have favourite verses, and **Nehemiah 8:10** is one of mine under pressures.

Verse 2 This is an abrupt, rude and sudden outburst from Paul, and so out of step with the previous verse that I can only conclude someone came in with news that disturbed him and made him head off in a different direction to deal with these evil workers who were disturbing the churches. To call Jewish men “dogs” was the ultimate insult and would lead to blows, even death in the market-place.

Such venom many find shocking from the great apostle who urges love for the brethren normally. The key is that these people he attacks here are false brethren, and workers of evil masquerading as genuine believers when they are really workers with Satan himself.

Jesus himself spoke most harshly to those who led people astray, and his venom was strong against them as sons of Satan himself! **John 8:44**. Do not be afraid to call the enemy’s troops for what they are, but be sure of them by their fruit before you accuse them. **Matthew 7:13-23, Galatians 5:16-21**.

Those who work evil serve evil, and they are men who “cut off” mankind from salvation. Paul plays with the word for circumcision here and makes them castrators. This is no joke to Paul, for these men act like Jewish religious experts, but they “cut away” all godliness and destroy those who follow them. **Galatians 1:6-9, 5:7-10**.

Paul hates evil and all who push evil receive his wrath. Do not be afraid of the hatred of evil and those who practise it by habit! This is the Lord’s attitude. The prophet Isaiah uses the identical language to attack the false prophets and pastors of Israel, seeing them as evil to their core because of their effect on the people. Satan’s people in the church do untold damage to young faith. Read **Isaiah 56:9-12**, and then read again **Matthew 7:6-20**.

Peter will also use similar language taken from Matthew 7. **2 Peter 2:17-22**. We show love to those who can receive it but must recognise evil workers of Satan who cannot and will not and must be separated from for safety’s sake. We must tell the truth about satanic ministers, or they will hurt or kill the little lambs! **Acts 20:29**.

Verse 3 It is clear from this verse that those attacking the truth in the church are Jewish, and from this verse it is clear what they are arguing, given Paul’s strong statement here. Read this verse again and see if you can spot it. These men are arguing that believers need to be “truly circumcised” by them if not before, and if they have been circumcised, they need to be inspected and certified by these men. They claim special ability and authority to audit and certify genuine faith and practise. These men are “special” in their own eyes, “entitled” only to good things. Such people we call “narcissists” today, but the Bible just calls them self-centred and “evil”. **Isaiah 14:12-14**.

A clear sign of satanic presence is self-absorption and self-centeredness. Anyone believing they are special is already identified as a satanic worker, for God’s people are servants to the flock, but Satan’s people require servants.

God's people serve and seek the glory of the Lord, satanic pastors always seek their own glory, money and power for themselves. As Jesus said in **Matthew 7:20**, "by their fruit you know them". Once evil workers are spotted and clearly identified they must be publicly exposed as "evil workers" to protect the innocent and the vulnerable who may be fooled by them without being extra alert. Remember **2 Corinthians 11:13-15**.

False teachers, false prophets, and false pastors have always abounded, and will until the end, and genuine pastors need to keep on practising discernment to protect the flocks of the Lord until the end. **John 21:15ff**. The fake pastors who have attacked the church at Philippi have argued about their "special" rights and privileges, but Paul corrects their nonsense. Those who are genuinely followers of Jesus are the genuine spiritual "circumcision" of the new Church Age. These genuine believers are known by their spirit of worship, and service to others, not the outward signs in their flesh. The greatest fruit of the Holy Spirit is genuine worship of the Lord in spirit and in truth, and such worship will always overflow into caring service for others. **John 4:23-24, Galatians 6:22-26, James 5:1-8**.

We are ordered by the Lord Jesus to "fruit inspect" anyone claiming to be a pastor, prophet or other servant of the Lord. **Matthew 7:13-23**. The spiritual fruit that counts is in inward attitudes, beliefs, and their outworking in close and personal behaviours. Pastors, prophets, evangelists, and other Christian leaders must all be ready to have their behaviours under the spotlight, for they must be able to prove that they are walking in the power of the Holy Spirit in the holiness that is appropriate to those who minister Christ to others. **1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-16**.

The greatest fruit however of spirituality is worship, and that will always be seen in those who walk close to Jesus. In the African churches that I love to work amongst in Lusaka they have a test they apply to all visiting "pastors" and it is a good one. They call upon them to lead in prayer and then share a word from the scriptures to encourage God's people. Very quickly in prayer you can see if a man or woman is a fake by their string of platitudes, but if they are genuine by their powerful prayer for the saints.

Let us prove we are genuine by genuine love for the brethren and powerful worship to the glory of God. It doesn't matter what the outward signs of spirituality are in dress or formal words, but spiritual power does matter and must be seen in fruits that bring blessing, not actions that speak of arrogant self-centeredness.

Verses 4 - 5 Paul was able to meet every test these fake religionists might put to others, for he was a PhD in Jewish Theology from the greatest school of his day, the Jerusalem School of Gamaliel. He was circumcised and was educated and brought up in a Jewish home of the Diaspora as an orthodox Jew, even being a Pharisee in his strictness. Paul really delivers his credentials here and that was important, because these arrogant religionists would not accept correction from anyone who couldn't "out-Jewish" them. Even then they would argue against them, but Paul was hard to argue against

because he was smarter than them and better qualified in Judaism than them all.

There are people that you do need an expert to confound and eliminate and you need to pull the expert in quickly if he/she is required, for these evil workers need to be silenced and eliminated. Paul has had to do this sort of defence before and so this time he can shorten it up, as I suspect by this date copies of his earlier letters to the Corinthians would have been circulated to other churches. The early church habit was to copy letters and then pass them on to others.

Read **2 Corinthians 11:10 – 12:13**. In this long section Paul shocks us with the things that have happened to him in service, but he makes the point that his suffering is more evidence of his spirituality than his circumcision and education ever could be. What do we trust in? The Perfect tense reminds us that getting the object of trust wrong has eternal consequences. Paul has all the “assets” but saw them as worthless, for the reality eternally is relationship with Jesus!

The “tick the box” points for full certification as a “Jew of the Jews” were the items that Paul lists here before us. Paul could “tick all the boxes”. He mocks and attacks these people because they need to be silenced, for they speak nonsense. None of these things matter at all. It doesn't matter how we were born, whether noble or illegitimate, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, but it does matter that we know the Lord Jesus and that we walk in the Spirit. **1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28ff, Ephesians 6:8ff, Colossians 3:11ff**.

Verse 6 Paul's real credentials as far as Judaism is concerned are his evil energy and focused hatred of the early church in the beginning. Paul seriously persecuted the church and many were imprisoned and possibly very many died as a result of his actions. He was hated by many and it took a long time before the church that suffered most from his work in Jerusalem would accept him at all. **Acts 8:1-4, 9:1ff, 22:3-4, 26:9-10, Galatians 1:11-17**. Paul captures the hypocritical centre of legalism in this verse, which is the heart of its satanic evil identity.

Paul was a murderer and a persecutor of believers in the one true God and yet he was “blameless” according to the legalistic system of the Pharisees. Even according to the basic Law of Moses he could not be accused by his peers of any wrongful actions, for the people killed were looked upon as “apostates”. This is the mind baffling thing about legalism. People can certify themselves as righteous after they have murdered the innocent, or just those they disagree with! Hypocrisy and self-righteousness is an evil thing and very powerful as a deceptive and devious theology. Read the condemnation of Jesus of this whole mental attitude. Matthew Chapter 23.

Verse 7 All the socially acceptable nonsense of legalism that made him “famous” in Judaism he has cast aside as the garbage it was. He sees that the things that the Pharisees value are “rubbish” in the eyes of God

and all thinking and sensible men. Paul now sees these things as actually causing damage if they are paid attention to as significant. These things he valued highly, but he saw now as of no value eternally whatsoever.

Galatians 5:1-4.

Verse 8 Paul goes even further to emotionally and socially distance himself from his old behaviours and cultural practises. It is vital when we shift our behaviours to shift our emotional core also and get the emotional distance we need from the things that tie our heart as well as our hands. Paul has totally and completely separated himself from his past and all its old ties. He sees the need for such total commitment to new paths. He seriously insults his old path here, just as strongly as the “dogs” reference above.

His old legalistic behaviours he labels as “manure”, or excrement! This is shocking language to use of legalistic behaviours. It is meant to shock these people, for the Lord finds it shocking and disgraceful for believers to hold to their belief in and practise of this garbage! It is disgraceful and disgusting to the Lord for believers to practise legalism rather than walk in grace and mercy and love in the Spirit. The only thing of value is to know more of the Lord God and grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then overflow to powerful Holy Spirit inspired service. **2 Peter 3:18.** The believer’s sole focus must be to “win Christ”, for this powerful phrase means all that the Lord is free to do in and through us in the power of the Filling of the Holy Spirit. **Matthew 13:44-52.**

Verse 9 It doesn’t matter what men think of us, but it does matter what the Lord thinks of us. How do we want to be “found of him”? Paul was focused only upon how the Lord saw him and that gave him power, for he wasn’t distracted by the irrelevant opinions of men. This is the mental attitude that we are challenged to follow after. Paul didn’t want to be discovered in his own righteousness, but in that provided by the work of the Holy Spirit within him, for that alone is worthy of entry into heaven. It is only God the Holy Spirit that can prepare us for heaven, for our human effort self-righteous nonsense is “filthy rags” in his sight! **Proverbs 23:19-21, Isaiah 64:1-7.**

The only righteousness that matters is that achieved by walking in the power and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and that is the path of “grace by faith”. **Ephesians 2:4-10.** As we have begun our walk with God so we are to continue, and that is by grace through faith. God wants us to keep on stepping out in faith through Holy Spirit filled service. **Galatians 3:11-14.** Faith is the only way to please God, and even in Old Testament times this was understood by the great saints of the past. **Psalms 71:14-17, Isaiah 45:22-25, 46:11-13, 53:10ff, Jeremiah 23:5-7, 33:15-17, Daniel 9:24ff.** Ordinary life tests basic application of these things, but serious difficulties and suffering really tests our application. God wants us to be real. Suffering is fire to burn away any rubbish!

Verse 10 Paul’s passion is caught in this verse. Read it slowly and see his desire to know and serve the Lord with more and more power and focused

energy and wisdom. He desired nothing other than to see the Lord Jesus glorified and lifted up. Paul wanted to live and work in resurrection power, as that is the power we are called to live within. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus and we need to live within the power of that new relationship. That means walking in the Holy Spirit's power daily for nothing else will "cut it" facing real pressures. **Ephesians 5:15-21.**

Paul had gone beyond the sheer joy of walking with the Lord in power to face the reality of walking with the Lord through "the Valley of the shadow of death" also. **Psalms 23:1ff.** He realised that when the Lord said to the disciples to take up his Cross that it might mean suffering and death in the end. **Matthew 10:37-39, 16:24-28, Luke 9:23.** When you have such a thing said at least twice very strongly by the Lord it pays to take it seriously and factor it into your walk with him. Paul had accepted this hard word from the Lord and he was ready to suffer and to die for the Lord if he needed to in the plan for his life. **2 Timothy 4:6-8.**

Verse 11 Paul knew that only the righteous dead will rise with Jesus and live forever with him. It is not the self-righteous, but those who in Christ have received his righteousness that are genuinely saved. Paul sought no other outcome of this life than to be numbered amongst those standing with the Lord in that resurrection day. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.** Death is defeated with sin on the Cross of Jesus, and all who have accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and Lord are able to with confidence look to that day when we receive our resurrection bodies. Let us be sure of our destiny but let us work now in God's plan in his power to achieve all we are called to achieve until that day when we leave this earth.

APPLICATION – PERSONAL

Rejoice in the Lord brother and sister. Rejoice in the Lord, in the midst of pressures remind yourself that the Lord is victor over all things. Let us worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. The Lord is good and the people of the Lord need to say so and say so powerfully and openly.

Let us be careful of judging anyone on the basis of their external characteristics. It is not our birth, our qualifications, our attractiveness, but our union with the Lord and our walk with God the Holy Spirit. Let us not be impressed by externals but walk in humility before the Lord and man.

Beware of legalism that makes self-righteousness appear moral and good rather than the evil perversion of truth that it often is.

Nothing matters in this world other than knowing Christ Jesus more and serving him more passionately and powerfully. All legalism is garbage, but all Holy Spirit Filled service is powerful and wonderful – we are called to work that is wonderful, not playing with manure!

We live and serve powerfully by grace through faith, for there is no other way to walk with the Lord Jesus and be conduits for the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us walk by faith and not by human effort, but the power of the Holy Spirit alone. Let us be people of powerful prayer and position ourselves daily to catch the wind of the Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION – PASTORAL

We all know the challenge from Galatians and all Paul's work - Stand in the liberty whereby Christ has set us free. So, under maximum pressure from circumstances let us preach grace alone, and reject legalism in all its forms, for it is satanic evil that distracts believers from grace into arrogance.

Suffering situations as we are seeing in this "master class" all appear to be related to arrogance reduction and eliminating any over-confidence we may have had. Lets keep this emphasis in our daily walk – to depend quite consciously on the Lord's power alone to walk through each day.

Let us ensure that all God's people get the message to "win Christ". This means to receive all that the Lord is free to do in us through spiritual union with Him in the good times and the "bad". Let us preach with passion and power to ensure that God's people embrace the truth and walk in it, and we can only do that as we "live it" by applying the principles we see above into daily life in the worst days we may face.

Notes

THE MYSTERY OF THE INDWELLING CHRIST – COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 1:24-29

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

KEY WORDS

Rejoice	chairō	present, active, infinitive – to be rejoicing with deep joy.
Sufferings	pathema	deep suffering of the soul/body.
Fill up	ant-ana-plerōō	present, active, indicative – to fill up in turn.
Behind	usterema	that which is lacking...
Afflictions	thlipsis	severe torturous suffering/affliction of spirit.
Minister	diakonos	servant of the church/tables....
Dispensation	oikonomia	period of stewardship...
Given	didomi	aorist, passive, participle – received at a point in time.
To fulfil up/complete...	plerōō	aorist, active, infinitive – purpose to fill
Mystery	musterion	secret doctrine revealed to those on the inside.
Hid	apokrupto	perfect, passive, participle – has been hidden – until God revealed it.
Made manifest clear	phanerōō	aorist, passive, indicative – was made absolutely clear
Make known known.	gnorizō	aorist, active, infinitive – purpose – to make known.
We preach proclaiming.	kataggello	present, active, indicative – we keep on
Warning	noutheteō	present, active, participle – keeping on warning.
Teaching	didaskalo	present, active, participle – keeping on instructing.
Wisdom living.	Sophia	full knowledge tested by years of experienced living.
Present present...	paristemi	aorist, active, subjunctive – that we might
Perfect	telios	completely equipped.
Labour	kopiaō	present, active, indicative – keep on labouring...

Striving working.	agonizomai	present, middle, participle – keep strenuously working.
Working	energeia	according to the standard of Christ’s working.
Worketh working/energizing.	energeo	present, middle, participle – keeps on working/energizing.
Mightily	dunamis	dynamic power.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Verse 24 Paul continues his rejoicing in the midst of his present suffering under house arrest in Rome as he awaits trial there. As we read of the careful correction of the false views of the Colossians we must keep remembering that Paul is facing trial in Rome at the accusation of his own countrymen. **Acts 28:16-31.** Paul is facing a trial that may end in his death, his accusers are certainly working for that. He is confident and so is Dr Luke, as we see from the Acts passage, but in the midst of privation he is thoughtful and prayerful towards this church.

He suffers chains, and has done so for a year already at least by this point. He is chained to two members of the Praetorian Guard at all times, and at least two others guard the doors. He must feed them and his own people and depend upon the churches for support to achieve this, and yet in the midst of the very real pressures he faces he writes the most careful letter on Christology to the smallest church founded to this point.

It is so easy to “despise the day of small things” (Zechariah 4:10), and undervalue a small fellowship or home group, but Paul writes this letter to a church that might be as small as a home group of a large church today. No small group or small “issue” is too small for the Lord, and all things are to be taken to the Lord in prayer, for actually believer, what is small or large in God’s sight in our lives? Let’s take our suffering situations seriously and bring them before the Lord, but with the confidence of those who know they are loved and have been guided to this place.

Paul walks in the Holy Spirit, and so under this great personal pressure is always found in prayer with rejoicing and is focused on answering the questions of this small fellowship. This man could order the church at this very time to rejoice always, **Philippians 4:4-7**, and he had certainly set the example to them of this. **Acts 16:25, 2 Corinthians 11:16-33, Romans 5:3, Philippians 2:14-18.**

Paul is a mentor to his people, these churches like Colossae, and to ourselves. He illustrates the strength of character that the Lord requires of us. Paul’s motto, like General William Booth, who founded the Salvation Army, was the single word motto, “others”. This is the pastor’s call, and we do well to heed Paul’s mental attitude through this letter, and get our doctrine right, but our care and concern for others even more right. Paul’s joy is unbounded for these confused people, for their hearts are right, but they have been influenced by the dominant false theologies of their day, and he doesn’t blame them, he quietly and systematically is correcting them.

Paul now introduces a strange concept to us, and one the church through the centuries has quietly ignored, the only exception being in the monastic orders. It is the concept that we are left here to “fill up/complete” the suffering of the Lord for us in our own bodies. It is a spiritual and mental attitude of readiness to suffer, following the Lord in that suffering without complaint, and with absolute focus upon heaven rather than the things of earth. Paul expresses this though in a way that baffles some modern commentators. He indicates that the Lord has left some things for us to do, and one of those things is suffer, unjustly, in his name and for his glory.

There is no redeeming value to the service and suffering of the individual believer, but by suffering for the name of the Lord and on our pilgrim path we are following him. We are taking up our own cross, just as Jesus took up his unique cross of suffering and paid the price for our sins. We do not know what our sufferings might produce for others in the church by way of “fruit”. It may be that our courage is the very encouragement that others need. The blood of the martyrs was seen later as the “seed of the church”, as the example of believers steadfast under extreme suffering and death encouraged many to stand for in their own faith unto the end.

The Lord warned the disciples that great suffering would come to them for his name’s sake. **Matthew 5:3-16, 10:22, 19:29, 24:9, John 15:18-27**. He gave blessings that would be for those who stood firm under pressures, and he warned very directly of the hatred of evil men towards the followers of the Saviour, just as he had faced the undiluted hatred of Satan’s men. The early church remembered the words of Jesus and accepted that they would be hated by men for the truth they proclaimed. **Acts 9:16**. As a result they rejoiced in pressure, which many today feel to be an aberration. If any doubt the suffering of Paul and wish to ask themselves as to whether they desire a senior role in the church it is wise to read **2 Corinthians 11:23-33, 12:5-10**.

Verse 25 To be the pastor of a church is to be the example of Christ to that place, and that means being ready to suffer on behalf of that church. To lead means to be the servant or bonded slave of all. **Matthew 10:24-25, 20:27, 23:11, 25:21-23, Mark 9:35, 10:44, Luke 16:13, John 12:26, 13:16, 15:15-20**. Servant leadership is the biblical model for leadership. Refer to the EBCWA Book 112 on “Christian Leadership”, in the Christian Living file of the website.

Leadership means a readiness to suffer at a level that many will find baffling. Why would the Lord allow such things to happen to his choicest servants? Paul gives us a glimpse of the answer here; in order to give them opportunity to serve and receive eternal rewards that would not otherwise be theirs. Suffering is the opportunity to rejoice in tough places and so experience triumph in the toughest places and receive great reward and eternal victor’s crowns at the Judgment Seat of Christ. **2 Corinthians 4:8-18, 11:23-29**. Refer to the doctrinal studies, “Rewards and Crowns” and “Judgment Seat of Christ” in the Bible Topic Book.

Each of us must walk the path that the Lord has given us to walk, each uniquely to fulfil our part in the Plan of God. Paul uses the Greek word for an area of administration, translated into the English as “a dispensation”. Paul has been handed by the Lord a role to fulfil, an area of administration to complete for the Lord to assist these people. His area of work/administration requires great suffering but Paul is ready to receive this from the Master’s hands, for he knows this is indeed his path. That’s the key for each of us. If we are asked by the Lord to suffer more than our peers, then we pause, reflect and in prayer take this to the Lord, for if it is our path, then we are to walk it in Holy Spirit power for the glory that will be ours forever by accepting the hard path.

Paul had caused great suffering to the early church and so he accepted that his path would involve great suffering for the church. He saw the Lord’s justice and grace in this and rejoiced to receive whatever the Lord gave him and turn it to blessing to the name of the Lord at all times and in all ways. It is this mental attitude that sets an example to us all. **Acts 8:1-4, 9:1-2, 1 Timothy 1:12-14, Philippians 3:8-11, 2 Timothy 1:8-13, 2:8-13.** Note Paul’s strong words of encouragement under suffering to the believers in these verses here. See “Christian Life - Mental Attitude” in the Bible Topic Book.

Verse 26 Paul will keep preaching the truth of God’s Word to them, for it alone will comfort, correct, direct and empower them as they face the suffering that is to come to them. This church and the town that nurtured it would disappear under the pressures of foreign invasions and earthquakes in the 6th century, its people dead or scattered. Their own hope under the extreme pressures that they will face is to be found in their occupation with the person and work of Christ.

Like ourselves under pressure, the only comfort we can know as we suffer affliction comes from the close fellowship we have with the Lord, not any additional money we might earn, or things we might acquire. All goods we receive in this world are but for temporary use here. In themselves no goods can every bring happiness, but walking with the Lord in hard places can bring the greatest joy we can know this side of eternity. The challenge we face is the challenge we see Paul meeting. To rejoice in all situations and praise the Lord at all times. **Philippians 4:4-13.**

Many of the truths that the Lord’s First Advent would open up to the world were kept carefully hidden (mystery to mankind) from mankind before the Lord’s advent. Enough was prophesied for the Jewish people to be ready for the coming Messiah, but there were enough baffling elements of the prophecies so that satanic men could not work everything out and so be ready to destroy him and his ministry. Evil men would try to achieve this satanic destruction, but the truths were carefully revealed so that unbelievers, and Satan himself, didn’t have enough to go on. **Romans 16:25-27, Ephesians 3:1-13.**

We forget at times that Satan does not have omniscience. He wants to deceive men into thinking he knows as much as God, but he is limited, and

many doctrines that would be taught in the New Testament period, especially after Pentecost, were hidden from everyone before the very day that the Holy Spirit fell. This is the concept behind the word “mystery” in this verse. Many doctrines were simply hidden from all men, and others were revealed only to those who were Holy Spirit filled. This kept the truth known to those who would use it for God’s purposes and hidden from evil men who would abuse the truth and those who held it dear.

Verse 27 The key “mystery doctrine” that was hidden from even the Old Testament prophets was that the Lord Jesus Christ, the expected Jewish Messiah, would not just come to earth as prophesied, but He would actually end his first advent by personally indwelling his followers and empowering them for victory in the angelic conflict. **1 Peter 1:10-12.**

The truth that was revealed fully on the Day of Pentecost took Satan and all the angels by surprise and signalled his doom in a way that none would have seen or even dreamed of before. Before the Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon people for specific service and then left them when the specific task was completed.

In the Old Testament period (right up to the day of Pentecost) the Holy Spirit was upon and “with” men to serve, but not permanently “in” men for lasting power and service. **John 14: 12-20, 15:26-27, 16:7-15.** Even after the resurrection the Lord was required to give a temporary empowering of the Holy Spirit to carry the disciples through until that day when all would change. **John 20:22.**

All this would change on the Day of Pentecost and it took Satan a while to realise what had occurred, for it meant believers in living fellowship with the Lord Jesus were way beyond his power from that point on. **1 John 4:4.** Refer to the doctrinal study in the Bible Topic Book on the Holy Spirit’s ministries in the Old Testament and the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in New Testament times to show the changing role of the Holy Spirit because of the victory at the Cross. Understand how much more you have now than David had!

The purpose of spiritual growth is that each and every believer might be “perfect” (telios in verse 28). This means complete and thoroughly equipped for service of the Lord. Can you see from the context of these verses how we are “thoroughly equipped”. **2 Timothy 3:17.** It is not just the “Armour of the Spirit” that makes us thoroughly furnished for all good work! **Ephesians 6:10-18.**

It is the very reason why we have the armour itself that makes us ready to serve in all places and at all times. The reason we have the armour of the Holy Spirit to put on is because of the Lord’s unique person and ministry in the First Advent and the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers. We are equipped by his grace provision. Under maximum pressure we need to always be fully armed!

Verse 28 We don't preach a program, we announce a person, telling the world who he is and what his policy is, what he has done, is doing, and will yet do. The great mystery doctrine, hidden from all the people and angels in Old Testament times is the truth of the indwelling of Christ of each and every believer. It is the presence of the Lord within us and the Holy Spirit also that is our "hope of glory" in the midst of anything we might face.

It is the person and work of Jesus that we announce as the "good news" that all mankind needs to hear. With the announcement of the "good news" there is a solemn and logical warning that must accompany it. That is the warning of certain judgment for all who would mock, ignore or oppose "so great a salvation". **Hebrews 2:3.**

This word for warning, translated "admonishment" in older days has been appropriately taken as the heart concept of Christian Counselling by Jay E Adams, who refers to biblical counselling as "Nouthetic Counselling". He was absolutely right and correct in this, for all biblical counsel has "admonishment" in this biblical sense at its heart. All truth carries with it the responsibility to obey and follow through upon it, and the corresponding consequences for ignoring or opposing it.

The purpose of all biblical teaching is that believers might hear and obey, being submissive to the truth, and Holy Spirit filled in their application of it. Submission to the truth and obedience in life leads to the "complete" (perfect) service to which we are all called. Refer to the doctrinal studies in the BTB on "Obedience", "Submission", and the "Filling of the Holy Spirit".

Verses 29 Paul's mental attitude as a pastor is akin to that of the focused soldier and athlete, and in these words here he gives us the example to follow if we would serve the Lord in the power and focused attention that we are called to. **2 Timothy 2:3-13.**

Paul is ready to serve powerfully, and in the filling of the Holy Spirit able to serve with all energy focused on the goal he has been personally called to fulfil. God works within us in order that we might be powerful in our service. We are not empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to relax more wonderfully, sing more powerfully, or feel better as we listen to nice music and relax by the swimming pool. Sadly, many believers in today's "prosperity gospel" world think that feeling good is God's purpose for them in this life, but it is not!

We are here to serve and serve in and through suffering if required. We are here to work and work as hard as labourers and athletes working for a gold medal. The very night that I initially wrote this commentary here in New Zealand we had the final of the Rugby World Cup 2011, and the two teams playing, France and New Zealand, both threw themselves into the struggle, with no holding back of energy. At the end of the game there were two teams of totally exhausted men, but they had a result, and they had their medals, either silver or gold. It is this level of energy that Paul urges us to spend as we walk through this life. We are here to work to the point of exhaustion, not save our energy for something else – there is nothing else! We are here to

work and burn up every piece of energy we have in the contest the Lord has set us. All we have is to be expended in the arena of service – no reserve.

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

Suffering is not meant to be a strange and unjust thing but accepted as a normal part of the Christian life. We suffer because that is what the Lord said would happen in the “devil’s world” while he is free to vent his hatred at losing the angelic conflict! He is only free for a time and will soon be imprisoned forever in the Lake of Fire with all who hate the Lord and wish to join him in active opposition to the Plan of God.

Let us take any suffering we endure to the Lord and truly “endure” all pressure that comes to us in the filling of the Holy Spirit. The Lord has produced enough grace resources for us to be victorious in all things, and so let us walk in the power the Lord gives and do what the Lord requires of us.

If we are called to “fill up” the measure of his suffering, then let us do it with joy, for he has called us to join him in his suffering and he will empower us through the midst of it, and he is with us through the worst and the best of times. Let us walk in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ and savour every moment with him.

B. PASTORAL

We are saved to serve, and to serve powerfully in the Holy Spirit’s power and the living daily fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us do this with power and joy. Servant leadership is the Lord’s concept for leadership. Let us embrace this concept and walk in the power that it provides us. In accepting the Lord’s leadership style we free ourselves of all the self-centeredness and lust-based programs of unsaved men.

Let us serve as Jesus served. Let us focus upon receiving his rewards in eternity, not the accolades of men in time. In and through any suffering we are experiencing let’s pour ourselves out for the Lord’s people. It’s in caring that we cope best!

Let us preach and teach the Lord’s people about the mystery doctrines that are critical for survival and powerful service in the church age. We are living in a time when believers need to walk in the Holy Spirit’s power and serve in accordance with the plan for God for this age, not an earlier one.

Believers today need to know the nature of their service and the age in which they live, and they need to utilize all the Holy Spirit’s power, or they will fall short of the Lord’s plan for their lives. As the Lord’s pastors we are responsible for teaching them and mentoring the correct way to live and serve.

This is the age when the “mystery doctrines” need to be known and applied. At their heart is the truth that the Lord, as a result of his victory on the Cross is living within individual believers and they need to draw upon his sweet fellowship and the Holy Spirit’s powerful permanent presence to achieve what they are here for.

We are left behind on this earth to serve, and so let us serve appropriately to our age in history and the power that is available to us. As noted above, it’s in caring that we will cope best with our own troubles and cares.

PARAPHRASE

“I am rejoicing in my sufferings for you all, for in this I am filling up what the Lord left behind for us to complete of his deep sufferings, in my body for the church. I became a member of the church and a servant of the church in my entry into union with Christ, and my area of administration and responsibility in the church is to teach you the complete Word of God. To reveal to you all the mystery doctrines which were kept secret from all before the church, but now is to be made known to all in the church. It is to us all that the Lord wants his will make clearly known, so that all know and experience the riches of his glory, which are in Christ Jesus, the confident hope of eternal glory. It is this truth we boldly announce to all, seriously warning every man, and teaching all who will hear the truth of biblical wisdom that we might bring all to complete and fully equipped service in Christ Jesus. It is for this purpose that I labour, working to the point of exhaustion, striving to complete the work according to the Holy Spirit’s inner provided power.”

Notes

PETER ENCOURAGES TO BE READY FOR WHAT THE ENEMY MAY BE GIVEN PERMISSION TO THROW AT US

1 Peter 4:13

Verses 12 - 19

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; 13 but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as of a murderer or as a thief, or an evil doer or a busy body in other men’s matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 17 For the time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (Proverbs 11:31). 19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their soul to him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator”.

KEY WORDS

Beloved	agapetoi	loved ones; that is our position in Christ Jesus.
Strange	xenizo	present , passive, imperative, do not keep on receiving the thought that this is strange, unexpected.
Fiery	purosis	burning, fiery, refining, purifying.
Trial	perirasmos	trial, ordeal to prove the nature of a thing/person.
Rejoice	chairo	present active imperative, keep on rejoicing.
Partakers	koinoneo	present, active indicative, to keep on sharing in.
Sufferings	pathema	serious sufferings.
Exceeding	agalliaomai	present, middle , participle, to be exuberantly happy.
Reproached	oneidizo	present , passive, indicative, to receive reviling, insulting words.
Happy	makarios	blessedly happy.
Rests	anapauo	present , middle , indicative, rests, refreshes.
Evil spoken of	blasphemeo	spoken of as evil when really good.
Glorified	doxazo	spoken of bringing glory to his name.
Busybody	allotriepiskopos	one who looks into the lives of others to agitate, or cause mischief.
Ashamed	aischunomai	present passive indicative, to be put to shame.
Glorify	doxazo	present active imperative, the order to give glory to.
Behalf	meretouto	in respect of this.

Begin	archomai	present middle imperative, must begin (it is ordered).
Obeys not	apeitheo	present active participle or the verb to be disobedient.
Scarcely	molis	with difficulty.
Appear	phainomai	future, middle indicative of the verb to appear.
Wherefore	hoste	For all these reasons (sums up the whole paragraph).
Suffer	pascho	present active participle of the verb to the ones who keep on suffering.
Commit	paratithemi	present, middle imperative of the verb, to deliver over to, to entrust for safe keeping.
Well doing	agathopoiia	active well doing.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

“The high standards of Christianity made society uneasy. By aspiring to the teaching of Christ believers had inadvertently become the conscience of society. Mankind has always been troubled by its conscience, and persecution has been the normal response. **Matthew 5:11, 1 John 3:13.**” (Mounce, 1982).

Verse 12. If we are to receive a “fiery trial” in our own lives we are to have the mental attitude expressed here in these verses. Don't be baffled or surprised by persecution, as if it is unnatural. The persecution of the saved by those who are determined to be lost is the story of history. Did not Cain murder Abel, Ishmael persecute Isaac, Esau hate Jacob, the authorities hate the Lord himself? This has been Peter's theme throughout this letter; the hatred of the unbeliever towards the believer is to be expected, and we are to relax in the midst of any pressures that their hatred brings, for we are in the Lord's hands, and under his loving care. If we are to die under attacks from evil men we can die like Stephen seeing our Lord in the midst of the attack. **Acts 7:55-60.**

We are not to be baffled, questioning, worried, upset or moaning (verse 9), rather we are to be rejoicing when pressure situations come to us. Peter reminds them that they will be rejoicing with joy that overflows all boundaries when the Lord returns, so why not get started now! We are on the winning side. This is another great theme of the letter; if we are serving the one who wins in eternity, let us live like winners now! Rejoice now and rejoice even more later! Praise and worship is our main tool against pressure and suffering – we affirm God's Joy in the midst of pressure.

Paul has many parallel passages to this one, and it may be that Peter is echoing Paul's sentiments; they are certainly shared by him. **Philippians 1:18, 2:16-18, 28, 3:1-3, 4:4, Colossians 1:24-26, and 1 Thessalonians 5:16.** This is the apostolic faith; it is a dynamic and powerful faith that smiles in the face of adversity, for it is always looking for the glory of God in the midst, and the path the Lord has provided through the troubles.

Verse 13. Suffering is viewed by the early church as a “gift” given by the Lord to his most mature and choicest saints, in order that they might grow spiritually even more. **Philippians 3:10, Colossians 1:24-26.** In suffering we have a chance to enter into something of the sufferings of our Lord. In a manner of speaking, we share the sufferings of Christ. That is the thought at the start of verse thirteen.

As the doctrinal study of the subject in the Bible Topic Book makes clear, suffering is not a “bad” thing in this world, for it is the necessary result of the fall of man, but is used by the Lord to bring glory to himself as the saint walks through the suffering empowered by the Holy Spirit and looking to Jesus, the one who set the example of walking through the veil of tears in the spirit of peace and glory. Peter is giving all believers a promise here; reiterating the promise that the Lord is with them to the end of the age, **Matthew 28:20**, but even more is in view, for Peter takes us to the end of the age in his language.

If a believer is called to walk the path of suffering, then he or she is called to be like Christ in it, and by placing ourselves under such a spirit of obedience, even unto death, we will know, in the midst of it, the glory of the Lord in our spirit, as Stephen did, but also much more! Peter says that at his final return to the earth for his saints, we will receive even more glory. The doctrine of “Crowns” covers part of this also, but there is far more in these verses that even this. Suffering is not to be feared, flinched from or rejected, for there is glory in it, if it comes in God’s will for the saint. Hear a messianic Jewish brother on this.

“Do not only brace for afflictions, but rejoice in them, sharing the fellowship of the Messiah’s sufferings (Colossians 1:24, Ephesians 3:1-7). For just as the Sh’khinah (God’s manifest glory Hebrews 1:2-3) glory, once rested on the temple in Jerusalem, now the spirit of the Sh’khinah is resting upon each of us, since our body is a temple for the Ruach Ha Kodesh who lives inside us(1 Corinthians 6:19). The Sh’khinah was revealed as his, Yeshua’s Sh’khinah at his first coming (John 1:14-15,); it is the same as ‘the glory to be revealed’ (John 5:1ff), at his Second Coming (Titus 2:12).” (David Stern, 1992).

The early Israelites at the Exodus could see the Sh’khinah glory from afar, but could not approach lest they died, but we, we are the ones who in suffering have the presence of the Sh’khinah of God with us in power, and later when the Lord appears we are there in the winner’s circle with our Lord sharing his glory, as we shared his sufferings. This victors crown is not won by any save those who share the sufferings of Christ. Can you see why Peter was not concerned if he, or others, had to suffer for their Lord, for it meant they had the opportunity to win great glory now and forever.

Peter here is like the great military leader who does not shrink away from combat but urges his faithful troops on, knowing that it is only in the worst of battles that the greatest of medals are given out for “courage under fire”. It is to this we may be called, and it is for this that the Sh’khinah of God rests upon us, or better put, the Holy Spirit empowers our spiritual lives from within – the

glory seen without through the fruit of the Spirit. The Sh'khinah glory today is seen in our lives through the work of the Holy Spirit by means of "fruitfulness".

Verse 14. This reminds us that we are never alone in suffering, when it is for the Lord's sake. **Daniel 3:25.** In the worst fiery trial, the three Israelites were joined by the Lord himself, and Peter's promise here is, so will we be! Can anything separate us from the loving presence of the one who died for us that we might live? No! Never! We do not follow a Saviour who leaves us in the midst of trials to suffer alone. His firm promise is that he is with us and will never leave us alone. **Romans 8:26-39.**

Evil doers attacked our Lord, calling him an evil doer, John 18:30, and so they will to us. Like our Lord we must make sure their lies are not true!

They called him a blasphemer, but were themselves guilty of the very thing; so it will be until the end when he returns. Peter urges us to turn their blasphemy into glory by the way we take the suffering they dish out to us. By taking the suffering, "as unto the Lord", we transform the attacks of the evil one into glory for the Lord, and glory for ourselves as we stand in Christ Jesus.

What never glorifies God is for believers to suffer in the courts and jails for genuine crimes against their neighbours. We are called to love our neighbours, and full love shares the gospel message, it does not lead to evil. Note what Peter specifically mentions as sins /crimes that believers have clearly been guilty of or are in present danger of committing.

Verse 15. There are four categories of crime mentioned here, none of which are believers ever to be associated with. The first is murder. Sadly, many believers through the centuries have responded to verbal and physical attacks upon them not by turning the other cheek, but by killing those who abused them! Peter, the one who drew his sword on the night of the Lord's arrest has learnt the lesson God had for him that night. Have we heard the words of our Lord? **Matthew 26:51-56, Luke 22:49-51.**

The second thing is theft. All too many of us have stolen money, things that were not ours, and the reputations of others by the lies we may have told. We are not to be known as thieves by the world or they will not hear our message, for if it has not delivered us from such evil practises, what is the good news for the lost?

The third category of things is "evil doing", and covers all things associated with evil. Remember that evil is defined as satanic attacks on the things that God hold's sacred. Anything that attacks, or violates the four so called "divine institutions" is evil:

1. All violation of the free will of human beings is evil doing.

2. All violation of marriage is evil doing. Adultery, and all forms of promiscuity, pornography, or other perversions (child abuse, etc), is evil doing.
3. All attacks on the sacredness of the family is evil doing. Child abuse comes into all three categories as one of the great evils.
4. All attacks upon the integrity of the nation state are evil, for God has established the nations as his way to limit evil and enhance opportunities to spread the gospel, reversing the curse of the tower of Babel.

Believers are not to be known for attacking these four divine institutions; we are to be known as people who respect them and uphold them at all times.

Verse 16. This indicates that as the result of the attacks of the mob some believers will be led to judgement, and standing before the judges of one's own society can be a source of shame for a good citizen. Peter says, if you find yourself in this position, do not be ashamed if you are there for a good thing. Whatever the charges against us as believers, we are to make sure no crime is amongst them, except by the lies of our accusers.

Verse 17. This verse notes the logical fact about judgement. "If God's judgement is ordained to start with his chosen people, it is certainly not going to stop with them". (Kelly, 1969, p 193). Note a very sober principle in this verse. When the Lord judges he begins with his own people and purifies them first by the suffering he allows them to undergo. But if he allows this to occur, will he stop there? Peter brings our minds back to the plan of God again.

He reminds us that the suffering of the church is part of a plan and it is leading somewhere, and that is to the end of all things and the judgement of the whole world system. Keeping our heads safe from anxiety and despair as we undergo suffering, involves being focused on the plan of God, that does not end with our pain or death, but ends with his glory and our glory with Him.

Also note in verse seventeen, that the unbelievers are referred to as, disobeying not disbelieving. "The gospel makes its demands on the will of man. It does not call for his opinion. The truth of the gospel is not at issue. People either reject the truth or obey the truth. They do not decide on its truthfulness." (Mounce, 1982). Note this carefully. The unbeliever is condemned by their own actions, they disobeyed the clear instruction of the living God, and for such a crime they are truly lost.

Note also that as far as the church was concerned, it was always, "five minutes to midnight". (F F Bruce, quoted in Hiebert, 1982) The return of the Lord was expected at any moment, and they lived with that reality, and had each day purified and focused by it. **Matthew 24:36, Romans 13:12, 1 Corinthians 7:29, Philippians 4:5, Hebrews 10:25, James 5:8, 9, Revelation 1:3, 22:20, 2 Peter 3:8-9.**

In these verses we have the, “methodology for suffering saints” (Meyer, 1953). It may be summarised by the following three application points.

1. Be sure you **keep in the current will of God** for your life.
2. **Be sure to not lose focus** but keep on doing the good things you can in service for the Lord.
3. When facing each day, **commit your soul to the safe keeping of the Lord.**

Verse 18. This verse has had some stumble. It does not teach that it is “hard” for God to save us, and that some might not make it because it is too hard for God to help them! It simply underlines Peter’s point from verse seventeen that those who disobey the Lord who died for them are in a very perilous place. Salvation was obtained, “with difficulty”, it cost the Lord tremendous suffering, and the price paid was terrible, but it was total and complete. Given that price paid, Peter asks, where will the unbeliever stand?

Upon what ground will they try to establish their right to enter heaven on their own account? If the Lord on the cross is the standard, what can they do to win their own salvation? The answer is nothing! There is only one way that man may be saved and that is through the work of Christ; no-one else can do anything like this, and it is this that was required to win our salvation!

Verse 19. Here we have Peter’s expectation spelt out. He is not expecting them to die, but if they must his words will keep them mentally safe, if they apply them! “Martyrdom is not envisaged, for he expects them to go on living normal lives and to be energetic in practical charity. God is a reliable depository who can be trusted. His faithfulness is the basic motive for Christian hope in the New Testament.” (Kelly, 1969).

We are not to seek out a dramatic confrontation with the evil powers, we are to do the work that the Lord puts before us. If we are to suffer and/or die however, we are to accept it with rejoicing! He is our faithful creator, and the one who made us, has provided all things needed for us, in all things he leads us into!

If we must face and go through the ‘fiery trials’, then we are to go through them in the power of the Holy Spirit and grow spiritually, and witness in his power, right until our last breath is breathed. “There is no standing still in things spiritual. He who does not advance goes backwards.” (Lumby, 1893). God is faithful, he never ‘forgets’ us! We need to know and claim the promises of God. **Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 10:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:24, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, 2 Timothy 2:13, Deuteronomy 7:9, Isaiah 49:7,15.**

This is not resigning ourselves to our fate or any form of despair, rather it is the dynamic trust in the power of the Lord to keep us unto death. “Christian resignation differs from fatalism in that it recognises a beneficent will behind all the changes and chances of mortal life.” (Mastermann, 1912).

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

“To share Christ’s shame is a glorious privilege, to have his fellowship, though it be in the midst of flames, is to have fullness of joy and to partake of his humiliation in this world is the pledge of participation in his glory in the world to come. . . . Peter’s motive is not to warn believers, but to encourage believers to endure steadfastly; so that believers are reminded, that terrible though their ordeal is, they are at least facing a less severe ordeal than the disobedient will have to face.” (Cranfield, 1959).

“To suffer for Christ is to be blessed, because God’s glorious spirit comes to rest upon all who endure reproach for him.” (Mounce, 1982).

Medals are only won on the battlefield, never on the parade ground. The church teaching sessions and prayer meetings are the parade ground only; we are trained there to go out and do the work of evangelism and be prepared daily to suffer reproach for his sake. **Luke 6:22-23, 1 Timothy 4:10, Colossians 1:24**. The whole theme of this letter might be titled, the “fiery trial mental attitude”, for that is what Peter wants from us, a dynamic mental attitude that faces troubles as opportunities for glory!

In verse seventeen and eighteen we are encouraged to keep our focus on the Lord who bought us, and to remember that we are kept by him. We are to, “trust yourselves to God, continue to do right and all will be well; however severe this ordeal may be, it is nothing compared to the fate of outsiders.” (Moffatt, 1963).

Do we remember who has called us, and do we praise him enough and often for who he is? Our response determines how he is able to act in blessing towards us, and that is why we are so often living beneath the level He desires for us. We are meant to be living in “Faith-Rest” – in praise and worship and trust in the one who died for us.

He is our faithful creator, and He is the one who made us, and he has provided all things needed for us, in all things he leads us into! Let us praise his holy name! He can be trusted and He will deliver us. Let us affirm this aloud for all to hear – including the enemy!

[b] PASTORAL

“Yet we may know something of his other sufferings, when He was tempted, when he foresaw the doom of men and wept; when he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself when he surrendered himself to do and suffer the holy will of God. . . . Would it be right for him to sink fainting beneath his cross, whilst we are carried to heaven on beds of down. Shall he go through seas of anguish and we pass round them by a safer and easier path?” (Meyer, 1953).

Are our people prepared for suffering should it come upon them? If we are training believers, we are training them for combat in the angelic conflict and that means there will be casualties. Are the people ready to suffer casualties for the Lord in his work? If our flock does not have the mental attitude expressed here then we do not have the mind of Christ, and we have failed in our job as pastors. Let us train for this spiritual combat; let us encourage our people to always have the mental attitude that takes suffering for the Lord's sake in his way.

The battle for the believer is a daily battle for a dynamic and apostolic mental attitude. It is a mental attitude that sets itself the task of doing the work that the Lord has set us without dramatics. That means we seek no-thing that is not the Lord's will for us. "Committing oneself to God is not passive submission. It involves active well doing, There is no place for a martyrdom mentality. Suffer in silence but get on with the job of living an active life of good deeds. Christians should be known for what they do." (Mounce, 1982).

CONCLUSION

We are called to a "Christ like life", nothing short of that will do in the Lord's service. Let us set our hearts and minds to the task of being obedient to him and to be trusting in him for all things, focused on the plan of God not the attacks of disobedient men nor annoyed demons, nor difficult circumstances no matter how "unfair" they all feel.

PARAPHRASE

"Loved ones in Christ, do not think it strange or unexpected that you may endure fiery refining and purifying trials of your faith. Do not think that some strange thing has happened to you, (this is "normal" in the devil's world). (Instead of confusion and fear) keep on rejoicing, both now, (in the midst of it), and later at the Lord's glorious appearing, for then you will exult and rejoice with real exuberance. If you are verbally abused because you are believers, blessed are you, because (in the midst of it all) the Holy Spirit is with you! On the part of the evil ones the Lord is blasphemed, but on your side the Lord is exulted (by your response to their attacks). But be sure, that none of you suffers judgement as a murderer, as a thief, as an evil doer, or an agitator and mischief maker. If you are judged as a Christian, then do not be ashamed, but rather let the Lord work his glory through this. Because the time for this judgement is begun and the church will suffer first. But if it starts with us and we suffer, what will happen to those who live in disobedience to the gospel message? If the righteous ones with great difficulty are saved, what will happen to the ungodly? Where will they stand? For all these reasons, those of us who are to suffer according to the will of God, let them commit their souls to the loving, faithful creator of all things, and demonstrate that commitment by doing good things (in love)."

DOCTRINES

CHRIST – HYPOSTATIC UNION: GOD – MAN

(Who our Lord is gives us our focus for Suffering situations)

1. Hypostasis means standing together under one essence, two things united under one with no loss or transfer to the other and no change to either. In the person of Jesus Christ the two natures, divine and human, were inseparably linked with no loss or transfer of properties or attributes, and no mixture or loss of separate identity the union was personal and eternal. The Lord Jesus Christ is still perfectly human and divine. Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1-14, Romans 1:2-5, Romans 9:5, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 1:4

2. The incarnate person of the Lord Jesus Christ included undiminished deity. Jesus Christ is God; He remained co equal and co eternal with the Father while on earth. Christ is eternal because God is eternal life. His deity was never affected by His death, resurrection and session. As God Jesus Christ could not die, however as a baby in the cradle he was holding the universe together.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ was also true humanity; body, soul and spirit although due to the virgin birth he had no old sin nature 1 Peter 2:22

4. The two natures of Jesus Christ are united with no transfer of attributes. Each set of attributes corresponds to the respective natures. The divine attributes such as eternal life, all knowing, everywhere, refers to His divine nature, the human attributes correspond to His human nature. To remove any attribute from His deity would be to destroy deity.

5. No aspect of the divine nature was lacking, although certain attributes were not exercised in line with the Father's plan. Matthew 4:1-10

6. The union of the two natures in the person of Christ must be considered personal, human to the human, divine to the divine. They are never mixed. The union was therefore personal and hypostatic; one essence with two natures.

7. Deity did not indwell humanity or possess it. The union was more than sympathy and harmony, it was unique combining the two natures eternally. He is the God – man

8. Christ had two natures in one person; therefore he could be supremely powerful yet weak at the same time.

a) Deity cannot be tempted, humanity can. Matthew 4:1-10

b) Deity cannot thirst, humanity can John 19:28.

c) Deity is omniscient, humanity learns Luke 2:40,52

9. The necessity of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in the following:-

- a) To be our Saviour he had to be man as God cannot die. Hebrews 2:14,15, Philippians 2:7,8
- b) To be our mediator He had to be equal with both God and man. Job 9:2, 32-33, 1 Timothy 2:5-6
- c) To be our High Priest He must be a man. Hebrews 7:4,5 14-28; 10:5, 10-14
- d) To be a king he must be a man, a Jew in the line of David. Psalm 89:20-37, 2 Samuel 7:8-16

10. There are three categories of sayings or actions of the Lord:

- a) From his deity alone John 8:58
- b) From his humanity alone John 19:28
- c) From his hypostatic union - John 11:25,26

11. The uniqueness of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is a key doctrine to understand for all believers, for it is on this point that the accurate preaching of the gospel rests. 1 Timothy 3:16

12. The gospel in one word is Immanuel - God with us. John's testimony on this point John 1:14. In Christ we see God's love and favour towards man. As God revealed himself in the Old Testament, so He perfectly reveals himself in the person of the unique person of the universe, the God man the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST – KENOSIS OF CHRIST

1. Kenosis is an expression which means to "empty oneself" or "to make himself of no reputation". Can we also join our Lord and let go of anything that our suffering shows us is "extra baggage" on the pilgrim road. Only who we are "In Christ Jesus" is what we move forward through pressure situations with close to our heart.

2. Principle of Kenosis: - (Philippians 2:5-8)

3. Jesus Christ from eternity past always has been God. As such he is all knowing, he is all powerful, has everlasting life and many other absolute qualities. He was not created because he is eternal.

4. Jesus Christ chose to become a little lower than the angels (as we are) and took on the form of man that He might provide salvation for all human beings.

5. Adam the first man aspired to be God, the second Adam who is God divested himself of his deity (Kenosis) and became man in order to be Saviour of mankind.

6. During his earthly ministry, rather than using his own absolute power he used the power of the Holy Spirit. His restraint, in accordance with the

Father's Plan is the example for us, that all we do is to be done in accordance with the requirements of the Plan. Obedience and Submission required from us – Doctrines below.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – HUMILITY

1. Humility is to be sought - Zephaniah 2:3
2. Humility is manifest in restraint - Luke 6:28-29
3. Humility is produced by the Holy Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23
4. Humility is essential in teaching - 2 Timothy 2:25
5. Humility is essential in learning. - James 1:21
6. Humility is valuable to God. - Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

7. Humility is the path to promotion - 1 Peter 5:6
8. Humility gives proper self evaluation. - Romans 12:3
9. Examples of humility
 - a) Moses - Numbers 12:3
 - b) David - 2 Samuel 16:11
 - c) Jeremiah - Jeremiah 26:14
 - d) Stephen - Acts 7:60
 - e) Paul - 2 Timothy 4:16
10. Evidences of humility
 - a) Forbearance to others - Ephesians 4:2,6:9, Colossians 3:13
 - b) Endurance in trials - 1 Corinthians 13:7, James 1:12
 - c) Compassion - 1 Thessalonians 2:7
 - d) Peaceability - James 3:17
11. Humility was the primary characteristic of Christ - Isaiah 53:7, Matthew 11:29, 21:5
12. Promises to the humble - Psalm 22:26, 37:11, 147:6, Isaiah 29:19

CHRISTIAN LIFE – IMITATE CHRIST

1. Imitation is the foundation of discipleship, the surest and quickest method of training - 1 Corinthians 4:16

2. The Corinthians could imitate Paul, for he was imitating Jesus Christ. In context the imitation has to do with self sacrifice for the cause of the ministry - 1 Corinthians 10; 23-33, 11:1

3. As the believer imitates Christ he reflects the character of the invisible God. Here the imitation relates specifically to God's love expressed in forgiveness - Ephesians 4:32, 5:1-2

4. Peter illustrates the fact that the minister of God's Word is to be an example to those he teaches - 1 Peter 5:2-3

5. To become an example you first must be an imitator. - 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

6. Imitation is the primary teaching method of Jesus Christ - 1 Peter 2:21
7. The call of "follow me" was used by ancient rabbis to call their disciples to a life of learning by imitation - Matthew 4:19, John 21:19,22
8. The principle of imitation is conformity. - Matthew 10:24-25; Luke 6:40
9. This principle was fulfilled when the training of the disciples was finally completed. - Acts 4:13
10. The quest of the pastor teacher must be to imitate Christ and to be imitated in the faith. - Hebrews 13:7

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUBMISSION

1. This means to humble oneself in willing service to another, with the connotation that it is for your good. Genesis 16:9, 1 Peter 5:6, Hebrews 13:17.
2. We must fully surrender ourselves to God. James 4:7, Romans 12:1-2. As the Lord made himself obedient unto death so must we. Philippians 2:18.
3. We are, in Christ to submit ourselves each to the other within the church. This involves putting the spiritual needs of others ahead of any personal interests. Ephesians 5:21.
4. Within the church, believers are to submit to the teaching authority of the pastor as he preaches from the Word. Hebrews 13:17, 1 Corinthians 16:6, 1 Peter 5:5.
5. A wife is to submit herself to her own husband within their marriage. This involves respect for him as her spiritual leader and protector. Ephesians 5:22, Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:4 -5.
6. Children also are to submit in love to their parents' authority under God. Colossians 3:20.
7. All believers are to be in submission to the laws of their land, unless those laws violate the clear command of God. Romans 13:1, 2, Matthew 22:21, 1 Peter 2:13-17, exception example, Acts 4:15-20, 5:40-42.
8. Workers are to be under authority of their employers and their managers. Colossians 3:22-25, Ephesians 6:5-8, Titus 2:9, 10, 1 Peter 2:18-24.
9. Those in authority have a special responsibility to treat those under them with care and respect. Colossians 4:1.

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



“DAILY BATTLE ORDERS”

**CHURCH TEAM WORK UNDER PRESSURE ON
THE PILGRIM PATH**

GETTING OUR “DAILY ORDERS” RIGHT

by

DR. JOHN C MCEWAN

[BOOK 107- Part 3]

**Feast of Tabernacles
19 October 2024**

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Professor Simon Greenleaf was one of the most eminent lawyers of all time. His "Laws of Evidence" for many years were accepted by all States in the United States as the standard methodology for evaluating cases. He was teaching law at a university in the United States when one of his students asked Professor Greenleaf if he would apply his "Laws of Evidence" to evaluate an historical figure. When Greenleaf agreed to the project he asked the student who was to be the subject of the review. The student replied that the person to be examined would be Jesus Christ. Professor Greenleaf agreed to undertake the examination of Jesus Christ and as a result, when he had finished the review, Simon Greenleaf personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Professor Greenleaf then sent an open letter to all jurists in the United States saying in part "I personally have investigated one called Jesus Christ. I have found the evidence concerning him to be historically accurate. I have also discovered that Jesus Christ is more than a human being, he is either God or nothing and having examined the evidence it is impossible to conclude other than he is God. Having concluded that he is God I have accepted him as my personal Saviour. I urge all members of the legal profession to use the "Laws of Evidence" to investigate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you find that he is wrong expose him as a faker but if not consider him as your Saviour and Lord"

HOW CAN I BE SAVED?

Salvation is available for all members of the human race.

Salvation is the most important undertaking in all of God's universe. The salvation of sinners is never on the basis of God's merely passing over or closing His eyes to sin. God saves sinners on a completely righteous basis consistent with the divine holiness of His character. This is called grace. It relies on God so man cannot work for salvation, neither can he deserve it. We need to realise that the creation of this vast unmeasured universe was far less an undertaking than the working out of God's plan to save sinners.

However the acceptance of God's salvation by the sinner is the most simple thing in all of life. One need not be rich, nor wise, nor educated. Age is no barrier nor the colour of one's skin. The reception of the enormous benefits of God's redemption is based upon the simplest of terms so that there is no one in all this wide universe who need be turned away.

How do I become a Christian?

There is but one simple step divided into three parts. **First** of all I have to recognise that I am a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24).

Secondly, realising that if I want a relationship with Almighty God who is perfect, and recognising that I am not perfect, I need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (I Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16).

Thirdly, by the exercise of my own free will I personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, believing that He died personally for me and that He is what He claims to be in an individual, personal and living way (John 1:12; 3:36; Acts 16:31; 4:12).

The results of Salvation

The results of this are unbelievably wonderful:

My sins are taken away (John 1:29),

I possess eternal life now (I John 5:11,12),

I become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17),

The Holy Spirit takes up His residence in my life (I Corinthians 6:19),

And I will never perish (John 10:28-30).

This truthfully is life's greatest transaction. This is the goal of all people; this is the ultimate of our existence. We invite and exhort any reader who has not become a Christian by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to follow these simple instructions and be born again eternally into God's family (Matthew 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

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A MENTAL ATTITUDE CHALLENGE TO US FROM THE AGE OF ISRAEL

Hear Nehemiah.

“6. So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

7. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,

8. And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.

9. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

10. And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.

11. And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.

12. And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.

13. Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

14. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the LORD, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

15. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

16. And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.

17. They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.

18. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

19. And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.

20. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.

21. So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

22. Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day.

23. So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing.”

(Nehemiah 4:6-9, 14-23)

*“For my thoughts are not your thoughts
Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.”*

(Isaiah 55:8)

“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

(Jeremiah 10:23)

BY THEIR FRUITS EACH CHURCH IS KNOWN – GOD’S WAY, NOT OURS

Team work in the local church means we work God’s way, not by human-strength and philosophical means, and that means we are Holy Spirit coordinated in all our actions with Holy Spirit filled believers, led by a bible believing and teaching Pastor-Teacher, seeking God’s glory not their own – my prayer is you will be encouraged as you read God’s Plan for the church not the self-serving nonsense that abounds in today’s world.

US President Ronald Reagan is quoted as saying, “When no-one takes credit the job gets done.” He was right, 100% right! There is no room for narcissism in the local church. We are to be Holy Spirit led, empowered and directed. The Lord Jesus Christ must get the glory in all that happens, as each member is bound together spiritually by our coach on the “team” – the Holy Spirit. Let’s be biblical brethren and that means we open our bibles and are directed by the Spirit through the Word.

NOT the management manuals of men	The Word of God alone.
NOT self-promotion and marketing alone.	The Work of The Holy Spirit
NOT planning meetings	Prayer meetings.
NOT “five year plans”	God’s Plan for us from
Eternity Past.	
NO competition/Darwinian conflict	Spiritual Team Work only.

Like all old Naval Officers, I begin with my “Ship’s Daily Orders” and as believers in the Lord we have five basic daily orders to apply every day.

“**Daily Orders**” for the battle against the adversary, to be applied in the Church Age, in the power of the Holy Spirit are found in **1 Peter 5:8,9**. They will protect us against the cunning of the mangy satanic “lion” who will otherwise play with our hearts and minds and hurt or kill believers within the local church.

The context of our Church Age orders is the Angelic Conflict – the fact that we have a malicious enemy, but he is no danger to us if we are obedient to our orders, for since the Day of Pentecost, and the resultant permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit, “Greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world”. **1 John 4:4**. Satan and his “crew” are dangerous only as we remain ignorant of or disobedient to our orders. Let’s get them clear. I will simply state them below, but we will explore them in our study as our subject unfolds making application points for our daily use.

Church Daily Orders

1. **Be Alert to battlefield realities at all times**
2. **Be Sober at all times**
3. **Be vigilant at all times**
4. **Resist the enemy and reject fear/anxiety at all times**
5. **Be Steadfast in the Apostolic Faith**
6. **Keep on knowing you are not ever alone**

Firstly – Be Alert on the Battlefield. This is not a time to be fighting each other in the Church, nor scrabbling about for apparent fame, fortune, position or human power in the earthly realm. This is the time to be alert to the possible actions of the enemy, and totally focused on living a Holy Spirit filled life, working together in the “Priestly Royal Family” that is the true status and nature of the Church. **1 Peter 2:9-10.**

Systematic Theology teaches us that Satan was strategically defeated at the Cross, Empty Tomb, Mount of Ascension, and on the Day of Pentecost. The “Daily Orders” of the Church are given by the Lord through the Apostles (**Jude 3**) so that we might be obedient in our following up of the Lord’s victory. Satan will be “bound” at the Lord’s Second Advent, (**Revelation 20:1-3**) but not before. Our ORDERS are very clear, as we will see below, but first we must recognize the enemy is still active, though wounded to death! He is a “mangy lion” but still a dangerous lion to be aware of as we will see below.

James 4:1-10. “1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*
2. *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*
3. *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*
4. *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*
5. *Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?*
6. *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*
7. *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*
8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*
9. *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.*
10. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”*

1 Peter 5:5b - 11. “*Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*
6. *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*
7. *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*
8. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*
9. *Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*
10. *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

11. *To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*”

Secondly - Be Sober! - At all times be self-controlled, not under the control of any emotion, or any other substance (drink or drugs), but operate only by the Holy Spirit’s filling power. This is not a time to be internally disabled by any distracting powerful thought or substance. No sleepwalking through life – be in control of each footfall.

Romans 13:11-14. “11. *And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

12. *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*

13. *Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.*

14. *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*”

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11. “4. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

5. *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*

6. *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

7. *For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*

8. *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*

9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*

10. *Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*

11. *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.*”

Thirdly - Be Vigilant! - At all times, stay awake to danger, don’t relax your guard, don’t get careless and trust evil people. This is not a Holiday Camp or Resort, it’s a battlefield. The time to relax fully is in heaven, and until we arrive there, face to face with our Lord we work, we witness, and we worship.

2 Corinthians 5:6-10. “6. *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:*

7. *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

8. *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

9. *Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.*

10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

John 2:24-25. “24. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,
25. And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”

1 Timothy 3:1-7. “1. This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3. Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4. One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5. (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6. Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Fourthly - Resist the enemy/temptation to fear! - Stand up to, resist, oppose everything the enemy stands for. Zero tolerance for fear, anxiety and evil is to be the standard for our lives. The enemy was defeated at the Cross and Empty Tomb and on the Day of Pentecost but he’s still active on the earth – he won’t be “bound” until the great angel does so after the Lord’s Second Advent. **Revelation 20:1-2.** The order for the church age is “RESIST!” We are not to be praying goofy and wrongful prayers for Satan of his team to be “bound” – they won’t be! We have God’s Word on this! Our Order is, at all times, in all spiritual ways, we Resist Satan and his evil crew!

Matthew 10:24-31, “24. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

25. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

26. Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

27. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

Luke 4:3-13. “3. *And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.*
 4. *And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*
 5. *And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.*
 6. *And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.*
 7. *If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.*
 8. *And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*
 9. *And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:*
 10. *For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:*
 11. *And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*
 12. *And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*
 13. *And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.”*

Ephesians 4:22-29. “22. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*
 23. *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;*
 24. *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*
 25. *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*
 26. *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*
 27. *Neither give place to the devil.*
 28. *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*
 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”*

Fifthly - Be steadfast in the faith “once delivered to the apostles”!
Jude 3. Be unbreakable, stand as a solid mass of soldiers resisting attack. Stand with the apostolic doctrines, and let their practices guide you. As a local church be united in biblical, apostolic faith, and so stand together, tight and committed to each other.

2 Timothy 1:7. “*The Lord has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.*”

Hebrews 6:18-20. “18. *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

19. *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*
 20. *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."*

Sixthly) Keep on knowing you are not alone! All believers suffer pressures when they stand for their Lord and He is always at our side, and the Spirit is always within us. We cannot be better protected, for the Holy Spirit empowers from within, the Lord Jesus walks beside us in living fellowship and we each have a guardian angel assigned to cover our back!
Hebrews 1:14.

Matthew 28:19-20. "19. *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*
 20. *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

Hebrews 3:6-15. "6. *But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*
 7. *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,*
 8. *Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*
 9. *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.*
 10. *Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*
 11. *So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)*
 12. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*
 13. *But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*
 14. *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;*
 15. *While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."*

2 Timothy 1:6-8. "6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*
 7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*
 8. *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;"*

1 John 4:4. "4. *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."*

SQUARING OUR SHOULDERS TO THE MARCH FORWARD

So having taken our “daily battle orders” seriously, we then hear Paul’s last words and the words of the author of Hebrews from around the same time and apply these words into our hearts in focused prayer and determination to reach the end of our pilgrim walk with glory to the Lord.

2 Timothy 4:6-8. *“6. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.*

7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Hebrews 12:11-13. *“11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

12. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”

Our goal is to stand with the apostles not with the paper-back writers of our modern wealth saturated world who feel all pressure situations are personally unfair to them. The apostles stood firm against the enemy and against the elements. When I consider Paul’s testimony in 2 Corinthians 11:24-30 I am embarrassed of my complaints to the Lord for the pressures of this year or any year, for while they have been severe testing of mind, body and spirit, Paul looks on from heaven (**Hebrews 12:1-3**) and encourages me to square my shoulders and keep being obedient on my pilgrim road. He cheers me on to keep on doing what the Lord has required of me, and leave my outcomes with the Lord, who loved, loves, and always will love and care for me.

2 Corinthians 11:24-30 *“23. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

24. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

25. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30. If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.”

We will address this very centrally significant subject biblically, being challenged and encouraged by the “apostolic faith”, **Jude 3**, which is our standard for operations. We will not minimize our suffering on the pilgrim road and that of our friends by just tritely quoting verses but keep our pain always alongside that of the apostles, for we are called to be like them on our own personal journey through life. **Philippians 3:17**.

We are to stand and fight in the angelic conflict and so hear the Lord’s words, “well done, good and faithful servant”, not win accolades from the governmental ministry of retirement for dying at a boring old age having achieved very little, but very wealthy in the world’s goods. **Matthew 25:21-23**.

We are not here on earth to be wealthy but to be useful and powerful in the Lord’s service – pouring ourselves out to the very end in Holy Spirit directed power. Fame on Facebook, wealth in any “top 100” list, political power or influence matters not a bit, unless it is useful and used for the glory of the Lord. All that is here on earth passes away; only what is stored in heaven as spiritual work lasts for glory forever!

To live at the end of the Church Age we face uniquely powerful pressures, but we are here in God’s Eternal Plan, “for such a time as this”, and so with Mordecai and Esther we seek God’s path amidst the dangers, for God’s path is always “amidst the dangers”, but safe all the way. Read **Psalms 23** again and again for we need David’s encouragement to keep walking along the “valley of the shadow of death” at times.

The Lord hides nothing from his disciples; they are bluntly told to take up “their cross” and be ready to “plough their assigned field to the end”. **Matthew 10:38, 16:24. Luke 9:62**. Both images are those of hard work, pain and extreme suffering, but in the provided power that God alone gives. Check the context of every quote I refer to below please, and so see that I am not twisting the Scriptures out of their context. Maybe we have been too influenced in the past by the marketing executives rather than the truth telling apostles....

In these very difficult days we have entered, where the coming Anti-Christ’s “One-World” people no longer even hide their agendas, we must be genuine and walk in Holy Spirit power alone. In the 1950s and early 2000s we could walk in a relaxed manner, but these are not days now for relaxation, distraction, or play acting. There are plenty in modern Christendom who preach “abounding” but few who help us in the “abasing” (**Philippians 4:11-13**) and we have been facing a lot more “abasing” situations than “abounding” ones this year so far. Can we “give thanks in all things” as the apostles urge us?

We must be 100% biblical in our reflections upon this subject of the, at times, toughness of our personal pilgrim road at this stage of the Church Age, and I will quote and reflect upon the texts of Scripture noted below, for I seek to be apostolic not acceptable to a newspaper or social media platform. Whatever

the opinions of good women and men on any subject, it is always “back to the text” for critical application principles.

Personally, this present year 2024 has been so hard, like David I have watered my bed with tears many nights (**Psalm 6:1-7, 139:7-8**) and felt my mind falling apart at times the stress was so great, and so I seek God’s path alone, for the truth alone will set me free from fears, doubts and despair. We are here in God’s plan for this time in history and we are to apply the “Daily Orders” that are relevant for this time in Church Age history.

It is genuine apostolic faith alone that will bring us all through the severe testing times that appear to be unfolding around us today. **2 Timothy 1:7** must be our motto daily.

“The Lord has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind”.

Join me as we face our hard pilgrim road together with the Lord and the apostles, for in these last days of the Church Age we must get our orders right and obey in every detail – it is simply too dangerous to walk one step away from the Lord’s path in these darkening days.

Notes

THE TEXTS THE LORD HAS LED ME TO FOR THIS REFLECTION

Let's begin by re-reading our first texts from our previous volume on this subject of Suffering on the Pilgrim Road – reminding us the Church Age is characterized by the Lord's Call to the "narrow path" – we are challenged to take the "road less travelled", rather than the "Broadway" that the majority walk downhill to destruction – we will find the going tough at times – we have the Lord's word on that fact - and this study as Volume 3 is designed to build upon the earlier two books. **Matthew 7:13-23.**

James 5:10-11 *"10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.*

11. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

Luke 6:20-26 *"20. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.*

21. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

John 14:27, 16:33 *"14:27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

16:33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

1 Corinthians 4:11-16 *"11. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place;*

12. And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13. *Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.*
14. *I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.*
15. *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*
16. *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”*

Philippians 2:5-8, 3:7-14, 4:11-13.

“5. Let this mind be in you,

which was also in Christ Jesus:

6. *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*
7. *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*
8. *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*
- 3:7. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*
8. *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,*
9. *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*
10. *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*
11. *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*
12. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*
13. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*
14. *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*
- 4: 11. *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*
12. *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*
13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”*

Colossians 1:24-26

“24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

25. *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;*

26. *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:”*

1 Peter 4:12-13

“12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

GETTING OUR ORDERS RIGHT FOR THE CHURCH AGE – Paul’s Challenge from Galatians and the Prison Epistles

I find it appropriate that Paul’s main “orders” for the Church Age are from the Prison Epistles, where he was “constrained”; chained between two soldiers at all times. He was “bound” but the gospel message was not, and the Church as a whole was blessed and strengthened by the legacy of his time under house arrest in Rome. Orders for the Church Age are orders to be received and obeyed “under pressure”, not just in carpeted hallways.

Let’s hear our brother and mentor the Apostle Paul, because he gives us the Holy Spirit’s direction for our own lives. This book of course is a brief summary to encourage and stimulate thought, and so it is to be followed up by a thorough study of each of the Pauline and Petrine Letters, finishing with John and Jude. Let’s simply pick up Paul’s “Ship’s Company Orders” and hear, believe and apply them right now.

Galatians 5:13-16

“13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

APPLICATION POINTS

1. We are not under legalism, we are to be operating in Holy Spirit filled power in Grace, and grace expressed always thinks of others and serving the Church to the glory of Christ. Anything lower than this standard is not Christian!
2. Love others (Agape Love – caring for their eternal destiny) – it’s not an option, it’s an order.
3. We must not ever be “biters” of others. We may be irritated by other believers but our response should be to pray for them, counsel them, and encourage them to change. This is the standard – there ought not be any “Christian cannibals” who eat each other in anger! **1 John 1:9** applies – Sins like these must be dealt with quickly! It is never the right time to be rage-filled, but always Spirit filled.

Ephesians 2:1-10 *“1. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
2. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
7. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
9. Not of works, lest any man should boast.
10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”*

APPLICATION POINTS

1. As Unbelievers we were “dead” and under Satan’s “Broadway” kingdom influences, but in Christ Jesus we have been set free and ought to have nothing whatsoever to do with the enemy’s belief systems or behaviours ever again.
2. Satan is a “prince” – a usurping ruler of darkness and evil, and we are to give no ground to him at all! Greater is HE that is in us than he that is in the world, 1 John 4:4, and so there is to be no fear of evil, but neither any carelessness in evil’s pretense either. We are to be guarded, alert and focused on God’s Plan for our life!
3. No fulfilling of the lusts of the flesh believer – we are not here to eat, drink and party. No matter what it is we “lust” after, we are to face the temptation and resist it, be Holy Spirit controlled at all times, and give no opportunity for evil to make us look foolish, or worse!
4. We have been “raised up” and are now members of the Royal family of Heaven and should be acting like it, not acting like ferals!
5. All is to be “by Grace”, and any works done are to be Holy Spirit guided, nothing done to “win points” or “look good”. No play-acting believer – just genuinely walking with Jesus in Holy Spirit power.

Ephesians 4:3-6 *“3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*

Ephesians 4:11-13 *“11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

12. *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”*

APPLICATION POINTS

1. Unity on the Church Team is a spiritual sign that you belong. Any narcissism or “self-centeredness” is a sign a person may not be a believer at all or is a very immature one.
2. One purpose, the glory of God and praise to the Lord Jesus Christ. For any task to be done we need always ask how the Lord will be glorified in what we are doing. If we have come to problem point with our “plans” and they do not appear to be bringing glory to God, then we need to pause, reflect, pray over these plans for they may be simply “ours”, not God’s. Be always ready to be corrected.
3. One body, one hope, one Saviour, one calling, one God.... A “one” attitude of mind in all the believers – our focus is on HIM – nothing else.
4. All gifts are given to glorify the Lord and empower the entire body. They are service gifts not for self-centered pleasure.
5. Every position in the Church is for service, not for status and pride. Any role in the church is a service role to glorify the Lord and build the church.
6. Our behaviour standard is “the stature of the fullness of Christ” – we are to be growing to be like Him.

Ephesians 5:8-21

“8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

APPLICATION POINTS

1. Starting with the last verse, let the one fear that is legitimate guide you! Fear of missing out on what the Lord has for you, and the associated fear of bringing embarrassment to the Lord.
2. We “prove” we are genuine by walking in the light, not acting like people of the darkness. We prove we are genuinely children of God by acting in ways that bring glory to God in all things said and done.
3. “Wake up” believers to spiritual realities! Walk carefully in the devil’s world.
4. Redeem the time – buy up every second – you are here for a limited time only.
5. Be filled with the Holy Spirit, not with food and wine! Let spiritual encouragement be your entertainment and your recreation and then you are always ready to serve.

Ephesians 6:11-18 *“11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints”;

APPLICATION POINTS

1. GET YOUR ARMOUR ON! Stop messing around in the morning believer, and as you sip your first coffee or tea pray each piece of armour on and affirm your place in the Lord’s Army for this day. The Roman Soldier rose and got his armour on immediately and so must we – ready to fight from the first second!
2. Every item of armour speaks of doctrines you all know – or should know! As you pray and affirm them daily you build stability into your spiritual life and service.
3. Note how the armour instructions end. “Praying always”. There is no moment when we shouldn’t be quietly praying to the Lord about what is going on around us.

Philippians 1:11, 20-21 *“11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

20. *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

21. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*

APPLICATION POINTS

1. Holy Spirit fruitful is the call in every letter of the New Testament. Notice how often Paul raises this and yet how seldom we hear this in our churches – let's reverse this in our pulpits!
2. In nothing ashamed. Not doing anything that brings shame to the Lord. Let's judge our behaviour by this and by the other biblical standards. We don't need any legalistic "lists of rules" as these principles are so clear.
3. Our body is a vessel for the glory of God. How many sins would be resisted if believers thought this way!
4. Death is not to be an issue for thought at all – we are here to serve to the end, not think about dying for it's a nothing – a moment between space-time and eternity in Jesus Arms. Let's be clear in our thinking on this.

Philippians 2:5-8

"5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

APPLICATION POINTS

1. Once again – the standard of thinking is that of the Lord's mind – we are to think as HE did! We can, as Holy Spirit filled believers, but we cannot in human strength.
2. Are we ready to make ourselves of no reputation? Are we ready to adopt the humble path, or do we seek fame, fortune and status in the devil's world?
3. Humble servant leadership is the Lord's call – let us embrace it and live it. Let us walk away from all pride based human viewpoint thinking.

Philippians 3:7-14, 20-21

"7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

13. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

14. *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

20. *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

21. *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”*

APPLICATION POINTS

1. How are your values believer? What do you value? You can tell by what you put your time into. Do an audit of your hours and work out what's wasted and what's useful.
2. Paul was ready to suffer the loss of all the things he had previously valued that he might simply pour his life out for Jesus. This is the apostolic standard.
3. Paul was ready for the “fellowship of his suffering”, when the Christian life meant loss, pain, distress and troubles. J R R Tolkien uses this passage for his “fellowship of the ring” in the “Lord of the Rings”. Are we ready to walk the hard road – that was what Tolkien's books were all about.
4. Forgetting the things I once valued I press on towards the new goals the Lord has set for me on my pilgrim journey. That's Paul's mental attitude – let it be our own.
5. Be followers of the apostolic pattern – be like Paul! Nothing is to get in the way of the Lord's work to be done.
6. Keep your focus on the endgame and the end of the race! We face the enemy, but we face him down in spiritual power. We aim to bring glory to the Lord' name and we serve with an eye on heaven. Refer to our book, “Let's Talk About Heaven”.

Philippians 4:4-7, 11-13 *“4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*

5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

APPLICATION POINTS

1. No matter what the pressures, we rejoice in what the Lord has done for us, is doing and will do, through any suffering we presently bear.
2. Seek in every situation what you can rejoice over. There will always be a thing you can thank God for; find it and begin your prayers with praise.
3. Peace is what we need within in difficult days, and it's only found in spiritual fellowship with the Holy Spirit and the Lord.
4. It's easy to "abound", it's a lot harder to be "abased", but both are to be the same for the mature believer.
5. I can do all things the Lord requires of me, because in the Holy Spirit's power HE will enable me to do all things for His Glory! This is biblical confidence – nothing short of it.

Colossians 2:8, 18-19 *"8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

18. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19. And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

APPLICATION POINTS

1. Beware of those who desire to rob you of eternal rewards. Remember, Satan knows he cannot rob you of salvation, for that is secure. Your life is hidden with Christ in God, in heavenly places! Your eternal security is established, but your eternal rewards are in jeopardy if you stray from the path and forget your orders.
2. There is no end of "vain philosophies" that will lead believers away from Systematic Theology, and we must be on our guard against them.
3. "Hold the head" – keep your focus on glory to the Lord Jesus.
4. Teamwork with others for the Lord's glory is the sign of a biblical, genuine believer.

Colossians 3:11-17 *"11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

12. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

APPLICATION POINTS

1. There is to be no racism, sexism or ageism in the genuine Church Age Team! All find their unity in Christ Jesus. There is no equality in any other place on earth, but we have it and should be enjoying and affirming it in the Church.
2. Forbear each other, forgive each other – cut your teammates slack and treat them as you would hope people will treat you. We all can make mistakes and get things wrong, so let's behave in the way that is always ready to work together.
3. Let the Word of God dwell richly within you! This is the right note to strike as we finish this short study, for those who do not love the Word, do not love Jesus – they are fakes.
4. Lift up the Word and left up the path that God has called us all to walk and then the Lord is glorified.

Notes

DOCTRINAL STUDIES

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

1. Greek EKKLESIA (literally "the called out ones")
This word is used four different ways in scripture.
 - a) Citizen Assembly (**Acts 19:32**)
 - b) Assembly of Israel (**Acts 7:38**)
 - c) Synagogue (**Matthew 18:17**)
 - d) Body of Christ (all believers) (**Ephesians 1:22,23, 5:25-7, Colossians 1:18**)
2. The church is said to be a mystery. (**Ephesians 3:1-6, Colossians 1:25,26, Romans 16:25,26**). Mystery - something that was hidden in the past in the Old Testament period but is now revealed.
3. The Church began at Pentecost 32 AD (Acts 2) and will be removed from the earth at the Rapture (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**)
4. Believers in the Church Age are unique, having spiritual blessings which did not exist in the Old Testament. We are a uniquely blessed group in the "body of Christ" the Church.
 - a) Every believer is united with Christ, in the Body of Christ.
 - b) Jesus Christ indwells every believer.
 - c) The Holy Spirit indwells every believer.
 - d) Every believer is a priest, praying and serving directly to God.
 - e) We have a completed canon of scripture.
 - f) Believers are commanded to live by the Spirit, not by Law.
 - g) Every believer is an ambassador of Christ.

THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

1. The Body of Christ is being formed on the earth during the Church Age. (**Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:16, 4:4-5, 5:23, Colossians 1:18, 1:24, 2:19**).
2. It is being completed by entering every believer of the Church Age into union with Christ. (**1 Corinthians 12:12-14**)
3. When the body is completed the Rapture occurs. (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-7**. Compared with **Revelation 19:6-8, Zechariah 13:2 and 1 Thessalonians 3:13**)
4. During the tribulation on earth the bride is being dressed in heaven ready for the second advent of the Lord – "the marriage supper of the Lamb".
 - a) For ultimate sanctification - the resurrection body. (**1 Corinthians 15:51-7, Philippians 3:21, 1 John 3:1,2**).

- b) The bride is prepared by being cleansed from all human good. (1 **Corinthians 3:12-15**)
- c) The bride no longer possesses a sinful nature (**Revelation 19:7-8**)
5. The Bride returns in triumph with Christ at the Second Advent. (1 **Thessalonians 3:13**)
6. Upon the return of the bride and groom judgement occurs. (**Psalm 110:1**)
- a) Disarming of demons (**Colossians 2:15**)
- b) Satan is imprisoned for 1,000 years. (**Revelation 20:1-3**)
- c) Jesus Christ casts demons into prison **Zechariah 13:2, Colossians 2:15, 1 Corinthians 15:24,25**)
7. Coronation of the Groom, Jesus Christ is Crowned King of the World. (**Revelation 19:6**)
8. Wedding Supper of the Lamb. (**Revelation 19:7-9**)
- a) Marriage occurred in heaven, supper to take place on earth. (**Matthew 25:1-13**)
- b) Wedding supper described in detail (**Revelation 19:6-9**)
- c) Four groups involved in this supper:-
- i) The Groom - Jesus Christ.
 - ii) The Friends of the Groom - Old Testament Saints (**John 3:29**)
 - iii) The Bride - Church Age Believers.
 - iv) The Friends of the Bride - Tribulation believers, i.e. those who have known the Bride and become believers. (**Matthew 25:1-13**)

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

1. SCRIPTURE Matthew 16:18-19

"And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. "

2. Apparent Problem

Is Peter the foundation of the church? What are the keys of heaven and who has them?

3. Evaluation

Jesus is talking to Simon (or Cephas) who is renamed Peter in this passage. In the previous verses, Peter has just acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

4. v.18 The Rock

- a) "And I say unto thee thou art Petros (Peter) - PETROS is a stone a piece of a rock, a piece of stone that fell off the mountain but not the mountain itself.
- b) "Upon this rock" - PETRA - this is the mountain or rock from which the stone comes the PETRA is Christ.
- c) "I will build my church future tense shows that the church is future at this point. We are in union with Christ we are part of the mountain. The Lord did not found his church on a human being Peter, but it is founded on the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ. (d) "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". Once you are in the Rock/mountain, hell has no opportunity to take you away - Eternal Security. (**Romans 8:38,39**)

5. v.19 The Keys to the Kingdom

- a) "And I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven
- b) "I shall give " - relates to the future tense of I will build my church.
- c) "unto thee " - thee is plural, the keys of the kingdom are not therefore given to Peter, but to all believers.
- d) "the keys of the kingdom this is the prerogative of witnessing for Jesus Christ.
- e) In v. 19 we do not have to worry about the gates of hell but we have the key to the gate of heaven.
- f) In **John 20:23** we have "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained". This deals with declaring the gospel regarding the remission of sins.
- g) "Whosoever" - third class condition - maybe yes maybe no.
- h) "sins ye remit " - aorist tense - at the point of time they believe.
- i) "are remitted unto them " - perfect tense - they are remitted forever.
- j) "sins ye retain" - those who reject and are condemned to eternal judgement.
- k) "and whatsoever (maybe yes, maybe no) - third class condition.
- l) "thou shalt bind on earth decisions for Christ aorist tense - point of time of decision.
- m) "shall be bound in heaven perfect tense - eternal security in heaven.
- n) "and whatsoever" - (maybe yes, maybe no) - third class condition.
- o) "thou shalt loose on earth " - this is use of the Holy Spirit during the Church Age.
- p) "shall be loosed in heaven " - more literally shall be loosed from the sphere of heaven.

6. Conclusions

- a) Peter is not the foundation stone of the church. He did, however, preach the first sermon at Pentecost (**Acts 2**). He is given the great honour to open the door.
- b) The key to the kingdom of heaven is faith in Christ – “You are the Christ, the Son of God...”

THE CHURCH AND THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

1. Israel under dispersion and at this stage of history no longer represents Christ on this earth. Sadly it is an atheistic nation, and even with extensive evangelism in the Tribulation period Zechariah records that only one third (1/3) are saved!
2. Israel is set aside for a significant time and replaced by the Church, the Body of Christ. (**Acts 2:47, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, Ephesians 1:22, 23, 2:16, 4:4, 5, 5:23, 24, 30-32, Colossians 1:18, 24, 2:19**).
3. The Body of Christ is being completed by entering every believer of the Church Age into union with Christ. (**Colossians 2:10, Hebrews 2:10**)
4. When the Body is completed, the Rapture of the Church occurs. (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**)
5. Then the Body becomes the Bride and is prepared for the Second Advent.
 - (a) The Bride receives a resurrection body like Christ's (1 Corinthians 15:51-57, Philippians 3:21, 1 John 3:1, 2)
 - (b) The Bride's old sin nature is removed. (Philippians 3:21)
 - (c) The Bride is cleansed from all human good. (1 Corinthians 3:12-16)
6. The Bride returns in triumph with Christ at the Second Advent. (1 Thessalonians 3:13, Revelation 19:6-8)
7. Then follows the conquest-
 - (a) Satan is imprisoned for a time (Revelation 20:1-3)
 - (b) Demons are permanently removed from the earth. (Zechariah 13:2, 1 Corinthians 15:24, 25, Colossians 2:15)
8. The removal of the demons changes the environment of the earth and causes perfect conditions during the Millennium.
 - (a) Religion removed.
 - (b) False doctrine removed.
 - (c) Perfect environment restored.

THE CHURCH – THE BRIDE OF CHRIST – SUMMARY OF PERFECT TENSE RESULTS

- 6-01.** We are to seek the kingdom of God and our needs for functioning for Him will be met. **Matthew 6**
- 6-02.** The narrow gate is the way we access heaven, its by grace through faith not by our works **Matthew 7**
- 6-03.** The family of Jesus Christ are those who will spend eternity with Him not blood relations. **Matthew 12**
- 6-04.** Any reward in the Christian life requires response from our free will to get involved. **Matthew 20**
- 6-05.** The Christian is to be the best of citizens taking care to properly contribute to society. **Matthew 22**
- 6-06.** Christ is resurrected forever by the Holy Spirit who will give resurrection bodies to us all! **Matthew 28**
- 6-07.** While conversion occurs at a point in time continual growth towards maturity is essential **Matthew 28**
- 6-08.** Christians are to be prepared to share the Word of God but if it is rejected they move on. **Mark 6**
- 6-09.** Jesus shows that an offence against young or new believers is of great offence to Him. **Mark 9**
- 6-10.** There is emphasis on learning and applying the Word of God to ones life in these passages **Mark 13**
- 6-11.** Christ was resurrected forever by the Holy Spirit who will give resurrection bodies to us all! **Mark 16**
- 6-12.** To guide the Christian the word of God by the Holy Spirit are absolutely true and reliable. **Luke 1**
- 6-13.** The general attitude dominant today is to seek worldly riches rather than eternal rewards. **Luke 6**
- 6-14.** The family of Jesus Christ are those who will spend eternity with Him not blood relations. **Luke 8**
- 6-15.** Christians are not to be proud but to take the place of humility as the Lord himself did. **Luke 9**
- 6-16.** As Christians our daily need is quite small. It is wonderful how simply we can live. **Luke 12**

6-17. The Father sending His Son shows the ultimate payment made to seek and save the Lost **Luke 19**

6-18. In principle if we do not use our opportunities for the Lord they will be taken away from us. **Luke 19**

6-19. The Christian needs to understand that the government is given by God Romans 13. **Luke 20**

6-20. God in His Plan often provides assistance from unusual and unexpected quarters. **Luke 23**

6-21. The stone was rolled away forever. Death had been conquered permanently by our Lord **Luke 24**

6-22. His death and resurrection means our sins are solved and our eternal security is assured. **Luke 24**

6-23. We lead people to meet the Lord through His Word, and God the Holy Spirit wins them. **John 1**

6-24. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has passed permanently from death to life. **John 5**

6-25. God the Son knew He was to be separated from His Father for the first time in eternity. **John 12**

6-26. We can be encouraged by the failure of the disciples showing everybody has limitations. **John 14**

6-27. The Lord says that even if we are in conditions of catastrophe we can still have peace. **John 14**

6-28. Because of our relationship with Christ we are no longer servants but His eternal friends **John 15**

6-29. The world hates believers because they have always hated the Father and the Son **John 15**

6-30. The Lord knows everything and forewarns the disciples accurately of hard times ahead **John 16**

6-31. Godhead unity seen, the Father the Planner, the Son the Executor and Spirit the Revealer **John 16**

6-32. The prayer for believers again shows the caring relation in the Father's Plan for them. **John 17**

- 6-33.** All Christians need to play their part in the progression of the Plan of God towards completion. **John 19**
- 6-34.** The tomb's stone was permanently removed showing that the Lord had conquered death **John 20**
- 6-35.** To ridicule genuine miracles sent by God and be permanently in doubt is a dangerous unbelief. **Acts 2**
- 6-36.** The Father, Son, Holy Spirit and Church is seen co-ordinated here as part of the Eternal Plan. **Acts 2**
- 6-37.** It is not our mighty spiritual status that makes us useful to God, or powerful in His service. **Acts 3**
- 6-38.** The believers have been brought together by God for the coming of the Holy Spirit. **Acts 4**
- 6-39.** As Christians all of us are responsible to the Lord for our obedience to the Holy Spirit **Acts 5**
- 6-40.** Strength and power of a Christian requires applying the Word in the Holy Spirit's filling. **Acts 6**
- 6-41.** When we respond to God as a believer we need to be aware that we are on holy ground **Acts 7**
- 6-42.** Stephen looking into heaven sees Jesus standing by his throne ready to greet the martyr home. **Acts 7**
- 6-43.** As believers we need to ensure to seek to follow the Lord alone, and be like his apostles. **Acts 8**
- 6-44.** The humour of God is seen with Paul wanting to bind people is now visually bound by Him. **Acts 9**
- 6-45.** We need to realise that if there is any genuine healing miracle it is from God and not the healer **Acts 9**
- 6-46.** God opens heaven for Peter, divinely guiding him about the next stage in the Plan of God. **Acts 10**
- 6-47.** We must be sensitive to God's direction as He knows what our role is in the Plan of God. **Acts 10**
- 6-48.** When the door of opportunity opens we need to see it from God's perspective, not our own. **Acts 10**
- 6-49.** The Holy Spirit's direct action shows the Jews that the Gentiles are their equals in the Church **Acts 10**

6-50. We must move beyond traditional prejudices to be fully used by God as Peter had to do. **Acts 11**

6-51. All divine guided ministry has eternal meaning and must be in conformity with the will of God. **Acts 13**

6-52. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. He has fulfilled all the prophecies for the First Advent. **Acts 13**

6-53. Paul again makes the point that resurrection is at the centre of the Old Testament hope. **Acts 13**

6-54. As believers God calls us to undertake specific tasks while we represent Him here. **Acts 13**

6-55. God allowed free will to man but this must be used to be used for salvation by faith. **Acts 14**

6-56. The kingdom of God has for its nobility those who have second birth by grace through faith **Acts 15**

6-57. Church decisions should end confusion and gives the church back its momentum forward. **Acts 15**

6-58. Christians should do all things in such a way so it is seen to be moral and godly. **Acts 16**

6-59. God miraculously opens the prison door to give Paul and Silas the opportunity to evangelise. **Acts 16**

6-60. We have been sanctified or set apart as one of the things done for us at the point of salvation. **Acts 20**

6-61. We can be guided by other Christians showing us what God has chosen for us in ministry. **Acts 21-22**

6-62. God provided a light wind to continue Paul's journey to Malta where His power will be seen. **Acts 27**

6-63. With no casualties from the shipwreck a glimpse of the power and guidance of God is given **Acts 27**

6-64. Believers should be "separated" from all other concerns in this life to serve the Lord alone. **Romans 1**

6-65. Faith expressed in action in the community builds others lives up our service and witness **Romans 1**

6-66. We can celebrate the victory by walking in faith filled with the Holy Spirit living for Jesus. **Romans 4**

6-67. As believers have been made free from sin we now become the servants of righteousness. **Romans 6**

6-68. Marriage in God's sight is permanent while both live and only terminates at death of one. **Romans 7**

6-69. We may desire to do good but our Old Sin Nature only pulls us down to our "lower self". **Romans 7**

6-70. We are convinced that the Fall of Man affected everything in nature as well as humanity. **Romans 8**

6-71. Under maximum pressure we don't know what to pray but the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. **Romans 8**

6-72. Believers are confident that all things work together for good as part of God's Eternal Plan. **Romans 8**

6-73. There is no power that can frustrate the Plan of God for us or separate us from His love. **Romans 8**

6-74. Those who arrogantly decide that their minds are superior to their Creator are doomed. **Romans 9**

6-75. If you set yourself or your nation against the Plan of God expect God's severe judgement! **Romans 13**

6-76. By loving one another the believer fulfils the Law of God. Love is at the heart of the Bible. **Romans 13**

6-77. Do not do something if we cannot do it in full expression of our living faith in Christ Jesus. **Romans 14.**

6-78. All nations will praise His holy name and all will rejoice in their common salvation. **Romans 15**

6-79. Even though Paul couldn't arrive as he personally intended to he arrives finally in Rome **Romans 15**

6-80. Paul praises God that His Plan has been clarified with items kept secret until Paul's time. **Romans 16**

6-81. As Christians we have been set apart eternally by God through our position in Christ. **1 Corinthians 1**

6-82. The work of the Holy Spirit has joined us together permanently in union with Christ. **1 Corinthians 1**

- 6-83.** The Lord is not divided so the church which is His body should also be not divided. **1 Corinthians 1**
- 6-84.** We realise that what God values we cannot in our own strength and wisdom perform. **1 Corinthians 1**
- 6-85.** The great blessing that comes to us is the truth of God that he reveals to us. **1 Corinthians 2**
- 6-86.** Man only believes human view point unless things are revealed by the Holy Spirit. **1 Corinthians 2**
- 6-87.** Our bodies are the dwelling place of God from where God is honoured and glorified. **1 Corinthians 3**
- 6-88.** Believers need to be humble and not judgmental because you feel important. **1 Corinthians 4**
- 6-89.** Churches harbouring sin must deal with it before others are destroyed by it. **1 Corinthians 5**
- 6-90.** Believers are going to judge angels and the world. As judges we must be servants. **1 Corinthians 6**
- 6-91.** Believers who persist in serious sin can find themselves under the “Sin unto Death”. **1 Corinthians 6**
- 6-92.** Believers are to be known by their integrity in sexual matters and support marriage. **1 Corinthians 7**
- 6-93.** If you are a member of the Royal Family of God you do not need to be circumcised. **1 Corinthians 7**
- 6-94.** How careful we as believers have to be about the issue of marriage and remarriage. **1 Corinthians 7**
- 6-95.** We have the freedom to do many things but have responsibilities to stand for ministry. **1 Corinthians 8**
- 6-96.** Believers are to get their priorities right and do the work the Lord has given us to do. **1 Corinthians 9**
- 6-97.** Are we ready to become different in order to reach those who are different to us? **1 Corinthians 9**
- 6-98.** Whatever the testing situation the omnipotent Lord is on the throne, and protects us. **1 Corinthians 10**

6-99. The order given is God, Christ, Man, Woman with the long hair given to the woman. **1 Corinthians 11**

6-100. Believers must realise that we were all unbelievers and any gifts used are from God. **1 Corinthians 12**

6-101. We are not to become proud of our spiritual gifts but use them for the glory of God. **1 Corinthians 13**

6-102. Evangelising of Jews in early days was by being able to speak unlearned languages. **1 Corinthians 14**

6-103. The believers' sure hope is that Christ conquered death and has permanently risen. **1 Corinthians 15**

6-104. For believers the resurrection of Christ proceeds to all resurrections in God's Plan **1 Corinthians 15**

6-105. The believer is human and a living soul but is a new creature by union with Christ. **1 Corinthians 15**

6-106. Death is swallowed up in victory so the believer's work for the Lord is not in vain. **1 Corinthians 15**

6-107. When God opens a door there is great opportunity to minister and with it adversity. **1 Corinthians 16**

6-108. We are not to permanently trust in ourselves but permanently trust in God. **2 Corinthians 1**

6-109. There are permanent results of forgiveness, as well as results of failure to forgive. **2 Corinthians 2**

6-110. God opens doors, sometimes unexpectedly for areas of mission for the believer. **2 Corinthians 2**

6-111. As believers we are living letters about the Lord which can be read and known by all. **2 Corinthians 3**

6-112. Any glory that exists for us is received not from man but given to man by God. **2 Corinthians 3**

6-113. The purpose of every confrontation with our Lord is that we are to be changed by it. **2 Corinthians 3**

6-114. Each person will stand before God responsible for their own state and destiny. **2 Corinthians 4**

6-115. We believed, we acted, we communicated is to be the short summary of our life. **2 Corinthians 4**

- 6-116.** We will be evaluated for what we do as believers and need to be helping others. **2 Corinthians 5**
- 6-117.** Believers at the point of salvation become permanent new creations in Christ. **2 Corinthians 5**
- 6-118.** Believers when given opportunity must be willing to speak openly in a loving way. **2 Corinthians 6**
- 6-119.** Dangerous places are safe if the Lord wants us to be there as He will provide for us **2 Corinthians 7**
- 6-120.** We are comforted in others comfort, encouraged through others encouragement. **2 Corinthians 7**
- 6-121.** Believers should give service and offerings to the Lord God who gave His all for us. **2 Corinthians 8**
- 6-122.** Consistent spirituality is the aim for believers making best use of their time here. **2 Corinthians 10**
- 6-123.** The church incorrectly saw Paul as inferior to the false teachers who visited them. **2 Corinthians 11**
- 6-124.** We are “nothings” in ourselves but are strong channels of God’s grace and power. **2 Corinthians 12**
- 6-125.** Honesty will often be offensive to the rebellious believer, but it is the policy of God! **2 Corinthians 13**
- 6-126.** God’s Plan may call us to serve in a specific area while others serve to elsewhere. **Galatians 2**
- 6-127.** As believers our job now is to live by faith, to live in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit **Galatians 2**
- 6-128.** The Law shows man’s sinfulness and God’s holiness preparing man for the Saviour. **Galatians 3**
- 6-129.** The Galatians are busying themselves in ritual to the detriment of their spiritual life. **Galatians 4**
- 6-130.** Paul approaches with the gospel now worries that they consider him their enemy. **Galatians 4**
- 6-131.** The church has a new position in God’s plan and a different destiny to Israel. **Galatians 5**

6-132. The whole law of God is fulfilled in this “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” **Galatians 5**

6-133. Believers trust in the Lord with permanent results as the Father eternally loved the Lord. **Ephesians 1**

6-134. It isn't some form of “enlightenment” but genuine light coming from the Creator-Saviour. **Ephesians 1**

6-135. Believers are saved permanently by grace through faith, not by works, it is a gift of God. **Ephesians 2**

6-136. All were unbelievers permanently alienated without Christ, without hope of eternal life. **Ephesians 2**

6-137. The Church was always in the mind of God but kept secret through historical ages. **Ephesians 3**

6-138. Believers are to be well rooted and grounded drawing daily nourishment from the Word. **Ephesians 3**

6-139. Unbelievers can kill and destroy without feelings and are even greedy for evil actions. **Ephesians 4**

6-140. Those who continue in evil without regret or conscience are certainly not believers at all. **Ephesians 5**

6-141. Believers should always work in a manner to bring honour and praise to the Lord, **Ephesians 6**

6-142. The permanent fiery darts of the wicked shows constant antagonism by the opposition. **Ephesians 6**

6-143. Confidence in God's blessing towards us will encourage us always our Christian lives. **Philippians 1**

6-144. Let us as believers embrace the Lord's plan for our life, in life and in death. **Philippians 1**

6-145. We are absolutely confident that we are in the Lord's hands through our life on earth. **Philippians 1**

6-146. Our challenge as believers is to be worthy of the Lord and the standards of His Word. **Philippians 2**

6-147. We are not here to wait for God, but to worship and serve the Lord in any way we can. **Philippians 2**

6-148. The things Paul valued highly, but he saw now as of no eternal value whatsoever. **Philippians 1**

6-149. Believers must press toward the prize of their own high calling of God in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 3**

6-150. We are all God's ambassadors and the Lord has responsibility to care for us **Philippians 4**

6-151. As Christians we need to be permanently "grounded and settled in the faith". **Colossians 1**

6-152. God revealed a mystery hidden for previous ages and now seen as the Church Age. **Colossians 1**

6-153. Jesus Christ is in the believer and is over all angelic forces, both elect and fallen. **Colossians 2**

6-154. Believers must ensure that they are not lead away into anything that isn't biblical **Colossians 2**

6-155. Our lives are hid with Christ in God, we are totally dead to sin's power to condemn us. **Colossians 3**

6-156. The believer's eyes are to be upon the Lord for reward and praise, not upon men. **Colossians 3**

6-157. Our speech is to be gracious, and well reasoned so we might reply to anyone. **Colossians 4**

6-158. Believers are to stand, prepared and complete in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Colossians 4**

6-159. The gospel is also to be given with much assurance that links us with eternity. **1 Thessalonians 1**

6-160. The body of the believer contains the soul, the spirit and the Holy Spirit. **1 Thessalonians 4**

6-161. We know that the Rapture and Tribulation will come unexpectedly upon mankind. **1 Thessalonians 5**

6-162. Believers are to know those who have authority in the church and respect them **1 Thessalonians 5**

6-163. When the Holy Spirit goes the Church goes, then the Antichrist will be known. **2 Thessalonians 2**

6-164. Believers are called brethren permanently beloved of the Lord. God chose you. **2 Thessalonians 2**

6-165. It is essential that any ministry is backed by faithful people who persist in prayer **2 Thessalonians 3**

6-166. We are saved by faith in the only one who has ever been totally obedient to God's law. **1 Timothy 1**

6-167. Adam was judged harshly by deliberately disobeying God to join his wife. **1 Timothy 2**

6-168. If he doesn't know how to control his own household he is not ready to lead a church. **1 Timothy 3**

6-169. Church leaders must live up to our high calling so that they are beyond reproach. **1 Timothy 3**

6-170. Any deviation from the doctrines of God will lead us into the doctrines of devils. **1 Timothy 4**

6-171. Believers suffer rejection because they trust in and represent the living God **1 Timothy 4**

6-172. A true "widow" trusts in God alone and practises the faith rest life in daily living. **1 Timothy 5**

6-173. The elders or leaders of the Church must permanently rule the Church well. **1 Timothy 5**

6-174. Proud false teachers have permanently corrupted minds and are destitute of the truth. **1 Timothy 6**

6-175. The right use of the believer's wealth is a foundation for eternal rewards. **1 Timothy 6**

6-176. Believers have a faith that is rooted and grounded in eternity and have a destiny there. **2 Timothy 1**

6-177. Believers draw strength from the power of God that upholds them through trials. **2 Timothy 1**

6-178. The Empty Tomb and Resurrection are the visible evidence of the success of God's Plan **2 Timothy 2**

6-179. Believers are to focus on Holy Spirit empowered spiritual growth and purity of life. **2 Timothy 2**

6-180. The coming apostasy comprises permanently proud, arrogant self seeking sinful people. **2 Timothy 3**

6-181. Believers have what they need if we know and apply the doctrines of the Word of God. **2 Timothy 3**

6-182. Our service must have the discipline of the soldier, the athlete and the priest, **2 Timothy 4**

- 6-183.** The unbeliever is permanently defiled in mind and conscience and does not know God. **Titus 1**
- 6-184.** The older women of the church are never to be passive drinkers enslaved to alcohol. **Titus 2**
- 6-185.** Believers must remember that good works filled by the Holy Spirit are not an optional extra **Titus 3**
- 6-186.** It is a wonderful either to permanently refresh a group or to be refreshed by Christians. **Philemon**
- 6-187.** It is encouraging to have total confidence that a Christian will act in a gracious manner **Philemon**
- 6-188.** To fall short of the standard of faith is to fall short of equal partnership in blessing. **Hebrews 3**
- 6-189.** Unless the Word is applied and is then seen to work out, we will not grow in confidence. **Hebrews 4**
- 6-190.** Our great High Priest, Lord Jesus Christ as a human has passed into the heavens. **Hebrews 4**
- 6-191.** Jesus Christ the Son of God was born to become the Royal High Priest to minister for us. **Hebrews 5**
- 6-192.** It is a dangerous thing for a person, who is left on earth to do a task, not to do it. **Hebrews 5**
- 6-193.** Even if we waste the time the Lord has given us we are still His and He loves us. **Hebrews 6**
- 6-194.** Christ's priesthood is forever while Levitical Priests had limited tenure due to death. **Hebrews 7**
- 6-195.** A "true" heart is a consistent attitude, a dependable nature and character. **Hebrews 10**
- 6-196.** Through the Holy Spirit we strengthen ourselves to obey the commands of scripture. **Hebrews 12**
- 6-197.** Believers are to stir up love so that it is practised amongst the people of God. **Hebrews 13**
- 6-198.** The timing of the life and death of believers are the Lord's prerogative. **Hebrews 13**

- 6-199.** Believers need to apply the Word of God to ensure that they do not suffer from instability. **James 1**
- 6-200.** Believers are to be those who translate from being a hearer into being a doer of the Word. **James 1**
- 6-201.** We can often err in our understanding of sin with sin showing a heart away from God's will. **James 2.**
- 6-202.** Christians must be careful of seeking status in the Lord's service unless it is your gifting. **James 3**
- 6-203.** Sinful behaviours and lack of faith is adultery with the Old Sin Nature and the Devil's world. **James 4**
- 6-204.** Sin is missing the mark and God's standard for us is to serve him with an absolute focus. **James 4**
- 6-205.** We should respond to the concept that the Lord is ready to return and waiting at the door. **James 5**
- 6-206.** Believers should ensure that what we pray is in accord with his will and for his glory **James 5**
- 6-207.** Believers permanently purify their souls by trusting in Christ thereby being born again. **1 Peter 1**
- 6-208.** Unbelievers are judged because of their rejection of the Lord with eternal results **1 Peter 2**
- 6-209.** We need to recall what we have been saved from, and where we are going in our life **1 Peter 4**
- 6-210.** Suffering is "normal", and so is the praise of God from the midst of the fiery trial. **1 Peter 5**
- 6-211.** We have the power we need to deal with whatever is thrown at us by the world **2 Peter 1**
- 6-212.** We need to have prepared the brethren as we reach the final leg of our journey on earth. **2 Peter 1**
- 6-213.** There is no escape from a Holy God; His judgements have been demonstrated as absolute. **2 Peter 2**
- 6-214.** Believers choose their company; the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, or living with the world **2 Peter 2**
- 6-215.** Have we as believers moved away from the clearly biblical concepts of creator and judge? **2 Peter 3**

6-216. Our destiny in Christ is eternal. Our eternal life began at the point of salvation. **1 John 1**

6-217. God is light and believers are to be in the daily habit of walking in the light. **1 John 1**

6-218. Our sins have been permanently forgiven so we are meant to grow up in the spiritual realm. **1 John 2**

6-219. Knowing Jesus is righteous we know that everyone that is righteous is born of Him. **1 John 2**

6-220. Believer, if you have a holy horror of sin, then rejoice in the work of the Spirit within you. **1 John 3**

6-221. We know we have passed from death to life if we have loving concern for fellow Christians. **1 John 3**

6-222. Believers are permanently overcomers through Christ and need to be astute in their walk. **1 John 4**

6-223. Love will drive away doubt and fear, or doubts and fears will drive away peace of mind. **1 John 4**

6-224. God's plan is perfect, His love towards us is total and stable and our future is secure. **1 John 5**

6-225. The Lord intends believers to rest securely in the truth of the incarnation and all it led to. **1 John 5**

6-226. Life that is able to be enjoyed is only as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. **1 John 5**

6-227. Believers need clear channels of blessing down which God can pour his love to others. **2 John**

6-228. Believers are sanctified by the Father, called by the Spirit and safely held by the Son **Jude**

6-229. Believers are fooled many times by apostates in the church **Jude**

6-230. God provided His Perfect Word so that humanity can understand Him and His Plan. **Revelation 1**

6-231. Jesus Christ is the centre of the Plan and purposes of God from eternity past. **Revelation 1**

6-232. Believers need to guard against false practice by comparing it to the Scriptures. **Revelation 2**

6-233. Believers should adopt the attitude of trusting in the Lord and in everything give thanks. **Revelation 2**

6-234. Believers are provided as a new creation with spiritual provision and a new identity. **Revelation 2**

6-235. The Lord is coming back for his genuine people at the Rapture and Second Advent. **Revelation 2**

6-236. The challenge for the believer is to walk in the Spirit, and serve in the Spirit's power. **Revelation 3**

6-237. Believers get opportunities where they work in His strength and under His direction. **Revelation 3**

6-238. Backslidden believers reject passionate faith and feels settled in their mediocrity. **Revelation 3**

6-239. When we get to heaven we will have a resurrection body and lose our old sinful nature. **Revelation 4**

6-240. We will be truly blessed to attend the supper, as only believers will attend it. **Revelation 19**

6-241. We see Jesus Christ personally destroy his enemies to set up His kingdom on earth. **Revelation 19**

**Let us be apostolic – not pathetic – in our brief walk through Space-time towards eternity with our Lord – our sole desire – to hear his praise.
Amen**

Combined Volume Prepared for the Prison Ministry

In the midst of the “storms of life” – with me experiencing all the pain and discomfort post-operative after my hip surgery – debilitated and unable to do anything at home, but then also facing more flooding and near catastrophic fire at our home in this same time frame – the fire saved by our Christian Electricians with an hour or two before the entire house was lost. Pressures to the maximum – yet in the Lord’s Arms all the way and kept.

God’s testimony in the midst of a massive electrical storm as I note this – these books are clearly needed. I am standing in the “Angelic Conflict” and simply need to be obedient, submissive, and faithful to the Lord’s demands of my life – firstly to be fruitful and thankful as I advance through the stressors.

The greater the pressure we face, the greater the work to be done, and the more dependant we are to be upon the power the Lord gives in dark places.

Let the light of the Word shine into every corner, banish fear and doubt and show you and others the path to walk towards our meeting with the Lord in the air at His Second Advent, or in heaven itself, if death ends our earthly pilgrimage and the Lord himself greets us before His Second Advent.

Praise God for His goodness and greatness.

Dr John C McEwan

Dean EBCWA

“The Ends of the Earth”. 22 October 2024