



A Great While Before Day

VOLUME XIII

PART TWO:
July 1–December 31

A New Devotional from
DON & PEARL ANDERSON

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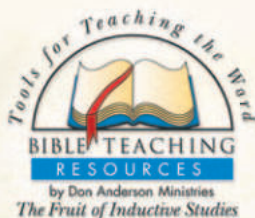
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Bible Teaching Resources

P.O. Box 6611

Tyler, TX 75711-6611

903.939.1201

Toll free: 1.877.326.7729

www.BibleTeachingResources.org

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A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

Volume XIII (July-December)
Daily Devotional

by Don and Pearl Anderson

P.O. Box 6611
Tyler, Texas 75711-6611
(903) 939-1201 or
Toll-free 1-877-326-7729

Website: www.BibleTeachingResources.org

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Bible Teaching Resources

by Don Anderson Ministries

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A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

The gospel writer Mark records that Jesus “rising up a great while before day... went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” (1:35 KJV) Whenever and wherever you spend your time with the Father each day, we hope that these devotional verses and thoughts will be encouraging. Unless otherwise noted, New Testament verses are taken from Don Anderson’s translations from the original text.

Our devotions will pick up where we left off in 2013. We will continue with 1 Peter.

JULY

July 1 — Won Without a Word (1 Peter 3:2)

1 Peter 3:2: “*Having observed your pure manner of life with a reverential fear.*”

Verse 2: “Having observed your pure manner of life with a reverential fear.”

Here, Peter is telling us that the disbelieving husband is won without a word by observing the “pure manner of life with a reverential fear.”

He has already spoken of our “manner of life” in chapter 2, verse 12 where he says: “Having your manner of life among the Gentiles beautiful in its goodness, in order that in case they are speaking against you as those who are doing evil, as a result of your good deeds, which they are watching, they may glorify God on the day of visitation.”

In verse 15 of chapter 2, he also says, “For it is the will of God that by doing good you might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

Whereas, in chapter 2, Peter is talking about our witness to the unsaved in general, now in chapter 3, he is speaking more specific of a Christian wife to an unsaved husband.

Barkley has a beautiful comment on the wife’s responsibility:

He tells her something very simple. He tells her nothing else than to be a good wife, by the silent preaching of the loveliness of her life she must break down the barriers of prejudice, hostility and win her husband for her new master.

Gary Thomas, in his book, *Sacred Influence: What a Man Needs from His Wife to be the Husband She Wants*, says:

You may not have realized this, but husbands like to brag

about their wives. They may not say it to you, but they notice your strengths and take pride in them. But far more important than your business savvy or social skills is your spiritual core. This is what will give you the strength and respect that are so necessary for being a godly change agent in your marriage.

As I face the new day, I accept the challenge of asking the Lord to produce His life in me. Three questions we need to answer:

1. Am I meeting with the Lord on a daily basis?
2. Am I sensitive to that still small voice?
3. Am I asking the Spirit to produce His fruit in me?

I cannot think of a better hymn for us to express our worship and praise of the Lord this morning than that great hymn, **“He Is So Precious to Me.”** Let’s sing verse 1 together: *“So precious is Jesus, my Saviour, my King; His praise all the day long with rapture I sing; To Him in my weakness for strength I can cling, For He is so precious to me. For He is so precious, so precious to me; For He is so precious, so precious to me. ‘Tis Heaven below, my Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me.”*

July 2 — Focus on Fashions (1 Peter 3:3)

1 Peter 3:3: “Let your adornment not be the outward adorning with braiding the hair and wearing gold ornaments or putting on clothes.”

Verse 3: “Let your adornment not be the outward adorning with braiding the hair and wearing gold ornaments or putting on clothes.”

Peter is not speaking against the matter of outward adorning, but the comparative value of the two. The most important is the hidden person of the heart which we will see in verse 4.

This verse is just pointing out the negative side of the admonition. In verse 4, we will see the positive.

There are three things which the woman can spend much time and money on which are not really top priorities, if a choice has to be made. These three things are (1) the braiding of the hair, (2) the wearing of gold ornaments, and (3) putting on clothing – *Hair, Jewelry and Clothes*.

Peter is not saying it is wrong to (1) braid the hair, or (2) to wear jewelry, or (3) to put on nice clothing, but those are only material things. The most important matter is seen in verse 4.

Let’s continue our worship and praise of our precious Lord by singing verse 2 of **“He Is So Precious to Me”**: *“He stood at my heart’s door ‘mid sunshine and rain, And patiently waited an entrance to gain; What shame that so long He entreated in vain, For He is so precious to me. For*

He is so precious, so precious to me; For He is so precious, so precious to me. 'Tis Heaven below, my Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me."

July 3 — Inner Beauty (1 Peter 3:4)

1 Peter 3:4: *"But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God very costly."*

Verse 4: "But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God very costly."

The word "but" forms the contrast. Now we get the positive statement. Whereas it is not to be the outward adorning, it is to be the hidden person of the heart which is to be adorned because this is true beauty.

This adornment of the heart is to be "with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit."

Peter mentions "the gentle and quiet spirit" which are likewise characteristics of the Lord Jesus himself, described in the latter part of chapter 2, verse 23: "When he was being reviled, He was not reviling in return; and who while suffering, was not threatening, but was committing Himself to the One who is judging righteously."

James certainly agrees with Peter in James 1:19-20: "This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

Further, Peter tells us this imperishable quality of "a gentle and quiet spirit" "is in the sight of God very costly."

Back in chapter 2, verse 20, we read, "But if when you are doing good and suffering for it and this you are enduring, this is commendable in the sight of God." Peter is telling us the wife's responsibility in marriage is to cultivate the hidden person of the heart, manifesting "a gentle and quiet spirit" rather than being overly concerned about the outward adornment. It is this inner quality of life produced by the Spirit of God that is going to make it possible for an unbelieving husband to be won to the Savior.

This morning, let's continue our worship and praise by singing together verse 3 of **"He Is So Precious to Me"**: *"I stand on the mountain of blessing at last, No cloud in the heavens a shadow to cast; His smile is upon me; the valley is past, For He is so precious to me."*

For He is so precious, so precious to me; For He is so precious, so precious to me. 'Tis Heaven below, my Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me."

July 4 — Sarah & Subjection (1 Peter 3:5-6)

1 Peter 3:5: *"For thus formerly also the holy women, the ones who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, putting themselves in subjection to their own husbands."*

1 Peter 3:6: *"As Sarah used to obey Abraham, calling him lord, whose children you become if you are doing good and not fearing any terror."*

Verse 5: "For thus formerly also the holy women, the ones who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, putting themselves in subjection to their own husbands."

In verse 5, Peter gives a reason for this previous admonition by using an illustration from the women of the Old Testament. There are three things said about these women:

1. First of all, they were holy women "who hoped in God."
2. Secondly, they adorned themselves with the inner adorning of the hidden person with "a gentle and quiet spirit."
3. Thirdly, they were "putting themselves in subjection to their own husbands."

Verse 6: "As Sarah used to obey Abraham, calling him lord, whose children you become if you are doing good and not fearing any terror."

Now, Peter makes the illustration more specific by citing Sarah as one who used to obey Abraham. In other words, she put herself in subjection of his leadership, calling him lord.

Then, he applies this illustration to the New Testament by saying, "whose children you become if," positively, "you are doing good," and negatively, "you are not fearing any terror."

What Peter says is that "doing good" and "not fearing any terror" are just manifestations of the fact that you've been born again by living the Word of God. If this is the case, your life will bear fruit to this end. You will not be "fearing any terror" because God's judgment for your sin has already been poured on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Song of Solomon 8:6-7 (NLT): "Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, its jealousy as enduring as the grave. Love flashes like fire, the brightest kind of flame. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can rivers drown

it. If a man tried to buy love with all his wealth, his offer would be utterly scorned.”

Because of His unconditional love for us, the Lord Jesus is in the process of preparing a special place for us when our journey on this earth is finished. Please join me in singing verse 4 of **“He Is So Precious to Me”**: *“I praise Him because He appointed a place Where, some day, thro’ faith in His wonderful grace, I know I shall see Him, shall look on His face, For He is so precious to me. For He is so precious, so precious to me; For He is so precious, so precious to me. ‘Tis Heaven below, my Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me.”*

July 5 — Wow! What a Woman (1 Peter 3:7)

1 Peter 3:7: *“Husbands, in like manner, be living with your wives according to knowledge, showing honor unto the woman as the weaker vessel (sex); as to those who are also joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered.”*

Verse 7: “Husbands, in like manner, be living with your wives according to knowledge, showing honor unto the woman as the weaker vessel (sex); as to those who are also joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered.”

Paul in Ephesians chapter 5 tells the husbands to “love their wives as Christ loves the church.” He also says their love for their wives should equal their love for themselves.

Peter now turns to the husband’s responsibility in marriage. There are two things he wants to say to them:

1. “Be living with your wives according to knowledge.”
2. “Showing honor unto the woman as the weaker vessel, as to those who are also joint heirs of the grace of life.”

The purpose behind these two admonitions is seen in the last phrase of the verse, “in order that your prayers may not be hindered.”

First of all, Peter says: “Be living with your wives according to knowledge.” A woman feels loved when she is understood. Seriously, Peter is admonishing the husbands to “be living with their wives according to the knowledge” that the woman’s needs are different from his own. Time must be taken to be (1) considerate, (2) to communicate, (3) to be concerned, and (4) to be careful, to be sensitive to the needs of his wife.

This, then, would be fulfilling the admonition to “be living with your wives according to knowledge.” Every day the two of you live together should be a time of gaining new knowledge of the needs of

your wife.

The second admonition is “showing honor unto the woman as the weaker vessel; as to those who are also joint heirs of the grace of life. Both the husband and the wife are vessels in the household of God. One is stronger than the other, but both belong to Him.

This is another part of Peter’s development that he has learned to live with and care for a woman.

Gary Thomas in his book, *Sacred Marriage*, says:

The difficulty with honoring our spouse is that it calls us to adopt attitudes and actions that go far beyond merely saying that we won’t dishonor him or her. As Betsy and Gary Ricucci point out, “Honor isn’t passive, it’s active. We honor our wives by demonstrating our esteem and respect: complimenting them in public; affirming their gifts, abilities and accomplishments; and declaring our appreciation for all they do. Honor not expressed is not honor.”

Peter goes on to say, “As to those who are also joint heirs of the grace of life.” Paul in Romans 8:17 says, “And if children, also heirs; on the one hand heirs of God, on the other fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed, we are suffering with Him in order that we may also be glorified together.”

In this passage, Peter makes it clear the husbands and wives who know him are “joint heirs of the grace of life.” Whereas in this life the woman is the weaker vessel, the future for both of them in eternity is they are “joint heirs of the grace of life.”

Stedman says:

“This means that a husband must recognize his wife’s right to share every part of his thinking, of his whole life. All the barriers must come down between them.”

The purpose given for these previous admonitions is “in order that your prayers may not be hindered.

Barclay says:

Finally, unless a man realizes and fulfills these obligations, there is a barrier between his prayers and God. As Bigg puts it, “The sighs of the injured wife come between the husbands prayers and God’s hearing.”

Here is a great truth. Our relationships with God can never be right when our relationships with our fellow men are wrong. It is when we are one with each other that we are also one with God.

Peter thus tells us husbands are to fulfill their responsibilities “in order that their prayers will not be hindered.”

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning with that wonderful hymn, **"O To Be Like Thee."** Let's sing together verses 1 and 2: *"O to be like Thee! Blessed Redeemer; This is my constant longing and prayer; Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures, Jesus Thy perfect likeness to wear. O to be like Thee! Full of compassion, Loving, forgiving, tender and kind; Helping the helpless, cheering the fainting; Seeking the wand'ring sinner to find. O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art; Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness; Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart."*

July 6 — A Beautiful Life (1 Peter 3:8)

1 Peter 3:8: *"Finally, all of you be united in spirit, sympathetic, loving the brethren, tenderhearted, humble-minded;"*

Verse 8: "Finally, all of you be united in spirit, sympathetic, loving the brethren, tenderhearted, humble-minded;"

Peter's admonition is not limited to any particular group, but it will be a universal admonition to all of you.

The first ingredient of a beautiful life is seen in the words "be united in spirit." This in essence is the prayer of the Lord Jesus in John 17: "That they may be one even as we are one."

Psalm 133:1: "Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity."

In Ephesians 4, Paul says: "As God's prisoner, I beg you to live lives worthy of your high calling. Accept life with humility and patience making allowances for others because you love each other."

The second ingredient of a beautiful life is seen in the word "sympathetic." It is that quality or characteristic in life whereby we are able to feel with others in their suffering.

The third ingredient of the beautiful life is seen in the words "loving the brethren." Jesus, in John 13:34-35, says, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love, one for another."

The fourth ingredient of the beautiful life is seen in the phrase "tenderhearted," or it could be translated *"to feel compassion."* We have become so hard of heart and selfish in our day it's difficult to experience pity and sensitivity toward the needs of others.

Barclay points out:

Pity is of the very essences of God, compassion is of the very being of Jesus Christ, pity so great that God sent His only Son to die for men, a compassion so intense that it took Christ to the

Cross.

The fifth ingredient of the beautiful life is seen in the words “humble-minded.” Peter will have more to say on this subject of humility in chapter 5. It is only as we are humbled before God that we are in a position to receive the blessings of the beautiful life which He has designed for us.

The five ingredients we have noted thus far can only be explained in terms of the work of the Spirit. Unity, sympathy, love, compassion and humility do not come natural to man. Whereas division, selfishness, hatred, hard-heartedness and pride are the fruits of the flesh.

May God grant that we might be controlled by the Spirit expressing unity, sympathy, love, compassion and humility as we live our lives as members of the body of Christ.

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of **“O To Be Like Thee”**: *“O to be like Thee! Lowly in spirit, Holy and harmless, patient and brave; Meekly enduring cruel reproaches, Willing to suffer others to save. O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art; Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness; Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.”*

July 7 — The Choice is Yours (1 Peter 3:9)

1 Peter 3:9: *“Not giving back evil for evil, or verbal abuse for verbal abuse, but on the other hand, be blessing; because to this you have been called in order that you might inherit a blessing.”*

Verse 9: “Not giving back evil for evil, or verbal abuse for verbal abuse, but on the other hand, be blessing; because to this you have been called in order that you might inherit a blessing.”

The sixth ingredient in a beautiful life is seen in the statement, “not giving back evil for evil.” How quick we are to retaliate! Paul in Romans 12:17 says, “Do not be paying back evil for evil to anyone, taking into consideration what is right in the sight of all men.”

Conflict comes when our rights are being stepped on, when we start using people.

Remember it was Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane who hacked off a guy's ear.

Peter says of the Lord in 2:23: “And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”

The seventh ingredient of a beautiful life is “not giving back verbal abuse for verbal abuse.” James points out we commit many sins in 3:2: “If anyone does not stumble in words, this one is a fully developed man able to hold in check also his entire body.”

The eighth ingredient forms a contrast. Whereas the negative has been spoken in “not giving back evil for evil” or “verbal abuse for verbal abuse,” we now see the positive with the eighth ingredient: “blessing, because of this you have been called in order that you might inherit a blessing.”

Once again, we see this little word, “called.” Chapter 1:15: We have been called to be holy. In chapter 2:9: we have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light. In chapter 2:21: we have been called to suffer because Christ also suffered for us leaving us a model in order that we might follow in His footprints. Now in 3:9: we are called to be a blessing in the face of evil and verbal abuse.

Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:11-12 (NLT): “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.”

Join me in worship this morning as we sing together verse 4 of “**O To Be Like Thee**”: *“O to be like Thee! Lord, I am coming Now to receive th’ anointing divine; All that I am and have I am bringing, Lord, from this moment all shall be Thine. O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art; Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness; Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.”*

July 8 — Be Careful of the Words You Speak (1 Peter 3:10)

1 Peter 3:10: “*For, ‘he who is desiring to love life and to see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.’”*

Verse 10: “For, ‘he who is desiring to love life and to see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.’”

Here, Peter gives the reason for the previous admonitions, “he who is desiring to love life and to see good days” will follow the previous admonitions as well as those that are to follow. This section shows the picture of the life of Jesus Christ as we allow the Savior to come into our lives and live his life through us. Then, life will truly be beautiful.

The ninth ingredient of the beautiful life is given: “let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.” Ephesians 4:25: “Finish then with lying and tell your neighbor the truth. For we are

not separate units, but intimately related to each other in Christ.” 4:29: “Let there be no more foul language, but good words instead, words suitable for the occasion which God can use to help other people.”

This ingredient is a quotation from Psalm 34:13: “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.”

This morning, let’s make our prayer that of David in Psalm 19:14: “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your Sight, O Lord, my Rock and Redeemer.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 5 of “**O To Be Like Thee**”: *“O to be like Thee! While I am pleading, Pour out your Spirit, fill with Thy love; Make me a temple meet for Thy dwelling, Fit me for life and heaven above. O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art; Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness; Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.”*

July 9 — 3-Point Pattern for the Beautiful Life (1 Peter 3:11)

1 Peter 3:11: “*But let him turn away from evil and let him do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.*”

Verse 11: “But let him turn away from evil and let him do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.”

The tenth ingredient of the beautiful life is “let him turn away from evil and let him do good.”

1 Timothy 6:11-12: “But thou man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life whereunto thou art also called and hath professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

The eleventh ingredient of a beautiful life is seen in the last statement of verse 11: “let him seek peace and pursue it.”

John 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.”

In summary of verse 11, the 3-point pattern for life could be:

1. Turn away from evil.
2. Do good.
3. Seek peace and pursue it.

I find myself worshipping the Lord this morning with one of my very favorite hymns, “**My Wonderful Lord.**” Please join me in praise as we sing verse 1: *“I have found a deep peace that I never had known And a joy this world could not afford Since I yielded control of my body and soul To my wonderful, wonderful Lord. My wonderful Lord, my wonderful*

Lord, By angels and seraphs in Heaven adored! I bow at Thy shrine, my Saviour divine My wonderful, wonderful Lord."

July 10 — God is Looking & Listening (1 Peter 3:12)

1 Peter 3:12: "Because the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their petitions, but the face of the Lord is against those who are practicing evil."

Verse 12: "Because the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their petitions, but the face of the Lord is against those who are practicing evil."

This is the reason for all of the previous admonitions: "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open unto their petitions."

First, we learn "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous." 2 Chronicles 16:9: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."

Secondly, we learn "His ears are open unto their petitions." John 16:24: "Hitherto have you asked nothing in My name. Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full."

Jeremiah 33:3: "Call unto Me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which though knowest not."

In this passage, we have learned it is possible for our prayers to be hindered back in verse 7. Now we have the promise that "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open unto their petitions."

Once again we have the contrast in the middle of the passage: "but the face of the Lord is against those who are practicing evil." Whereas "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous" to protect them and "His ears are open unto their prayers," His face is "against those who are practicing evil." Psalm 1:6: "For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."

May our testimony be that of David in Psalm 5:3: "In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation." What a joy to see His response in Psalm 6:9: "The Lord has heard my cry for mercy; the Lord accepts my prayer."

Let's worship and praise the Lord with great enthusiasm and expectancy as we sing verse 2 of "**My Wonderful Lord**": "*I desire that my life shall be ordered by Thee, That my will be in perfect accord With Thine own sov'reign will, Thy desires to fulfill, My wonderful,*

wonderful Lord. My wonderful Lord, my wonderful Lord, By angels and seraphs in Heaven adored! I bow at Thy shrine, my Saviour divine My wonderful, wonderful Lord.”

July 11 — The Power of Life & Lip (1 Peter 3:13-14)

1 Peter 3:13: “And who is he that will do you harm if you become zealous of the good?”

1 Peter 3:14: “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you will be blessed; have no fear of them, nor be troubled.”

Verse 13: “And who is he that will do you harm if you become zealous of the good?”

After outlining the ingredients of the beautiful life, Peter raises a question. In view of the life he has described in the previous verses: Who is the person that will “do you harm if you become zealous” in striving for unity, being sympathetic, loving brethren, tenderhearted, humble-minded, not giving evil for evil or verbal abuse for verbal abuse? Who will do you harm if you instead are a blessing, you are keeping your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit, you’re turning away from evil and doing good, and you are seeking and pursuing peace? It is pretty difficult to want to hurt someone like this.

1 Thessalonians 2:10: “You are witnesses, and [so is] God, as to how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we proved ourselves among you who are believing.”

Verse 14: “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you will be blessed; have no fear of them, nor be troubled.”

Peter gives the promise “even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you will be blessed.” Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:10: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

There is a two-fold command if while you are being “zealous for good,” you should suffer for righteousness: (1) “have no fear of them” (2) “nor be troubled.”

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord that He knows what is best for us. Join me in singing verse 3 of “**My Wonderful Lord**”: “All the talents I have, I have laid at Thy Feet; Thy approval shall be my reward. Be my store great or small, I surrender it all To my wonderful, wonderful Lord. My wonderful Lord, my wonderful Lord, By angels and seraphs in Heaven adored! I bow at Thy shrine, my Saviour divine My wonderful, wonderful Lord.”

July 12 — Be Prepared (1 Peter 3:15)

1 Peter 3:15: *“But set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you, but doing this with gentleness and reverence.”*

Verse 15: “But set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you, but doing this with gentleness and reverence.”

Peter says “Have no fear of them nor be troubled,” but “set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you.”

I am certain he is commanding these dear saints to do what he failed to do at the critical hour of the Savior’s crucifixion. Who can number the hours of agony and pain for his failure and fear, when he had the opportunity to openly identify himself and to make a defense?

The verse continues, “always being those who are prepared to make a defense to everyone who is asking you for a reason concerning the hope that is in you.”

The Christian witness is one who always needs to be prepared for when the opportunity comes to make a defense to everyone who is asking for a reason concerning the hope in you. This hope which is in us has been something Peter spoke about in 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

However, this defense should be made “with gentleness and reverence.”

First, with gentleness, secondly with reverence. The wives were admonished in the first part of this chapter to be witnessing without a word by their behavior, and that the hidden person of the heart of the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit in the sight of God was very costly.

Self-assertion, argument and dogmatic force have no place in the Scriptural definition of a witness.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:14: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.” Then in 5:16: “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

I find myself already worshipping and praising the Lord this

morning. Let's sing verse 1 of **"Channels Only"** : *"How I praise Thee, precious Savior; That Thy love laid hold of me; Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me That I might Thy channel be. Channels only, blessed Master; But with all Thy wondrous pow'r Flowing thro' us, Thou canst use us Ev'ry day and ev'ry hour."*

July 13 — A Fruitful Witness (1 Peter 3:16)

1 Peter 3:16: *"Keeping a clear conscience so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting (reviling) your good behavior in Christ."*

Verse 16: "Keeping a clear conscience so that in case you are being spoken against, they may be put to shame those who are insulting (reviling) your good behavior in Christ."

Gentleness, reverence and a clear conscience are the three things that are going to make for a most effective witness. I can't have a ministry in someone else's life if my own conscience is not clear.

In Acts 24:16, Paul says: "And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offenses toward God and toward men."

The reason for keeping a clear conscience is so that if you are being spoken against, those who are insulting or reviling your good behavior may be put to shame.

Gary Chapman in *The Five Love Languages* says of love:

We are talking about love, and love is something you do for someone else, not something you do for yourself. Most of us do many things each day that do not come "naturally" for us. For some of us, that is getting out of bed in the morning. We go against our feelings and get out of bed. Why? Because we believe there is something worthwhile to do that day. And normally, before the day is over, we feel good about having gotten up. Our actions preceded our emotions.

The hymn verse this morning is a fitting preparation for an effective witness. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing this verse I love, verse 2 of **"Channels Only"** : *"Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, A clean vessel in Thy hand; With no pow'r but as Thou givest Graciously with each command. Channels only, blessed Master; But with all Thy wondrous pow'r Flowing thro' us, Thou canst use us Ev'ry day and ev'ry hour."*

July 14 — Suffering for Doing Good (1 Peter 3:17)

1 Peter 3:17: *"For it is better to be suffering when doing good, if*

it should be the will of God, than when doing wrong.”

Verse 17: “For it is better to be suffering when doing good, if it should be the will of God, than when doing wrong.”

In this verse, Peter gives the reason for the commands in verses 15 and 16, “it is better to be suffering when doing good, if it should be the will of God.” This is a statement of principle from the pen of Peter.

We have already noted the phrase “the will of God” in 2:15: “For so it is the will of God that by doing good you might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” Then in 2:20: “For what credit is it if when you are sinning, and if you are enduring being beaten, but if when you are doing good and suffering for it and this you are enduring, this is commendable in the sight of God.”

Lange says:

“It is infinitely better to suffer once with Christ, than to suffer eternally without Christ.”

I am so amazed at the way the Spirit of God puts certain hymns upon my heart, and I am very aware of His presence this morning as we continue singing “**Channels Only**.” You will see what I mean as we sing together verse 3 of “**Channels Only**”: *“Witnessing Thy pow’r to save me, Setting free from self and sin; Thou who boughtest to possess me, In Thy fullness, Lord come in. Channels only, blessèd Master; But with all Thy wondrous pow’r Flowing thro’ us, Thou canst use us Ev’ry day and ev’ry hour.”*

July 15 — No Price Was Too Great (1 Peter 3:18)

1 Peter 3:18: *“Because Christ also died once for all for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”*

Verse 18: “Because Christ also died once for all for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”

In speaking on this particular verse, Ross says:

It is one of the shortest and simplest and yet one of the richest summaries given in the New Testament of the meaning of the cross of Jesus. He also links the thought with the message of the preceding about the brave souls who with a good conscience suffer for righteousness sake. Their Lord stands beside them. He also suffered with a good conscience for a high cause. Let this example help them to endure.

“Being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.” This

phrase must have been a great comfort to those who were suffering and not knowing for certain when they would be giving their lives up for the cause of Christ. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, points out that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. To the Philippians, he said he would much rather depart and be with Christ which is far better. Life, to him, was Christ, and to die would be a gain.

Spurgeon says:

“Now, remember, you will never know the fulness of Christ until you know the emptiness of everything else but Christ.”

Remember what Peter said back in 1:19 “but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish and without spot” He paid for you.

It is so appropriate that we continue to worship and praise the Lord by singing verse 4 of **“Channels Only.”** This praise includes a prayer to the Lord Jesus Himself. Let’s sing together: *“Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit Hearts that full surrender know; That the streams of living water From our inner self may flow. Channels only, blessed Master, But with all Thy wondrous pow’r Flowing thro’ us, Thou canst use us Ev’ry day and ev’ry hour.”*

July 16 — Weighed & Found Wanting (1 Peter 3:19-20)

1 Peter 3:19: *“In which also having proceeded he preached to the spirits in prison.”*

1 Peter 3:20: *“Who formerly did not obey, when God’s patience was waiting in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by means of water.”*

Verse 19: “In which also having proceeded he preached to the spirits in prison.”

“In which” refers back to the spirit of verse 18. In the spirit “also having proceeded, he preached to the spirits in prison.”

We learned back in 1:11 it was the Spirit of Christ who was in the prophets making clear when he was testifying beforehand concerning the sufferings of Christ, and the glories along with them.

In 2 Peter 2:4-6 (NET) we read: “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but threw them into hell and locked them up in chains in utter darkness, to be kept until the judgment, and if he did not spare the ancient world, but did protect Noah, a herald of righteousness, along with seven others, when God brought a flood on an ungodly world, and if he turned to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when he condemned them to destruction, having appointed

them to serve as an example to future generations of the ungodly.”

From this, I take that there are consequences to choices. Weighed in the balances and found wanting. The Lord said it, He did it and now He’s celebrating the victory.

Verse 20: “Who formerly did not obey, when God’s patience was waiting in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by means of water.”

These “spirits in prison” are identified as those that “did not obey, when God’s patience was waiting in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark.”

The people had a witness before them as Noah was busily engaged in building the ark. Yet, only a few, eight souls – Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives – “were brought safely through by means of water.”

I am sure this was a great comfort to these saints. It was a reminder to not be discouraged by the few of their number and the hatred of the world. They found salvation in Jesus Christ, dead and risen again, which the rest missed by their own willful refusal. Peter clearly emphasizes this very point in the following chapter.

As the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets testifying beforehand of the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow, so the Spirit of Christ preached through Noah.

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord, celebrating our salvation, by singing verses 1 and 2 of that wonderful hymn, “**At Calvary**”: *“Years I spent in vanity and pride, Caring not my Lord was crucified, Knowing not it was for me He died On Calvary. By God’s Word at last my sin I learned, Then I trembled at the law I’d spurned, Till my guilty soul imploring turned To Calvary. Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary.”*

July 17 — Baptized in Christ (1 Peter 3:21)

1 Peter 3:21: “Baptism, which also corresponds to this, is now saving you--not a removing of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Verse 21: “Baptism, which also corresponds to this, is now saving you--not a removing of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

The baptism Peter references in this verse is the baptism of the Holy

Spirit into the church, the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

The baptism of the Spirit is a non-experiential act whereby God declares the sinner righteous on the single basis of faith:

1. Taken out of Adam and baptized into Christ.
2. Taken out of the world and baptized into the church, the body of Christ.
3. Taken out of Satan's kingdom and baptized into Christ's kingdom.
4. Taken out of Satan's family and baptized into God's family, sons and daughters of King Jesus.

"Baptism, which also corresponds to this, is now saving you" "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The baptism of the Spirit had no significance until after the resurrection of Christ. As Peter taught us in 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Peter makes a positive and negative statement. Negatively, "not a removing of dirt from the body," but positively, "as an appeal to God for a clear conscience."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of "**At Calvary**": *"O, the love that drew salvation's plan! O, the grace that brought it down to man! O, the mighty gulf that God did span At Calvary! Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary."*

July 18 — He Ever Lives to Make Intercession (1 Peter 3:22)

1 Peter 3:22: *"Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities, and powers having been made subject to Him."*

Verse 22: "Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities, and powers having been made subject to Him."

The "who" in this verse refers to Jesus Christ from verse 21. "At the right hand of God," it is He that is interceding on our behalf, making it possible for us to have an appeal to God for a clear conscience.

Hebrews 7:24-25: "But this [priest], because He is abiding forever, is holding His priesthood permanently. Hence, also, He is able to be saving

forever those who are drawing near to God through Him, since He always is living for the purpose of making intercession for them.”

Because He is a living Christ, He is in a position to intercede on our behalf continually.

“Having gone into heaven, with angel and authorities, and powers having been made subject to Him.” Once again, Peter makes reference to God’s chain of command. He spoke quite at length in the second and early part of the third chapters about the nature of submission to the authority that is over us.

Hebrews 2:9: “But we are seeing Jesus who for a short time has been made lower than the angels because of the suffering of death, having been crowned with glory and honor, in order that by the grace of God He might taste death for every one.”

Now Peter tells us the Lord Jesus, at the right hand of God the Father, has angels, authorities and powers subject to Him.

I love the way the writer of Hebrews approaches Christ priesthood on our behalf in 4:14-16: “Since then we are having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us be holding fast our confession. For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”

My heart is overflowing this morning with the abundant grace that our blessed Savior provides for us in response to our prayers. Please join me in singing this favorite hymn written by Annie Johnson Flint. Let’s sing verse 1 of **“He Giveth More Grace”**: *“He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater; He sendeth more strength when the labors increase. To added affliction He addeth His mercy; To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace. His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His pow’r has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.”*

July 19 — Focus on the Will of God (1 Peter 4:1-2)

1 Peter 4:1: *“Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same insight, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”*

1 Peter 4:2: *“so as to no longer live the remaining time in the flesh by the desires of men, but by the will of God.”*

Verse 1: “Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves

with the same insight, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”

Peter wants to be certain that these saints to whom he is writing know how to walk and where to walk.

“Therefore” takes us back to the previous verses where Peter has used the illustration of Christ, specifically verse 18: “Because Christ also died once for all for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”

“Since Christ suffered in the flesh,” Peter gives the following command: “arm yourselves also with the same insight.” He had already spoken of this in 2:21: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you a model to imitate in order that you might follow in His footsteps.”

Peter is saying get yourself ready, because part of Christian living and experience is suffering. Then, he gives the reason: “because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”

Verse 2: “so as to no longer live the remaining time in the flesh by the desires of men, but by the will of God.”

If you live by the desires of men, of course, death is the result. However, living by the will of God, you are in control of the Spirit and as a result, producing the fruitage of the Spirit.

Dr. Ryrie in his book, *“Balancing the Christian Life,”* says:

The flesh then is that old capacity which all men have to live lives which exclude God. In the Christian, the flesh is that same capacity to leave God out of his life in actions. The unsaved man has only one capacity, but the Christian has two, which means that the unsaved person has only one course of action, to serve sin and self or to leave God out of his life, while the believer has an option. He may serve God and as long as he is in a human body, he may also choose to leave God out and live according to the old nature.

Recognizing this truth, Peter wants to make sure these suffering saints are living under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Hosea 10:12: “Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; For it is time to seek the Lord, until He comes and showers righteousness on you.”

I find myself still worshipping and praising the Lord this morning, singing the words from verse 2 of **“He Giveth More Grace”**: *“When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day is half done, When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,*

Our Father's full giving is only begun. His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His pow'r has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again."

July 20 — Now is the Day of Salvation (1 Peter 4:3)

1 Peter 4:3: *"For adequate has been the time that is now past to have accomplished what the Gentiles (pagans, unsaved) desire to do, living in sexual excesses, in desires, in drunkenness, in carousings, in drinking parties and in unlawful idolatries."*

Verse 3: "For adequate has been the time that is now past to have accomplished what the Gentiles (pagans, unsaved) desire to do, living in sexual excesses, in desires, in drunkenness, in carousings, in drinking parties and in unlawful idolatries."

There are six works of the flesh listed here which are a product of the desires of men, and certainly have no part in the life of a Christian.

F.B. Meyer points out:

Any time spent in the lusts of the flesh is too long. The time past may well suffice. Oh the bitter regrets which the memory of past sins breeds in the saved soul. What would it not give to be able to obliterate the record and to look back on an unsullied page, but this may not be. Our only comfort is that He who says the time for watching is over also says that there is yet opportunity to retrieve the past, and promises to restore the years which the cankerworm and the caterpillar have eaten.

In this verse, Peter gives us the reason for his command or admonition in verse 2 to be "living the remaining time in the flesh by the will of God rather than by the desires of men."

Jesus is speaking in Mark 7:20-23: "And He was saying, 'That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.'"

Paul says in Romans 13:13-14: "Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord by singing verses 1 and 2 of Charlotte Elliott's great invitation hymn, **"Just As I Am"**: *"Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidst me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I*

am, and waiting not To rid my soul of one dark blot, To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

July 21 — A New Person in Christ (1 Peter 4:4-5)

1 Peter 4:4: *"In which they are surprised (thinking it strange) that you are not running with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you;"*

1 Peter 4:5: *"who shall give account to the One who is ready to judge the living and the dead."*

Verse 4: "In which they are surprised (thinking it strange) that you are not running with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you;"

The words "in which" point us back to the previous list in verse 3. These who are living by the desires of the flesh (1) "are surprised that you" as a Christian "are not running with them in the same flood of dissipation" and (2) they are "speaking evil of you."

Because of personal convictions wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, there is a purity of life that surprises the one who does not know Christ. Whereas their life is lived on a plane of *pleasure, pain* and *passion*, the life of the Christian is lived on the level of *purity, piety* and *power* which comes from the One who makes it possible to live a victorious Christian life.

Verse 5: "who shall give account to the One who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

These who are living according to the desires of the flesh are one day going to give account to Christ "who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In a fire of flame, allotting full justice to those who do not know God and who are not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus; and who will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

Ecclesiastes 11:9: "Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment."

2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold new things have come."

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by continuing to sing verses 3 and 4 of **"Just As I Am"**: *"Just as I am, tho'tossed about With many a conflict, many a doubt, Fightings and fears within without, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, poor, wretched,*

blind; Sight, riches, healing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

July 22 — John 3:16 (1 Peter 4:6)

1 Peter 4:6: "For to this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, in order that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

Verse 6: "For to this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, in order that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

Peter has just said that Christ is going to judge the living and the dead. Now, in verse 6, we have the statement: "For to this end was the gospel preached even to the dead."

This is referencing those who have already died in Christ, but while they were living, the gospel was preached to them. The purpose is "in order that they might be judged according to men in the flesh," but because of the relationship to Christ, "live according to God in the spirit."

Luck points out in verse 5:

We are told that all men must some day give an account of themselves to God. The expression "for this cause" points back to this important truth. For this reason, the gospel was preached also to them that are dead. Some have imagined that this statement refers to some mysterious preaching to the dead after death. It rather has to do with believers who are now dead, but once while they were living, had the gospel preached to them. They received and believed God's wonderful Good News, therefore they were ready to stand before God when wicked men judged them and even put them to death. They were dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne. Although judged and condemned to die by human beings, they still live in spirit in the presence of God.

Matthew 10:28: "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Let's worship and praise our blessed, living Lord this morning who is knocking at the door of our hearts. Our worship response is to sing together verse 5 of **"Just As I Am"**: *"Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; Because Thy promise I believe,*

O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

July 23 — He is Coming Soon (1 Peter 4:7)

1 Peter 4:7: *"But the end of all things has come near; therefore, be of sound mind (keep your head) and exercise self-restraint to help you pray."*

Verse 7: "But the end of all things has come near; therefore, be of sound mind (keep your head) and exercise self-restraint to help you pray."

Here, Peter sounds the warning: "The end of all things has come near." He has already mentioned in verse 5 that Christ is ready to judge the living and the dead."

It could reference the end of physical life. For many of these who would receive this letter were coming near because of the tremendous persecution that they were facing.

There are five things Peter wants to say to them in view that "the end of all things has come near." The first two are in this verse:

1. The first: "Therefore, be of sound mind (keep your head)." In 1:13, he asked them to "gird up the loins of their mind." Now, he says "be of sound mind." Paul in Philippians 2:5 advised: "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus."
2. The second: "Exercise self-restraint to help you pray." Make no mistake about it, prayer is a discipline and not easy work. Peter admonishes husbands and wives to be sure their relationship is such that their prayers may not be hindered. Now he is commanding them to "exercise self-restraint to help" them pray.

Ruth Myers quotes Kay Arthur in her book, *31 Days of Prayer*:

Gracious Father—high King of heaven, yet my Father!—
You are seated in the throne room of the universe on a throne of grace, a throne of favor for the undeserving. What a privilege it is to come to Your throne unafraid, with utter freedom and confidence, assured of Your glad welcome—"to run right into Your throne room and find Your arms open wide!"

In view of the Lord's soon coming, let's verbalize our worship and praise this morning by singing verse 1 of "**Come, Thou Fount**": *"Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace; Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above; Praise His name! I'm fixed upon it! Name of God's redeeming love."*

July 24 — Love is the First Priority (1 Peter 4:8)

1 Peter 4:8: *“Above all things, keeping love constant for one another, because love is covering a multitude of sins.”*

Verse 8: “Above all things, keeping love constant for one another, because love is covering a multitude of sins.”

The third thing Peter says in view that “the end of all things has come near” is “keeping love constant for one another.” Then, he gives the reason, “because love is covering a multitude of sins.”

In chapter 3:8, Peter said we should be “loving the brethren.” In chapter 2:17, he said “be loving the brotherhood.” Also, in chapter 1:22, he said “love of the brethren, love one another from the heart earnestly.”

This practice of Christian love was to be constant. This word conveys the idea of intensity, earnestness, exerting one’s power to their full extent.

Barclay, in speaking on this matter of love, says:

Our love must be the love that never fails. The word here in the text means stretching out as a runner stretches out. A horse at full gallop, and it denotes the taut muscle of strenuous and sustained effort as of an athlete. Here is a fundamental Christian truth. Christian love is not an easy sentimental reaction. It demands everything a man has got of mental and spiritual nerve and muscle, sinew. It means loving the unlovely and the unlovable. It means in spite of insult and injury. It means loving when love is not returned but is spurned. The Christian love is a love which never fails and the love in which every atom of a man’s strength is directed.

I think Peter had impressed upon him when Christ asked him three times, “Do you love me?” that early morning with the resurrected Christ on the Sea of Galilee. Christ used the word of the love of the spirit, “agape.” However, Peter could only answer with human love, “phileo.”

How appropriate that we continue singing the hymn, **“Come, Thou Fount.”** Let’s sing verse 2 in celebration and praise this morning: *“Hitherto Thy love has blest me; Thou hast bro’t me to this place; And I know Thy hand will bring me Safely home by Thy good grace. Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, Bought me with His precious blood.”*

July 25 — Use Your Gift to Edify Others (1 Peter 4:9-10)

1 Peter 4:9: *“Be hospitable to one another without complaining.”*

1 Peter 4:10: *“As each has received a gift, be exercising it for one another, as good administrators of God’s varied grace.”*

Verse 9: “Be hospitable to one another without complaining.”

This is the fourth admonition by the apostle. Paul says in Romans

12:13 (Phillips): “Give freely to fellow Christians in want, never grudging a meal or a bed to those who need them.” In Philippians 2:14-15 (Phillips), he says: “Do all you have to do without grumbling or arguing, so that you may be God’s children, blameless, sincere and wholesome, living in a warped and diseased world, and shining there like lights in a dark place. For you hold in your hands the very word of life.”

Hospitality is made up of two Greek words: “phileo” and “xenos,” meaning “the love of a stranger.” It is a recurring theme in the qualifications for church leadership.

Verse 10: “As each has received a gift, be exercising it for one another, as good administrators of God’s varied grace.”

Peter’s fifth admonition is to use the spiritual gift which was given at the time of coming to know Christ. “Be exercising” this gift “for one another (other members of the body) and doing it “as good administrators of God’s varied grace.

Peter calls these gifts a product of “God’s varied grace” or multicolored grace. These gifts have many different functions and yet all uniting together for one common purpose, that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

There are five things true of a real witness for Jesus Christ. Peter has outlined them in these verses we have been considering:

1. Being of Sound Mind
2. Exercising Restraint to Pray
3. Loving One Another
4. Being Hospitable
5. Exercising the Spiritual Gift

As we worship and praise, let’s sing verse 3 together of **“Come, Thou Fount”** : *“O to grace how great a debtor Daily I’m constrained to be! Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee: Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love; Here’s my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it for Thy courts above.”*

July 26 — Serving in His Strength (1 Peter 4:11)

1 Peter 4:11: *“If anyone is speaking, as utterances of God [let them be]; if anyone is serving, [let him serve] as out of strength which God is supplying; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, in whom there is glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.”*

Verse 11: “If anyone is speaking, as utterances of God [let them be]; if anyone is serving, [let him serve] as out of strength which God is supplying; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus

Christ, in whom there is glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.”

Peter mentions a couple of gifts in this verse that are a part of God's great grace. “If anyone is speaking, as utterances of God [let them be],” “If anyone is serving, [let him serve] as out of strength which God is supplying.” Speaking and Serving – by these making an impact.

Paul had much to say about strength that is ours in Christ. Philippians 4:13: “I am having strength for all things in the One who is making me strong.” 2 Timothy 1:7: “For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.” Colossians 1:11: “Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously.”

The strength to serve is supplied by God Himself “in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, in whom there is glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.”

Everything in our relationship with Jesus Christ is a product of God's grace from beginning to end. No wonder Peter breaks forth in this great doxology “in whom there is glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.”

You might not know the song this morning, but please meditate on the words by Richard Gillard - **“The Servants Song”** : *“Brother, let me be your servant. Let me be as Christ to you. Pray that I may have the grace To let you be my servant, too. We are pilgrims on a journey. We are brothers on the road. We are here to help each other Walk the mile and bear the load. I will weep when you are weeping. When you laugh I'll laugh with you. I will share your joy and sorrow Till we've seen this journey through. When we sing to God in heaven We shall find such harmony. Born of all we've known together Of Christ's love and agony. Brother, let me be your servant, Let me be as Christ to you. Pray that I may have the grace To let you be my servant, too.”*

July 27 — Sharing the Sufferings of Christ (1 Peter 4:12-13)

1 Peter 4:12: *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is coming upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you;”*

1 Peter 4:13: *“but inasmuch as you are sharing the sufferings of Christ, be rejoicing; in order that also at the revelation of His glory, you might shout for joy.”*

Verse 12: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is coming upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you;”

Once more, Peter addresses these dear persecuted Christians as “beloved,” as he did in chapter 2:11.

He says negatively, “do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is coming upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you.” He had previously pointed out in chapter 1:6-7: “In this you are rejoicing, though now for a little while, if it must be (if there is need for it), you have been distressed in the midst of various kinds of testings, in order that the genuineness of your faith, which is more precious than gold which is perishing, though it is being tested by fire, may be found for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

John Piper in his book, *Life as a Vapor*, says:

All of life is meant to reflect the infinite value of Christ (Philippians 1:20). We show His infinite worth by treasuring Him above all things and all persons. Believing in His all-ruling, all-wise sovereignty helps reveal our idolatries in times of pain and loss. Not believing that God has a wise purpose for every event helps conceal our idolatries.

Verse 13: “but inasmuch as you are sharing the sufferings of Christ, be rejoicing; in order that also at the revelation of His glory, you might shout for joy.”

Whereas in verse 12 we had the negative statement, “do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal,” we have the positive statement in verse 13. It begins with the contrasting word, “but inasmuch as you are sharing the sufferings of Christ, be rejoicing” and follows with the purpose “in order that also at the revelation of His glory, you might shout for joy.”

Peter says we “are sharing the sufferings of Christ” and we endure the “fiery ordeal” that comes upon us. It is so important for us to remember that the purpose in these sufferings is “in order that also at the revelation of His glory, you might shout for joy,” stated in the last phrase of verse 13. Maybe it is “Praise the Lord,” maybe it is “Hallelujah,” or maybe it is “Amen!”

Joni Eareckson Tada in *Pearls of Great Price: 366 Daily Devotional Readings*, says:

But suffering obliterates such preoccupation with earthly things. Suffering wakes us up from our spiritual slumber and turns our hearts toward the future, like a mother turning the face of her child, insisting, “Look this way!” Once heaven has our attention, earth’s pleasures begin to pale in comparison.

Lord of heaven, turn my heart toward you this day. I set my mind right now on things above.

One of my all-time favorite hymns is “**Day by Day.**” Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing together verse 1 of this

wonderful hymn: *“Day by day, and with each passing moment, Strength I find to meet my trials here; Trusting in my Father’s wise bestowment, I’ve no cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure Gives unto each day what He deems best. Lovingly, it’s part of pain and pleasure, Mingling toil with peace and rest.”*

July 28 — Reviled for the Name of Christ (1 Peter 4:14-15)

1 Peter 4:14: *“If you are being reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God is resting upon you.”*

1 Peter 4:15: *“For let not one of you be suffering as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or as a meddler in other men’s matters.”*

Verse 14: “If you are being reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God is resting upon you.”

In this verse, Peter states “If you are being reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed.” Then he gives the reason, “because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God is resting upon you.”

I am reminded of Stephen as he bore testimony before the Sanhedrin in Acts 6:15: “And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.”

As he concluded his testimony in Acts 7:55, we read: “But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.”

Verse 15: “For let not one of you be suffering as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or as a meddler in other men’s matters.”

Peter says it is a great experience to be “sharing the sufferings of Christ,” but it is not a joyful experience to be suffering when you deserve it “as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or as a meddler in other men’s matters.” In these cases, the suffering experienced is deserved and very sad.

Paul tells Timothy in his final epistle, 2 Timothy 4:16-17: “At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion’s mouth.”

Let’s continue worshipping the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of **“Day by Day”**: *“Ev’ry day, the Lord Himself is near me With a special mercy for each hour; All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me, He whose Name is Counsellor and Pow’r. The protection*

of His child and treasure Is a charge that on Himself He laid; As your days, your strength shall be in measure, This the pledge to me He made."

July 29 — Glorifying God in Suffering (1 Peter 4:16-17)

1 Peter 4:16: *"But if one is suffering as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him be glorifying God in this name."*

1 Peter 4:17: *"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what shall be the end of those who are not obeying the gospel of God?"*

Verse 16: "But if one is suffering as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him be glorifying God in this name."

This was the experience of Peter in Acts 5:40-41: "And they took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and then released them. So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name."

Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who is believing, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

2 Timothy 1:12: "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

How is it they could "be glorifying God in this name?" I think it is understanding *He is alive, He's adequate and He allowed it* which makes it possible to glorify in the outcome.

Verse 17: "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what shall be the end of those who are not obeying the gospel of God?"

Peter gives the reason why we do not have to "be ashamed" of suffering as a Christian, "for the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God." He stated previously in chapter 4:5 judgment was coming, "who shall give account to the One who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

By "the house of God," Peter means the "spiritual house" which he mentioned back in 2:5-6 of which we are "living stones" and Christ is the chief "cornerstone."

The judgment he references is the judgment seat of Christ recorded in 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive a recompense for

what he has done during his life in the body, whether good or bad.”

Then, Peter raises the question, “If it begins with us first, what shall be the end of those who are not obeying the gospel of God?”

There is only one more verse to this wonderful hymn. How appropriate that we would worship and praise the Lord this morning singing verse 3 of **“Day by Day”**: *“Help me then in ev’ry tribulation So to trust Thy promises, O Lord, That I lose not faith’s sweet consolation Offered me within Thy holy Word. Help me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting, E’er to take, as from a father’s hand, One by one, the days, the moments fleeting, Till I reach the promised land.”*

July 30 — A Big Question (1 Peter 4:18)

1 Peter 4:18: *“And if he who is righteous is with difficulty being saved, where will the ungodly and sinner appear?”*

Verse 18: “And if he who is righteous is with difficulty being saved, where will the ungodly and sinner appear?”

Once again, Peter is making contrasts between the righteous and ungodly. If the righteous is “being saved” while going through difficulty and testing, “where will the ungodly and sinner appear” who selfishly want to live a comfortable life?

This answer, of course, is the same answer given in answer to the previous question in verse 17, “what shall be the end of those who are not obeying the gospel of God?”

The answer is found in verses in Revelation. First, in 21:8: “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Then, in 21:27: “And nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

John 10:27-29, Jesus says: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”

Let’s celebrate and worship our Blessed Lord this morning by affirming our decision. Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of **“I’m a Child of the King”**: *“My Father is rich in houses and lands, He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands! Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold, His coffers are full, He has riches untold. My Father’s own Son, the Savior of men, Once wandered on earth as the poorest of them;*

But now He is pleading our pardon on high, That we may be His, when He comes by and by. I'm a child of the King, A child of the King: With Jesus my Savior, I'm a child of the King."

July 31 — Suffering in the Will of God (1 Peter 4:19)

1 Peter 4:19: *"Therefore, also let those who are suffering according to the will of God be entrusting their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good."*

Verse 19: "Therefore, also let those who are suffering according to the will of God be entrusting their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good."

In this particular section of the epistle, Peter has asked us to "not be surprised at the fiery ordeal" because we "are sharing the sufferings of Christ." If we are "suffering as a Christian, let him (us) not be ashamed," but "let those who are suffering according to the will of God" be doing two things (1) "entrusting their souls to a faithful Creator" (2) "while doing good."

Two verses in Romans 8 that bring comfort to the suffering saint are 8:18: "For I am of the opinion that the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed to us" and 8:28: "And we are knowing that for those who are loving God, all things He is working together for good, for those who are called in accordance with His purpose."

Ruth Myers in *31 Days of Praise: Enjoying God Anew* says:

As fire melts unrefined silver, bringing the impurities to the surface, so trials bring the "scum" to the top in your life. When you praise God in the midst of a trial, you cooperate with His plan to remove the scum; when you complain, you resist His plan and stir the impurities right back into your character. This means that God, to accomplish His good purposes, may have to send or permit another trial; it may delay the unfolding of His good plan for you and your loved ones.

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verses 3 and 4 of this wonderful hymn of affirmation, **"I'm a Child of the King"**: *"I once was an outcast stranger on earth, A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth; But I've been adopted, my name's written down, An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown. A tent or a cottage, why should I care? They're building a palace for me over there; Tho' exiled from home, yet still may I sing: All glory to God, I'm a child of the King. I'm a child of the King, A child of the King: With Jesus my Savior, I'm a child of the King."*

AUGUST

August 1 — It's All in the Leadership (1 Peter 5:1)

1 Peter 5:1: “Elders, therefore, who are among you I am exhorting, I who am a fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who also am a partaker of the glory which is about to be revealed.”

Verse 1: “Elders, therefore, who are among you I am exhorting, I who am a fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who also am a partaker of the glory which is about to be revealed.”

Oswald Sanders in his book, *Spiritual Leadership*, says:

“True greatness, true leadership is achieved not by reducing men to one’s service, but in giving oneself in selfless service to them and this is never done without cost.”

Walt Disney said:

“The greatest need of the next generation is dedicated leadership!”

In verse 1, Peter outlines three credentials for leadership.

1. “I who am a fellow elder.” This is an elder speaking to elders at this point.
2. “A witness of the sufferings of Christ.” He was there to witness the sufferings of the Savior. What a difficult time for Peter to recall this experience. If there was ever a time when Peter failed in his leadership, it was during the time just prior to the Cross.
3. “Who also am a partaker of the glory which is about to be revealed.” Peter has much to say about our “living hope,” “our inheritance” and that the time of our future glory is very near.

Paul also speaks of this glory in Romans 8:18 (NLT): “Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will reveal to us later.”

1 John 3:2 (NLT): “Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but He has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He really is.”

When we start talking about our glorious future and our eternal residence with our blessed Savior, I can’t contain myself. I find myself worshipping and praising the Lord with verse 1 of **“O That Will Be Glory”**: *“When all my labors and trials are o’er, And I am safe on that beautiful shore, Just to be near the dear Lord I adore, Will thro’ the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, Glory for me, glory for me; When by His grace I shall look on His face, That will*

be glory, be glory for me.”

August 2 — Shepherd the Flock (1 Peter 5:2)

1 Peter 5:2: “*Tend (shepherd) the flock of God which is among you, not by compulsion, but willingly according to God; not in fondness for dishonest gain, but freely.*”

Verse 2: “Tend (shepherd) the flock of God which is among you, not by compulsion, but willingly according to God; not in fondness for dishonest gain, but freely.”

This verse and verse 3 give the laws of leadership Peter wanted to convey to these leaders of the churches in their areas.

Law #1: “Tend (or shepherd) the flock of God which is among you.”

Peter is remembering his own commission to leadership when the resurrected Christ spoke to him in John 21. Christ had suffered and now was preparing to enter into glory.

Referencing this first word “tend” or “shepherd,” Hort points out Jesus used this very word to Peter in the interview by the Sea of Galilee. We learn from this statement that people are to be involved in one another’s lives. How do we tend?

1. Leading
2. Guiding
3. Providing

We exhort, encourage and we are an example!

Whereas **Law #1** speaks of action, **Law #2** reflects the attitude.

Law #2: “Not by compulsion, but willingly according to God.”

The right attitude would be three-fold. It would recognize the (1) *privilege*, (2) *possibilities*, and (3) *pleasure* that would result from being faithful.

Law #3: “Not in fondness for dishonest gain, but freely.”

Whereas we have *action* in **Law #1** and *attitude* in **Law #2**; we have *accountability* in **Law #3**.

My heart swells with praise and adoration of our blessed Lord and the price He paid for us. What a privilege to serve Him! Let’s sing together verse 2 of that wonderful hymn from yesterday, “**O That Will Be Glory**”: “*When by the gift of His infinite grace, I am accorded in heaven a place, Just to be there and to look on His face, Will thro’ the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, Glory for me, glory for me; When by His grace I shall look on His face, That will be glory, be glory for me.*”

August 3 — Servant Leadership (1 Peter 5:3)

1 Peter 5:3: “Nor as lording it over (domineering) the portions of the flock assigned to you, but being examples to the flock.”

Verse 3: “Nor as lording it over (domineering) the portions of the flock assigned to you, but being examples to the flock.”

In **Law #1** we had *action*, **Law #2** we had *attitude* and **Law #3** we had *accountability*. In **Law #4**, we have *authority*.

Law #4: “Nor as lording it over (domineering) the portions of the flock assigned to you, but being examples to the flock.”

Peter points out the negative and the positive to clarify what he means. It’s awfully easy to want the authority that comes with leadership without the responsibility of earning the right to be the leader by being an example to the flock. It is also a very subtle temptation of leadership to use your authority for your own comfort and profit.

Not domineering, but “being examples to the flock.” In chapter 2, Peter has already challenged that we have been called to imitate our model, Jesus Christ.

Lenski says:

Peter mentions three common sins of preachers – laziness, greed and popishness – all of which are especially objectionable in days of persecution. Peter demands voluntariness, unselfish devotion, models fit to be patterned after.

Sanders, in writing about Martin Luther, said:

He was described as a man easy to approach, totally without personal vanity, so simple in his tastes that men wondered how he could sustain life on so little. Abounding in solid sense, playful humor and mirthfulness, honest as the day, transparently sincere, added to this was his undaunted courage, inflexible conviction and passion for Christ, it is small wonder that he bound men to him with bonds of steel.

Listen to the words of Jesus in Mark 10:45: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of “**O That Will Be Glory**”: “*Friends will be there I have loved long ago; Joy like a river around me will flow; Yet, just a smile from my Savior, I know, Will thro’ the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, Glory for me, glory for me; When by His grace I shall look on His face, That will be glory, be glory for me.*”

August 4 — Leadership Award (1 Peter 5:4)

1 Peter 5:4: “*And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you shall receive the unfading crown of glory.*”

Verse 4: “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you shall receive the unfading crown of glory.”

Peter gave his credentials for leadership in verse 1. Then, his charge to leadership in verses 2 and 3. Now, in verse 4, he gives the crown for leadership.

He has already mentioned Christ as the shepherd in 1 Peter 2:25: “For you were as sheep going astray, but now have been turned back to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

This is making reference to the judgment seat of Christ when we will be examined on the basis of the fruit that has been born in our lives since we have become Christians. There are five crowns recorded in scripture as rewards to be given at this particular time.

1. The crown of life (James 1)
2. The incorruptible crown (1 Corinthians 9)
3. The crown of rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2 & Philippians 4)
4. The crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8)
5. The crown of glory (1 Peter 5)

Speaking to future leaders, Spurgeon says:

Having the integrity and the courage, dear brethren, may you be gifted with an indomitable *zeal*. Zeal—what is it? How shall I describe it? Possess it, and you will know what it is. Be consumed with love for Christ, and let the flame burn continuously, not flaming up at public meetings and dying out in the routine work of every day. We need indomitable perseverance, dogged resolution, and a combination of sacred obstinacy, self-denial, holy gentleness, and invincible courage.

Excel also in one power, which is both mental and moral, namely, the power of concentrating all your forces upon the work to which you are called. Collect your thoughts, rally all your faculties, mass your energies, focus your capacities. Turn all the springs of your soul into one channel, causing it to flow onward in an undivided stream.

This morning, let's celebrate and worship the Lord by singing that old hymn, “**When the Roll is Called Up Yonder.**” Join me in singing verse 1: “*When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more, And the morning breaks eternal, bright, and fair; When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, And the roll is called up*

yonder I'll be there! When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there."

August 5 — Grace to the Humble (1 Peter 5:5)

1 Peter 5:5: *"Likewise, younger ones, be in subjection to the elders; moreover, all of you, in your associations with each other, clothe yourselves with humility, because God is opposing the proud, but is giving grace to the humble."*

Verse 5: "Likewise, younger ones, be in subjection to the elders; moreover, all of you, in your associations with each other, clothe yourselves with humility, because God is opposing the proud, but is giving grace to the humble."

David Walls & Max Anders in their commentary on 1 Peter said:

Be submissive is a command, an imperative, a directive which should be obeyed. Such a command is not to be debated. The verb means "to defer to the authority of." It indicates a spirit of cooperation as opposed to dissatisfaction with the leadership. It describes a willingness to support the pastors' directions.

Peter returns to the subject of God's order in the command. He is commanding the younger ones to be in subjection to the elders who are charged with the responsibility before God of the care and leadership of the flock.

He, then, expands the exhortation by saying, "Moreover, all of you, in your associations with each other, clothe yourselves with humility," then gives the reason, "because God is opposing the proud, but is giving grace to the humble."

Ironside says:

"Humility is not so much to think of self in a lowly and mean way, but rather to not think of self at all."

The word for "clothe" describes a thing which is knotted, and therefore, may be applied to the tying of a slave's apron.

God is an adversary to the proud because the proud are living for themselves and their own desires. However, He is an advocate for the humble providing grace to meet his every need.

Rick Rigsby in *Lessons from a Third Grade Dropout* says:

Speaker and author James Ryle makes sense of how feeling secure can produce a correlation of kindness and humility:

"Humility is the God-given self-assurance that eliminates the need to prove the worth of who you are and the rightness of what you do."

Keith Miller in *Habitation of Dragons* says:

“Help me, Lord, not to cling to my rights, but to unclench my spiritual fist so that I can be free to follow you.”

I think a prayer hymn would be appropriate this morning as each of us deals with the issue of humility. Let’s answer and praise the Lord by singing verse 1 of **“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”**: *“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mould me and make me After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still.”*

August 6 — Let God Humble You (1 Peter 5:6-7)

1 Peter 5:6: *“Permit yourselves, therefore, to be humbled under the mighty hand of God, in order that in due time He may exalt you,”*

1 Peter 5:7: *“throwing all your anxieties upon Him, because it is a care to Him about you.”*

Verse 6: “Permit yourselves, therefore, to be humbled under the mighty hand of God, in order that in due time He may exalt you,”

Since “God is opposing the proud, but is giving grace to the humble,” “permit yourselves, therefore, to be humbled under the mighty hand of God.” The purpose is “in order that in due time He may exalt you.”

Mark Lowry in *Live Long and Die Laughing* says:

God doesn’t need any of us; He chooses to work through us. And when Bill Gaither goes to glory, God will raise someone else up. When Billy Graham takes his flight, God will raise someone else up. And when I’m gone...there’ll be a moment of silence. My family and friends have earned it.

Woodrow Kroll in his book, *Empowered to Pray*, says:

Jonathan Edwards said, “Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil’s reach as humility.” If you want Satan to be at your elbow when you pray, pray like the Pharisees. If you want him to keep his distance, pray like the tax collector. Prayer without humility is like bidding at an auction without money. It’s all talk.

It is a fantastic truth to realize God, through His gracious dealings with us, will do the humbling if we will but yield to Him and allow the humbling to take place. The trials, the tests and the suffering are all part of His humbling process. As we are submissive and allow this process to go on, we have the wonderful promise in the latter part of this verse, “in due time He may exalt you.”

Verse 7: “throwing all your anxieties upon Him, because it is a care to Him about you.”

In verse 6, we are to “permit ourselves (yourselves), therefore, to be humbled.” In verse 7, we are to be “throwing all our (your) anxieties upon Him.”

It is His will that I should cast my care on Him each day. He also bids me not to cast my confidence away, but oh how foolishly I act when taken unaware. I cast away my confidence and carry all my care.

Let’s continue our worship and praise this morning by singing verse 2 of **“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”**: *“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Search me and try me, Master, today! Whiter than snow, Lord, Wash me just now, As in Thy presence Humbly I bow.”*

August 7 — Watch Out for the Devil (1 Peter 5:8)

1 Peter 5:8: “Be self-possessed, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion (in fierce hunger) is walking about, seeking someone to devour (swallow up).”

Verse 8: “Be self-possessed, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion (in fierce hunger) is walking about, seeking someone to devour (swallow up).”

Dr. Pentecost in *Your Adversary the Devil* says:

Sobriety has to do with a with a serious attitude of the mind. It has to do with an outlook on life. Sobriety sees things in their true light. One who is serious minded sees things in their true nature because he has a scriptural set of values and is living in the light of those new principles that have been given to him by Jesus Christ.

Whereas sobriety deals with his internal attitude, vigilance deals with the external defense.

Peter pictures the real adversary – the devil – as a roaring lion. It is possible Peter is recalling some of the persecutions where Christians were fed to the lions in the arena, and used this as an illustration of Satan himself. Whereas these persecuted saints were being opposed from all sides, the real enemy and adversary was Satan, who was watching for the smallest opportunity to catch them offguard.

“Your adversary is” continually “walking about, seeking someone to devour (swallow up).”

Dr. Pentecost says:

“Satan never relaxes. You sleep, he doesn’t. He is planning for the next day’s attack.”

Luke 22:31-34 (NLT): ““Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned

to me again, strengthen your brothers.’ Peter said, ‘Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you.’ But Jesus said, ‘Peter, let me tell you something. Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.’”

How appropriate that this morning we should sing verse 3 of **“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”**: *“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, Help me, I pray! Power all power Surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Saviour divine!”*

August 8 — Standing Against Satan (1 Peter 5:9)

1 Peter 5:9: *“Withstand (resist) him, firm (steadfast) in your faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being laid upon your brotherhood who are in the world.”*

Verse 9: “Withstand (resist) him, firm (steadfast) in your faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being laid upon your brotherhood who are in the world.”

James 4:7 (Phillips): “Be humble then before God, but resist the devil and you’ll find he will run away from you.”

Ephesians 6:11-13: “Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”

Samuel Rutherford in *The Loveliness of Christ* says:

When we shall come home and enter to the possession of our Brother’s fair kingdom, and when our heads shall find the weight of the eternal crown of glory, and when we shall look back to pains and sufferings; then shall we see life and sorrow to be less than one step or stride from a prison to glory; and that our little inch of time – suffering is not worthy of our first night’s welcome home to heaven.

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning in triumphant victory as we sing verse 4 of **“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”**: *“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Hold o’er my being Absolute sway! Fill with Thy Spirit Till all shall see Christ only, always, Living in me!”*

August 9 — Ultimate Victory in Christ (1 Peter 5:10-11)

1 Peter 5:10: *“But the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while,*

shall Himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation."

1 Peter 5:11: "To Him be the power (dominion) for ever and ever. Amen."

Verse 10: "But the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall Himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation."

It is the God of all grace who provided grace and salvation past, who provides grace to meet every trial in our daily lives and experiences, and who will ultimately manifest His grace when we stand complete in His presence.

Because we are heirs and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, we have an inheritance reserved in heaven for us.

This will all be ours after we "have suffered a little while." There are four things He is going to do for you:

1. Shall Himself make you complete
2. Shall establish you
3. Shall make you strong
4. Shall ground you as on a foundation

All of this depends on our submission and yieldedness to Him.

Verse 11: "To Him be the power (dominion) for ever and ever. Amen."

It is by His power that the creatures of His hand are changed and transformed through a salvation experience into the children of His heart. It is by His power that through suffering we are transformed into the likeness and image of Jesus Christ. It is by His power as we permit ourselves to be humbled under the mighty hand of God that we experience the freedom of submission.

I find myself worshipping and praising the Lord with that wonderful hymn that asks the question, **"Have You Any Room for Jesus?"** Please join me in singing verse 1. *"Have you any room for Jesus, He who bore your load of sin? As He knocks and asks admission, Sinners, will you let Him in?"*

August 10 — True Grace of God (1 Peter 5:12)

1 Peter 5:12: "Through Silvanus, a faithful brother (as I am thinking of him), briefly I have written to you, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God, in which [grace] take your stand."

Verse 12: "Through Silvanus, a faithful brother (as I am thinking of him), briefly I have written to you, exhorting and testifying that this

is the true grace of God, in which [grace] take your stand.”

Silvanus can be identified as the one who accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey referenced in the book of Acts as Silas. He is also mentioned by Paul as Silvanus in certain epistles: 1 Thessalonians 1:1 and 2 Thessalonians 1:1. It is possible he may have been the one who served as a stenographer for Peter and the one who carried the letter to its destinations.

The ministry could not be carried on without a faithful brother like Silvanus, men who do the job behind the scenes in order to edify, build up and fortify the body of Christ. A man such as him is a good administrator of the very grace of God.

Peter then summarizes his message in the letter, “I have written to you, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God, in which [grace] take your stand.”

Let us continue to worship and praise the Lord with the hymn we started yesterday morning. Join me in singing verse 3 of **“Have You Any Room for Jesus?”**: *“Have you any room for Jesus, As in grace He calls again? O today is time accepted, Tomorrow you may call in vain. Room for Jesus, King of Glory! Hasten now His Word obey; Swing the heart’s door widely open, Bid Him enter while you may.”*

August 11 — Peace to All (1 Peter 5:13-14)

1 Peter 5:13: *“The church in Babylon, chosen out with you, sends greetings, and Mark, my son.”*

1 Peter 5:14: *“Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ.”*

Verse 13: “The church in Babylon, chosen out with you, sends greetings, and Mark, my son.”

The Christians often referred to the city of Rome as the church in Babylon. This may be a reference to Rome here. The group sending greetings is “chosen out” just as they were referred to as chosen exiles in verse 1.

“Mark, my son,” wrote the gospel of Mark. He is also the “Mark” who backed out of Paul’s first missionary journey and returned home. Later, he went with Barnabas on a missionary journey when Paul went with Silas.

I am sure Mark and Peter shared common ground. Peter could sympathize with Mark. At a critical point in his life, he denied the Lord. Both Peter and Mark, subsequently, were greatly used of the Lord.

Verse 14: “Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all

who are in Christ.”

Peter ends the letter as he began with “peace.”

Rees points out:

In between there is trouble, turmoil, tempest and tension, yet beneath it all, through it all, peace. There must have been a sound in Peter’s soul as he pronounced this blessing of peace.

It seems most appropriate to complete our study of 1 Peter by continuing to worship and praise the Lord through song by singing verse 4 of **“Have You Any Room for Jesus?”**: *“Room and time now give to Jesus, Soon will pass God’s day of grace; Soon thy heart left cold and silent, And thy Savior’s pleading cease. Room for Jesus, King of Glory! Hasten now His Word obey; Swing the heart’s door widely open, Bid Him enter while you may.”*

August 12 — Meet My Servant (2 Peter 1:1)

2 Peter 1:1: *“Simon Peter, a bonds slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”*

Verse 1: “Simon Peter, a bonds slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

“Simon Peter, a bonds slave and apostle of Jesus Christ.” First, Peter calls himself “a bonds slave.”

Jowett , when speaking on the subject of the bonds slave, says:

HIS NOT TO REASON WHY,
HIS NOT TO MAKE REPLY,
HIS BUT TO DO AND DIE.

He has learned the secret to success in God’s army is to be a servant.

Mark 10:45: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

The key to growth and maturity in the Lord Jesus Christ is to learn servant leadership. We begin by serving Jesus, then our mates, our family, our church, our country, in our profession, our friends and associates, and those without Christ.

A good servant has these characteristics: (1) quick eyes, (2) listening ears, (3) ready feet, (4) working hands, and (5) an honest heart.

Secondly, Peter says he is an “apostle of Jesus Christ.” The word “apostle” means “*sent one*.” He is one sent of Jesus Christ with a message of eternal salvation.

“To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours.”

John 1:12: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

This faith is only made available by the instrument of “the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Romans 1:17: “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith; even as it has been written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’”

Kierkegaard was right when he said:

“We choose to lock the door of our hearts because we want to live in the wretched doghouses of our life.”

I find myself worshipping and praising the Lord this morning by singing that great, old hymn, “**The Solid Rock.**” Please join me in singing verse 1: “*My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand.*”

August 13 — More Grace & Peace (2 Peter 1:2)

2 Peter 1:2: “*May grace and peace be yours in ever greater measure in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*”

Verse 2: “May grace and peace be yours in ever greater measure in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”

The wish of the apostle for these fellow believers is two-fold:

1. Grace
2. Peace

Peter wants this to be theirs “in ever greater measure.” He is never content with the status quo. He uses these phrases:

1. “ever greater measure”
2. “every intense effort”
3. “be all the more diligent”
4. “be paying attention”
5. “keep on stirring you up”
6. “looking for and hastening”
7. “constantly be on your guard”
8. “be constantly growing”

I think all of these statements of intensity are revealing his personal passion about his relationship with Jesus Christ. Peter sees the Christian life as an ongoing process. In it, we can experience in “greater measure” His “grace and peace” as we learn to trust Him.

He goes on to say this “grace and peace” can be “ours (yours) in

ever greater measure in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. The more you know Him, the greater will be your grace and peace.

Blair points out:

“We are not fully grown. We are growing. As we feed upon God’s Word daily, we increase our knowledge of Christ.”

Colossians 2:3: “In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Keep Jesus at the center and spend all of your energy getting to know Him better and better. The more you know Him, the greater your grace and peace.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**The Solid Rock**”: *“When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace; In every high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the veil. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand.”*

August 14 — Jesus is All We Need (2 Peter 1:3)

2 Peter 1:3: *“Seeing that His divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by means of His own glory and virtue.”*

Verse 3: “Seeing that His divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by means of His own glory and virtue.”

We must first consider what we have. This glorious verse tells us “that His divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness.”

He has taken care of everything. He has made every provision for the journey. Philippians 4:19: “And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

All we need for “life and godliness” is provided by His power. “Seeing that His divine power has generously given to us everything. He has loaded us up with everything we will ever need.

It must really hurt the Lord Jesus when we look somewhere else for the things that we need. John 10:10b: “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”

He is the author and giver of life. He is the one who knows best how to ultimately bring life to triumph in His presence.

“His divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life,” the focus on eternal salvation, but Peter does not stop there. He also adds, “and godliness,” our own spiritual growth.

It is in Jesus Christ, “who called us by means of His own glory and virtue.” Glory was His vertical witness and virtue His horizontal. Glory was the manifestation of the divine, virtue the manifestation of the human.

It is His *power* and His *person* which “has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness.”

J. Vernon McGee says:

“It is only through the knowledge of Christ that you can really learn to live down here and grow to be a more godly person.”

Psalm 84:11: “The Lord God is the sun and shield. The Lord will give grace and glory, ‘and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.’”

How appropriate for us to worship and praise the Lord by singing a verse which speaks of the Lord’s covenant and commitment to supply all that each of us needs. Please join me in singing verse 3 of “**The Solid Rock**”: *“His oath, His covenant, His blood Support me in the whelming flood; When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand.”*

August 15 — Precious Promises (2 Peter 1:4)

2 Peter 1:4: *“Through which (things) He has generously given to us His precious and exceedingly great promises, in order that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the destruction in the world caused by desire.”*

Verse 4: “Through which (things) He has generously given to us His precious and exceedingly great promises, in order that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the destruction in the world caused by desire.”

“Through which (things)” refers back to verse 3. It tells us it is through His own glory and virtue “He has generously given to us,” believers, “His precious and exceedingly great promises.”

The promises are characterized in two ways:

1. Precious
2. Exceedingly great

It is “His own glory and virtue” who has made them this way. He will keep them. He has never made a promise He hasn’t or won’t keep.

The purpose behind these “precious and exceedingly great promises” is seen in the next phrase, “in order that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the

destruction in the world caused by desire.”

As a result of believing these promises, God works in our lives through them and we become partakers of the divine nature.

“Having escaped from the destruction in the world caused by desire.” The real culprit behind “the destruction in the world” is human desire.

Desire energizes the old nature to produce sin which leads to destruction.

There are precious promises that involve our eternal future. Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning as we sing verse 4 of “**The Solid Rock**”: *“When He shall come with trumpet sound, Oh, may I then in Him be found; Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand.”*

August 16 — Intense Effort – Part 1 (2 Peter 1:5)

2 Peter 1:5: *“Now for this very reason also, having added on your part every intense effort, provide lavishly in your faith the aforementioned virtue, and in the virtue, knowledge.”*

Verse 5: “Now for this very reason also, having added on your part every intense effort, provide lavishly in your faith the aforementioned virtue, and in the virtue, knowledge.”

As His children, we are motivated by a deep desire to please the Lord. We want to do what He has said.

We learned yesterday we have everything we need for life and godliness – the *power, person and promises*. We need only to be *partakers* of the inheritance planned for us in the future.

We have “become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the destruction in the world caused by desire.” “For this very reason,” we are now to add on our part “every intense effort.”

With all of the *resources* available, there is a *responsibility* on our part.

The seven virtues in chapter 1:5-7 are crucial to the concept growth, following Peter’s closure of his first letter in chapter 3:18. They are the goals for growth for the Christian.

“Now for this very reason also, having added on your part every intense effort, provide lavishly.” Peter is stating the importance of really putting yourself into this growth and working at it every way.

“Provide lavishly in your faith.” Back in verse 1, Peter mentioned this faith when he addressed the letter “to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours.”

Now, the apostle Peter lists seven additions we are to make “every intense effort” to “provide (for) lavishly in your faith.” The first is “the aforementioned virtue.”

1. Virtue

To add “the aforementioned virtue,” we’ve got to work, be strong, have manly energy and let it be manifested in prompt decisions and resolute action. We must behave like a man who has a clear, fixed judgment of what is true and right, and who is determined to follow it to its fair, practical results. We must not look as if we are halting between two opinions, weary in well-doing or being double-minded men, unstable in all of our ways. We need to bear a bold front in opposition to the hazards connected with a consistent Christian profession.

Gaebelein says:

“It means moral courage, a courage which refused the gratification of the old nature.”

It is an energy by which the heart is master of itself.

It is the summation of Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”

“Provide lavishly in your faith the aforementioned virtue, and in the virtue, knowledge.”

2. Knowledge

The more you know Him, the more you are going to love Him. The more you know Him, the more you are going to trust Him.

Philippians 3:10: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”

The apostle is outlining the game plan for progress and growth in our Christian life.

The second virtue, knowledge, is to seek to get to know Him.

For our worship and praise this morning, let’s sing one of Fanny Crosby’s favorite hymns, “**Draw Me Nearer.**” Please join me in singing verse 1: *“I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me; But I long to rise in the arms of faith, And be closer drawn to Thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

August 17 — Intense Effort – Part 2 (2 Peter 1:6)

2 Peter 1:6: “*And in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness.*”

Verse 6: “And in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness.”

Ironside points out:

“There can be no proper growth without a deepened understanding of spiritual realities.”

In the chain of virtues mentioned in these verses, the third is self-control - “and in your knowledge, self-control.”

3. Self-Control

This concept is demonstrated in 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”

Self-control is listed as a fruitage of the spirit in Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Of little use is a trained mind in an ungoverned body.

Hannah Whitall Smith in her book, *Religious Fanaticism*, writes:

A quiet, steadfast holding of the human will to the will of God and a peaceful resting in His love and care is of infinitely greater value in the religious life than the most intense emotions or the most wonderful experiences that have ever been known by the greatest mystic of them all.

“And in your self-control, perseverance,” the fourth virtue.

4. Perseverance

“Hupomone” is a Greek word which means “*to remain under*.” The word occurs 49 times in the New Testament.

Hebrews 10:36: “For you are having need of perseverance, in order that, having done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.”

2 Thessalonians 3:5: “And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness (perseverance) of Christ.”

Perseverance is staying power, sticking to it under stress and fighting fortitude.

The fifth virtue is seen in the last phrase of this verse, “and in your perseverance, godliness.” Now we have:

5. Godliness

Oyler says:

“Godliness in this context refers to that proper attitude toward

God that results in behavior that is pleasing to God.”

We learned in verse 3: “Seeing that His divine power has generously given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by means of His own glory and virtue.”

This morning, how appropriate it is for us to continue worshipping and praising the Lord with Fanny Crosby’s hymn. Please sing verse 2 with me of **“Draw Me Nearer”**: *“Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord, By the pow’r of grace divine; Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope, And my will be lost in Thine. Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.”*

August 18 — Intense Effort – Part 3 (2 Peter 1:7)

2 Peter 1:7: *“And in your godliness, brotherly affection, and in your brotherly affection, the divine love.”*

Verse 7: “And in your godliness, brotherly affection, and in your brotherly affection, the divine love.”

The sixth virtue is brotherly affection, “and in your godliness, brotherly affection.”

6. Brotherly Affection

The Greek word, “phileo,” means “*to love the brother.*”

Romans 12:9-10: “Let love be without hypocrisy. Be abhorring what is evil; be clinging to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; trying to outdo one another in showing respect.”

True godliness is expressed in loving others.

“And in your brotherly affection, the divine love.” This is the seventh virtue, love produced by the Spirit of God in the believer’s heart. “Agape” is the Greek word.

7. Divine Love

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 give fifteen qualities of love, but the passage ends with 13:13: “But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Love perseveres all things. It is the final virtue because it most appropriately reflects the divine nature. Love is what God is. It is the divine nature itself.

It is only as we are empowered by the indwelling Spirit that we are capable, by an act of our will, to offer a self-sacrificing act of love to those in the world around us.

The real secret is surrender. As we surrender to the power of the Spirit of God, we will indeed begin to see these qualities of lifestyle

showing up in our lives.

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of **"Draw Me Nearer"**: *"O, the pure delight of a single hour That before Thy throne I spend, When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend! Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side."*

August 19 — Fruitful & Faithful (2 Peter 1:8)

2 Peter 1:8: *"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing they are rendering you neither unemployed nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Verse 8: "For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they are rendering you neither unemployed nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"For if" (this is a big "if") "these qualities" (the seven listed: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly affection and divine love) "are yours and are increasing," (you not only possess, but are growing in these spiritual disciplines), the result will be two-fold. "They are rendering you (negatively):

1. Neither unemployed
2. Nor Unfruitful

"in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Employed and fruitful are the opposites of "unemployed" and "unfruitful." We need to be employed and fruitful in the Lord's work.

There is a greater and greater display of these qualities as we grow toward maturity.

Elisabeth Elliot in her book, *Discipline: The Glad Surrender*, says:

Here is a recipe for boredom and cynicism: if life is nothing more than a meaningless string of minutes threaded on hours, with no comprehension of God's work from beginning to end, the hillbilly song says it all:

*"Open the door and the flies come in,
Shut the door and I'm sweating again.
Life gets tejus, don't it?"*

Proverbs 18: 9: "One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys."

John 15:16: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of Fanny Crosby's hymn, "**Draw Me Nearer**": *"There are depths of love that I cannot know Till I cross the narrow sea; There are heights of joy that I may not reach Till I rest in peace with Thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side."*

August 20 — Short-Sighted & Blind (2 Peter 1:9)

2 Peter 1:9: *"For he who is lacking these qualities is so shortsighted that he is blind, having forgotten his purification from his former sins."*

Verse 9: "For he who is lacking these qualities is so shortsighted that he is blind, having forgotten his purification from his former sins."

In verse 8, we have the person in whom these qualities is residing and increasing. This person is employed and fruitful "in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, in verse 9, we have the opposite. We have the one who is lacking these qualities, referring to the seven disciplines that have been outlined.

Whereas the two key words in verse 8 were neither "unemployed nor unfruitful;" the key words in this verse are "shortsighted" and "forgotten."

First, this person is shortsighted in the sense that they are living only for themselves and for the now. There is no long range purpose for this person. Eating and drinking and being merry!

Barclay says:

The word here can have either of two meanings. It can mean shortsighted. It is easy to become shortsighted in life, to see things only as they appear at the moment, and to be unable to take the long view of things, to have our eyes so fixed upon earth that we never think of the things which are beyond. But this word can also mean blinking, or shutting the eyes. Again, it is easy in life to shut our eyes to that which we do not wish to see; to walk, as it were, in blinkers (blinders), which limit our view to the things that we wish to see about ourselves and about the world.

Secondly, this person who is lacking these qualities has not only become "shortsighted," he has "forgotten his purification from his former sins."

Jesus instituted the ordinance of the broken bread and the drinking of the cup for this very purpose – it would be done in remembrance of Him on a regular basis.

I believe it would be most appropriate for us as we worship and praise the Lord this morning that we do so with a prayer hymn, **“Open My Eyes That I May See.”** Please join me as we sing verse 1: *“Open my eyes that I may see Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me; Place in my hands the wonderful key That shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!”*

August 21 — Diligence (2 Peter 1:10)

2 Peter 1:10: *“Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you are doing these things, you will never stumble.”*

Verse 10: “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you are doing these things, you will never stumble.”

Our verse begins with “therefore.” In light of the previous commands and outlining of the spiritual disciplines or Christian virtues, Peter now addresses the brethren. He gives them the command, “Be all the more diligent.”

In verse 5, he has said, “Having added on your part every intense effort.”

The reason for the command is seen in the next phrase, “for as long as you are doing these things, you will never stumble.” To “stumble” means *“to get sidetracked”* or *“out of fellowship with the Lord.”*

Galatians 5:7: “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

Psalms 37: 23-24: “If the Lord delights in a man’s way, He makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand.”

J. Vernon McGee says:

I have been married for a long time, and I never lie awake at night and wonder whether or not I am married. But to make my marriage meaningful, I have to work at it. And I have been working at it for a long, long time.

In this verse, we are told to concentrate on the conduct. It’s what we are that really counts, more than what we do or say.

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of our prayer hymn, **“Open My Eyes That I May See”:** *“Open my mind, that I may read More of Thy love in word and deed. What shall I fear while yet Thou dost lead? Only for light from Thee I plead. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my mind, illumine*

me, Spirit divine!”

August 22 — Entrance to the Eternal Kingdom (2 Peter 1:11)

2 Peter 1:11: *“For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.”*

Verse 11: “For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.”

The reason for being “all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you” and emphasizing these virtues that have been described is not only so you will not “stumble.” It is also so that “in this way” you will have a “richly provided” “entrance into the eternal kingdom.”

“For in this way,” doing these things, “the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.”

Charles Jones in his book, *Life is Tremendous*, says:

You know what growing means. Growing means growing pains. It means changing. When two people come together and don’t let each other change each other, they may wind up exchanging each other.

If you’re learning to say something positive to everybody, about everything all the time; if you’re disciplining your mind to see something positive in everything that happens, and if you’re learning to see it big and keep it simple, you have a foundation on which to build a steady, expanding life.

I would add to this wonderful quote that you will be providing richly for your entrance into heaven.

I think it would be most appropriate for us to continue to sing our prayer hymn. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“Open My Eyes That I May See”**: *“Open my way that I may bring Trophies of grace to Christ, my King; Echoed in love Thy word shall out-ring, Sweet as the note that angels sing. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my way, illumine me, Spirit divine!”*

August 23 — Repetition! Repetition! Repetition! (2 Peter 1:12)

2 Peter 1:12: *“Therefore, I shall always be ready to be reminding you concerning these things, even though you know them and have been firmly established in the truth which is present with you.”*

Verse 12: “Therefore, I shall always be ready to be reminding you

concerning these things, even though you know them and have been firmly established in the truth which is present with you.”

Peter believed in *seeing it simply* and *keeping it positive*. These are the final acts of a great man following his master. You will notice he is still thinking of others in these closing days of his life.

In this verse, “therefore” takes us back to verse 10: “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you are doing these things, you will never stumble.” Now, he says, “Therefore, I shall always be ready.”

“I shall always be ready to be reminding (or calling your attention to) you concerning these things.” “These things” refers back to the virtues described in the previous verses. He is directing us to concentrate on our duty by developing the virtues he’s outlined!

You need my arms around you when you fall and I need to be in the front row clapping wildly when you succeed! This is Peter’s personal commitment to these believers as long as he remains in the flesh.

There are two things he reminds them:

1. They know about these things
2. These things have been firmly established in the truth, which is present with them.

Peter is making an issue about truth at this time in preparation for his speaking on falsehood in chapter 2.

It was Jesus who said in John 8:32: “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.” He also said to Thomas in the Upper Room in John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by me.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord by singing verse 1 of that wonderful, triumphant hymn, “**When We All Get To Heaven**”: “*Sing the wondrous love of Jesus, Sing His mercy and His grace; In the mansions bright and blessed He’ll prepare for us a place. When we all get to Heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We’ll sing and shout the victory.*”

August 24 — My Ground Time is Going to be Brief (2 Peter 1:13-14)

2 Peter 1:13: “*Indeed, I am considering it my duty (right), as long as I am in this tent to keep on stirring you up by way of reminder.*”

2 Peter 1:14: “*Knowing that the laying aside of my earthly tent is very soon, even as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.*”

Verse 13: “Indeed, I am considering it my duty (right), as long as I am in this tent to keep on stirring you up by way of reminder.”

This verse begins with an emotional outburst in the word, “indeed.” We have considered together:

1. Resources – what you have
2. Responsibility – what you do
3. Relationships – how I’ll help

In verse 12, he says, “I shall always be ready.” Now in verse 13, “I am considering it my duty (right), as long as I am in this tent to keep on stirring you up by way of reminder.”

The reminder comes as an *exhortation, encouragement* or *example*.

The apostle describes his body as a tent, a temporary dwelling.

Philippians 1:23: “But I am being hard pressed between the two, having the desire to depart (break up camp) and to be with Christ, for it is much more better.”

Verse 14: “Knowing that the laying aside of my earthly tent is very soon, even as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.”

Physical death to the Apostle Peter is just the laying aside of a physical body. He is running harder because he knows he is getting closer to the goal! He is following in the steps of his Savior in John 9:4: “We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.”

Peter knows that he is terminal, but doesn’t seem to be sad about it. The testimony of the dying can win the world to Christ. God doesn’t say don’t cry, don’t grieve, don’t hurt. He only says: Don’t fear!

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**When We All Get To Heaven**”: “*While we walk the pilgrim pathway Clouds will overspread the sky; But when trav’ling days are over, Not a shadow, not a sigh. When we all get to Heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We’ll sing and shout the victory.*”

August 25 — We Spoke Truth to You (2 Peter 1:15-16)

2 Peter 1:15: “*Indeed, I will also do my best that at any time after my departure you may be able to call these things to mind,*”

2 Peter 1:16: “*For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and personal coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but became eyewitnesses of that One’s magnificence.*”

Verse 15: “Indeed, I will also do my best that at any time after my departure you may be able to call these things to mind,”

Again, Peter uses the emotional word, “indeed.” In verses 12-14, Peter tells what he will do in the present to remind them and keep on “stirring” them up. In verse 15, he turns to the future saying, “I will

also do my best.”

“Do(ing) my best” is probably the writing of these two epistles: 1 and 2 Peter. They will be left after his departure. We will outline “these things,” the virtues we have seen in the previous verses.

Verse 16: “For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and personal coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but became eyewitnesses of that One’s magnificence.”

Peter is letting us know Jesus got a round trip ticket and He’s coming back!

The reason he is “stirring” up their minds by way of remembrance and preparing “these things” for his ultimate departure is because he, along with the rest of the men, did not follow “cleverly devised fables.” This is truth! This is *good, genuine, glorious* stuff!

How could he forget Jesus’ words in the Upper Room in John 14:1-3: “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

It has been wonderful singing a triumphant, worship hymn these past mornings while we study these verses. Please join me singing verse 3 of **“When We All Get To Heaven”**: *“Let us then be true and faithful, Trusting, serving ev’ry day; Just one glimpse of Him in glory Will the toils of life repay. When we all get to Heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We’ll sing and shout the victory.”*

August 26 — We Witnessed the Transfiguration (2 Peter 1:17-18)

2 Peter 1:17: “For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such a voice as this was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is my beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased.’”

2 Peter 1:18: “And we ourselves heard this voice borne along out from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.”

Verse 17: “For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such a voice as this was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is my beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased.’”

As Peter begins to think of his own departure, he is reminded of the transfiguration experience. He witnessed the Lord Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah about His departure into Glory. It would soon be accomplished in the city of Jerusalem as He gave His Life upon the cross.

He says the transfiguration was not only a demonstration of His power and personal coming, but a time when Jesus received two things: *honor* and *glory* from God the Father. It was demonstrated in a voice as this was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory,” and the voice said, “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased.”

“This,” refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, “is my,” He belongs to the Father, “beloved,” He is much loved, and He is a “Son.” It is with this Son “in whom I,” God the Father, “am well-pleased.” God is satisfied with the work His Son has done and will complete.

Verse 18: “And we ourselves heard this voice borne along out from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.”

We saw this transfiguration and we heard a voice. Our eyes and ears witnessed the truth!

The “we” refers to Peter, James and John. Hearing this voice provides another of the five senses to this witness. They not only saw with their eyes, but their heard with their ears.

The Lord often enriches our lives with previews. This was a preview for these three disciples to see Jesus preparing to enter glory.

No wonder John could say: “Soon we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Sometimes, God the Father enriches our lives with the Glory of the unknown. How precious He is!

Let’s sing together in victorious triumph, worship and praise verse 4 of “**When We All Get To Heaven**”: “*Onward to the prize before us, Soon His beauty we’ll behold; Soon the pearly gates will open, We shall tread the streets of gold. When we all get to Heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We’ll sing and shout the victory.*”

August 27 — The Morning Star Will Arise (2 Peter 1:19)

2 Peter 1:19: “*And we are having the prophetic word as something altogether reliable, to which you are doing well to be paying attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.*”

Verse 19: “And we are having the prophetic word as something altogether reliable, to which you are doing well to be paying attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.”

In verse 17, we had the word of the Father. In this verse, we have the words of the prophets. If it is *prophetic*, it is also a *promise*, and the Father keeps His *Promises*.

Revelation 1:3: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for

the time is near.”

Prophecy is like a lamp, giving light to walk by in the dark world.

Peter shares with us three evidences that he did not follow “cleverly devised fables.” He speaks of:

1. What he saw
2. What he heard
3. The prophetic word

“And we are having,” something more, “the prophetic word as something altogether reliable.” He continues: “to which (the prophetic word) you are doing well.” It is something which pleases the Father when you study the prophets.

“You are doing well to be paying attention.” He then uses an illustration to describe the prophetic word. It is “as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.”

There is a new dawning. It is not a question of “if,” but of “when.”

Peter instructs us “to be paying attention” to “the prophetic word.” Many people don’t bother with it so they don’t see that something better is on the horizon.

1 Corinthians 2:9: “But just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.’”

“The prophetic word” will shine like “a lamp shining in a dark place” until two things happen:

1. The day dawns
2. The morning star arises in your hearts

In Revelation 2:28, Jesus says: “And I will give him the morning star.”

Revelation 22:16: “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning Star.”

Whether is it by death or His coming to take us home to be with Himself, what a glorious anticipation is ours. Indeed, “soon we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of “**Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus**”: “*O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There’s a light for a look at the Savior; And life more abundant and free! Turn your eyes upon Jesus; Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim In the light of His glory and grace.*”

August 28 — Prophecy Came by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21)

2 Peter 1:20: *“But knowing this first of all, that every prophecy of Scripture is not originating from one’s own interpretation.”*

2 Peter 1:21: *“For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men being carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”*

Verse 20: “But knowing this first of all, that every prophecy of Scripture is not originating from one’s own interpretation.”

Verse 21: “For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men being carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

Harry Ironside says:

“Prophecy is intended by God to illumine our paths and give light in our souls until the day dawns and the day star arise at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The reason is given in verse 21: “For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will.” The message of prophecy will be consistent with its source. It will be holy if it is from the Holy Spirit and unholy if it is from Satan.

No “prophecy of Scripture” is originating “from one’s own interpretation” of world events nor “was ever made by an act of human will.”

We read in the text, “being carried along by the Holy Spirit (the instrument) spoke from God.” The words “being carried along” are like the winds filling the sails of the sailing vessel. As the winds fill the sails, so the Holy Spirit fills the prophets bringing forth the message from the Lord for us to hear. These men, the prophets, were “being carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

We are challenged to pay attention to the prophetic word. We need to observe that God the Father sometimes gives us a little glimpse of glory to encourage and prepare us for our arrival.

For our worship and praise this morning, let’s sing verse 3 of **“Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus”**: *“His Word shall not fail you, He promised; Believe Him, and all will be well. Then go to a world that is dying, His perfect salvation to tell! Turn your eyes upon Jesus; Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim In the light of His glory and grace.”*

August 29 — The Destruction of the False Prophets (2 Peter 2:1)

2 Peter 2:1: *“But there arose also false prophets among the people, just as there will be also false teachers among you, who will bring in destructive opinions, even denying the Master who*

purchased them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”

Verse 1: “But there arose also false prophets among the people, just as there will be also false teachers among you, who will bring in destructive opinions, even denying the Master who purchased them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”

The word “but” forms the contrast to the positive, authentic prophecy Peter has been speaking about in chapter 1.

Through the process of time, there arose Satan’s men. These men are borne along by the unholy spirit.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15: “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan is disguising himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if also his servants are disguising themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

When you bring in falsehood to the body of Christ, you also bring upon yourself “destruction.”

James 3:1: “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.”

One of the biggest problems that error creates to the body of Christ is to destroy its unity and its love for one another.

Peter gives a dramatic illustration of what this means, “even denying the Master who purchased them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.” In other words, they don’t accept His provision through the blood of Christ upon the cross.

Note that Peter uses the title “Master” when he speaks of the Lord. Perhaps we are the slaves to sin He purchased with His own blood, pictured here in this verse. The question we must ask: Is He our Master? Maybe we need to surrender anew to His Lordship.

How interesting it is that much of liberalism today is represented by a bloodless religion. The writer of the book of Hebrews makes it clear that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

Colossians 1:20: “And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.”

Whenever I work on a passage that speaks of certain divine judgment, I find myself worshipping and praising the Lord with this wonderful hymn. Would you join me singing verse 1 of “**Battle Hymn of the Republic?**”: *“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword; His truth is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory!*

Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on.

August 30 — Many Will Go the Broad Way (2 Peter 2:2-3)

2 Peter 2:2: *“And many will follow their inclination to sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;”*

2 Peter 2:3: *“And in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not sleeping.”*

Verse 2: “And many will follow their inclination to sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;”

The word “and” is a continuation of verse 1, “many will follow their inclination to sensuality.” The many will believe if it feels good, do it!

Proverbs 14:12 (NLT): “There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.”

“And because of them,” the false teachers, “the way,” the narrow way, “of the truth.” The way is singular – You are either in it or out of it.

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.’”

What does it mean to be “maligned?” It means *“to be slandered, to be spoken evil of, to be injured.”* Psalm 1:1: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.”

Destructive opinions will end up in “swift destruction” for the teachers.

Verse 3: “And in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not sleeping.”

As mentioned in 2:14, it is “a heart trained in greed.” “In their greed, they will exploit you with false words.”

2 Corinthians 2:17: “For we are not like the many who are peddling the word of God, but out of pure motives (sincerity), but as from God we are speaking in Christ in the sight of God.”

The “judgment...is not idle.” It is getting closer and closer for them. The “destruction is not sleeping,” but wide awake, ready to overtake them when the Father designs it shall be so.

I think it would be appropriate for us to continue our worship and praise this morning by singing verse 2 of **“Battle Hymn of the Republic”**: *“I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps; They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and*

damps; I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps; His day is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on.”

August 31 — Examples of God’s Judgment (2 Peter 2:4-5)

2 Peter 2:4: “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them down into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, being reserved for judgment;”

2 Peter 2:5: “And did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.”

Verse 4: “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them down into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, being reserved for judgment;”

The phrase “did not spare” occurs in both verses 4 and 5.

This is the first of three illustrations the writer uses of swift and certain judgment in God’s handling of the “angels when they sinned.” He “cast” and “committed” the angels. He also “reserved” and “preserved” – *reserved* for judgment and *preserved* from judgment.

I think it is important for us to observe that hell is a place, not a state or condition.

Jude 1:6: “And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”

Verse 5: “And did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.”

He “reserved” the judgment for angels, but “preserved” Noah, “a preacher of righteousness,” from judgment.

This is the second illustration Peter uses of the certainty and swiftness of God’s judgment – the flood which took place during Noah’s time.

“And did not spare the ancient world.” Genesis 6:8: “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.” “But preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.”

Noah’s title is “a preacher of righteousness.” God “brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.” We have talked about the godly in chapter 1, but now we are introduced to the ungodly in chapter 2.

Let’s continue our worship and praise by singing verse 3 of “**Battle Hymn of the Republic**”: “He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never sound retreat; He is sifting out the hearts of men before His

judgment seat; O be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet! Our God is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on.”

SEPTEMBER

September 1 — Sodom & Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:6)

2 Peter 2:6: “*And if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to the ungodly of things about to come.*”

Verse 6: “And if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to the ungodly of things about to come.”

We have the third illustration from Peter. He uses the example of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah being destroyed as an act of divine judgment. First, he spoke of the angels, then of the flood in the ancient world. Now, he speaks of these two wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 18:20: “Then the Lord said, ‘The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous.’”

Romans 1:28: “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to be doing those things which are not fitting.”

Peter is saying the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are an example, a message, to the ones who know not God. It is a message to “the ungodly of the things about to come,” or the certainty of future judgment, spoken of in verse 3.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 (NLT): “In flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.”

J.I. Packer in his book, *Knowing God*, says:

The doctrine of final judgment stresses man’s accountability and the certainty that justice will finally triumph over all the wrongs which are part and parcel of life here and now. The former gives a dignity to the humblest action, the latter brings calmness and assurance to those in the thick of the battle.

The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were *pride, pleasure and perversion*. They led to instant and swift judgment.

This morning, let’s worship and praise that the Lord is One who keeps His promises. He not only sustains, but leads us through to victory. Let’s celebrate with Fanny Crosby by singing verse 1 of her famous

hymn, **“Blessed Assurance”**: *“Blessèd assurance, Jesus is mine! O, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.”*

September 2 — Lot’s Suffering in a Sinful Culture (2 Peter 2:7-8)

2 Peter 2:7: *“And if He rescued righteous Lot, being completely worn down by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men.”*

2 Peter 2:8: *“For by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, they were tormenting his righteous soul day after day with their lawless deeds.”*

Verse 7: “And if He rescued righteous Lot, being completely worn down by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men.”

The power of a sinful and corrupt society makes a tremendous impact on Lot. When it came time to choose, he chose the best land. He was willing to sacrifice his daughters to sexual whims of the city of Sodom. Finally, he drank and got his daughters pregnant.

The corrupt environment has caused Lot to be “completely worn down.” God must have revealed something about Lot’s heart to Peter. Lot endured a daily struggle.

The word “completely” speaks of exhaustion. The word “worn down” refers to *“the process of continuous stress until the will is weakened.”* This is one of Satan’s programs for defeat.

Sometimes it is the spur of the moment desire, but in others it is the stress and struggle of being exhausted by the fight. Weakened through the struggle, we see this program with Eve as the serpent comes back again with another suggestion. We see it in the life of Joseph as Potiphar’s wife is coming to him day after day. Then, we see it in the life of Samson as Delilah continues time and again to find the secret of Samson’s strength.

It is amazing how little of Biblical principle filters down in the determination of rights, rules and regulations in the society in which we live. We are living in a day when men will fight to win the right to justify their sin.

Verse 8: “For by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, they were tormenting his righteous soul day after day with their lawless deeds.”

In these circumstances, it is what the eye saw and the ear heard that created the problems for Lot. The mind *thinks*, the eye *sees* and the ear *hears*. The desire is triggered, the course is altered, the will takes action.

Simply stated, the principle of this passage is that the Lord can

handle the opposition and deliver you from the temptation, but it is your responsibility to lean upon Him and allow Him to provide the victory. “Greater is He that is in Me, than He that is in the world.”

Please join me as we celebrate this truth, by singing verse 2 of Fanny Crosby’s hymn, “**Blessed Assurance**”: “*Perfect submission, perfect delight, Visions of rapture now burst on my sight; Angels descending, bring from above Echoes of mercy, whispers of love. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.*”

September 3 — The Lord Can Handle Judgment (2 Peter 2:9)

2 Peter 2:9: “*The Lord is knowing how to be delivering the godly out of testing (temptation), and to be keeping the unrighteous for the day of judgment to be punished.*”

Verse 9: “The Lord is knowing how to be delivering the godly out of testing (temptation), and to be keeping the unrighteous for the day of judgment to be punished.”

Now, Peter gives us two summary statements. “The Lord is knowing how”:

1. “To be delivering the godly out of testing (or temptation).” This has been manifested by His deliverance of Noah, the preacher or righteousness, and righteous Lot.
2. “To be keeping the unrighteous for the day of judgment to be punished.” This is seen in the angels, the flood and the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT): “The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.”

Weisiger says:

How marvelous is the knowledge of the Lord. He understands the weaknesses of our physical, mental, nervous and moral inheritance. He realizes that some are predisposed to sins of pride and self-will; some to sins of compromise with prevailing fads; some to gross sins of the flesh. Yet, He has the ingenuity and power to keep us from falling. When we even half-try to be faithful to Him, and when we are weary from a thousand temptations, He lets us know that “He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world.” Although we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, we also rejoice that God gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let's worship and praise our Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of that wonderful hymn, **"Blessed Assurance"**: *"Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blest; Watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long."*

September 4 — Caring Nothing for Authority (2 Peter 2:10)

2 Peter 2:10: *"And especially those who are going after the flesh in corrupting desire and who are caring nothing for authority. Presumptuous, stubborn, they are not trembling when they are defaming those in exalted positions."*

Verse 10: "And especially those who are going after the flesh in corrupting desire and who are caring nothing for authority. Presumptuous, stubborn, they are not trembling when they are defaming those in exalted positions."

"And especially those who are going after the flesh in corrupting desire."

Romans 1:32: "Such are those who, knowing the requirement (ordinance) of God, that those who are practicing such things are worthy of death, they are not only doing the same, but also are giving hearty approval to those who are practicing them."

The word "especially" tells us that God has a special judgment for those who are "going after the flesh in corrupting desire."

English says:

"They assume that they know more than God about running the universe."

"And who are caring nothing for authority." They are "presumptuous, stubborn, they are not trembling when they are defaming those in exalted positions."

Barkley points out:

There is a reason for this loss of proportion, and the reason is nothing other than selfishness. The root evil of the lust-dominated life is that it proceeds on the assumption that nothing matters but the gratification of its own desires and the expression of its own feeling. It has ceased to have any respect or care for others. It has erected itself in the center of the picture. Selfishness and desire go hand in hand.

This kind of verse at the beginning of the day brings me a lot of personal joy. Just to know that no matter how bad the world gets, the Lord is still in control and He will have the final word. That word is going to

be “Victory!”

I think it would be most appropriate for us to sing Martin Luther's famous hymn, **“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.”** Please join me in singing verse 1: *“A mighty Fortress is our God, A Bulwark never failing; Our Helper He amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, And armed with cruel hate, On earth is not His equal.”*

September 5 — In Destroying, Be Destroyed (2 Peter 2:11-12)

2 Peter 2:11: *“Whereas angels, who are greater in might and power are not bringing a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.”*

2 Peter 2:12: *“But these, like unreasoning animals, having been born as creatures of instinct to be caught and killed, reviling where they are having no knowledge; shall in their destroying surely be destroyed.”*

Verse 11: “Whereas angels, who are greater in might and power are not bringing a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.”

Peter describes the angels as “greater in might and power,” but even being in this position, they “are not bringing a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.” Earlier in chapter 2:4, he said: “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them down into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, being reserved for judgment.”

McGee says:

“The false teachers are lifted up with pride and they do something that angels don’t dare to do.”

Verse 12: “But these, like unreasoning animals, having been born as creatures of instinct to be caught and killed, reviling where they are having no knowledge; shall in their destroying surely be destroyed.”

Never underestimate the power of the enemy.

Now, Peter uses an illustration to describe these false prophets. They are “like unreasoning animals.” They are controlled by their desires rather than intelligent thought, “having been born as creatures of instinct.”

According to Peter, they are born “to be caught and killed, reviling where they are having no knowledge.”

A man without the facts has no right to an opinion.

The prophetic end to those who are doing these things “shall in their destroying surely be destroyed.” They are destroying unity and love within the body of Christ. This is not going unnoticed by the Lord. They will ultimately be destroyed as well.

These are lives that have all the potential in the world to be beautiful,

but they have chosen to go their own way.

What joy is ours to worship the Lord! Please join me in singing verse 2 of **“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”**: *“Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing, Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God’s own choosing: Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth, His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the battle.”*

September 6 — The Wages of Wrong Doing (2 Peter 2:13)

2 Peter 2:13: *“Suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They are counting it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they are feasting together with you.”*

Verse 13: “Suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They are counting it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they are feasting together with you.”

“Suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong” reminds us of Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Galatians 6:7: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

We ask the obvious question: What are they doing wrong? The apostle outlines five things they are doing wrong in the remainder of this verse and verse 14:

1. They are counting it a pleasure to revel in the daytime.

In making a defense for those who were manifesting the phenomenal signs at the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter says in Acts 2:15: “For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day.” These false teachers are drinking and carrying on during the daytime hours when they should be at work, constructively involved in the tasks at hand.

2. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they are feasting together with you.

They are phony and hypocritical. They are terrorists who have infiltrated the Christian church. As Peter describes them, they are carrying on, going through all the religious motions without a relationship. They are associating themselves without the acceptance of Christ. Judas Iscariot is a classic illustration.

Galatians 2:4: “But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order

to bring us into bondage.”

I can't believe how wonderful it is for us to continue our worship and praise when we sing with Martin Luther verse 3 of **“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”**: *“And tho this world, with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us. The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure; One little word shall fell him.”*

September 7 — Looking for Sin (2 Peter 2:14)

2 Peter 2:14: *“Having eyes that are full of (desire for) an adulteress and unceasingly looking for sin; enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children.”*

Verse 14: “Having eyes that are full of (desire for) an adulteress and unceasingly looking for sin; enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children.”

We will continue the description of these false teachers that Peter began yesterday.

3. Having eyes that are full of (desire for) an adulteress and unceasingly looking for sin.

Paul says in his last letter, 2 Timothy 3:6: “For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women, weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses.”

4. Enticing unstable souls

It is amazing how so many cults and religious groups who are caught up in error feast on “the unstable souls” – the new converts who have not really had a chance to get established. It appears the heretics delight to feast on the unstable souls.

They are snatching the seed before it is able to take root!

5. Having a heart trained in greed

Peter makes his summary outburst in conclusion: “accursed children.”

Weisinger points out:

Four marks of deep slavery to sin are:

1. Rationalization
2. Shamelessness
3. Abandonment
4. Seduction of others

William Barclay says:

If a man dedicates himself to these fleshly pleasures, if he makes them his only joy, in the end he so ruins himself in bodily health and in spiritual and mental character, that-he

cannot even enjoy them. To put it quite simply and bluntly, the glutton destroys his appetite in the end. The drunkard ruins his health. The sensualist destroys his own body. The self-indulgent ruins his own character and his own peace of mind. The man who dedicates himself to these things is seeking for pleasure. For a while he might enjoy what he calls pleasure, but in the end he ruins his health, wrecks his constitution, destroys his mind and character, and begins his experience of hell when he is still upon the earth.

There's a glorious alternative in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We celebrate that alternative with great joy this morning as we worship and praise the Lord by singing verse 4 of **"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"**: *"That word above all earthly powers, No thanks to them, abideth; The Spirit and the gifts are ours, Thru him who with us sideth; Let goods and kindred go, This mortal life also; The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still; His kingdom is forever."*

September 8 — The Way of Balance (2 Peter 2:15-16)

2 Peter 2:15: *"Leaving the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."*

2 Peter 2:16: *"But he received a rebuke for his own transgression; for a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man; restrained the insanity of the prophet."*

Verse 15: "Leaving the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."

"They have gone astray." Isaiah 53:6: "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

J. Vernon McGee points out:

Balaam is mentioned three times in the closing books of the New Testament:

1. In 2 Peter, it is "the way of Balaam."
2. In Jude, it is "the error of Balaam."
3. In Revelation, it is "the doctrine of Balaam."

Each one is different. What is "the way of Balaam?" Peter says he is the son of Beor who loved the wages of unrighteousness. Balaam knew that he should not go and prophesy against Israel. But he loved the price that was being offered to him. Therefore, the way of Balaam is the covetousness of one who does religious

work for personal profit.

It is “what can I get” more than “what can I give.”

Verse 16: “But he received a rebuke for his own transgression; for a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man; restrained the insanity of the prophet.”

Balaam received a rebuke for his own transgression in this situation. Peter speaks about how this happens: “for a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man; restrained the insanity of the prophet.” The donkey speaks the message from the Lord. He calls selfishness insanity.

Let’s worship and praise the Lord by singing that wonderful hymn, **“A Shelter in the Time of Storm.”** Please sing verse 1 with me: *“The Lord’s our Rock, in Him we hide, A Shelter in the time of storm; Secure whatever ill betide, A Shelter in the time of storm. O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A weary land, a weary land; O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A Shelter in the time of storm.”*

September 9 — High Sounding But Empty Words (2 Peter 2:17-18)

2 Peter 2:17: *“These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the blackness of the darkness has been reserved.”*

2 Peter 2:18: *“For they are speaking high-sounding but empty words. They are enticing by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who are just about escaping from the ones who are living in error.”*

Verse 17: “These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the blackness of the darkness has been reserved.”

These false teachers are characterized in two ways in this verse:

1. Springs without water

John 7:37-38: “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”’”

2. Mists driven by a storm, for whom the blackness of the darkness has been reserved.

J. Vernon McGee says:

They are very impressive but there is no water in the well and there is no rain in the clouds. People are thirsting today for the word of God, and yet it is not being given to them.

The reservations for eternity have already been made. The blackness of the darkness has been reserved for them. In Matthew 22:13 and 25:30, Christ speaks of casting into outer darkness those who have not responded properly to that which He has commanded.

Verse 18: “For they are speaking high-sounding but empty words. They are enticing by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who are just about escaping from the ones who are living in error.”

These false teachers are characterized in two additional ways:

3. Speaking high-sounding but empty words. They are betrayed by their speech.
4. They are enticing by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who are just about escaping from the ones who are living in error. They are betrayed by their actions.

One of Satan’s instruments from the very beginning has been desire. You will notice it says, “those who are just about escaping from the ones who are living in error.”

The “unstable souls” of verse 14 are those “who are just about escaping from the ones who are living in error” in verse 18.

The chains of illicit love will bind you forever in its slavery!

It is so hard to take the steps to disengage from that which is false. The hardest thing in the world is to admit that you have made a mistake.

Acts 4:12 (NLT): “There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”

We have found the shelter in the time of storm. Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of “**A Shelter in the Time of Storm**”: *“A Shade by day, Defense by night, A Shelter in the time of storm; No fears alarm, no foes afright, A Shelter in the time of storm. O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A weary land, a weary land; O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A Shelter in the time of storm.”*

September 10 — Slaves of Corruption (2 Peter 2:19-20)

2 Peter 2:19: “*Promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man has been defeated, by this he has been enslaved.*”

2 Peter 2:20: “*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again being entangled, being overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.*”

Verse 19: “Promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man has been defeated, by this he has been enslaved.”

They have been defeated by their own desires, and they are slaves of them.

John 8:32: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

These false teachers are “promising them freedom,” but “they themselves are slaves of corruption.” Yesterday, Peter gave us four characteristics of these false teachers: (1) “Springs without water,” (2) “mists driven by a storm, for whom the blackness of the darkness has been reserved,” (3) “speaking high-sounding but empty words,” and (4) “enticing by fleshly desires.” This verse includes two more:

5. Living in error

6. Promising freedom while they themselves are slaves.

The last phrase in this verse is a key phrase: “for by what a man has been defeated, by this he has been enslaved.” Ecclesiastes 4:5: “The fool folds his hands and ruins himself.”

Here, we are talking about the peril of the unsundered will. You can be pinned to the canvas in pride, too. Jacob is a great example.

1 Corinthians 6:12: “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.”

Verse 20: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again being entangled, being overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.”

This does not say they have entered into a relationship with Him, but they have an awareness of the facts of the Gospel. It goes on to say, “they are again being entangled being overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.”

The seed of the Gospel has been snatched away! They know about Christ, but they don’t know Christ.

2 Timothy 2:3-4: “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the One who enlisted him as a soldier.”

Let’s continue our worship and praise of the Lord by singing verse 3 of “**A Shelter in the Time of Storm**”: “*The raging storms may round us beat, A Shelter in the time of storm; We’ll never leave our safe retreat, A Shelter in the time of storm. O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A weary land, a weary land; O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A Shelter in the time of storm.*”

September 11 — The Dog & the Pig (2 Peter 2:21-22)

2 Peter 2:21: “*For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment which was delivered to them.*”

2 Peter 2:22: *“It has happened to them according to the true proverb, ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘A sow, having been bathed, to its rolling in the mire.’”*

Verse 21: “For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment which was delivered to them.”

The little word “for” gives us the reason why it is worse for them in the last state than the first. “It would be better for them,” negatively, “not to have known the way of righteousness,” than positively, “having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment which was delivered to them.”

When you hear it, you are held accountable.

By an act of will they chose not to receive Christ. What is the holy commandment? Luke 10:27: “And He answered and said, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’”

John 3:7 gives us the divine imperative: “You must be born again.”

Verse 22: *“It has happened to them according to the true proverb, ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘A sow, having been bathed, to its rolling in the mire.’”*

There are two illustrations from nature given in this proverb:

1. A dog returns to his own vomit.
2. A sow, having been bathed, to its rolling in the mire.

The Scriptures never refer to the believer as being a dog or a sow, but only a sheep. The Lord tells the story of the Good Shepherd, not the healthy dog nor the washed pig.

William Barclay points out:

So Peter ends with contempt. These evil men are like dogs who return to their vomit (Proverbs 26:11), or like a sow which has been scrubbed and then goes back to rolling in the mud. These men have seen Christ but they are so morally degraded by their own choice that they prefer to wallow in the depths of sin rather than to climb the heights of virtue. It is a dreadful warning that a man can make himself such that, in the end, the tentacles of sin are inextricably around him, and virtue for him has lost its beauty.

Richard DeHaan says:

“Profession of faith in the Savior isn’t necessarily possession of salvation.”

With greater meaning and purpose, let us worship the Lord and praise His holy name by singing verse 4 of **“A Shelter in the Time of Storm”**:
“O Rock divine, O Refuge dear, A Shelter in the time of storm; Be Thou

our Helper ever near, A Shelter in the time of storm. O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A weary land, a weary land; O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A Shelter in the time of storm."

September 12 — A Timely Reminder (2 Peter 3:1-2)

2 Peter 3:1: *"This already, beloved, is a second letter I am writing to you, in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,"*

2 Peter 3:2: *"That you should remember the words spoken previously by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles."*

Verse 1: "This already, beloved, is a second letter I am writing to you, in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,"

Back in chapter 1:13, Peter committed himself to "as long as he lived to keep on stirring them up by way of a reminder." He is accomplishing this commitment in the writing of this letter.

He uses the term "sincere mind" because he knows they are real believers and their faith is sincere.

Verse 2: "That you should remember the words spoken previously by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles."

This stirring reminder is now specified: "That you should remember the words spoken previously by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles."

These are the holy prophets, not the false or unholy prophets we have been studying in chapter 2. They are challenged and admonished to remember two things:

1. The words spoken previously by the holy prophets.
2. The commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.

Peter calls the Lord Jesus "Lord and Savior" in this verse. "Lord" before Calvary and "Savior" after Calvary. He understands the significance of the Cross!

Numbers 23:19 (NLT) comes to mind: "God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?"

Let's affirm these promises as we worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of **"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"**: *"All hail the pow'r of Jesus' Name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all; Bring forth the royal*

diadem, And crown Him Lord of all!"

September 13 — When Is He Coming Back? (2 Peter 3:3-4)

2 Peter 3:3: *"Knowing this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own desires,"*

2 Peter 3:4: *"And saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are remaining just as it was from the beginning of creation."*

Verse 3: "Knowing this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own desires,"

Why is it necessary "that you should remember the words spoken previously by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord?" Peter advises this is a top priority, "Knowing this first of all," and as a prophet he is letting us know "that in the last days mockers:"

1. Will come with their mocking.
2. Following after their own desires.

The first speaks of their *lip*, the second speaks of their *life*.

Just as they mocked Jesus while He hung upon the cross, now they are mocking the Word of God. The mocking is an excuse or a defense or a cover-up for the way of life they are leading.

They are "following after their own desires."

Verse 4: "And saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are remaining just as it was from the beginning of creation."

Their mocking will be in the form of a question: "Where is the promise of His coming?"

The question is not if He is coming, but when He is coming.

The mockers are saying nothing significant has happened since the creation of the world. The reason for their mocking is seen in the latter part of verse 4: "For ever since the fathers fell asleep," the patriarchs and the prophets, "all things are remaining," business is as usual and nothing is changed, "just as it was from the beginning of creation."

Luke 21:28: "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (NLT): "As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. For God says, 'At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.' Indeed, the 'right time' is now. Today is the day of salvation."

Please join me in singing verse 2 of **"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"** : *"Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, Ye ransomed from the fall,*

Hail Him who saves you by His grace, And crown Him Lord of all; Hail Him who saves you by His grace, And crown Him Lord of all!"

September 14 — He is the Creator (2 Peter 3:5-6)

2 Peter 3:5: *"For when they are maintaining this, it is escaping their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,"*

2 Peter 3:6: *"Through which the world at that time was destroyed, by being flooded with water."*

Verse 5: "For when they are maintaining this, it is escaping their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,"

In this verse, we have Peter's defense. The word "for" gives us the reason. "When they are maintaining this," the idea that everything is just the same as it was from the beginning of creation, "it is escaping their notice," they are failing to recognize what God has done, "that by the word of God:"

1. The heavens existed long ago.
2. The earth was formed out of water and by water.

The "word of God" was the instrument of creation. God just spoke all of this into being.

Verse 6: "Through which the world at that time was destroyed, by being flooded with water."

His word said, "Get in Noah. Shut the door. Let it rain!"

This takes us back to 2:5: "And did not spare the ancient world but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly."

God's word is enough!

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of **"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"**: *"Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe, On this terrestrial ball, To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all; To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all!"*

September 15 — The Day of Judgment (2 Peter 3:7)

2 Peter 3:7: *"But the present heavens and earth by His word have been reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men."*

Verse 7: "But the present heavens and earth by His word have been reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men."

Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent

forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.”

Every day, I feel more strongly that we are in the last stages of the countdown.

So “the present heavens and earth... have been reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment.” You are just a “word” away from your eternal destiny.

1 Thessalonians 4:16: “Because the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the call of the trumpet sounded by God’s command; and the dead in Christ shall be raised first.”

Genesis 1:3: “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.”

John 11:43: “And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’”

O, His Word is Powerful! He speaks and it happens!

Because God has created all of this in the past and destroyed it with the universal flood according to His word, we can be clear that the present heavens and earth are reserved for a future day of judgment, also. What He has done in the past affirms what He will do in the future according to His promises.

The glorious comfort is that there is still grace and forgiveness available!

It seems appropriate and meaningful for us to sing together this morning verse 4 of “**All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name**”: “*O that with yonder sacred throng We at His feet may fall! We’ll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all; We’ll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all!*”

September 16 — One Day or a Thousand Years (2 Peter 3:8)

2 Peter 3:8: “*But do not let this one fact be escaping your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*”

Verse 8: “But do not let this one fact be escaping your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

The mocking crowd is “following their own desires” and asking: “Where is the promise of His coming?” Peter replies by saying, “do not let this one fact be escaping your notice, beloved.”

This “one fact” we must be careful to notice is that we are dealing with an eternal God who supersedes time. This one fact is “that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” We

must always keep this fact uppermost in dealing with prophetic delays.

Psalm 90:4: “For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.”

Our responsibility is to live each day as if it were our last and one day we’ll be right!

Weisiger points out:

Some such slogan as this may give helpful guidance: Live morally and spiritually as if the Lord were coming today. Pray and plan and work as if He were not coming for a thousand years.

I find myself worshipping and praising the Lord by singing John W. Peterson’s great hymn, **“Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul.”** Please join me as we sing verse 1: *“O what a wonderful wonderful day, Day I will never forget; After I’d wandered in darkness away, Jesus my Savior I met. O what a tender, compassionate Friend He met the need of my heart; Shadows dispelling, With joy I am telling, He made all the darkness depart! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, (filled my soul) When at the cross the Savior made me whole, (made me whole) My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day, Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! (filled my soul).”*

September 17 — The Lord is Not Delaying (2 Peter 3:9)

2 Peter 3:9: *“The Lord of the promise is not delaying, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not desiring for any to perish but for all to make room for (come to) repentance.”*

Verse 9: “The Lord of the promise is not delaying, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not desiring for any to perish but for all to make room for (come to) repentance.”

The potential to perish is very real in God’s eyes! He is the Lord of the Promise. We ask the question: “Has He ever broken one?” No. “Has He fulfilled them all so far?” Yes. Judging by past performance, we ought to have a present certainty of a fantastic future.

In this situation, Peter is defending the Lord, who is an eternal being with whom a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, when he says, “The Lord of the promise is,” negatively, “not delaying, as some count slowness,” but positively, “is patient toward you.”

The Lord is not holding back. He is just waiting for us to decide!

Hebrews 10:36-37: “For you are having need of perseverance, in order that, having done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come,

and will not delay.”

Negatively, “not desiring for any to perish,” but positively, “for all to make room for (come to) repentance.” This is the reason the Lord is patient. He is patient because He is “not desiring for any to perish.” Because it is a free choice. Jesus Christ can be rejected.

The two alternatives are (1) to perish or (2) to come to repentance.

Luke 15:7: “I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

Let’s continue our worship and praise with yesterday’s wonderful hymn. Let’s sing together verse 2 of **“Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul”** : *“Born of the Spirit with life from above Into God’s fam’ly divine, Justified fully thru Calvary’s love, O what a standing is mine! And the transaction so quickly was made When as a sinner I came, Took of the offer Of grace He did proffer He saved me, O praise His dear name! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, (filled my soul) When at the cross the Savior made me whole; (made me whole) My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day, Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! (filled my soul).”*

September 18 — The Day of the Lord Is Coming (2 Peter 3:10)

2 Peter 3:10: *“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens with a rushing roar will be dissolved, and the elements will be destroyed by burning, and the earth and the works in it shall be found (and disappear).”*

Verse 10: “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens with a rushing roar will be dissolved, and the elements will be destroyed by burning, and the earth and the works in it shall be found (and disappear).”

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3: “For you yourselves are knowing accurately that the day of the Lord is coming as a thief at night. When they are saying, ‘Peace and security,’ then sudden destruction is coming upon them even as birth pains upon a woman with child; and they shall by no means escape.”

When Peter is referring to “the day of the Lord,” he is referring to that period of time which begins after the rapture of the church. This time period involves the tribulation, the second coming of Christ to set up His kingdom, and the millennial reign of Christ.

“The day of the Lord will come like a thief” means it will rob you of any further opportunities to experience the patience of the Lord to come to repentance.

“The heavens with a rushing roar will be dissolved, and the elements will be destroyed by burning, and the earth and the works in it shall be found (and disappear).” There is a progression of these three D’s: (1) *dissolved*, (2) *destroyed*, and (3) *disappear*.

Revelation 21:1-2: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”

We are challenged to be ready because the Lord keeps His promises. I trust by your reading this devotional that you have already made preparation by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior by faith. As believers, we must be motivated like the Master in view of what is coming.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul”** : *“Now I’ve a hope that will surely endure After the passing of time; I have a future in heaven for sure, There in those mansions sublime. And it’s because of that wonderful day When at the cross I believed; Riches eternal And blessings supernal From His precious hand I received. Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, (filled my soul) When at the cross the Savior made me whole; (made me whole) My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day, Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! (filled my soul).”*

September 19 — What Sort of People Should We Be? (2 Peter 3:11)

2 Peter 3:11: *“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?”*

Verse 11: “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?”

“These things” refers to that which is *dissolved*, *destroyed* and *disappears* in verse 10.

“Since all these things are to be destroyed” tells us there is no question about whether it is going to happen “in this way.” Since our world is in a terminal situation and on a collision course with destruction, Peter poses the question: “what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?”

Christian people seem to be more concerned about what they are doing than who they are as a person.

It behooves us to be concerned about our conduct and godliness

because we are soon to be in His presence. 1 John 2:28: “And now, little children, keep on abiding in Him, in order that whenever He is revealed, we might have boldness and not shrink away in shame from Him in His coming.”

2 Corinthians 7:1: “Therefore having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and spirit, bringing about holiness in the fear of God.”

Titus 2:12-13: “Teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”

I find myself singing one of my favorite worship and prayer hymns, “**Fill My Cup, Lord.**” Please join me in praise as we sing verse 1: “*Like the woman at the well, I was seeking For things that could not satisfy; And then I heard my Savior speaking ‘Draw from My well that never shall run dry.’ Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord! Come and quench this thirsting of my soul; Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more, Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!*”

September 20 — Looking for the Lord’s Coming (2 Peter 3:12)

2 Peter 3:12: “*Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens being on fire will be destroyed and the elements burning up are being melted.*”

Verse 12: “Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens being on fire will be destroyed and the elements burning up are being melted.”

We are told to be “looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.” How can we do this? To be looking for something, we should be living in light of that event. Matthew 24:42, 44, 46: “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing (working) when he comes.” The Lord Jesus tells us to be *alert, aware and active.*

How may we “hasten” it?

Barclay points out:

The New Testament itself gives us certain ways in which this may be done.

1. It may be done by prayer.
2. It may be done by preaching.
3. It may be done by penitence and obedience.

If everyone came to repentance, the Lord wouldn't have any reason for delaying.

The "day of God" is the eternal state. It is mentioned in Revelation 21:1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea."

"On account of which the heavens being on fire will be destroyed and the elements burning up are being melted." Let's return to chapter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens with a rushing roar will be dissolved, and the elements will be destroyed by burning, and the earth and the works in it shall be found (and disappear)."

Jesus said it well in John 9:4 (NLT): "We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the One who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work."

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord by singing verse 2 of **"Fill My Cup, Lord"**: *"There are millions in this world who are craving The pleasure earthly things afford; But none can match the wondrous treasure That I find in Jesus Christ my Lord. Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord! Come and quench this thirsting of my soul; Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more, Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!"*

September 21 — New Heavens and a New Earth (2 Peter 3:13)

2 Peter 3:13: *"But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling."*

Verse 13: "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling."

By contrast, we are not deeply upset and distraught over what is going to happen to the present heavens and earth. "But according to His (the Lord's) promise." You can trust His prophetic promises.

We are looking for the goal or the finish line!

"But according to His promise" refers to John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

We, as believers, are looking for something – "we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling."

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NLT): "That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has

imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”

Let’s meditate for a moment on the words in Revelation 21:22-27: “And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Doesn’t your heart just sing with great joy in anticipation of that glorious future the Lord has prepared for us. Let’s worship and praise the Lord as we sing verse 3 of “**Fill My Cup, Lord**”: *“So, my brother, if the things this world gave you Leave hungers that won’t pass away, My blessed Lord will come and save you, If you kneel to Him and humbly pray: Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord! Come and quench this thirsting of my soul; Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more, Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!”*

September 22 — Found by Him in Peace (2 Peter 3:14)

2 Peter 3:14: “*Therefore, beloved, since you are looking for these things, make every effort to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.*”

Verse 14: “Therefore, beloved, since you are looking for these things, make every effort to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”

“Therefore” guides us to recognize Peter is directing us in light of these cataclysmic events. “Beloved, since you are looking for these things,” new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling and since all things are to be destroyed in this way. The command is “make every effort.”

“Make every effort to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.” There are three things outlined here. This references back to verse 11: “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?” We should “make every effort to be:”

1. Found by Him in peace. Peace in the past, in the present and in the future. Peace that is inward, outward and upward. It is peace that has been made by the blood of the cross. Therefore, being made right with God, we have

peace. It is the evidence of a right relationship with him.

2. Spotless. 1 John 1:9 says: “If we are confessing our sins, faithful is He and just that He should forgive us our sins, and should cleanse us from every unrighteousness.” It is being sensitive to that which is offensive to the Holy Spirit, that we have grieved or quenched in some way. We should be quick to confess and make it right, then experience the cleansing so that we might be found by Him not only in peace, but also spotless.
3. Blameless. Acts 24:16: “In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.”
Psalm 119:165: “Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.”

This morning, I have on my heart a beautiful hymn called, **“Wonderful Peace.”** Please join me in singing verse 1: *“Far away in the depths of my spirit tonight Rolls a melody sweeter than psalm; In celestial strains it unceasingly falls O’er my soul like an infinite calm. Peace! Peace! Wonderful peace, Coming down from the Father above; Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray In fathomless billows of love.”*

September 23 — The Patience of our Lord (2 Peter 3:15)

2 Peter 3:15: “And be considering the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you.”

Verse 15: “And be considering the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you.”

The command is “be considering the patience of our Lord to be salvation.” This takes us back to 3:9: “The Lord of the promise is not delaying, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not desiring for any to perish but for all to make room for (come to) repentance.”

It is important for us to see salvation in all three of its tenses:

1. Past – When by faith we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and we are born again by the Spirit into God’s family.
2. Present – This is the daily working of the Lord by His Spirit in our lives to produce growth and spiritual development, making us more like our Savior.
3. Future – When ultimately we are delivered as the

purchased possessions to glory. We stand before Him complete, to bring glory and honor to His work of grace in our lives.

“Just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you.” Peter references Paul and calls him a “beloved brother.” The healing power of the gospel brought about forgiveness and restoration in relationship.

How tragic to go to glory with a broken relationship. Paul is a “beloved brother” because they both belong to the same spiritual family.

“According to the wisdom given to him.” This wisdom was given by the Spirit of God. I am reminded of James 1:5: “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

Let’s continue worshipping and praising the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of “**Wonderful Peace**”: *“What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace, Buried deep in the heart of my soul; So secure that no power can mine it away, While the years of eternity roll! Peace! Peace! Wonderful peace, Coming down from the Father above! Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray In fathomless billows of love.”*

September 24 — Paul Speaks of These Things (2 Peter 3:16)

2 Peter 3:16: *“As also in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are unlearned and lacking stability are distorting (twisting), as they are also doing with the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”*

Verse 16: “As also in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are unlearned and lacking stability are distorting (twisting), as they are also doing with the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

Peter mentions “in all his letters, speaking in them concerning these things,” the prophetic themes (destruction of the heavens and earth, the new heavens and new earth), “are some things hard to understand.”

There are two characteristics of “those who are unlearned and lacking stability:”

1. They are *unlearned*. They probably have not come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They have not accepted the things of the Spirit of God for their foolishness.

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2. They are *lacking stability*. In chapter 2:14, we noted “the false prophets are enticing unstable souls.” Ephesians 4:14-15: “As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.”

“Those who are unlearned and lacking stability” are “distorting (twisting),” not only Paul’s writings, “as they are also doing with the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.” Satan is a master at distortion and twisting. When you distort or twist God’s word, it ends in destruction. Eve was the beginning of those distortions.

How gracious Peter is. It is the love of God shed forth in his heart which enables him to speak of the apostle Paul so affectionately as “beloved” after Paul had openly criticized him in Antioch. There is nothing of jealousy in Simon Peter’s nature. We can be sure his reference to Paul is with a pure and sincere heart.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“Wonderful Peace”**: *“I am resting tonight in this wonderful peace, Resting sweetly in Jesus’ control; For I’m kept from all danger by night and by day, And His glory is flooding my soul. Peace! Peace! Wonderful peace, Coming down from the Father above; Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray In fathomless billows of love.”*

September 25 — On Your Guard (2 Peter 3:17)

2 Peter 3:17: *“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be constantly on your guard, lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness.”*

Verse 17: “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be constantly on your guard, lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness.”

In these final words, Peter is addressing the believers again, “you therefore, beloved.” The Greek word for beloved is “agapetos” – love from the Spirit of God for brethren.

“You therefore, beloved,” as he spoke back in verse 14, “knowing this beforehand,” knowing the unlearned and those lacking stability will be distorting and twisting the word of God. He now commands them: “be constantly on your guard,” for the reason, “lest, being carried away.” In Ephesians 4, it is “tossed to and fro.”

In Hebrews 2:1-3: “For this reason we must be paying much closer

attention to things which we have heard, lest we should drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels was valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation, which was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was guaranteed to us by those who heard."

The instrument of this "carried away" is "by the error of unprincipled men." Then, "you fall from your own steadfastness."

Galatians 5:4: "You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

Peter had this very experience in Galatians 2 and at Calvary in Luke 22. You were running well!

I want to meditate a moment on the words of the apostle Paul at the end of that great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."

Let's focus on the future as we worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 4 of "**Wonderful Peace**": "*And I think when I rise to that City of peace, Where the Anchor of peace I shall see, That one strain of the song which the ransomed will sing In that heavenly kingdom will be: Peace! Peace! Wonderful peace, Coming down from the Father above; Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray In fathomless billows of love.*"

September 26 — Keep Growing (2 Peter 3:18)

2 Peter 3:18: "*But be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.*"

Verse 18: "But be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity."

Our verse begins with the command "be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Satan, like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, works hard on keeping us *childish* and *carnal*. He doesn't want us to mature where we will begin to share the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants us to drift.

Peter emphasizes growing in grace, not legalistic and self-righteous. Grace produces the humble, broken spirit and a tender, compassionate, contrite heart. It produces genuine, good, gracious, godly people.

The solution to drifting is a concentration on personal growth. It prepares you for war against (1) the world, (2) the flesh, and (3) the

devil. Satan has his hosts arrayed to divert us from the Father's primary objection: growth. "As a newborn babe in Christ desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."

John 17:17: "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth." It is the word, written; the living word, the Christ; through prayer and fellowship; we live according to God's will for our lives.

Peter is passing the torch over to others, even as he has grown into such Christlikeness in his years of relationship with the Savior and ministry. He now hands off this responsibility to others in these last two key commands:

1. Be constantly on your guard.
2. Be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Jowett says:

"Yes, we can grow. It is our dignity and our privilege to grow."

F.B. Meyer says:

"We may measure our growth in grace by the measure in which we grow in the knowledge of the word of God."

"To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity."

The apostle Peter ends the letter by focusing on eternity. All of this glory is to be directed to Jesus Christ. It is only through a growing and developing relationship with Him on a daily basis that we can ultimately win the game of life.

Tomorrow morning we begin our journey through 1st John. We are saying goodbye to 2nd Peter. What a joy it has been to study each verse! Please join me as we worship and praise the Lord this morning with hearts full of the Spirit of God as we sing Fanny Crosby's "**To God Be The Glory.**" What a wonderful hymn! Let's sing verse 1: *"To God be the glory, great things He hath done, So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, And opened the Life-gate that all may go in. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father thro' Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory, great things He hath done."*

September 27 — The Word of Life (1 John 1:1)

1 John 1:1: *"That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life."*

Verse 1: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and

our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life.”

John begins with Jesus.

In this epistle, he does not follow the customary writing of the day by giving the name of the author and greetings to those to whom it is written. He just begins by describing Jesus Christ in this 1st verse. If it were not for Jesus Christ, it would be impossible for fellowship or for a life of communion with the Father.

“That which was from the beginning,” the eternal Son of God, came to this world in Bethlehem on that first Christmas.

Jesus Christ is eternal. John 8:58: “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.’”

John 17:5: “And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” Because He is eternal, He is God.

“That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life.”

In these next statements, we see that this eternal God took on human flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ. John speaks of three senses in this verse: (1) hearing, (2) seeing, and (3) touching.

John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh and tabernacle among us.” Wonder of wonders that God in Christ took on human flesh to accomplish by that action a restoration of fellowship with the Father.

Our blessed Lord is *heard* today speaking to us through His word. He is *touching* today through our prayers. He is *seen* in our lives as we become more Christlike.

This first verse concludes with “concerning the Word of Life.”

I find this song welling up in my heart as we worship and praise our Father of Life, this great God who has provided His Son for us and the eternal life that comes with Him. Please join me in singing verse 2 of “**To God Be The Glory**”: “*O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood! To ev’ry believer the promise of God; The vilest offender who truly believes, That moment from Jesus a pardon receives. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father thro’ Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.*”

September 28 — We Are Eye-Witnesses (1 John 1:2)

1 John 1:2: “*And the life was made visible, and we have seen [it] and we are bearing witness and we are proclaiming to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made visible to us.*”

Verse 2: “And the life was made visible, and we have seen [it] and we are bearing witness and we are proclaiming to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made visible to us.”

It is “the Word of life” in verse 1. Now in verse 2, it is “the life” manifested and “the eternal life.”

In verse 1, we have a majestic picture of Jesus Christ – God coming in human flesh. What does He come to bring? In verse 2, we see the life of Jesus Christ “was made visible” and “we have seen [it].” Now John says, “we are bearing witness and we are proclaiming to you the eternal life.”

Before we can have fellowship, we must have “life” through relationship.

2 Timothy 1:12: “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.”

John concludes the verse saying “the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made visible to us.”

Fellowship is restored by Jesus Christ.

Before a holy God can have fellowship with sinful man, something must be done about the sin problem. That sin problem was resolved on Calvary’s cross when Jesus Christ was made sin for us. Fellowship was broken when the Father turned His back upon the Son. The orphan cry of the Son of God came from the cross: “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” - “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Now, Jesus Christ offers us:

1. Redemption
2. Restoration
3. Relationship

Relationship must precede fellowship. Have we established a basis for fellowship by coming to know Jesus Christ as Savior? If we have that relationship with Christ, we are singing with Fanny Crosby “**To God Be The Glory.**” Let’s join together in worship and praise singing verse 3: “*Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done, And great our rejoicing thro’ Jesus the Son; But purer and higher and greater will be Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father thro’ Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.*”

1 John 1:3: *“That which we have seen and heard we are proclaiming also to you, in order that you also may be having fellowship with us; and the fellowship which is ours is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.”*

Verse 3: “That which we have seen and heard we are proclaiming also to you, in order that you also may be having fellowship with us; and the fellowship which is ours is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.”

Love is like the spokes of a wheel. When you get close to the axle, you get close to each other. “Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.”

Dr. Mitchell reminds us:

Sin did not keep God from the appointment, but it did keep Adam from it.

The purpose of redemption is not just to free us from sin nor simply to get us to heaven, but rather to fit us for eternal, unbroken, wonderful, personal, intimate fellowship with the living God Himself. This is beyond all human comprehension.

The purpose for proclaiming these things “which we have seen and heard” is stated in the next phrase, “in order that you also may be having fellowship with us.”

One of the great fundamental truths of the Christian faith is that we are saved not for isolation, but for fellowship. This nature will create a community of joy and pleasure in all who really belong.

Psalm 16:11b: “In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

“And the fellowship which is ours is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” We have the wonderful privilege of becoming intimate with the Infinite and to have fellowship with the family.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”**: *“I am weak, but Thou art strong; Jesus, keep me from all wrong; I’ll be satisfied as long As I walk, let me walk close to Thee. Just a closer walk with Thee, Grant it, Jesus, is my plea, Daily walking close to Thee, Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.”*

September 30 — Full of Joy (1 John 1:4)

1 John 1:4: *“And as for us, we are writing these things in order that your joy might be filled.”*

Verse 4: “And as for us, we are writing these things in order that your joy might be filled.”

Let’s review the progression in these first four verses:

1. In verse 1, the Person of Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, is presented to us.
2. In verse 2, He brings eternal life through a relationship with Him.
3. In verse 3, this eternal life brings us into fellowship with God the Father and with others.
4. In verse 4, this fellowship brings us joy.

The Person of Christ + Eternal Life + Fellowship = Joy.

John 15:11: "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

This is a "joy" that is not dependent on outward circumstances, but is a fruit of the Spirit and a product of fellowship with the Father. The little chorus says it so well: *"If you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy, Let Jesus come into your heart."*

"Joy is the evidence that the King is in residence." Who can measure the joy that comes from right relationships? We have joy, when we have (1) a right relationship with God and (2) a right relationship with each other.

When we are out of fellowship with the Lord, our joy is the first thing to go. We can grieve the Holy Spirit by sin. We can quench the Holy Spirit by resisting Him. We literally turn off the faucet and the joy of the Lord dries up.

Have you ever thought that possibly the absence of joy in your life is an indication that you are out of fellowship with the Father and your fellow man? It is impossible for you to be in fellowship with the Father and out of fellowship with your fellow man who also loves Jesus Christ.

As a ship's sail is filled by the wind, so the believer filled with the Spirit manifests it in joy.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **"Just a Closer Walk with Thee"**: *"When my feeble life is o'er, Time for me will be no more; Guide me gently, safely o'er To Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore. Just a closer walk with Thee, Grant it, Jesus, is my plea, Daily walking close to Thee, Let it be, dear Lord, let it be."*

OCTOBER

October 1 — God is Light (1 John 1:5)

1 John 1:5: "And this is the message which we have heard from

Him and we are proclaiming to you, that God is light, and in Him there is not one bit of darkness.”

Verse 5: “And this is the message which we have heard from Him and we are proclaiming to you, that God is light, and in Him there is not one bit of darkness.”

Sin in my life as a believer affects my fellowship with God.

In this verse, John tells us Jesus gave a message they heard. The message is “that God is light, and in Him there is not one bit of darkness.”

“From Him” refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. In describing God as “light,” as John frequently did, he was thinking of God as “the Revealer of His holiness.” Both aspects of the divine nature are involved in the discussion of sin and fellowship. “Light,” then, is “the Revealer of Holiness.” As “light,” God exposes man’s sin and condemns it in the process.

Hebrews 4:13: “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to give account..”

When John heard Jesus Christ speak, there was a message which He gave. Now, it is John’s purpose to proclaim that message to us: “God is light, and in Him there is not one bit of darkness.”

In the word of God, “light” always speaks of one of three things:

1. Holiness
2. Purity
3. Perfect Righteousness

Ephesians 5:8: “For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.”

1 Thessalonians 5:5: “For all of you are sons of light and sons of day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.”

Because “God is light,” He knows the innermost heart of man. “Light” always reveals (1) the hidden flaws, (2) the stains, and (3) the imperfections. Light reveals where we are wrong.

There are no secrets with God because He is light. Everything is visible. Our thoughts lie open to His sight and all of our actions are beheld by Him.

As “light” speaks of God and all that is good, “darkness” naturally speaks of the opposite – that which is evil and is opposed to God. Satan’s greatest tool is “darkness.” It keeps you from seeing things as they really are.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4: “And even if our gospel is covered, it is covered to those who are perishing. In whose case the god of this world blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the

light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

It is in a spirit of brokenness, worship and praise that I find myself singing that wonderful prayer hymn, **“Take My Hand, Precious Lord,”** Please join me in singing verse 1: *“Precious Lord, take my hand. Lead me on, let me stand; I am tired, I am weak, I am worn; Thru the storm, thru the night, Lead me on to the light; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home.”*

October 2 — Hypocritical Response (1 John 1:6)

1 John 1:6: *“If we say that we are having fellowship with Him and we are walking around in the darkness, we are lying and not doing the truth.”*

Verse 6: “If we say that we are having fellowship with Him and we are walking around in the darkness, we are lying and not doing the truth.”

This is a profession of fellowship without possession. It is saying one thing, but living out something quite differently. It is the hypocritical or phony response to the message by making a profession of fellowship, but not having the possession of that experience.

This person might be someone who speaks of a relationship to Jesus Christ, but is a non-Christian, having never experienced a relationship or this person could be a Christian who says he’s having fellowship, but he’s really out of fellowship because of some sin in his life.

Some want to take a shortcut to peace. They want the Lord to make everything okay, but they don’t want Him to ask them to face what’s wrong.

You will notice there are two things of which this person is guilty:

1. Lying with his *lips*
2. Living Falsely with his *life*

Proverbs 28:13: “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

2 Corinthians 13:5: “Be putting yourselves to the test to see if you are in the faith; be examining yourselves! Or are you not recognizing this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you are failing the test?”

I find Edwin Orr’s hymn welling up in my soul built on these two verses. Please join me in singing verse 1 in an attitude of prayer, worship and praise of **“Cleanse Me”**: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Try me, O Savior; know my thoughts, I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me; Cleanse me from ev’ry sin, and set me free.”*

October 3 — Walking in the Light (1 John 1:7)

1 John 1:7: *“But if we are walking around in the light as He Himself is in the light, we are having fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus His Son is cleansing us from every sin.”*

Verse 7: “But if we are walking around in the light as He Himself is in the light, we are having fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus His Son is cleansing us from every sin.”

“Walking around in the light” is a picture of one who is walking in the truth and everything is okay. This is the honest response. It would mean that we would follow Guy King’s three-fold suggestion of responsibility:

1. To *grow* in grace
2. To *gladden* our friends
3. To *glorify* God

To be “walking around in the light” basically means to be walking in obedience.

Two things are true of the believer who is “walking around in the light:”

1. They are in fellowship with God.
2. They are being cleansed from every sin.

I think this could be said another way. If we are walking in obedience, we are having communion with the Lord and we have an increased sensitivity of that which brings Him displeasure. The closer we get to the light, the more we are aware of sin in our lives.

How appropriate it is for us to continue singing our prayer hymn from yesterday! Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**Cleanse Me**”: *“I praise Thee, Lord, for cleansing me from sin. Fulfill Thy Word, and make me pure within. Fill me with fire, where once I burned with shame. Grant my desire to magnify Thy Name.”*

October 4 — Living in Denial (1 John 1:8)

1 John 1:8: *“If we say that we are not having sin, we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us.”*

Verse 8: “If we say that we are not having sin, we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us.”

Have you ever noticed that when someone does something wrong there is usually one of several response?

1. Denial
2. Defense
3. Detour
4. The honest response – Confession!

We are not only “leading ourselves astray,” but “the truth is not in

us.” I believe that John is referring to the word of God itself. The word of truth tells us in Romans 3:23: “for all sinned and are falling short of the glory of God.”

We learned back in verse 6 when “we are walking in darkness we are lying and not doing the truth,” and now in verse 8 we see “the truth is not in us.”

Psalm 51:6: “Surely You desire truth in the inner parts; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place.”

We must recognize that we have all gone astray and we need to get right with the Lord if we have a relationship with Him. If we don’t have one, we need to come to that relationship rather than deny sin. Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning with this prayer in verse 3 of “**Cleanse Me**”: *“Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thine; Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine. Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride. I now surrender; Lord, in me abide.”*

October 5 — Confessing Our Sins (1 John 1:9)

1 John 1:9: *“If we are confessing our sins, faithful is He and just that He should forgive us our sins, and should cleanse us from every unrighteousness.”*

Verse 9: “If we are confessing our sins, faithful is He and just that He should forgive us our sins, and should cleanse us from every unrighteousness.”

When you realize that something has come between you and your Lord, do not go another hour out of fellowship with Him. You are not waiting for God, God is waiting for you. Confess your sin and be cleansed. He knows all about your sin already. He is your Father. Then, enjoy the day in fellowship with Him. It will delight the heart of God and it will fill you with great joy.

In this verse, we have the real key to maintaining fellowship with the Father. As long as we continue to *deny*, *defend* or *pretend* about the real situation, we will continue to live out of fellowship with the Father and strained in our relationships with each other.

It is the design of our heavenly Father that we live in openness, walking honestly in the light and making confession of those things in our lives which have broken our fellowship.

When we confess, we are opening our lives to God. We are taking off the roof and opening up the doors to let the light of Jesus Christ shine into every area of our lives.

Unless we are willing to come and follow the admonition, sin will continue to be *unjudged*, *unrebuked*, *unchecked* and *uncleansed* in our

lives which leads to broken fellowship and walking in the darkness.

1 Corinthians 11:28: “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”

There are two results that result from agreeing with God about our sins. We recognize:

1. He has forgiven us our sins.
2. He has cleansed us from every unrighteousness.

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning in our response to the Lord’s invitation by singing, “**My Jesus, I Love Thee.**” Join me in singing verse 1: “*My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine; For Thee all the follies of sin I resign; My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.*”

October 6 — Pleading Not Guilty (1 John 1:10)

1 John 1:10: “*If we say that we have not sinned, we are making Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.*”

Verse 10: “If we say that we have not sinned, we are making Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.”

In verse 8, we have a picture of one who is denying the existence of sin. In this verse, we have one who is denying he has committed sin. There is a two-fold response to this approach:

1. We are making Him a liar.
2. His word is not in us.

Romans 3:19: “Now we are knowing that whatever the Law is saying, it is speaking to those who are under the Law, in order that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God.”

Romans 3:23: “For all sinned and are falling short of the glory of God.”

His words tell us in Romans 3:10: “Even as it has been written that, ‘There is none righteous, not even one.’”

Proverbs 28:13: “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

The biblical response is found in Psalm 51:1-2: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.”

Isaiah 1:18 (NLT): “‘Come now, let’s settle this,’ says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool.’”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of “**My Jesus, I Love Thee**”: “*I love Thee, because Thou has first*

loved me, And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree; I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."

October 7 — Jesus Pleading Our Case (1 John 2:1)

1 John 2:1: *"My little children, these things I am writing to you in order that you may not commit an act of sin. And if anyone commits an act of sin, we are continually having one who pleads our case with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one."*

Verse 1: "My little children, these things I am writing to you in order that you may not commit an act of sin. And if anyone commits an act of sin, we are continually having one who pleads our case with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one."

We come now to a consideration of what I like to call: a precious prescription for the problem of sin. This is the answer to the problem of sin in the life of a Christian.

Hebrews 7:25: "Hence also He is able to be saving forever those who are drawing near to God through Him, since He always is living for the purpose of making intercession for them."

Jesus maintains our fellowship by continually representing us as an attorney before the Father. The basis for His case before the Father is His own shed blood upon Calvary's cross, the just payment for man's sin.

J. Vernon McGee says:

Someone has expressed this in beautiful poetic language:

I HEAR THE ACCUSER ROAR
OF ILLS THAT I HAVE DONE;
I KNOW THEM WELL, AND THOUSANDS MORE,
JEHOVAH FINDETH NONE.

THOUGH THE RESTLESS FOE ACCUSES--
SINS RECOUNTING LIKE A FLOOD,
EV'RY CHARGE OUR GOD REFUSES;
CHRIST HAS ANSWERED WITH HIS BLOOD.

--AUTHOR UNKNOWN

One hymn that has become one of great comfort is **"There is a Fountain."** Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1: *"There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains: Lose all their guilty stains, Lose all their guilty stains; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains."*

October 8 — Jesus is Our Sin Offering (1 John 2:2)

1 John 2:2: *“And He Himself is satisfaction for our sins; not for ours only but also for the whole world.”*

Verse 2: “And He Himself is satisfaction for our sins; not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

He is the sin offering. He is the mercy seat. He has made a satisfactory offering for our sins that has been accepted by a Holy God.

Jesus died, not only for our sins, but for the whole world. His death upon Calvary took care of all of the sins: *past, present* and *future*.

Jesus satisfied God’s demands by His death upon Calvary’s cross. If He had not made an adequate payment for our sins, the Father would have left Him in the grave.

Throughout His life, you hear the statement of the Father: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

This takes us back to chapter 1:7: “The blood of Jesus His Son is cleansing us from every sin.”

Dr. Mitchell says:

The Greek word for “propitiation” (satisfaction) is the same word used for “mercy-seat.” It signifies that which Christ has become for the sinner. On the cross He met the demands of God’s holiness and righteousness. He is what the mercy-seat was in the Old Testament, namely, the place of meeting between God and men. John is telling us in these verses that Christ is our Advocate, not only because He is the righteous One, but also because He is the abiding propitiation for our sin.

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 4 of **“There is a Fountain”**: *“Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood Shall never lose its pow’r Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more: Be saved, to sin no more, Be saved, to sin no more; Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more.”*

October 9 — Obedience is the Key (1 John 2:3-4)

1 John 2:3: *“And in this we are knowing that we know Him, if we are keeping His commandments.”*

1 John 2:4: *“The one who is saying, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and is not keeping His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this one.”*

Verse 3: “And in this we are knowing that we know Him, if we are keeping His commandments.”

There is a high premium in the Scripture on obedience. Too often in

our lives we are more interested in arranging compromises than obeying commands.

One of the ways we are able to tell whether or not “we know Him” is by our obedience to His commands. If we have “come to know Him,” then “we are keeping His commandments.” There is real joy in doing what He says. What a privilege! What a pleasure to be obedient!

The word translated “keeping” is also translated in the words: “to keep, to observe, to fulfill or to pay attention to.”

We demonstrate our love by our obedience.

The summary of His commandments in the New Testament is seen in this epistle in chapter 3:23: “And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”

Verse 4: “The one who is saying, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and is not keeping His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this one.”

This is an example of someone who is making a confession with their lips, but it is not being revealed in their life. It is an expression of faith without obedience.

There are two things said about this individual:

1. He is a liar.
2. The truth is not in this one.

He is out of touch with spiritual reality. He is not living the word.

The proof of the reality of our Christian experience is not our *talk*, but our *walk*. It is what we *do*, not what we *say*, that will make an impact.

Titus 1:16: “They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.”

One of the great old hymns I grew up hearing was “**Trust and Obey**.” Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1: “*When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, What a glory He sheds on our way! While we do His good will He abides with us still, And with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there’s no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.*”

October 10 — Obedience Brings Assurance (1 John 2:5)

1 John 2:5: “*But whoever is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been brought to maturity. In this we are knowing that we are in Him.*”

Verse 5: “But whoever is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been brought to maturity. In this we are knowing that we are

in Him.”

The word “but” forms the contrast to the previous verse: “but whoever is keeping His Word.”

Dr. Mitchell says:

If obedience to the Word of God is not the desire of your heart, then, my friend, I would like to ask you a question. Have you really accepted Christ as your personal Saviour? Have you come into right relationship with Him?

Obedience to His Word is the measure of our love for Christ and is also the evidence of our fellowship and union with Him.

Psalm 1:1-2: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night.”

“But whoever is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been brought to maturity.”

Jesus in the Upper Room in John 14:21 said: “He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.”

This verse speaks about a state of things by which one is above reproach. The consequence of disobedience is seen in the disciplinary action taken by the Father against us as His children.

Howard G. Hendricks & William D. Hendricks in *Living by the Book* say:

Does this seem too rigid, too confining? If so, may I suggest that you might be settling for a decaffeinated form of Christianity--one that promises not to keep you awake at night. You see, God gives us His Word not to make us comfortable but to conform us to the character of Christ. And that goes way beyond pious feelings and good intentions. It penetrates to the level of our schedules and checkbooks, and friendships and jobs and families. If our faith makes no practical difference there, then what difference does it make?

Please worship and praise the Lord with me this morning as we sing verse 2 of “**Trust and Obey**”: “*Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies, But His smile quickly drives it away; Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh nor a tear, Can abide while we trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there’s no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.*”

October 11 — A Work in Progress (1 John 2:6)

1 John 2:6: *“The one who is saying he is abiding in Him, he himself is morally obligated to be walking around just as that one also walked around.”*

Verse 6: “The one who is saying he is abiding in Him, he himself is morally obligated to be walking around just as that one also walked around.”

The heavenly Father’s response to the obedience of His Son is “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The words of that old hymn, **“Have Thine Own Way”** would be a great way for us to greet each day: *“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mould me and make me After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still.”*

The apostle John speaks of discipleship in this verse, not of salvation. As the Lord is doing His work in our lives, we will begin to look like the life of Jesus. 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

The obedient heart is reflected in a likeness to the One obeyed. To walk as He walked is an outward sign of an obedient heart in fellowship with the Father.

John Calvin said:

“A likeness in life and deeds will prove that we abide in Christ.”

We are abiding in Christ when we do these three things:

1. Draw upon all that He is
2. Depend upon all that He can do
3. Develop into His likeness

This morning, let’s continue to worship and praise the Lord as we sing verse 3 of **“Trust and Obey”**: *“Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, But our toil He doth richly repay; Not a grief nor a loss, not a frown nor a cross, But is blest if we trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there’s no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.”*

October 12 — The Old Commandment (1 John 2:7)

1 John 2:7: *“Beloved ones, I am not writing to you a new commandment, but an old commandment which you were having from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you heard.”*

Verse 7: “Beloved ones, I am not writing to you a new commandment, but an old commandment which you were having from the beginning;

the old commandment is the word which you heard.”

He calls them “beloved ones,” a very affection concern. John is stating that our obedience to His word will reflect itself in love. The obedient heart is revealed in three different ways:

1. Keeping His commandments
2. Walking as Christ walked or reflecting the image of Jesus Christ which results from abiding in Him
3. Loving the brethren

It is by the *word*, by our *walk* and by our *love*.

Leviticus 19:18: “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of **“Trust and Obey”**: *“But we never can prove the delights of His love Until all on the altar we lay; For the favor He shows and the joy He bestows Are for them who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there’s no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.”*

October 13 — The New Commandment (1 John 2:8)

1 John 2:8: “Again a new commandment I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the genuine light already is shining.”

Verse 8: “Again a new commandment I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the genuine light already is shining.”

The new commandment is John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

This love is first seen in Him. Then, it is seen in us as well.

In this verse, John continues to say “because the darkness is passing away, and the genuine light already is shining.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

“‘The darkness is passing away’ refers to Christ’s incarnation which brought a light into the world which can never be extinguished.”

The darkness represents the Satanic, and the light represents Christ’s kingdom.

Proverbs 4:18: “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining every brighter till the full light of day.”

Isaiah 5:20 (NLT): “What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet

and sweet is bitter.”

This morning, let's sing together in worship and praise verse 5 of **“Trust and Obey”**: *“Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet, Or we'll walk by His side in the way; What He says we will do, where He sends we will go; Never fear, only trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.”*

October 14 — Hate & Light Don't Go Together (1 John 2:9)

1 John 2:9: *“The one who is saying that he is in the light and is hating his brother, he is in the darkness until now.”*

Verse 9: “The one who is saying that he is in the light and is hating his brother, he is in the darkness until now.”

Isaiah 8:20 (NKJV): “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

Isaiah 12:2: (NLT): “See, God has come to save me. I will trust in Him and not be afraid. The Lord God is my strength and my song; He has given me victory.”

Love and light go together as do hate and darkness.

You will notice from John's writings that there is no twilight in the spiritual world. A man is either walking in the light of love or in the darkness of hatred. We are either living in the flesh or in the spirit.

With regard to our relationships with brothers in the family, we can treat them in one of five ways:

1. Negligible – So self-centered that no one matters except ourselves.
2. Contemptuous – As though all others are a fool in comparison to our intellectual attainments.
3. Annoying – when others are a nuisance, underprivileged.
4. Antagonistic (as an enemy) – when we treat others as competitors to our cause, and competition becomes a principle of life.
5. Brotherly – in love, others' needs are our needs, their interests are ours and we live to serve others.

I have one thing in common with the missionary to China, Hudson Taylor. He could often be heard singing, this hymn, **“Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting.”** Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1: *“Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart. Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, And Thy beauty fills my soul, For by Thy transforming power, Thou hast made me whole. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.”*

October 15 — Love & Light Are Compatible (1 John 2:10)

1 John 2:10: *“The one who is loving his brother is abiding in the light, and there is not a stumbling block in him.”*

Verse 10: “The one who is loving his brother is abiding in the light, and there is not a stumbling block in him.”

Once again, we have the word, “abiding.” In verse 6, it was “abiding in Him.” Now, it is “abiding in the light.”

This verse shows a member of the body of Christ loving his brother with God’s love. Two things result from loving others with God’s love. This brother is:

1. Abiding in the light
2. Doesn’t have a stumbling block in him

Since he is “abiding in the light,” he has spiritual discernment. He understands the will of God for his life.

Psalms 119:105: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”

“There is not a stumbling block in him.” He is not causing others to fall in response to a lack of love in his life. The word “stumbling block” can be translated *“trap, temptation, that which gives offense, disapproval or stain.”*

Psalms 37:23-24 (NLT): “The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand.”

Let’s continue our worship and praise by singing verse 2 of “**Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting**”: *“O, how great Thy loving kindness, Vaster, broader than the sea! O how marvelous Thy goodness, Lavished all on me! Yes, I rest in Thee, Belovèd, Know what wealth of grace is Thine, Know Thy certainty of promise, And have made it mine. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.”*

October 16 — Hate & Darkness Lead to Outer Darkness (1 John 2:11)

1 John 2:11: *“But the one who is hating his brother is in the darkness and he is walking around in the darkness, and he does not know where he is going because the darkness blinded his eyes.”*

Verse 11: “But the one who is hating his brother is in the darkness and he is walking around in the darkness, and he does not know where he is going because the darkness blinded his eyes.”

There are three results of being out of fellowship with the Lord and reflecting it in the hatred of our brother:

1. We are in the darkness. We are out of fellowship as we noted back in chapter 1.
2. We continue to conduct our activities in the darkness. We are living in the flesh.
3. We don't know where we are going because our eyes have been blinded by walking in the darkness.

Matthew 15:14: "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

It was J. Hudson Taylor who said:

"The real secret of an unsatisfied life lies too often in an unsundered will."

Perhaps you are hearing the words that Mary heard from Martha, "The Master is here and is calling for you." Maybe you are hearing the word of the Lord Himself to Adam, "Adam, where are you?" Be quick to respond with an obedient heart. It is critical that we give the response, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Isaiah 30:15 (NLT): "This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: 'Only in returning to Me and resting in Me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength. But you would have none of it.'"

Isaiah 30:18 (NLT): "So the Lord must wait for you to come to Him so He can show you His love and compassion. For the Lord is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for His help."

What a beautiful response to the invitation of our Lord when we express our worship and praise by singing verse 3 of **"Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting"**: *"Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, I behold Thee as Thou art, And Thy love, so pure, so changeless, Satisfies my heart; Satisfies its deepest longings, Meets, supplies its every need, Compasseth me round with blessings: Thine is love indeed! Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart."*

October 17 — Sins Have Been Forgiven (1 John 2:12)

1 John 2:12: *"I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven through His name."*

Verse 12: "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven through His name."

In these next verses, the apostle John discerns several stages of spiritual growth and maturity. The growth process involves (1) *forgiveness*, (2) *fellowship* and (3) *fight*.

Dr. Howard G. Hendricks said:

“I have never met a Christian who sat down and planned to live a mediocre life. But if you keep going in the direction in which you are moving, you may land there.”

The environment for spiritual growth is created by the following three things:

1. Feeding upon His word
2. Submitting to His spirit
3. Obeying His will

Guy King says:

The entrance to the fellowship is not a stopping place but a starting place. As in all life there is to be growth, progress.

Some people miss so much for lack of this onward spirit.

The first wonderful stage of development in the spiritual life is addressed to the “little children.” It is the incredible truth that our sins have been forgiven through His name.

What a thrill to be born again, to have all forgiven, to be in God’s family!

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of this favorite hymn, **“Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting”**: *“Ever lift Thy face upon me As I work and wait for Thee; Resting ’neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, Earth’s dark shadows flee. Brightness of my Father’s glory, Sunshine of my Father’s face, Keep me ever trusting, resting, Fill me with Thy grace. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.”*

October 18 — Knowledge & Victory (1 John 2:13)

1 John 2:13: *“I am writing to you, fathers, because you have come to know the One who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the evil one.”*

Verse 13: “I am writing to you, fathers, because you have come to know the One who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the evil one.”

John addressed the “little children” in the previous verse. Now he addresses “fathers,” the second spiritual development stage. “Fathers” are those who have grown in the Lord through the maturing process to the point that fruit has been born in their lives by the Holy Spirit. Then, this fruit has been born in the lives of others since fatherhood requires having children.

Philemon 1:10: “I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, Onesimus.”

“I am writing to you, fathers, because you have come to know the

One who is from the beginning.” With the “little children,” the focus was on forgiveness. With “fathers,” it is fellowship.

Dr. Mitchell points out:

“They have all been born into the family, but they are not all at the same stage of maturity. They have not all attained the same spiritual growth.”

Philippians 3:10: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”

Your maturity has nothing to do with longevity of service, but involves everything with your intimacy and fellowship with the Father.

“I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the evil one.” This is the third “because” phrase and spiritual development to whom John writes.

The growth process requires (1) *forgiveness* in the children, (2) *fellowship* in the fathers, and (3) a *fight* for the young men. These “young men” have tasted the joy of victory. They are moving ahead with determined spirits. Their lives are characterized by the three D’s

1. Desire
2. Determination
3. Discipline

Spiritual growth is always accompanied with a struggle.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of “**All That Thrills My Soul**”: “*Who can cheer the heart like Jesus, By His presence all divine? True and tender, pure and precious Oh, how blest to call Him mine! All that thrills my soul is Jesus; He is more than life to me; And the fairest of ten thousand, In my blessed Lord I see.*”

October 19 — Levels of Growth (1 John 2:14)

1 John 2:14: “*I write to you, young children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have come to know the One who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God is abiding in you, and you have conquered the evil one.*”

Verse 14: “I write to you, young children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have come to know the One who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God is abiding in you, and you have conquered the evil one.”

1. “I write to you, *young children*, because you have known

the Father.”

John is referring to those who are still young and immature in Christ. Carnality or living in the flesh results when a person is satisfied to stay in this level of spiritual immaturity. However, this passage does not imply that these “young children” are abnormal in their growth process. The apostle addresses those who are just passing through a stage of normal development on the way to becoming “young men,” and then “fathers.”

2. “I write to you, *fathers*, because you have come to know the One who is from the beginning.”

This is a repetition of the very same statement made in verse 13. John repeats this statement to remind the “fathers” of why he writes to them. They are always reaching toward a great Christlikeness.

3. “I write to you, *young men*, because you are strong and the word of God is abiding in you, and you have conquered the evil one.”

There are three things said about the “young men” in this verse and why John writes to them:

- a. They are strong.

They are “strong” because they are not dependent upon their own resources, but upon His. Isaiah 40:31: “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Colossians 1:11: “Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously.” The in-living Christ is that source of power. It was the Lord Jesus in John 15 who said, “Without Me, you can do nothing.”

- b. The word of God is abiding in them.

It is not only in the *head*, but it is also in the *heart*. In John’s writings, “the word of God” could refer to the Living Word – Jesus Christ – or the written word, the Bible. It is probably the written word that John references here. It is by *memorization* and *meditation* that we hide the word of God in our hearts.

Psalms 119:9, 11: “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word, I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.”

- c. They have conquered the evil one.

This is also a repetition of the phrase that characterized these “young men” in verse 13. They have experienced the sweet taste of victory in their Christian lives. There are two reasons for their victory: (1) they have not faced the foe in their own resources, but have been strong in the power of the indwelling Christ, as well as the power of the Holy Spirit and (2)

they have used the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, which is abiding in them to lead them in this victory over the evil one.

Will you join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **“All That Thrills My Soul?”**: *“Love of Christ so freely given, Grace of God beyond degree, Mercy higher than the heavens Deeper than the deepest sea. All that thrills my soul is Jesus; He is more than life to me; And the fairest of ten thousand, In my blessed Lord I see.”*

October 20 — Stop Loving the World (1 John 2:15)

1 John 2:15: *“Stop loving the world, neither the things which are in the world. If a man keeps on loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*

Verse 15: “Stop loving the world, neither the things which are in the world. If a man keeps on loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

John gives this negative command, “Stop loving the world,” in the middle of the passage where he speaks so much on the maturing process as it relates to our fellowship with the Father.

Fellowship is escalated by growth. We must focus on our love for the Lord Jesus Christ and our commitment to Him.

Just as light and darkness are opposed, and love and hate are opposed, so the Father and the world are opposed.

Dr. Mitchell says:

“In verses 15-17 we find that the young men have another enemy, the world.”

James 4:4: “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

It is so easy in our fellowship with the Father to not recognize the world as a rival lover to His cause. It is possible to love the Lord truly with our hearts but not wholly, or completely. There is still that wall of separation between us. Worldliness seems to be just a little thing, but in the eyes of the Father it is very serious. It is so serious it is necessary for us to make a choice. We cannot let the things of this world have first place in our lives and still enjoy a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.

Fellowship with the Father is affected by our attitude toward the world. The world is hostile toward God.

John gives this command to Christians in their pursuit of fellowship with the Father. They are not to let the things of this world have a dominant place in their lives. God is a jealous God and will not have any rivals to His love.

What is the most important thing in my life? What am I living for?
Someone has said it well:

“If you and God feel at a distance, guess who moved?”

Let’s continue to worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of **“All That Thrills My Soul”**: *“What a wonderful redemption! Never can a mortal know How my sin, tho’ red like crimson, Can be whiter than the snow. All that thrills my soul is Jesus; He is more than life to me; And the fairest of ten thousand, In my blessed Lord I see.”*

October 21 — The Reason for Not Loving the World (1 John 2:16)

1 John 2:16: *“Because everything which is in the world, the passionate desire of the flesh, and the passionate desire of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”*

Verse 16: “Because everything which is in the world, the passionate desire of the flesh, and the passionate desire of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

John gave us the negative command, “stop loving the world” yesterday morning. Today, he gives us the reason, “Because everything which is in the world... is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

The apostle then lists the three things of this world:

1. The passionate desire of the flesh
2. The passionate desire of the eyes
3. The vainglory of life

The world is famous for its (1) uncontrolled appetites, (2) false values, and (3) exaltation of self.

Let’s look at the three things John mentions:

1. The passionate desire of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16-17: “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”

2. The passionate desire of the eyes.

This is satisfied enjoyment through contemplation. Job 31:1: “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.”

The eyes, our desire, the mind and our actions are all very closely connected.

Psalm 25:15: “My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only He will release my feet from the snare.”

3. The vainglory of life.

This is personal pride in one’s possessions. The word “alazoneia”

is only used here in the New Testament. Christians ought to have nothing to do with these worldly perspectives. It is the word for “pretention, arrogance, or pride in one’s possessions.” It is a false pretention.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of “**All That Thrills My Soul**”: “*Ev’ry need His hand supplying, Ev’ry good in Him I see; On His strength divine relying, He is All in All to me. All that thrills my soul is Jesus; He is more than life to me; And the fairest of ten thousand, In my blessed Lord I see.*”

October 22 — The World is Passing Away (1 John 2:17)

1 John 2:17: “*And the world is passing away, and its passionate desire; but the one who is doing the will of God is abiding forever.*”

Verse 17: “And the world is passing away, and its passionate desire; but the one who is doing the will of God is abiding forever.”

We have a choice between the world and His will. The world is temporary, but His will is eternal.

It is my prayer this morning that our fellowship will be escalated as a result of this understanding of the maturing process in growing up in Jesus Christ.

Dr. Howard. G. Hendricks & William D. Hendricks in *Living by the Book* say:

A. W. Tozer, for many years a spiritual gadfly to the Body of Christ, placed a burr in my mental saddle with these words:

A religious mentality, characterized by timidity and lack of moral courage has given us today a flabby Christianity, intellectually impoverished, dull, repetitious, and to a great many persons, just plain boring. This is peddled as the very faith of our fathers in direct lineal descent from Christ and the apostles. We spoon-feed this insipid pabulum to our inquiring youth, and to make it palatable spice it up with carnal amusements snatched from the unbelieving world. It is easier to entertain than to instruct. It is easier to follow degenerate public taste than to think for oneself. So too many of our evangelical leaders let their minds atrophy while they keep their fingers nimble operating religious gimmicks to bring in the curious crowd.

Won’t you join me this morning in singing verse 5 of “**All That Thrills**

My Soul": *"By the crystal flowing river With the ransomed I will sing,
And forever and forever Praise and glorify the King. All that thrills my
soul is Jesus; He is more than life to me; And the fairest of ten thousand,
In my blessed Lord I see."*

October 23 — It is the Last Hour (1 John 2:18)

1 John 2:18: *"Young children, it is the last hour; even as you heard
that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from
which fact we are knowing that it is the last hour."*

Verse 18: "Young children, it is the last hour; even as you heard that
antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from which
fact we are knowing that it is the last hour."

John addresses these believers as "young children." They are young
in their faith. He is very concerned about them being swept away by the
pressure of error while they are in the process of growing up spiritually.

On their journey to maturity, there are special pressures from the cults
and "isms" to distract these young converts from the truth.

Ephesians 4:14: "As a result, we are no longer to be children,
tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of
doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming."

Galatians 1:6-7: "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him
who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is
really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want
to distort the gospel of Christ."

The apostle begins and ends his message with the same words, "it
is the last hour." John is marking time on the Father's calendar as Jesus
did when He was walking upon the earth. John 2:4: "And Jesus said
to her, 'Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet
come.'"

You can feel a sense of urgency in these words, "It is the last hour."
John's epistle is the only time it occurs in the New Testament.

John 9:4: "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long
as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work."

"Young children, it is the last hour; even as you heard that
antichrist is coming." They had already been taught the "man of sin"
would be coming. This is Satan's false messiah. He is going to come
and exercise worldwide rule during Satan's final shot at a kingdom.

John concludes the verse, "even now many antichrists have
arisen; from which fact we are knowing that it is the last hour." He
is referencing false teachers who deny the deity of Jesus Christ so he
calls them "antichrists." These are people who embrace Satan's values.

and agenda. This is prevalent in our current culture along with many dictators throughout the world who pride themselves as men who want the power.

Revelation 22:20 (NLT): “He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Let’s celebrate the coming of our blessed Lord by singing Andre Crouch’s hymn, **“Soon and Very Soon.”** Please join me in singing verse 1: *“Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We’re going to see the King!”*

October 24 — They Were Not of Us (1 John 2:19)

1 John 2:19: *“They departed from us, but they were not of us. For if they were of us, they would have remained with us; but [they departed], in order that they might be revealed that they all are not of us.”*

Verse 19: “They departed from us, but they were not of us. For if they were of us, they would have remained with us; but [they departed], in order that they might be revealed that they all are not of us.”

The word “they” refers back to the “antichrists” or false teachers of the previous verses. There was a time when they were with the believers, but these false teachers have separated themselves from the main body of believers. This is the reason John’s words spell such a sense of urgency.

John says: “They departed from us, but they were not of us.” Just like Judas Iscariot who was with Christ, but never in Christ, these false teachers departed from the believers, but they were not of them.

These false teachers are promoting religion without a relationship. They are the ones who have never become Christians. “They were not of us,” and now the reason, “For if they were of us, they would have remained with us.” If they had really been a part of God’s family, they would have remained with these fellow brothers and sisters in the family.

John continues: “but [they departed], in order that they might be revealed that they all are not of us.” They took the action to depart for the purpose: “that they might be revealed that they all are not of us.”

2 Peter 3:17: “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be constantly on your guard, lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness.”

Jude gives a similar warning in Jude 1:19: “These are the ones who

cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.”

The key to the whole situation that faces believers in these last days is to keep our focus on Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **“Soon and Very Soon”**: *“No more crying there, we are going to see the King! No more crying there, we are going to see the King! No more crying there, we are going to see the King! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We’re going to see the King!”*

October 25 — An Anointing from the Holy One (1 John 2:20-21)

1 John 2:20: *“And you yourselves are having an anointing from the Holy One, and you are knowing all things.”*

1 John 2:21: *“I am not writing to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because every lie is not out of the truth.”*

Verse 20: “And you yourselves are having an anointing from the Holy One, and you are knowing all things.”

As a result of this “anointing,” they are “knowing all things.” This “anointing” is the indwelling Holy Spirit that has come to take up residence in them at the moment of their salvation.

John 14:26: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

John makes reference to the promise which Jesus made in the upper room when He said: “He who is with you shall be in you.”

“And you yourselves are having an anointing from the Holy One, and you are knowing all things.”

W.E. Vine points out:

“The passage teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the all-efficient means of enabling believers to possess a knowledge of the truth.”

The Spirit of God illuminates the mind to the word of God.

Verse 21: “I am not writing to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because every lie is not out of the truth.”

The apostle is not wishing to convey some new truth. He just wants these believers to realize that truth and a lie are opposites. Just as we have the conflict between: *light and darkness, love and hatred, the Father and the World*, so also there is the conflict between *truth and the lie*.

They already know the truth. John 8:32: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.’”

They also had the experience of being guided into truth by the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

There is a wonderful little prayer chorus that would be most appropriate for us to conclude our meditation this morning. Take time to prayerfully sing these words from **“Spirit of the Living God”** with me and ask the Spirit of the Living God to fall fresh on you: *“Spirit of the Living God, Fall fresh on me, Spirit of the Living God, Fall fresh on me, Melt me, mold me, Fill me, use me. Spirit of the Living God, Fall fresh on me.”*

October 26 — Denying or Confessing (1 John 2:22-23)

1 John 2:22: *“Who is the liar if not the one who is denying that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist, the one who is denying the Father and the Son.”*

1 John 2:23: *“Everyone who is denying the Son is not having the Father; the one who is confessing the Son is having the Father also.”*

Verse 22: “Who is the liar if not the one who is denying that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist, the one who is denying the Father and the Son.”

John asks a question and then gives an answer. The question is: “Who is the liar if not the one who is denying that Jesus is the Christ?” The answer then is: “This one is the antichrist, the one who is denying the Father and the Son.”

Now John identifies the antichrists he spoke of in verse 18 and the “liar” he speaks of in this verse. They are the ones who are denying that Jesus is the Christ. They are saying Jesus was just a wonderful teacher and another good man, but He is not the Christ.

John then concludes this verse: “This one is the antichrist, the one who is denying the Father and the Son.”

John goes on to point out it is not only a denial of Jesus as being the Christ, but also a denial of the Father or of the existence of God.

Verse 23: “Everyone who is denying the Son is not having the Father; the one who is confessing the Son is having the Father also.”

The Father and the Son are related. If you deny the Son, then you deny the Father. You cannot have the Father without the Son, nor the Son without the Spirit.

John concludes this verse: “the one who is confessing the Son is having the Father also.”

Romans 10:9-10: “That if you confess with your mouth Jesus

as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart, faith is being exercised, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth confession is being made, resulting in salvation.”

Revelation 3:20 (NLT): “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.”

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord by singing this wonderful invitation hymn by Ralph Carmichael. Please join me in singing verse 1 of “**The Savior Is Waiting**”: *“The Savior is waiting to enter your heart; Why don’t you let Him come in? There’s nothing in this world to keep you apart, What is your answer to Him? Time after time, He has waited before, And now He is waiting again. To see if you are willing To open the door, Oh, how He wants to come in.”*

October 27 — Abiding in the Son & in the Father (1 John 2:24)

1 John 2:24: *“As for you, that which you heard from the beginning, let it be abiding in you. If that which you heard from the beginning is abiding in you, you also are abiding in the Son and in the Father.”*

Verse 24: “As for you, that which you heard from the beginning, let it be abiding in you. If that which you heard from the beginning is abiding in you, you also are abiding in the Son and in the Father.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

John’s point was that if the readers would resist the lies of the antichrists and let the truth they had heard from the beginning be at home in them, they would continue to abide in the fellowship of God the Father and God the Son.

John 14:21: “He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.”

The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth. He must be free to function.

It is God’s desire that we be *supersensitive saints*, sensitive to the Spirit of God and the truth of God.

Remember the words of Jesus in the Upper Room in John 15:5: “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of that wonderful hymn, “**Constantly Abiding**”: *“There’s a peace in my heart that the world never gave, A peace it cannot take away; Tho’ the trials of life may surround like a cloud, I’ve a peace that has come here*

to stay! Constantly abiding, Jesus is mine; Constantly abiding, rapture divine; He never leaves me lonely, whispers, O so kind: 'I will never leave thee,' Jesus is mine."

October 28 — He Promised Us Life Eternal (1 John 2:25-26)

1 John 2:25: *"And this is the promise which He Himself promised us: the life eternal."*

1 John 2:26: *"These things I am writing to you concerning those who are leading you astray."*

Verse 25: "And this is the promise which He Himself promised us: the life eternal."

When all else is said and done, this is the important issue in John's mind. He promised us eternal life.

John 10:28-29: "And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."

Verse 26: "These things I am writing to you concerning those who are leading you astray."

John will reference this again in chapter 3:7: "Little children, let no one keep on leading you astray; the one who is doing righteousness is righteous, even as that one is righteous."

Guy King says:

So often these people are individuals of such charming manners, obvious enthusiasm, delightful personality, and high intellectuality, that they put you completely off your guard.

Let's consider Paul's warning to young Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1-2: "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron."

Jesus says in Matthew 24:24: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

Let's think on the gospel this morning reminding us we have the blessed assurance of life eternal. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of **"Constantly Abiding"**: *"All the world seemed to sing of a Savior and King, When peace sweetly came to my heart; Troubles all fled away and*

my night turned to day, Blessed Jesus, how glorious Thou art! Constantly abiding, Jesus is mine; Constantly abiding, rapture divine; He never leaves me lonely, whispers, O so kind: 'I will never leave thee,' Jesus is mine."

October 29 — Keep on Abiding in Him (1 John 2:27)

1 John 2:27: *"As for you, the anointing which you received from Him is abiding in you, and you are not having need that anyone keep on teaching you; but even as His anointing is teaching you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie, and even as He taught you, keep on abiding in Him."*

Verse 27: "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him is abiding in you, and you are not having need that anyone keep on teaching you; but even as His anointing is teaching you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie, and even as He taught you, keep on abiding in Him."

This anointing is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which they received when they came to know Jesus Christ as Savior.

John 7:17: "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself." It is the function of the Holy Spirit to guide us into truth. Because of this ministry, John has a deep confidence that they are being taught the truth.

John concludes his verse: "but even as His anointing is teaching you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie, and even as He taught you, keep on abiding in Him."

John 15:4, 7: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you."

This verse teaches we are to be:

1. Abiding in Christ
2. Depending upon Him
3. (Being) taught the things of God by the Indwelling Holy Spirit

As we surrender to the Lord and submit to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, we can be assured we will be guided into all truth.

There are three obvious questions this morning:

1. Have I experienced the blessing of receiving the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ?
2. Am I abiding in Christ?
3. Have I been allowing the indwelling presence of the

Holy Spirit to teach me the meaning of God's truth?

This morning, it seems very appropriate for us to sing verse 3 of **"Constantly Abiding"**: *"This treasure I have in a temple of clay, While here on His footstool I roam; But He's coming to take me some glorious day, Over there to my heavenly home! Constantly abiding, Jesus is mine; Constantly abiding, rapture divine; He never leaves me lonely, whispers, O so kind: 'I will never leave thee,' Jesus is mine."*

October 30 — Boldness at His Coming (1 John 2:28)

1 John 2:28: *"And now, little children, keep on abiding in Him, in order that whenever He is revealed, we might have boldness and not shrink away in shame from Him in His coming."*

Verse 28: "And now, little children, keep on abiding in Him, in order that whenever He is revealed, we might have boldness and not shrink away in shame from Him in His coming."

John repeats the command from the previous verse: "keep on abiding in Him." This is a present imperative. This involves (1) communication, (2) closeness, and (3) communion. To fulfill this command, we need to:

1. Draw upon all that He is
2. Depend upon all that He can do
3. Develop into His likeness as a result

After giving the command, the apostle gives the purpose, "in order that whenever He is revealed, we might have boldness and not shrink away in shame from Him in His coming."

Dr. Mitchell regarding Jesus' coming says:

I've thought a good deal about this. Is it possible that there are going to be some who are going to be taken up to be with the Lord who are going to be ashamed when they stand in His presence? My friend, if the Lord Jesus should come for His own today, and He may, would you be ashamed of what you are doing? Would you be ashamed of some of the things you have said? Would you be ashamed of some of the plans you are making? This verse is very practical and heart-searching. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 21:4). I wonder if this will be because some Christians will be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Paul says in Philippians 1:20: "According to my eager expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but in all boldness, as always, also now, Christ shall be glorified in my body, whether through life or through death."

The three qualities that delight the heart of our heavenly Father are:

1. Fellowship

2. Faithfulness

3. Fruit

Our attitude towards Him in His coming will be determined by the kind of lives we have lived as Christians upon the earth and the level of our fellowship with Him.

Who can measure the joy that can be ours when we face the Lord Jesus with boldness because we have been pleasing to Him in the lives we have lived! We long to hear Him say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

This morning’s song of worship and praise is a hymn I would like sung at my funeral. Please join me as we sing together verse 1 of **“Be Still, My Soul”**: *“Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side; Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain. Leave to thy God to order and provide; In every change He faithful will remain. Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend Thro’ thorny ways leads to a joyful end.”*

October 31 — Born of God (1 John 2:29)

1 John 2:29: *“If you know that He is righteous, you are knowing also that everyone who is doing righteousness has been born of Him.”*

Verse 29: “If you know that He is righteous, you are knowing also that everyone who is doing righteousness has been born of Him.”

Our fingerprints, our ID, our dental records, our driver’s license, our credit cards, our social security number are all used to identify who we are. For the Christian, it is the fruit of righteousness which is flowing from his life.

Too many times we want to identify the victorious believer by: the cross he or she is wearing around their neck, the Bible they carry, their membership in a certain church, the fish symbol, bumper stickers on their car or their head full of biblical knowledge, but the Lord says it is righteousness.

When His righteousness is flowing from my life, it is fruit of an ever-deepening relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:20: “So then, you will know them by their fruits.”

J. Vernon McGee says:

In effect, John is saying that God’s children look like the Father. They take after their Father. If they don’t take after the Father, they must not be the Father’s children. It is just as simple as that, my friend.

James emphasizes this point in his epistle in James 2:17: “Even so, faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”

Philippians 1:11: "Having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which fruit is through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God."

Please join me as our hearts soar to heaven in praise as we sing verse 2 of **"Be Still, My Soul"**: *"Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake To guide the future as He has the past. Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake; All now mysterious shall be bright at last. Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know His voice Who ruled them while He dwelt below."*

NOVEMBER

November 1 — Children of God (1 John 3:1)

1 John 3:1: *"Behold how glorious a love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. For this reason the world is not knowing us, because it knew Him not."*

Verse 1: "Behold how glorious a love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. For this reason the world is not knowing us, because it knew Him not."

The apostle is emphatic to get our attention. He begins with the word, "Behold." We should take a moment to really see what is written here.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says of this verse:

"Contemplate the greatness of the divine love which that reality displays."

Romans 5:8: "But God is demonstrating His own love to us, because while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."

Galatians 3:26: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

John continues: "For this reason the world is not knowing us, because it knew Him not."

Jesus in John 17:14 says: "I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

John 16:33: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Since we are talking about heaven, it seems appropriate to worship and

praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of **“Be Still, My Soul”**:
“Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on When we shall be forever with the Lord, When disappointment, grief and fear are gone, Sorrow forgot, love’s purest joys restored. Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past, All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.”

November 2 — Soon We Shall Be Like Him (1 John 3:2)

1 John 3:2: *“Beloved ones, now we are the children of God, and not yet has it been made visible what we shall be. We are knowing that, whenever He is made visible, like ones to Him we shall be, because we shall see Him just as He is.”*

Verse 2: “Beloved ones, now we are the children of God, and not yet has it been made visible what we shall be. We are knowing that, whenever He is made visible, like ones to Him we shall be, because we shall see Him just as He is.”

How beautiful of John to call these Christians, “beloved ones.”

“Beloved ones, now we are the children of God.” This is a result of the new birth in their lives.

In this verse, John says what we will be in the future has not been made plain.

Philippians 1:6: “Being sure of this very thing, that He who began in you a good work will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Romans 8:29: “Because whom He foreknew, He also decided upon beforehand those who were to be like his Son in appearance to the end, that He might by the first-born among many brethren.”

In the *past*, we experienced the new birth by receiving Jesus Christ. In the *present*, we are now His children as a result of that transaction. Our *future* has not yet been made known.

John continues: “We are knowing that, whenever He is made visible, like ones to Him we shall be, because we shall see Him just as He is.”

2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

John says we know that the Spirit of God is changing us more into the image of His Son. When that work is completed, we are going to be like Him: “because we shall see Him just as He is.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord for the good work He is doing in each of our lives. Please join me in singing verse 1 of **“Face to Face”**: *“Face to face with Christ, my Savior, Face to face, what will it be? When with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ Who died for me*

Face to face I shall behold Him, Far beyond the starry sky; Face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by!"

November 3 — Purity is the Prize (1 John 3:3)

1 John 3:3: *"And everyone who is having this hope on Him is purifying himself, even as that One is pure."*

Verse 3: "And everyone who is having this hope on Him is purifying himself, even as that One is pure."

2 Corinthians 7:1: "Therefore having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and spirit, bringing about holiness in the fear of God."

We are challenged to deal with the sin in our lives that offends Him. He is perfectly holy.

Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Ephesians 5:27: "That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless."

It is a joy to see the Lord working out in our lives the image of Jesus Christ. Many of the things which are not pleasing to Him are falling away and His purity of life is beginning to take their place.

Psalms 26: 2-3: "Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth."

Psalms 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Suffering is part of the purifying process in working out His will in our lives. Purification takes place in our lives by three things:

1. The Scriptures
2. Suffering
3. Servanthood

Jeremiah 17:10 (NLT): "But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve."

Proverbs 28:13 (NLT): "People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy."

With worship and praise, let's sing together verse 3 of **"Face to Face"**: *"What rejoicing in His presence, When are banished grief and pain; When the crooked ways are straightened, And the dark things shall be plain. Face to face I shall behold Him, Far beyond the starry*

sky; Face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by!"

November 4 — Sin & Lawlessness (1 John 3:4-5)

1 John 3:4: “Everyone who is doing sin also is doing lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.”

1 John 3:5: “And you know that that One was made visible in order that He might take away sin; and sin is not in Him.”

Verse 4: “Everyone who is doing sin also is doing lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.”

This verse provides a contrast to verse 3: “And everyone who is having this hope on Him is purifying himself, even as that one is pure.” The word we have translated “lawlessness” is a general term like the English word, “wickedness.”

In a decadent society, sin is softened and excused.

Isaiah 5:20-21: “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.”

Our sin cost God the Father the death of His Son.

Barclay says:

Sin is the deliberate breaking of a law which a man well knows. Sin is putting one’s own desires in the place of the law of God; to sin is to obey oneself rather than to obey God.

John equates sin with lawlessness. Whenever a person commits an act of sin, it is the breaking of God’s law.

Whenever a person is continually “doing sin,” he becomes a law unto himself. He is disregarding his responsibility to God and to others. To continue in a practice of “doing sin,” reveals that I am not in fellowship with the Father because I am living in disobedience.

Sin violates the laws of nature. It is seen in these issues:

1. Homosexuality
2. Abortion
3. Divorce
4. Materialism
5. Self-Will
6. Adultery
7. Abuse
8. Theft
9. Lying

Verse 5: “And you know that that One was made visible in order that He might take away sin; and sin is not in Him.”

Sin violates His person and His work. It is a big deal with God! It makes drastic measures necessary – sending His Son to die on the cross.

He is the sinless Savior. Hebrews 4:15: “For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

Because He is without sin, He is in the position to pay the penalty for the sins of the whole world by His death. This is the good news of the gospel.

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of **“Because He Lives”**: *“God sent His Son - they called Him Jesus; He came to love, heal and forgive. He lived and died to buy my pardon; An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, All fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future And life is worth the living just because He lives.”*

November 5 — Sin is an Accident (1 John 3:6)

1 John 3:6: *“Everyone who is abiding in Him is not continually sinning. Everyone who is continually sinning has not seen Him nor has he known Him.”*

Verse 6: “Everyone who is abiding in Him is not continually sinning. Everyone who is continually sinning has not seen Him nor has he known Him.”

When you are abiding in Jesus Christ, you are living in union with Him, and the life will not manifest itself in a conduct that is continually sinning.

John 15:10: “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”

Abiding and obeying result in fellowship and relationship with our blessed Lord.

John forms the contrast between the one “who is abiding in Him” and the one “who is continually sinning.” There are two things pointed out about the one who is “continually sinning.” He has not (1) “seen Him” and has not (2) “known Him.” Two of the glorious experiences of a person who is walking in fellowship with the Father are:

1. He catches a vision through the word of God of Christ and all of His glory, in perfect holiness.
2. He comes to know by personal experience this wonderful Savior.

It is said of Isaiah and Job that when they saw the Lord, they were very much aware of their own sinfulness. So it is in our relationship to the Lord. The more we see Him in His holiness, the more we are aware of sin in our lives.

This morning, won't you join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of **"Because He Lives?"**: *"How sweet to hold a newborn baby And feel the pride and joy he gives; But greater still the calm assurance: This child can face uncertain days because He lives. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, All fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future And life is worth the living just because He lives."*

November 6 — Don't Go Astray (1 John 3:7)

1 John 3:7: *"Little children, let no one keep on leading you astray; the one who is doing righteousness is righteous, even as that one is righteous."*

Verse 7: "Little children, let no one keep on leading you astray; the one who is doing righteousness is righteous, even as that one is righteous."

This verse takes us back to chapter 1:8: "If we say that we are not having sin, we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us."

Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

Ephesians 5:6: "Let no one be deceiving you with empty words, for because of these things there is coming the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience."

The apostle is saying the proof is in the pudding or the cream always rises to the top.

Romans 1:17: "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith; even as it has been written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.'"

Romans 10:3: "For not knowing about the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God."

Genuine righteousness is the result of the Spirit's work in our lives. As this fruit of righteousness is born in our lives, it will impact the people around us.

Because our Father is righteous and we have been born into the family of God, we will manifest this same righteousness in our lives. It is a result of Him living His life in us.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **"Because He Lives"**: *"And then one day I'll cross the river; I'll fight life's final war*

with pain. And then, as death gives way to vict'ry, I'll see the lights of glory - and I'll know He reigns. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; Because He lives, All fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future And life is worth the living just because He lives."

November 7 — Sin & the Devil Go Together (1 John 3:8)

1 John 3:8: *"The one who is doing sin is of the devil; because the devil is sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was made visible, in order that He might destroy the works of the devil."*

Verse 8: "The one who is doing sin is of the devil; because the devil is sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was made visible, in order that He might destroy the works of the devil."

The sinner is identified with his father in this verse. John 8:44: "You are of your father, the devil."

Ephesians 2:2: "In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

The reason is stated by John: "because the devil is sinning from the beginning."

Isaiah 14:13-14: "You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'"

The apostle contrasts the children of God and the children of the devil. The children of God manifest themselves by doing righteousness, but the children of the devil by doing sin.

Satan is the author of sin. Christ came to free us from the bondage of sin. He had to destroy the works of the devil to free us from sin.

J. Vernon McGee says:

We need to recognize that the devil is the source of all sin. He is the one who is responsible for sin being brought into the world. He is the one who led our first parents into sin. And the reason that you and I have a sinful nature is because of the devil.

Hebrews 2:14-15: "Since then the children have shared blood and flesh, He Himself also in just the same way partook of the same, in order that through death He might render powerless the one who is having the power of death, that is, the devil; and might release those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

"In order that He might destroy the works of the devil."

By His death upon the cross, He has accomplished this two-fold objective.

1. Satan is a defeated foe. Christ's death upon the cross made it possible for a holy God to now deal with sin, which was Satan's stronghold.
2. Now, because the power of sin has been broken, Satan's power, too, has been broken. There is a way out of the bondage of sin and the domination of the god of this world by coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning with a hymn filled with expressions of victory. Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of **"O for a Thousand Tongues"**: *"O for a thousand tongues to sing My great Redeemer's praise, The glories of my God and King, The triumphs of His grace. Jesus! the name that charms our fears, That bids our sorrows cease, 'Tis music in the sinner's ears, 'Tis life, and health, and peace."*

November 8 — What a Change (1 John 3:9)

1 John 3:9: "Everyone who has been born of God is not practicing sin, because His seed is remaining in him; and he is not able to keep on sinning because he has been born of God."

Verse 9: "Everyone who has been born of God is not practicing sin, because His seed is remaining in him; and he is not able to keep on sinning because he has been born of God."

When we are walking with the Lord in fellowship, sin does not become a way of life, but an accident.

"Everyone who has been born of God is not practicing [doing] sin."

Romans 6:1-2: "What then shall we say? Are we to continue in sin in order that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" The key phrase is "still live in it."

Let us focus for a few moments on this phrase: "because His seed is remaining in him."

The principle of life which the believer has been given continues to be the ruling principle of his growth. God gives of Himself to the Christian. He does not only work on him, and then leave him. The mature man will be developed in due time out of the germ of the new life. This is the seed of the new nature that has been placed within him.

1 Peter 1:23: "Having been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding Word of God."

Dr. Mitchell says:

What a wonderful deliverance He has made for us! Not

only has He delivered us from the power of sin and Satan, but He has made us His children. We cannot repeat too often what John is showing us in this Epistle. The great yearning of the heart of God is that His children will walk in fellowship with Him.

Because we have been born of God and are a part of His family, He is going to discipline us when there is sin manifested in our lives.

1 John 1:9: “If we are confessing our sins, faithful is He and just that He should forgive us our sins, and should cleanse us from every unrighteousness.”

“And he is not able to keep on sinning because he has been born of God.” The person who is abiding in Christ cannot continue to consistently and deliberately sin because of what sin did to his Savior.

As we walk in close, intimate communion and fellowship with our heavenly Father, may it be the deep and longing desire of each heart that He might begin to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, and people may truly see Christ in us.

Please join me in worship and praise as we exalt our blessed Savior and His work on Calvary’s cross. Let’s sing together verse 3 of “**O for a Thousand Tongues**”: *“He breaks the power of canceled sin, He sets the prisoner free; His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood availed for me.”*

November 9 — Children of God & the Children of the Devil (1 John 3:10)

1 John 3:10: *“In this it is made visible: the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who is not practicing righteousness is not of God, and the one who is not loving his brother.”*

Verse 10: “In this it is made visible: the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who is not practicing righteousness is not of God, and the one who is not loving his brother.”

The condemnation in this verse shows up both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, he is “not practicing righteousness,” and horizontally, he is “not loving his brother.”

Galatians 5:21: “Of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

John identifies “the children of the devil” in two ways. The one who is not:

1. Practicing righteousness
2. Loving his brother

Hate and *sin* are ways to tell “the children of the devil” from “the children of God.” The opposite should also be true. *Love* and *obedience* should characterize “the children of God.”

Dr. Mitchell says:

If you really love the Lord, sin will not characterize your life. If you love to sin and love to rebel against the things of God, then you should examine your heart to find out if you are truly trusting the Saviour. A new creation, born of God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Nowhere does the scripture suggest we can take a light view of sin and have fellowship with our heavenly Father.

I would like to conclude our meditation this morning with two scriptures from the Phillips translation, Romans 12:1-2: “With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give Him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to Him and acceptable by Him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.”

Let’s worship and celebrate our blessed Lord’s victory on Calvary’s tree that provides the wonderful salvation we have this morning. Please join me in singing verses 4 and 5 of “**O for a Thousand Tongues**”: “*Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb, Your loosened tongues employ; Ye blind, behold your Savior come; And leap, ye lame, for joy. My gracious Master and my God, Assist me to proclaim, To spread thro’ all the earth abroad, The honors of Thy name.*”

November 10 — Be Loving One Another (1 John 3:11-12)

1 John 3:11: “*Because this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should be loving one another.*”

1 John 3:12: “*Not as Cain [who] was out of the evil one, and killed his brother. And for what reason did he kill him? Because his works were evil, and those of his brother righteous.*”

Verse 11: “Because this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should be loving one another.”

The message in 1 John 1:5 is that God is light. Now the message in this verse is we should be loving one another.

We are able to tell we are in the light by our love. Love will be the fruit of our fellowship with the Father. What is love, but the sheer ecstasy of giving the best we have to the One whom we love the most.

Before telling his audience precisely what love is, John first tells them

what it is not. It is most certainly not the kind of action Cain exhibited toward his brother Abel:

Verse 12: “Not as Cain [who] was out of the evil one, and killed his brother. And for what reason did he kill him? Because his works were evil, and those of his brother righteous.”

Genesis 4:6-8: “Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.’ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let’s go out to the field.’ And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.”

Hate *slays* and love *serves*.

Dr. Mitchell says:

“The heart of Cain in his attitude toward God manifested itself in his disobedience to the Word of God.”

From this, we learn you cannot approach God on your own terms.

1 Peter 4:4: “In which they are surprised (thinking it strange) that you are not running with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.”

Barclay says:

That was the attitude of the wild and loose living and reckless Alcibiades to Socrates. Socrates was the good man par excellence; Alcibiades was brilliant but erratic and often debauched. He used to say to Socrates: “Socrates, I hate you, because every time I meet you, you show me what I am.”

This morning, I find myself singing that wonderful old hymn, “**Glory to His Name.**” Please join me in singing verse 1: “*Down at the cross where my Saviour died, Down where for cleansing from sin I cried, There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His Name! Glory to His Name, Glory to His Name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His Name.*”

November 11 — Love & Life (1 John 3:13-14)

1 John 3:13: “*And stop wondering, brethren, if the world is hating you.*”

1 John 3:14: “*As for us we are knowing that we have passed over out of death into life, because we are loving the brethren. The one who is not loving is abiding in death.*”

Verse 13: “And stop wondering, brethren, if the world is hating you.”

John 15:18-19: “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated

Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

Because the world is opposed to the Father and we have identified ourselves with the Father, we then suffer the same hatred from the world.

In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:11-12, the Lord Jesus said: “Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Verse 14: “As for us we are knowing that we have passed over out of death into life, because we are loving the brethren. The one who is not loving is abiding in death.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

“The word ‘we’ is in the emphatic position in the original.

John 5:24: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

Love for one’s brothers and sisters in the family of God is evidence of entrance into God’s sphere of life.

Dr. Mitchell says:

“So the manifestation of our fellowship with God is a life of practical righteousness and a love for the brethren.”

“The one who is not loving is abiding in death.” We are born dead in trespasses and sin. We must experience the new birth.

Romans 5:12: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and through this sin, death, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

When we are out of fellowship and relationship, there is darkness and death, no growth and no fruit.

One of the evidences of life is love. My expression of love for the other brothers and sisters in God’s family is a visible manifestation of the fact that I belong to that family. I have passed over out of death which awaits the children of the devil into life, the ultimate destiny of the children of God.

Let’s continue our worship and praise this morning by singing verse 2 of **“Glory to His Name”**: *“I am so wondrously saved from sin, Jesus so sweetly abides within; There at the cross where He took me in; Glory to His Name! Glory to His Name, Glory to His Name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His Name.”*

November 12 — Hatred & Murder (1 John 3:15)

1 John 3:15: “*Everyone who is hating his brother is a murderer; and you are knowing that every murderer is not having eternal life abiding in him.*”

Verse 15: “Everyone who is hating his brother is a murderer; and you are knowing that every murderer is not having eternal life abiding in him.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

“It is an illusion to believe that a real Christian is incapable of hatred and murder. David was guilty of the murder of pious Uriah the Hittite.”

Matthew 5:21-22: “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.”

According to Jesus, a lustful eye is the spiritual equivalent of adultery. Matthew 5:28: “But I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

The text does not say he does not possess eternal life, but that he does not have it “abiding in him.”

Hatred on the part of one Christian toward another is an experience of moral murder. He is living in the same sphere in which the world lives – death. Fellowship with God and hatred cannot coexist.

Whereas *love* and *life* go together, so *hatred* and *death* go together.

When our hearts are filled with lust, materialism, selfishness and murder; there is no room for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:20: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.” Fellowship is restored when you answer the door.

Paul tells the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold new things have come.”

This morning, we have learned that the Lord always runs to repentance and reconciliation. When we refuse to deal with sin in our lives, it grows. It becomes more complicated and serious the longer we wait.

Let’s join together in worship and praise singing verse 3 of “**Glorify to His Name**”: “*O, precious fountain that saves from sin, I am so glad I*

have entered in; There Jesus saves me and keeps me clean; Glory to His Name! Glory to His Name, Glory to His Name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His Name."

November 13 — Sacrificial Servanthood (1 John 3:16)

1 John 3:16: "In this we have come to know love, because that One on our behalf laid down His soul; and we are having a moral obligation on behalf of our brethren to lay down our souls."

Verse 16: "In this we have come to know love, because that One on our behalf laid down His soul; and we are having a moral obligation on behalf of our brethren to lay down our souls."

Our fellowship with the Father will result in the serving and giving of ourselves to others.

The big questions we ask of ourselves are:

1. Are we loving?
2. Are we involved?

"In this we have come to know love, because that One on our behalf laid down His soul." If you really want to know love, you can see it pictured in Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:9: "For you are knowing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He being rich for your sake became poor, in order that you through His poverty might become rich."

Philippians 2:7: "But emptied Himself, having taken the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."

John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

NO GREATER LOVE, NOR COULD THERE BE
THAN CHRIST'S DEEP LOVE OF CALVARY.

"And we are having a moral obligation on behalf of our brethren to lay down our souls." In chapter 2:6, we have a moral obligation "to be walking around just as that One also walked around." In this verse, "we are having a moral obligation" to be laying down our lives for our fellow brethren, even as He did for us.

We are to be *living* and *loving* like Jesus Christ. Growth in Christlike love will result in sacrificial servanthood.

C. S. Lewis said:

"Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular."

It was Jim Elliot who prayed:

"Lord, pour out my life as an oblation for the world. Blood is only of value as it flows before thine altar."

This is love that knows no limit. This is love that will make any sacrifice necessary to manifest itself. Love is positive. It seeks the other person's good and leads to activity for him, even to the point of self-sacrifice.

Jim Elliot also said:

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Life is not all about me. A Christian in fellowship is living for and serving others.

Many musical pieces capture the thought of this morning's meditational verse. Listen to these words: *"Brother, sister, let me serve you. Let me be as Christ to you. Grant that I may have the grace, To let you be my servant, too. We are pilgrims on a journey, Together on this road. We are here to help each other, Walk the mile and bear the load, I will hold a Christ light for you, In the night and time of your fear. I will hold my hand out to you, Speak the peace you long to hear. I will weep when you are weeping, When you laugh I'll laugh with you. I will share your joy and sorrow, Till we've seen this journey through. When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony, Born of all we've known together, Christ's agony. Brother, sister let me serve you. Let me be as Christ to you. Grant that I may have the grace, To let you be my servant, too."*

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of **"Glory to His Name"**: *"Come to this fountain so rich and sweet, Cast thy poor soul at the Saviour's feet; Plunge in today, and be made complete; Glory to His Name! Glory to His Name, Glory to His Name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His Name."*

November 14 — A Stingy Heart (1 John 3:17)

1 John 3:17: *"But whoever is having the livelihood of the world, and is seeing his brother having need and shuts up his heart from him, how is the love of God abiding in him?"*

Verse 17: "But whoever is having the livelihood of the world, and is seeing his brother having need and shuts up his heart from him, how is the love of God abiding in him?"

Love is both *emotional* and *motional*. It *feels* and *moves*. It *weeps* and *works*.

John uses a picture to illustrate what he has been saying about love.

James 2:14-16: "What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to

them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?”

John may have been remembering the parable of the good Samaritan. If you remember the parable, the priest and Levite (both religious individuals) came down the road and saw the man beaten, in great need; but neither of them got involved in helping this man. Then, the good Samaritan came down the road. He had compassion and got involved in meeting needs.

Westcott says:

“The phrase ‘to shut up the heart’ is apparently unique. It expresses the interposition of a barrier between the sufferer and the tender feelings of his brother.”

John raises the question: “How is the love of God abiding in him?”

This love will only flow unhindered from our lives as we are faithful in our fellowship with the Father.

It was St. Francis of Assisi who said:

LORD, MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF THY PEACE,
WHERE THERE IS HATRED, LET ME SOW LOVE,
WHERE THERE IS INJURY, PARDON,
WHERE THERE IS DOUBT, FAITH,
WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR, HOPE,
WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS, LIGHT,
WHERE THERE IS SADNESS, JOY.

OH, DIVINE MASTER,
GRANT THAT I MAY NOT SO MUCH SEEK TO BE CONSOLED,
AS TO CONSOLE.
TO BE UNDERSTOOD, AS TO UNDERSTAND,
TO BE LOVED, AS TO LOVE,
FOR IT IS IN GIVING, THAT WE RECEIVE,
IT IS IN PARDONING THAT WE ARE PARDONED.
IT IS IN DYING THAT WE ARE BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE.

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of Margaret Clarkson’s hymn, “**So I Send You**”: “*So send I you to labor unrewarded, To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown, To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing; So send I you to toil for Me alone.*”

November 15 — Loving in Deed & in Truth (1 John 3:18)

1 John 3:18: “*Little children, let us not be loving by word nor by the tongue, but in deed and truth.*”

Verse 18: “Little children, let us not be loving by word nor by the

tongue, but in deed and truth.”

We could translate this as “put your money where your mouth is.”

Love, to be love, must be seen in deeds.

In light of his previous teaching, John is giving the command: “not be loving by word nor by the tongue, but in deed and truth.” It is possible to say that we are loving, and yet not be fulfilling our responsibility of that testimony by deeds which reveal it.

The good Samaritan’s actions reveal the fact that he is a man filled with love. When I become a vehicle for God’s kind of love, it is going to reveal itself by my constructive involvement in the lives of my brothers and sisters in God’s family.

This love will spill out to the world. “Lord, I want to be a vessel that is broken and spilled out, and used up for Thee.”

When God’s love is filling out hearts, it results in sacrificial servanthood.

This morning, please worship and praise the Lord with me by singing verses 2 and 3 of **“So I Send You”**: *“So send I you to bind the bruised and broken, O’er wand’ring souls to work, to weep, to wake, To bear the burdens of a world a-weary; So send I you to suffer for My sake. So send I you to loneliness and longing, With heart a-hung’ring for the loved and known, Forsaking home and kindred, friend and dear one; So send I you to know My love alone.”*

November 16 — God is Greater Than Our Hearts (1 John 3:19-20)

1 John 3:19: *“And in this we shall know that we are out of the truth, and in His presence we shall persuade our hearts.”*

1 John 3:20: *“In whatever our hearts are condemning us; because God is greater than our hearts, and He is knowing all things.”*

Verse 19: “And in this we shall know that we are out of the truth, and in His presence we shall persuade our hearts.”

If this love is manifesting in our lives, we will know that “we are out of the truth.” When we come into His presence, our hearts are more fully assured because of the fellowship we have with Him.

“And in His presence we shall persuade our hearts.” We have joy in our fellowship with the Father because this love is flowing from our lives in service to others. We know we are doing the right thing. The apostle says our hearts are persuaded that we are doing the right thing when His love is flowing through us.

We could translate this phrase: “We shall still and tranquilize the fears and misgivings of our heart.”

Psalm 94:19: “When anxiety was great within me, Your consolation brought joy to my soul.”

Verse 20: “In whatever our hearts are condemning us; because God is greater than our hearts, and He is knowing all things.”

Man sees the deed, but God knows the intention.

Thomas á Kempis said:

“Men judge us by our deeds but God by the deep emotions of our heart.”

Psalm 112:7-8: “He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.”

This is a child of God who has some guilt about his lack of love regarding a relationship in the past, so his heart condemns him. What is the answer to this condemnation? The answer is given in the next phrase: “because God is greater than our hearts, and He is knowing all things.”

What does John mean by this? God knows that the blood of Christ has already been applied to that situation, and the blood of His Son keeps on cleansing us from all sin. All sins are under the blood of Christ.

If “our hearts are condemning us,” we have this joy: “God is greater than our hearts, and He is knowing all things.”

Carl Bard says:

THOUGH NO ONE CAN GO BACK
AND MAKE A NEW START,
ANYONE CAN START FROM NOW
AND MAKE A BRAND NEW END.

Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of “**So I Send You**”: “*So send I you to leave your life’s ambition, To die to dear desire, self-will resign, To labor long, and love where men revile you; So send I you to lose your life in Mine.*”

November 17 — Boldness Toward God (1 John 3:21-22)

1 John 3:21: “*Beloved ones, if our heart is not condemning us, we are having boldness toward God.*”

1 John 3:22: “*And whatever we are asking we are receiving from Him, because we are keeping His commandments and we are doing*

the things pleasing in His sight.”

Verse 21: “Beloved ones, if our heart is not condemning us, we are having boldness toward God.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

“Once a condemning heart has been silenced by resting on God’s knowledge of all things, there comes a new confidence before God.”

When we are in fellowship with the Father, sometimes a disquieting concern comes up: What if I have done something I am not conscious of? What if I have grieved the Spirit, and may not know about it?

Many people live in a morbid introspection, always afraid they have done something, then feeling very guilty because they cannot pinpoint what it is. This is the problem John is addressing when he says, “if our heart is not condemning us.” We should not be worried.

“We are having boldness toward God,” because it is the ministry of God’s Holy Spirit to convict us of anything that displeases Him. He will do His work perfectly. You can count on the Spirit to let you know.

Similar to when there is something wrong in your marriage: you do not have a problem recognizing it in the conduct and attitude of your mate.

Isn’t it strange that some people get upset if they have guilt feelings and others get upset if they do not have them?

Verse 22: “And whatever we are asking we are receiving from Him, because we are keeping His commandments and we are doing the things pleasing in His sight.”

The Lord affirmed this verse in John 15:7: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”

Matthew 21:22: “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

We learn two grounds for effective prayer in these verses:

1. Keeping His commandments
2. Doing the things pleasing in His sight

We must focus on two things:

1. Obedience to His word
2. Pleasing Him by our conduct

Dr. Mitchells says:

When we are walking in fellowship with God, all doubts are removed and we will come to Him in prayer. Communion

with God excludes all false petitions. We will not want that which is outside the will of God but will seek to please Him. Whatsoever we ask of Him we will receive because we are obedient to His Word and because we trust Him.

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord by singing verse 1 of that wonderful hymn, **"Sitting at the Feet of Jesus":** *"Sitting at the feet of Jesus, O, what words I hear Him say! Happy place! so near, so precious! May it find me there each day! Sitting at the feet of Jesus, I would look upon the past; For His love has been so gracious, It has won my heart at last."*

November 18 — Believing in Jesus & Loving One Another (1 John 3:23)

1 John 3:23: *"And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and loving one another, as He gave us commandment."*

Verse 23: "And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and loving one another, as He gave us commandment."

John summarizes everything he has said. We have the right *belief* and the right *conduct* wedded together in this important verse.

1. I am to be "believing in the name of His Son."
Acts 16:31: "And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.'"
2. I am to be "loving one another, as He gave us commandment."

It is interesting that the two negative warnings in this epistle parallel these very things:

1. Back in chapter 2:15, John said: Stop loving the world, meaning do not misplace your love.
2. In chapter 4:1, John says: Beloved, stop believing every spirit. Be sure your belief is right.

So the apostle tells us there are two things that are most important: (1) Believing in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and (2) loving one another.

Please join me in praising the Lord by singing verse 2 of **"Sitting at the Feet of Jesus":** *"Sitting at the feet of Jesus, Where can mortal be more blest? There I lay my sins and sorrows, And when weary, find sweet rest; Sitting at the feet of Jesus, There I love to weep and pray, While I from His fullness gather Grace and comfort ev'ry day."*

November 19 — Blessed Assurance (1 John 3:24)

1 John 3:24: *“And the one who is keeping His commandments is abiding in Him, and He Himself is abiding in Him. And in this we are knowing that He is abiding in us, from the Spirit whom He gave to us.”*

Verse 24: “And the one who is keeping His commandments is abiding in Him, and He Himself is abiding in Him. And in this we are knowing that He is abiding in us, from the Spirit whom He gave to us.”

John 15:10: “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”

The one keeping the “commandments” of the Lord is finding these two things true:

1. He is abiding in Christ.
2. Christ is abiding in him.

Fellowship is a reality to the obedient heart.

John concludes this section with these words: “And in this we are knowing that He is abiding in us, from the Spirit whom He gave to us.”

Romans 8:14: “For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

Romans 8:16-17: “The Spirit Himself is bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, also heirs; on the one hand heirs of God, on the other fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed, we are suffering with Him in order that we may also be glorified together.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

“This is the first of six references to the Holy Spirit. The way a believer can verify that God lives in him is by the operation of God’s Spirit in his life.”

I think it is most appropriate for us to worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of “**Sitting at the Feet of Jesus**”: *“Bless me, O my Savior, bless me, As I sit low at Thy feet; O look down in love upon me, Let me see Thy face so sweet; Give me, Lord, the mind of Jesus, Make me holy as He is; May I prove I’ve been with Jesus, Who is all my righteousness.”*

November 20 — Stop Believing Every Spirit (1 John 4:1)

1 John 4:1: *“Beloved, stop believing every spirit, but keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”*

Verse 1: “Beloved, stop believing every spirit, but keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

This is the second negative warning in this book. The first one was in chapter 2:15: “Stop loving the world, neither the things which are in the world. If a man keeps on loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Now, in this verse: “Beloved, stop believing every spirit.”

Our belief is to be in Jesus Christ and should manifest itself as love for each other.

The more you know Him and His word, the safer you are. Stay away from the dramatic, emotional experiences. Focus on the written word and the living word, Christ.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

“To begin with, the Spirit of God must be distinguished from false spirits.”

Dr. Mitchell says:

How can we do this? One man says the Bible teaches this, and another man says the Bible teaches that. Someone else says the Bible is not to be trusted at all. How can we know that which is of God and that which is not of God?

We are to test a person on the basis of what he confesses about the Person of Jesus Christ.

Why is it necessary for us to be careful not to be believing every spirit? Paul answers this question in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan is disguising himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if also his servants are disguising themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

It is our responsibility as maturing Christians in the Lord Jesus, through our fellowship with the Father, to be careful not to believe every spirit that speaks, but to: “keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God.”

Negatively, we are not to be “believing every spirit,” but positively, we are to “keep on putting the spirits to the test to see if they are from God.”

These spirits are characterized by three things:

1. They are False
2. They precipitate Fear
3. They are Fake

The word “to test” is a technical word used of “*testing or assaying of metal*” to see if it rings true or is up to standard.

John gives the reason for this command in the last phrase of the verse: “because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

From a practical point of view, avoid jumping into things too quickly and “know-it-all” attitudes. Stay HOT: Humble, Open and Teachable.

John 8:32: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

When truth prevails, there is peace, unity, transparency, openness and honesty.

This morning, please join me in singing one of the most victorious hymns as we worship and praise the Lord. Let’s sing together verse 1 of **“Blessed Be the Name”**: *“All praise to Him Who reigns above In majesty supreme, Who gave His Son for man to die, That He might man redeem! Blessèd be the Name, blessèd be the Name, Blessèd be the Name of the Lord! Blessèd be the Name, blessèd be the Name, Blessèd be the Name of the Lord!”*

November 21 — Confessing Jesus Christ (1 John 4:2)

1 John 4:2: “In this you are knowing the Spirit of God: every spirit that is confessing Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”

Verse 2: “In this you are knowing the Spirit of God: every spirit that is confessing Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”

The focus and teaching is centered on Jesus Christ. There are no hidden agendas. There are six red flags to warn you of false teachings:

1. It’s a new revelation.
2. It’s extra biblical.
3. It focuses on the leader.
4. It focuses on control and isolation.
5. It focuses on money.
6. It is absent of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“In this you are knowing the Spirit of God.” John now provides the knowledge for testing the spirits. The Spirit of God is evident by the following test: “every spirit that is confessing Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”

It is God come in human flesh to (1) take away sins and (2) destroy the works of the devil.

John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The person who is confessing that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” is of God. It is the person believing in His deity, in His virgin birth, and in His mission to pay the penalty for man’s sin and provide eternal salvation.

You can recognize the false teachers by their failure to

acknowledge or confess that: “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.”

As we worship and praise our blessed Lord this morning, let's sing verse 2 of **“Blessed Be the Name”**: *“His Name above all names shall stand, Exalted more and more, At God the Father's own right hand, Where angel hosts adore. Blessèd be the Name, blessèd be the Name, Blessed be the Name of the Lord! Blessèd be the Name, blessèd be the Name, Blessèd be the Name of the Lord!”*

November 22 — The Spirit of Antichrist (1 John 4:3)

1 John 4:3: *“And every spirit which is not confessing Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”*

Verse 3: “And every spirit which is not confessing Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”

The negative side of this discerning test is seen in this phrase: “And every spirit which is not confessing Jesus is not from God.”

It is amazing the number of different religious beliefs that are disqualified by this basis: Christian Science, Spiritualism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Unity, Garner Ted Armstrong and much of Modern Theology.

Dr. Mitchell says:

I say very bluntly that a great many ecclesiastical leaders in our country are not Christian because they deny the Incarnate Word of God. Let me say that if Jesus Christ is not God Incarnate, if He is not the sinless Son of God, then we do not have a Saviour. Then He had to die for His own sin and could not have died to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This is precisely what these people are saying. They teach that when He died on the cross, He died as a martyr. They take the very words of Scripture and twist them to deceive the people of God.

The humanity and deity of Christ are the two things that John defends in this passage. To deny His deity and His humanity is to be of antichrist. Later in the passage, he will call it “the spirit of error.”

Romans 16:17-18: “Now I am urging you, brethren, be keeping a watchful eye every one for those who are causing the divisions and the occasions of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are not rendering service to our Lord Christ, but to their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they are deceiving the hearts of the unsuspecting.”

John concludes the verse with this phrase: “which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”

We must be living in the last days. We are deluged with false teaching that does not center on the person of Jesus Christ.

Let’s worship and praise our exalted Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of **“Blessed Be the Name”**: *“Redeemer, Saviour, Friend of man
Once ruined by the fall, Thou hast devised salvation’s plan, For Thou
hast died for all. Blessèd be the Name, blessèd be the Name, Blessèd be
the Name of the Lord! Blessèd be the Name, blessèd be the Name, Blessèd
be the Name of the Lord!”*

November 23 — Greater is He That is In Us (1 John 4:4)

1 John 4:4: *“You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”*

Verse 4: “You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”

What great statements and blessed truth! These are a treat for us in our meditation this morning.

1. You are from God.
2. You have conquered them.

In these remaining three verses, it is easy to identify to whom John is speaking: (1) “You” in verse 4, (2) “They” in verse 5, and (3) “We” in verse 6.

“You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them” – them, the antichrist or the false teachers.

John gives them a message of assurance. Because they have been born into God’s family by the new birth and their life is manifesting the fruit of that relationship, he is able to say with confidence they are “from God.”

What a blessed truth this is with all the error around them! They are “from God.”

The Christians are commended for having “conquered” the teachers that are inspired by the evil one. The victory has taken place because these believers have been unwilling to go along with the error which has been promoted by these false teachers.

The reason for their victory is given in the next statement: “Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”

John 10:28-29: “And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to

snatch them out of the Father's hand."

John 12:31: "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out."

2 Corinthians 2:14: "But thanks be to God who is always leading us in His triumph in Christ and is making known through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."

1 Corinthians 15:57: "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 8:37: "But in all things we are winning a most glorious victory through the One who loved us."

Isaiah 14:26-27 (NLT): "I have a plan for the whole earth, a hand of judgment upon all the nations. 'The LORD of Heaven's Armies has spoken—who can change his plans? When his hand is raised, who can stop him?'"

I find myself worshipping and praising the Lord with much passion and joy. Sing with me verse 4 of **"Blessed Be the Name"**: *"His Name shall be the Counselor, The mighty Prince of Peace, Of all earth's kingdoms Conqueror, Whose reign shall never cease. Blessed be the Name, blessed be the Name, Blessed be the Name of the Lord! Blessed be the Name, blessed be the Name, Blessed be the Name of the Lord!"*

November 24 — The World is Their Audience (1 John 4:5)

1 John 4:5: "They themselves are out of the world. On this account, out of the world they are speaking, and the world is hearing them."

Verse 5: "They themselves are out of the world. On this account, out of the world they are speaking, and the world is hearing them."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

In the three verses, you have three groups:

1. In verse 4, you have the readers.
2. In verse 5, you have the antichrists.
3. In verse 6, you have the apostles.

In verse 5, you have three things: (1) their origin, (2) their message, and (3) their audience.

"On this account, out of the world they are speaking." These false teachers are "out of the world," their origin. Their message is from "the world" and not from the Father.

Philippians 3:18-19: "For many are walking, of whom I was telling you often, but now also I am telling you with tears, they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their stomach, and that which they glory in is their shame, who are setting their minds on earthly things."

As J.B. Phillips says:

“This world is the limit of their vision.”

They have a message that the world likes to hear. Paul writes of these men to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:5, 7: “They have a form of godliness but they deny the power of it, from such turn away. They are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Then Paul continues in 2 Timothy 4:3-4: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their desire shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables.”

Dr. Mitchell says:

“The message of the world will make man the center. The message from the Spirit of God will always make Christ the center.”

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord by celebrating the victory accomplished by our blessed Savior on Calvary. Please join me in singing verse 1 of “**Faith Is the Victory**”: *“Encamped along the hills of light, Ye Christian soldiers, rise, And press the battle ere the night Shall veil the glowing skies. Against the foe in vales below Let all our strength be hurled; Faith is the victory, we know, That overcomes the world. Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory! O, glorious victory, That overcomes the world.”*

November 25 — The Spirit of Truth & the Spirit of Error (1 John 4:6)

1 John 4:6: *“We ourselves are from God; the one who is knowing God is hearing us; he who is not from God is not hearing us. From this we are knowing the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”*

Verse 6: “We ourselves are from God; the one who is knowing God is hearing us; he who is not from God is not hearing us. From this we are knowing the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

“We ourselves are from God.” This is similar to verse 4 when John said: “You are from God, little children.” This indicates they have been born again by the Spirit into God’s family.

“The one who is knowing God is hearing us.” This person has a personal relationship with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. He also has the ability to hear God’s message.

Revelation 3:22: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Isaiah 30:21: “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”

1 Corinthians 2:14: “But a natural man does not accept the things of

the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

Essentially, John is saying: “The one who is knowing God is hearing us.”

John 10:27: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

1 Samuel 3:9-10: “So Eli told Samuel, ‘Go and lie down, and if He calls you, say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”’ So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times. ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’”

This verse is a contrast between the children of God and the children of the world. Those who do not have a relationship with God are unable to hear with perception and understanding the message which is given from God.

2 Timothy 2:18: “They are men who have gone astray from the truth.”

Regarding the “Spirit of truth,” we read in John 14:17: “That is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.”

John 15:26: “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me.”

The apostle speaks of the “Spirit of truth” and the “spirit of error.” The word “error” can be translated *“wandering, roaming, wandering from the path of truth, error, delusion, deceit or deception to which one is subject.”*

1 Thessalonians 2:3: “For our exhortation was not out of error, neither out of impure motive nor in deceit.”

2 Peter 3:17: “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be constantly on your guard, lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness.”

How does Satan do this? He uses our own nature of the flesh to tempt us, but also focuses on performance over relationship. Additionally, he spiritually uses counter teaching of his own kingdom.

Ephesians 4:14: “In order that we no longer may be immature, being tossed here and there by the waves and being carried here and there by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.”

“The Spirit of truth” is the Holy Spirit who has now come to

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dwell in us and to guide us into all truth. He has anointed us by His indwelling to make us capable of (1) spiritual understanding, (2) discernment, and (3) separation of those things which are truth and those which are error.

Let's continue to worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of **"Faith Is the Victory"**: *"His banner over us is love, Our sword the Word of God; We tread the road the saints above With shouts of triumph trod. By faith they, like a whirlwind's breath, Swept on o'er every field; The faith by which they conquered death Is still our shining shield. Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory! O, glorious victory, That overcomes the world."*

November 26 — God Is Love (1 John 4:7-8)

1 John 4:7: *"Beloved, let us be loving one another, because love is from God; and everyone who is loving has been born of God and is knowing God."*

1 John 4:8: *"The one who is not loving has not come to know God, because God is love."*

Verse 7: "Beloved, let us be loving one another, because love is from God; and everyone who is loving has been born of God and is knowing God."

Flowing out of our fellowship with the Father is "agape" or Godlike love. Sacrificial servanthood flows from love that is produced by the Spirit of God.

John addresses these Christians as "Beloved." He begins the section with the exhortation: "Let us be loving one another." John uses the present tense which tells us to love all the time. When His life is flowing through me, His love will be seen: "because love is from God," the originating source.

The apostle makes clear that I am only revealing my relationship to God when I am loving others.

"And everyone who is loving has been born of God and is knowing God." Those who have been "born of God" are marked by love. Love will be the fruitage of my union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 8: "The one who is not loving has not come to know God, because God is love."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

"The absence of love is evidence that a person does not know God. Significantly, John did not say such a person is not "born of God."

Can you be a born again Christian and not be loving? Everything is

possible when we are out of fellowship with God. We are living by the flesh rather than the spirit. We are grieving and quenching the spirit.

E. Stanley Jones in *Victory through Surrender* says:

Jesus is the Great Affirmation. He affirms the most radical proposition ever made to the mind of man, the proposition that the present unworkable world order, based upon greed and self-seeking, be replaced by God's order--the kingdom of God based upon self-giving service and love.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of **"The Love of God"**: *"The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star; And reaches to the lowest hell. The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win; His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin. O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forevermore endure The saints' and angels' song."*

November 27 — Love Made Clear (1 John 4:9)

1 John 4:9: *"In this the love of God was made clear in our case, because His Son the only begotten one, God has sent into the world in order that we might live through Him."*

Verse 9: "In this the love of God was made clear in our case, because His Son the only begotten one, God has sent into the world in order that we might live through Him."

Romans 5:8: "But God is demonstrating His own love to us, because while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

"In this the love of God was made clear in our case." The "in this" is defined in the remainder of the verse: "because His Son the only begotten one God has sent into the world in order that we might live through Him."

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 1:18 (NET): "No one has ever seen God. The only One, Himself God, who is in closest fellowship with the Father, has made God known."

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

God the Father sent His Son into the world. He sent Him to die for

the purpose: “in order that we might live through Him.”

There are three things we know about the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world:

1. 1 John 3:5: “in order that He might take away sin; and sin is not in Him.”
2. 1 John 3:8: “in order that He might destroy the works of the devil.”
3. In this verse: “in order that we might live through Him.”

He came (1) to take away sin, (2) to destroy the works of the devil and (3) that we might live through Him.

All the promises of God’s love for us are signed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

I am overwhelmed with much joy and praise this morning. Please join me in singing verse 3 of **“The Love of God”**: *“Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made, Were ev’ry stalk on earth a quill, And ev’ry man a scribe by trade; To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry. Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Tho’ stretched from sky to sky. O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forevermore endure The saints’ and angels’ song.”*

November 28 — He Loved Us & Sent His Son (1 John 4:10)

1 John 4:10: *“In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He Himself loved us and sent His Son to be the satisfaction for our sins.”*

Verse 10: “In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He Himself loved us and sent His Son to be the satisfaction for our sins.”

God the Father saw us in the bondage of sin under the penalty of death, and His heart went out to us in love. He willingly sent His Son to die on the cross in our place.

The word “satisfaction” takes us back to chapter 2:2: “And He Himself is satisfaction for our sins; not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

Romans 3:25: “Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation [satisfaction] in His blood through faith for a proof of His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.”

This “satisfaction” refers to judicial action. God is the Judge who stepped down from the bench, paid the fine and represents me in court. I am declared not guilty. By this judicial action, God:

1. Settled all the claims against me.

2. Paid the ransom or fine.
3. Redeemed me by His blood.

God the Father was satisfied with God the Son so He raised Him from the dead.

John illustrates the true picture of love in this verse. It is not in our love for God, but in His love for us. He shows His love by sending His Son into the world to take care of our sin problem by making a sacrifice of Himself.

This was one of my favorite hymns during my seminary days. Please join me in worship and praise to the Lord this morning by singing together verse 3 of **“How Great Thou Art”**: *“And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in - That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art!”*

November 29 — Our Moral Obligation (1 John 4:11)

1 John 4:11: *“Beloved, if God so loved us also, we ourselves are under moral obligation to be loving one another.”*

Verse 11: “Beloved, if God so loved us also, we ourselves are under moral obligation to be loving one another.”

God’s love for us demands something from us in return. John explains: “we ourselves are under moral obligation to be loving one another.”

This is the third time John has used the phrase “under moral obligation” in this epistle:

1. 1 John 2:6: we are “under moral obligation” to be walking around even as Christ walked around.
2. 1 John 3:16: we are “under moral obligation” on behalf of our brethren to lay down our souls.
3. In this verse: we are “under moral obligation to be loving one another.”

We can summarize this moral obligation by saying we are to be *living* like Christ, *laying* down our lives like Christ, and *loving* just like God in Christ has done for us.

This love is *impartial*, it is *innocent*, and it is *involved*:

1. Impartial – does not play favorites
2. Innocent – has no ulterior motives
3. Involved – gives oneself sacrificially for others

This love is illustrated in the marriage relationship. Ephesians 5:25: “Husbands, love your wives even as also Christ loved the Church and

gave Himself up for her.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing another Fanny Crosby hymn. Let’s sing verse 1 of **“Close to Thee”**: *“Thou, my everlasting portion, More than friend or life to me; All along my pilgrim journey, Saviour, let me walk with Thee. Close to Thee, close to Thee, Close to Thee, close to Thee;”*

November 30 — Love Brought to Fullness (1 John 4:12)

1 John 4:12: *“No one has beheld God at any time; if we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love has been brought to its fullness in us.”*

Verse 12: “No one has beheld God at any time; if we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love has been brought to its fullness in us.”

Concentrating on my fellowship with the Father in turn produces a self-sacrificing love in [through] me for other brothers and sisters in the family, as well as those who do not know Jesus Christ as Savior.

The capacity to love grows with depth of fellowship.

“No one has beheld God at any time.”

John 1:18 (NET): “No one has ever seen God. The only One, Himself God, who is in closest fellowship with the Father, has made God known.”

Jesus Christ has unfolded God to us. It is true that no one has seen God at any time, but if we are loving one another, they are seeing God in us. When this is true, the love of God “has been brought to its fullness [or to maturity] in us.”

We grow up in love. John spoke of this maturing process in chapter 2 with “little children,” the “young men” and the “fathers.”

Dr. Mitchell says:

“Our love for God is displayed by obedience to His Word.

Our love for each other is displayed by sacrifice.”

The questions raised in these verses are:

1. Are you walking in fellowship with the Father?
2. Is your heart open before the Lord?
3. Is your life generating agape love?

Psalm 26:2-3: “Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth.”

This love flows out of brokenness.

Let’s continue our worship and praise of our Lord this morning by singing verses 2 and 3 of **“Close to Thee”**: *“Not for ease or worldly pleasure, Nor for fame my prayer shall be; Gladly will I toil and suffer;*

Only let me walk with Thee. Lead me through the vale of shadows, Bear me ov'r life's fitful sea; Then the gate of life eternal May I enter, Lord, with Thee. Close to Thee, close to Thee, Close to Thee, close to Thee;

DECEMBER

December 1 — The Spirit is the Evidence (1 John 4:13)

1 John 4:13: "In this we are knowing that we are abiding in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."

Verse 13: "In this we are knowing that we are abiding in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."

It is the Spirit of God that generates this love in our lives, love that otherwise would not be there.

Galatian 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

J.I. Packer in his book, *Rediscovering Holiness*, says:

We should think out our behavioral strategy with such situations directly in view. Thus, we should think of:

love as the Christ-like reaction to people's malice;

joy as the Christ-like reaction to depressing circumstances;

peace as the Christ-like reaction to troubles, threats, and invitations to anxiety;

patience as the Christ-like reaction to all that is maddening;

kindness as the Christ-like reaction to all who are unkind;

goodness as the Christ-like reaction to bad people and bad behavior;

faithfulness and gentleness as the Christ-like reaction to lies and fury; and

self-control as the Christ-like reaction to every situation that goads you to lose your cool and hit out.

Years ago someone stated:

"I used to think a few men had a monopoly on the power of the Holy Spirit. I have since learned the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on a few men."

As this love is being manifested in our lives, "we are knowing" it is the work of the Holy Spirit that generates this love through us. This assures us we belong to Him.

Jack R. Taylor said:

“Being filled with the Spirit is an inside job. If you insist on an outer experience, then you make emotions the king.”

I have picked a wonderful hymn for our worship and praise this morning. I hope to have this hymn sung at my funeral. Please join me in singing verse 1 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**: *“When peace, like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, ‘It is well, it is well, with my soul.’ ‘It is well (It is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.’”*

December 2 — The Savior of the World (1 John 4:14)

1 John 4:14: *“And we ourselves have beheld and we are bearing witness that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.”*

Verse 14: “And we ourselves have beheld and we are bearing witness that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.”

John points out this is a firsthand account. He and the other apostles are testifying what they have seen and heard to us.

Jesus is called the Savior of the world.

John 4:42: “And they were saying to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.’” John would remember the incident by the well when Christ talked to the woman who was lost in sin. As a result of her faith, countless other Samaritans responded as well to the message.

We read back in 1 John 2:2: “And He Himself is satisfaction for our sins; not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

The Savior’s motivation was His love for the whole world.

2 Corinthians 5:15 (NLT): “He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**: *“Though Satan should buffet, tho’ trials should come, Let this blest assurance control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul. It is well (It is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

December 3 — Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 4:15)

1 John 4:15: *“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God is abiding in Him--he is abiding in God.”*

Verse 15: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God is abiding in Him--he is abiding in God.”

Even the hated Samaritans were “abiding in God.” The hated, sinful woman at the well was having God abide in her. John had seen this happen with his own eyes.

Confessing to His deity and humanity assures us we are not of antichrist, but that we are abiding in Jesus Christ.

This references back to chapter 4:2: “In this you are knowing the Spirit of God: every spirit that is confessing Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”

There are two things true about a person who is confessing that Jesus is the Son of God:

1. God is abiding in him.
2. He (the believer) is abiding in God.

John 15:4: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”

This morning, please join me in singing joyfully verse 3 of “**It Is Well With My Soul**”: *“My sin, O, the bliss of this glorious thought, My sin not in part but the whole, Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! It is well (It is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

December 4 — Focus on the Love of God (1 John 4:16)

1 John 4:16: “*And we ourselves have known and have believed the love which God is having in our case. God is love, and the one who is abiding in love is abiding in God, and God is abiding in Him.*”

Verse 16: “And we ourselves have known and have believed the love which God is having in our case. God is love, and the one who is abiding in love is abiding in God, and God is abiding in Him.”

John repeats that “God is love” from verse 8. There are five observations we can make that demonstrate God is love. His love is manifested:

1. In the original act of creation. Creating us that we might have fellowship with Him and He might have an object of His love.
2. By giving us a free will to choose whether or not to follow Him.
3. In His constant care for us.
4. By the death of His Son upon the cross.
5. Ultimately by the life beyond that is going to be ours who know Christ as our Savior when He comes back for us.

We can say His love for us is manifested in the *past, present* and

future. In the *past*, we have seen His love in creation, at the cross and in His choice. We see His care now in our *present*. Then, He will show His love in the *future* by His coming again.

John 14:23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.’”

Join me as we worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 4 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**: *“And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll, The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, ‘Even so,’ it is well with my soul. It is well (It is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

December 5 — Love Brought to Completion (1 John 4:17)

1 John 4:17: *“In this the love has been brought to completion which is in us, that as a result we are having boldness in the day of judgment; because just as that one is, also we ourselves are in this world.”*

Verse 17: “In this the love has been brought to completion which is in us, that as a result we are having boldness in the day of judgment; because just as that one is, also we ourselves are in this world.”

His love has been brought to maturity when we no longer have to be afraid to have a freedom and confidence in His presence.

This takes us back to 1 John 2:28: “And now, little children, keep on abiding in Him, in order that whenever He is revealed, we might have boldness and not shrink away in shame from Him in His coming.”

1 John 3:21: “Beloved ones, if our heart is not condemning us, we are having boldness toward God.”

A believer’s life will be assessed at the judgment seat of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:10: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive a recompense for what he has done during his life in the body, whether good or bad.”

1 Corinthians 3:13-15: “Each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.”

Charles R. Swindoll in *Laugh Again* says:

Our attitude toward the world around us depends upon

what we are ourselves. If we are selfish, we will be suspicious of others. If we are of a generous nature, we will be likely to be more trustful. If we are quite honest with ourselves, we won't always be anticipating deceit in others. If we are inclined to be fair, we won't feel that we are being cheated. In a sense, looking at the people around you is like looking in a mirror. You see a reflection of yourself.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of one of the old favorite hymns, **"The Old Rugged Cross"**: *"On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, The emblem of suffering and shame; And I love that old cross where the dearest and best For a world of lost sinners was slain. So I'll cherish the old rugged cross, Till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross, And exchange it some day for a crown."*

December 6 — Perfect Love (1 John 4:18)

1 John 4:18: *"Fear is not in love; but perfect love is casting out fear, because this fear is having to do with punishment. And the one who is fearing has not been brought to completion in this love."*

Verse 18: "Fear is not in love; but perfect love is casting out fear, because this fear is having to do with punishment. And the one who is fearing has not been brought to completion in this love."

If there is "fear" in our lives, then there is something wrong that causes us to be afraid we are not pleasing to the Lord.

"Fear" has punishment. It carries a kind of torment that is its own punishment. Ironically, an unloving believer experiences punishment precisely because he feels guilty and fears meeting his judge. Such fear prohibits a completed love, but a Christian who loves has nothing to fear. Therefore, he escapes the inner torment which a failure to love can bring.

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."

Proverbs 29:25: "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe."

The apostle points out: "Fear is not in love; but perfect love is casting out fear." So let it happen. Let God love you His way with no conditions and no improvements on your part to make yourself worthy of God's love.

If you try to shape-up for God and be worthy of His love, you play the same game with Him that you play with others, especially your mate. You set a standard of what you think is lovable, and when you can't reach it or your mate does not reach it, you really fail in your

love.

Fear casts out or suppresses the love you once had for yourself and others. It is the fruit of focusing on yourself.

Watch the fear fall away as you join me as we sing verse 2 of **“The Old Rugged Cross”**: *“Oh, that old rugged cross, so despised by the world, Has a wondrous attraction for me; For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above To bear it to dark Calvary. So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross, Till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross, And exchange it some day for a crown.”*

December 7 — Obligated to Love (1 John 4:19-20)

1 John 4:19: *“As for us, let us be loving because He Himself first loved us.”*

1 John 4:20: *“If anyone should say, ‘I am loving God,’ and is hating his brother, he is a liar; for the one who is not loving his brother whom he has seen, he is not able to go on loving God whom he has not seen.”*

Verse 19: “As for us, let us be loving because He Himself first loved us.”

In this verse, John makes the plea on the basis of the previously stated “moral obligation.” We are under moral obligation to be loving one another because of His love for us.

1 Peter 1:22: “Having purified your souls by means of your obedience to the truth unto genuine (unhypocritical) love of the brethren, love one another from the heart earnestly.”

Romans 12:9: “Let love be without hypocrisy. Be abhorring what is evil; be clinging to what is good.”

Verse 20: “If anyone should say, ‘I am loving God,’ and is hating his brother, he is a liar; for the one who is not loving his brother whom he has seen, he is not able to go on loving God whom he has not seen.”

You cannot love the one without the other. If you are truly loving God, it is going to show up in your relationship with people.

This person is not only a “liar,” but he is walking in the darkness.

1 John 2:11: “But the one who is hating his brother is in the darkness and he is walking around in the darkness, and he does not know where he is going because the darkness blinded his eyes.”

John gives us the reason for his opening statement in the last phrases of this verse: “for the one who is not loving his brother whom he has seen, he is not able to go on loving God whom he has not seen.”

How can you love that which is invisible if you cannot love that which is visible? The expression of love on the horizontal is only a manifestation of love on the vertical.

E. Stanley Jones in *Victory through Surrender* says:

We can see ten bubbles arising to the surface of the lives of the disciples from the unsundered selves. (1) Selfish egoism—they quarrelled over first places. (2) Self-righteousness—“though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended,” a “they” “I” relationship. (3) Resentments—“Shall we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” (4) Spiritual impotence—“Why could we not cast it out?” (5) Critical attitudes—“Why this waste?” (6) Group bigotry—“We forbade them for they followed not us.” (7) Race prejudice—“Send her (a Syro-Phoenician) away, for she crieth after us.” (8) Selfish acquisitiveness—“We have left all to follow Thee, what do we get?” (9) A dislike of self-sacrifice—“Be it far from Thee, Lord, this shall never be.” (10) Fear—behind closed doors for fear.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“The Old Rugged Cross”**: *“In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine, A wondrous beauty I see, For twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died, To pardon and sanctify me. So I’ll cherish the old rugged cross, Till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross, And exchange it some day for a crown.”*

December 8 — The Commandment from Jesus (1 John 4:21)

1 John 4:21: *“And this commandment we are having from Him, that the one who is loving God should also be loving his brother.”*

Verse 21: *“And this commandment we are having from Him, that the one who is loving God should also be loving his brother.”*

Someone said:

“A friend never gets in the way unless you are falling.”

1 John 2:3: “And in this we are knowing that we know Him, if we are keeping His commandments.”

When I have a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ, it will be manifested in my love for the Father. It will also be revealed in my love for my brother or sister in Christ.

Stephen R. Covey in *Principle-Centered Leadership* says:

Interpersonal quality means giving those twelve hugs a day—physical hugs, emotional hugs, verbal hugs to the people around us—so that those deposits are constantly being made.

F.D. Meyer says:

When there is faith in the Lord Jesus, there will always be love toward all the saints, because faith is the faculty of taking

God into the heart. Faith is God-receptiveness. Faith appropriates the nature of God as the expanded lung does the mountain air or as the child does the parent's gift. Faith, like a narrow channel, conveys God's ocean fullness into the lagoons of human need.

It is time for a personal commitment to our blessed Lord. We can express that by singing in worship and praise verse 4 of **"The Old Rugged Cross"**: *"To the old rugged cross I will ever be true; Its shame and reproach gladly bear; Then He'll call me some day to my home far away, Where His glory forever I'll share. So I'll cherish the old rugged cross, Till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross, And exchange it some day for a crown."*

December 9 — Believing that Jesus is the Christ (1 John 5:1)

1 John 5:1: *"Everyone who is believing that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God; and everyone who is loving the one who begat is loving the one who has been begotten of Him."*

Verse 1: "Everyone who is believing that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God; and everyone who is loving the one who begat is loving the one who has been begotten of Him."

Love and belief are wedded together again as the things which reveal a person has a right relationship with God. When love flows out of my life, it gives evidence of the new birth.

Everyone who loves the Father loves His Child as well. John has also given us warnings about these two very things, love and belief:

1. Not to love the world – 1 John 2:15
2. Not be believing every spirit – 1 John 4:1

Eternal life is uppermost in John's mind. It is received through a proper relationship with Jesus Christ. The fruitage of the indwelling Spirit will be a love that emanates from that relationship to others. He wants us to be sure about these things above all else.

"Everyone who is believing that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God." It is not believing Jesus was a good human being or believing Jesus was a good teacher, but that He is the Christ--God come in human flesh--and that He came to die on a cross for our sins.

Christ came to die on a cross and destroy the works of the devil. He offered the perfect sacrifice and was victorious in conquering sin.

Guys King says:

"We have heard the old saying, 'Love me, love my dog,'

The idea here is similar, 'Love God, love His child.'"

Barclay says:

"So John is thinking of the love which naturally binds a man

to the Father who begat him and to the other children whom the Father has begotten.”

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord by singing verses 1 and 3 of that familiar old hymn, **“What a Friend We Have In Jesus”**: *“What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Ev'rything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Ev'rything to God in prayer! Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge, Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do your friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer; In His arms He'll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a solace there.”*

December 10 — Love & Obedience (1 John 5:2)

1 John 5:2: *“In this we are knowing that we are loving the children of God, when we are loving God and we are doing His commandments.”*

Verse 2: *“In this we are knowing that we are loving the children of God, when we are loving God and we are doing His commandments.”*

How can I know that God's love is flowing through me?

In 1 John 4:2, we had the statement: “In this you are knowing the Spirit of God,” and in this verse: “In this we are knowing that we are loving the children of God.”

There are two ways we can know when we are loving the children of God:

1. We are loving God.
2. We are doing His commandments.

When I am concentrating on my love in the vertical relationship, my love in the horizontal relationship will be a normal outgrowth.

I manifest my love for God by believing in His Son.

1 John 2:3: “And in this we are knowing that we know Him, if we are keeping His commandments.”

1 John 3:24: “And the one who is keeping His commandments is abiding in Him.”

By my love for God and my obedience to His word, I am also aware of my love for “the children of God.”

There are three things that result from keeping His commandments:

1. We are knowing that we know Him – 1 John 2:3 – *assurance*.
2. We are abiding in Him – 1 John 3:24 – *abidance*.
3. We are knowing that we are loving the children of God – 1 John 5:2 – *affirmation*.

You have the *assurance, abidance and affirmation*.

A person who obeys God's commands is doing what is right, both toward God and toward His fellow believers. Thus, he is loving both God and them. It must be remembered that this includes the willingness to sacrifice for one's brother.

Let's worship and praise the Lord on this morning by singing verses 1 and 3 of **"Beneath The Cross of Jesus"**: *"Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand, The shadow of a mighty Rock Within a weary land; A home within the wilderness, A rest upon the way, From the burning of the noontide heat, And the burden of the day. I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place; I ask no other sunshine than The sunshine of His face; Content to let the world go by, To know no gain nor loss, My sinful self my only shame, My glory all the cross."*

December 11 — His Commandments are not Burdensome (1 John 5:3)

1 John 5:3: *"For this is the love of God, that we are keeping His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome (difficult to fulfill)."*

Verse 3: "For this is the love of God, that we are keeping His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome (difficult to fulfill)."

God's commands are not burdensome.

E.V. Hill said:

Get up every morning. Get your bible in your hand. Get on your knees and walk with God. Talk with the Lord. Worship the Lord. Become doers of the word, not hearers only. The more you do, the more you will rejoice.

We demonstrate our love for God by doing what He says, by our obedience.

John 15:10, 14: "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. You are My friends, if you do what I command you."

Obedience to His word is the proof of our love.

John 14:21: "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."

Deuteronomy 30:11, 14: "Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it."

Because of our deep love for the Lord Jesus Christ and the

overwhelming gratitude for His sacrifice upon the cross of Calvary for our sins; it is not a burden to do what He asks us to do.

My motivation for obedience is gratitude, not trying to gain acceptance.

Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.”

To joyfully express our love to our Savior, I think it would be honoring to sing that wonderful little prayer chorus, **“I Love You, Lord”**: *“I love you, Lord, and I lift my voice To worship You. O my soul, rejoice! Take joy, my King, in what You hear; May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.”*

December 12 — Faith is the Victory (1 John 5:4)

1 John 5:4: *“Because everyone that has been born of God is conquering the world; and this is the victory which conquered the world--our faith.”*

Verse 4: “Because everyone that has been born of God is conquering the world; and this is the victory which conquered the world--our faith.”

In chapter 2:13, we found the “young men” had conquered the evil one. Then, in chapter 4:4, the teachings of the evil one had been conquered by the “little children.” Now, “the world,” the system of the evil one, is conquered by those who are “born of God.”

John concludes this verse: “and this is the victory which conquered the world--our faith.”

Guy King says:

“This is the victory that overcometh the world”--even our fighting? No; prepare for a surprise--“even our faith.”

Dr. Mitchell says:

“Faith not only appropriates Christ for salvation but it appropriates Christ for victory.”

It was faith that released us from the bondage of sin and gave us new life. It is daily faith in the promises of God and in His ability to order and handle the circumstances in our lives that gives us victory over the world. It is faith at the point of human futility: I cannot but You can. It is faith involving the will, not just the head or heart, the intellect or the emotions.

Faith is complete trust in God’s ability to do what He has promised.

It is my faith in God that keeps me from submitting to the desires

of the world that are described back in 1 John 2:16: (1) the desires of the flesh, (2) the desires of the eyes, and (3) the vainglory of life.

Barbara Johnson in *Pack Up Your Gloomees in a Great Big Box, then Sit on the Lid and Laugh*, says:

“Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves the One who is leading.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning with hearts of joy as we sing verses 1 and 2 of **“He Touched Me”**: *“Shackled by a heavy burden, ‘Neath a load of guilt and shame -Then the hand of Jesus touched me, And now I am no longer the same. Since I met this blessed Savior, Since He cleansed and made me whole; I will never cease to praise Him -I’ll shout it while eternity rolls. He touched me, O, He touched me, And O the joy that floods my soul! Something happened, and now I know, He touched me and made me whole.”*

December 13 — The Big Question (1 John 5:5)

1 John 5:5: *“And who is the one who is conquering the world, except the one who is believing that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

Verse 5: “And who is the one who is conquering the world, except the one who is believing that Jesus is the Son of God?”

John raises the question to amplify his thoughts. In verse 1, we noted: the one “who is believing that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.” In this verse, it is: “the one who is believing that Jesus is the Son of God” that is “conquering the world.”

The prerequisite to victory over the world is believing: “Jesus is the Son of God.” Christ comes in. It is He that does the “conquering” through us.

1 John 4:4: “You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”

Dr. Mitchell says:

We overcome the world through the Saviour. Jesus Christ gets the victory and we enjoy the deliverance.

Faith makes victory possible. Love makes it easy. It delights the heart of God.

Romans 8:37 (NLT): “No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.”

1 Corinthians 15:57: “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

John 16:33: “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Dr. Mitchell points out:

It (this passage) also reminds us of a little song.

CHEER UP, YE SAINTS OF GOD, THERE'S NOTHING TO
WORRY ABOUT,

NOTHING TO MAKE YOU FEEL AFRAID, NOTHING TO MAKE
YOU DOUBT.

REMEMBER, JESUS NEVER FAILS, SO WHY NOT TRUST HIM
AND SHOUT?

YOU'LL BE SORRY YOU WORRIED AT ALL TOMORROW
MORNING!

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verses 1 and 2 of **“His Eye Is On The Sparrow”**: *“Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come, Why should my heart be lonely And long for Heav’n and home When Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is He: His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ His tender word I hear; And resting on His goodness I lose my doubts and fears; Tho’ by the path He leadeth, But one step I may see: His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. I sing because I’m happy, I sing because I’m free, For His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.”*

December 14 — The Spirit is the Truth (1 John 5:6)

1 John 5:6: *“This is the One who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is the one who is bearing witness, because the Spirit is the truth.”*

Verse 6: “This is the One who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is the one who is bearing witness, because the Spirit is the truth.”

John characterizes the life of Christ by water, representing the baptism in the beginning, and blood, representing Jesus’ sacrifice on Calvary’s cross at the end.

Make no mistake. It was Jesus Christ who was baptized by John. The water baptism of the Lord Jesus signified the entrance of Christ into the work which He came to perform, and His blood signified the conclusion of that work.

Colossians 1:20: “And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.”

Hebrews 9:22: “And one may almost say that with blood all things

are being cleansed according to the Law, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

“Not in water only, but in the water and in the blood.” The water was the beginning. The blood signifies the successful completion of the work He came to do.

John concludes the verse: “And the Spirit is the one who is bearing witness, because the Spirit is the truth.”

There are two things said of the Holy Spirit:

1. He is the one who is bearing witness.
2. The Spirit is the truth.

Jesus referred to the Spirit’s work in John 16:13: “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth.”

Romans 8:16-17: “The Spirit Himself is bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, also heirs; on the one hand heirs of God, on the other fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed we are suffering with Him in order that we may also be glorified together.”

This morning’s hymn is an old familiar one we often sang growing up. As we praise and worship our Savior who shed His blood for us, let’s sing verses 1 and 2 of **“Nothing But The Blood”**: *“What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus; What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus; For my pardon, this I see, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; For my cleansing this my plea, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; Oh! precious is the flow That makes me white as snow; No other fount I know, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”*

December 15 — The Three Witnesses (1 John 5:7-8)

1 John 5:7: “Because there are three who are bearing witness.”

1 John 5:8: “The Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in one thing.”

Verse 7: “Because there are three who are bearing witness.”

Verse 8: “The Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in one thing.”

The Spirit, the water and the blood are the three bearing witness. John mentioned these three in verse 6.

The Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. The water is testimony of the initiation or beginning of Christ’s work of redemption. The blood is the consummation of the Lord Jesus’ work.

Dr. Mitchell says:

“It is remarkable to note that our Saviour’s ministry started

at the River Jordan when He was baptized in water and ended at the cross where He shed His blood.”

“The Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in one thing,” or could be translated, *“the three are in agreement.”*

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates it this way:

“All three witnesses are in agreement that a single divine person, Jesus Christ, was involved in these events.”

All three of these witnesses converge in one Person: Jesus Christ.

Let’s celebrate the work of our blessed Redeemer together this morning by singing verses 3 and 4 of **“Nothing But The Blood”**:
“Nothing can for sin atone, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; Naught of good that I have done, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; This is all my hope and peace, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; This is all my righteousness, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; Oh! precious is the flow That makes me white as snow; No other fount I know, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

December 16 — The Witness of God is Greater (1 John 5:9)

1 John 5:9: *“If we are receiving the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; because this is the witness of God, that He has borne witness concerning His Son.”*

Verse 9: “If we are receiving the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; because this is the witness of God, that He has borne witness concerning His Son.”

Being greater, God’s testimony ought to be accepted. Here is God’s testimony about His Son, which we should accept because of its greatness.

We read (1) in chapter 3:20: God is greater than our hearts, (2) in chapter 4:4: God is greater than the one who is in the world, and in this verse (3) God’s witness is greater than that of man.

If we are receiving the “witness of men,” which we do daily in the experiences of life; then “the witness of God is greater.” The apostle emphasizes you can surely trust the “witness of God” if you can trust the “witness of men.”

John 14:1-3: “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

The Father’s witness is recorded at the time of His Son’s baptism when the heavens opened and a voice was heard that said: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

This passage gives three witnesses from God: the Spirit, the water

and the blood.

When I think of God the Father's witness of God the Son, this wonderful hymn comes to mind. Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of **"Ten Thousand Angels"**: *"They bound the hands of Jesus in the garden where He prayed; They led Him thro' the streets in shame. They spat upon the Saviour so pure and free from sin. They said, 'Crucify Him; He's to blame.' Upon His precious head they placed a crown of thorns; They laughed and said, 'Behold the King.' They struck Him and they cursed Him and mocked His holy name All alone. He suffered ev'rything. He could have called ten thousand angels To destroy the world and set Him free. He could have called ten thousand angels, But He died alone, for you and me."*

December 17 — Believing in the Son of God (1 John 5:10)

1 John 5:10: *"The one who is believing in the Son of God is having the witness in himself; the one who is not believing God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness which God has witnessed concerning His Son."*

Verse 10: "The one who is believing in the Son of God is having the witness in himself; the one who is not believing God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness which God has witnessed concerning His Son."

"The one who is believing in the Son of God is having the witness in himself." The witness the Christian has within himself is the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:16: "The Spirit Himself is bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

1 John 3:24: "We are knowing that He is abiding in us, from the Spirit whom He gave to us."

"The one who is not believing God has made Him a liar." If we deny the witness of God, we make God a "liar." 1 John 1:10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we are making Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."

The last phrase of this verse provides the reason John makes this statement: "because he has not believed in the witness which God has witnessed concerning His Son."

Let's stay at the foot of the cross as we conclude our meditation this morning by singing verses 3 and 4 of **"Ten Thousand Angels"**: *"When they nailed Him to the cross, His mother stood nearby, He said, 'Woman, behold thy son!' He cried, 'I thirst for water;' but they gave Him none to drink. Then the sinful work of man was done. To the howling mob He yielded; He did not for mercy cry. The cross of shame He took alone."*

And when He cried, 'It's finished,' He gave Himself to die; Salvation's wondrous plan was done. He could have called ten thousand angels To destroy the world and set Him free. He could have called ten thousand angels, But He died alone, for you and me."

December 18 — God Gave Us Eternal Life (1 John 5:11)

1 John 5:11: "And this is the witness, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

Verse 11: "And this is the witness, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

John defines this "witness." It is that God has given us "eternal life."

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

John 5:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

The eternal life John speaks of is in "His Son," as we see in this last phrase: "and this life is in His Son." This "eternal life" can be found nowhere except in "His Son."

Speaking to Thomas in John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'"

Please join me in worship and praise as we celebrate Jesus' victory as He died upon the cross for our sins. Let's sing together verses 1 and 2 of "**Grace Greater Than Our Sin**": "*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt, Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured, There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt. Sin and despair, like the seawaves cold, Threaten the soul with infinite loss; Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold, Points to the Refuge, the Mighty Cross. Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.*"

December 19 — Having the Son is Having Life (1 John 5:12)

1 John 5:12: "The one who is having the Son is having the life; the one who is not having the Son of God is not having the life."

Verse 12: "The one who is having the Son is having the life; the one who is not having the Son of God is not having the life."

John uses this contrast to summarize the teaching of this section.

Humanity is divided into two parts:

1. The one having the Son and having the life

2. The one not having the Son of God and not having the life
Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me."

I will always remember the testimony many years ago of one of the Dallas Cowboys who came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He said: "If the elevator is going to work, you've got to get on the elevator."

You must come to that moment of abandonment to Jesus Christ, and commit yourself to Him and Him alone by faith. Before fellowship can be a reality, I must experience relationship in the new birth and be born into His family. Only then, as a result of this relationship, can I be counting on fellowship with the Father.

This life only resides in His Son and nowhere else. To have Christ is to have life, and to not have Christ is to not have life.

When I come to Jesus Christ in faith, I am saved from (1) the guilt, (2) the doom, (3) the stain, and (4) the dominion of sin. I am saved by the sovereign grace of God and precious blood of Christ.

Some people are not sure about their home in heaven. They have doubts about their future salvation. It is so sad because they have no assurance. They miss the whole point that Jesus Christ is our salvation. Our safety does not depend upon what we keep doing, but upon what He is.

This verse says: "The one who is having the Son is having the life."

On the basis of God's word and your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, can you say with certainty that He is your personal possession? Do you know that you have eternal life because He lives in your heart?

WHEN THE LAST FEEBLE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN,
AND THE GATES OF THAT CITY APPEAR,
WHEN THE BEAUTIFUL SONGS OF THE ANGELS,
FLOAT OUT ON MY LISTENING EAR;

WHEN ALL THAT NOW SEEMS SO MYSTERIOUS,
SHALL BE AS BRIGHT AND AS CLEAR AS THE DAY,
THEN THE TRIALS OF THE RACE WILL SEEM NOTHING,
WHEN I COME TO THE END OF LIFE'S DAY.

George McDaniel Cole in *To the End of the Race*

Doesn't it make you homesick?

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verses 3 and 4 of "**Grace Greater Than Our Sin**": "*Dark is the stain that we cannot hide, What can avail to wash it away? Look, there is flowing a crimson tide; Whiter than snow you may be today. Marvelous, infinite,*

matchless grace, Freely bestowed on all who believe; You that are longing to see His face, Will you this moment His grace receive? Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin."

December 20 — Complete Assurance (1 John 5:13)

1 John 5:13: *"I wrote these things to you in order that you may know that you are having eternal life, you who are believing in the name of the Son of God."*

Verse 13: "I wrote these things to you in order that you may know that you are having eternal life, you who are believing in the name of the Son of God."

As I read these words, I think of Fanny Crosby's wonderful hymn, **"Blessed Assurance"**: *"Blessèd assurance, Jesus is mine! O, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long."*

Do we have this wonderful assurance of knowing that Jesus Christ is living in our lives? Do we know our eternal destiny is secure?

This morning, we are going to be challenged. Daily, we should be developing a greater intimacy with the divine.

"I wrote these things to you in order that you may know that you are having eternal life." With this purpose in mind, John wrote to assure his believing readers they had eternal life.

"You who are believing in the name of the Son of God." The only ones who can have this assurance are those who have received Him by faith.

Faith is a big factor in our Christian lives. It is by faith we accept Him as our Savior, and it is by faith that we learn to walk with Him daily.

Each of us are filled with doubts at some point in our lives. Can I really know that I am on my way to heaven without a doubt? Can I have a certainty about spiritual things? The answer to these questions is Yes! The more we have fellowship with the Father, the more we find Him to be totally adequate to meet every need in our lives.

Above everything else, John wants us to know we have "eternal life." Can we really know before we die that our destination is heaven? I believe we can know based on the experience of men in the Scriptures:

1. Abraham. In John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."
2. Job. In Job 19:25-26: "I know that my Redeemer lives,

and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.”

3. David. In Psalm 23:4: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

The word “assurance” means “*a positive declaration intended to give confidence, freedom from doubt, or a certainty.*”

It is by faith that I come to the Lord Jesus. Assurance is based on His promise. Faith is the root and assurance is the flower.

Francis Ridley Havergal wrote several wonderful hymns. One of my favorites is “**Like A River Glorious.**” Please join me as we sing verses 1 and 2: “*Like a river glorious, Is God’s perfect peace, Over all victorious In its bright Increase; Perfect, yet it floweth Fuller ev’ry day, Perfect, yet it groweth Deeper all the way. Hidden in the hollow Of His blessed hand, Never foe can follow Never traitor stand; Not a surge of worry Not a shade of care, Not a blast of hurry Touch the spirit there. Stayed upon Jehovah, Hearts are fully blest; Finding, as He promised, Perfect peace and rest.*”

December 21 — When We Pray (1 John 5:14)

1 John 5:14: “*And this is the boldness (confidence) which we are having toward Him, that if we are asking anything according to His will, He is hearing us.*”

Verse 14: “And this is the boldness (confidence) which we are having toward Him, that if we are asking anything according to His will, He is hearing us.”

George Mueller put it like this:

“Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance. It is laying hold of His willingness.”

Dr. Mitchell says:

“The consciousness of divine life brings the believer into a place of boldness.”

We have freedom of speech. We are able to make requests of Him at any time.

On the basis of our fellowship with the Father, we are having a confidence toward Him: “If we are asking anything according to His will, He is hearing us.” He hears us because the lines of communication have been established, because we are in fellowship with Him.

John 16:24: "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full."

There is a wonderful old hymn that asks the question: Does Jesus Care? I would ask you to join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 1 and 2 of **"Does Jesus Care?"**: *"Does Jesus care when my heart is pained Too deeply for mirth or song; As the burdens press, and the cares distress, And the way grows weary and long? Does Jesus care when my way is dark With a nameless dread and fear? As the daylight fades into deep night shades, Does He care enough to be near? Oh yes, He cares; I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares."*

December 22 — He Is Hearing Us (1 John 5:15)

1 John 5:15: *"And if we are knowing that He is hearing us, whatever we are asking, we are knowing that we are having the requests which we have asked from Him."*

Verse 15: "And if we are knowing that He is hearing us, whatever we are asking, we are knowing that we are having the requests which we have asked from Him."

What a joy to know the Lord is hearing us when we pray!

Exodus 22:23: "If thou afflict them in any way and they cry unto Me, I will surely hear their cry."

Psalms 34:15: "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their cry."

Jeremiah 32:27: "I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for Me?"

Jeremiah 33:3: "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."

The real problem in unanswered prayer comes when our thoughts are not His thoughts and our ways are not His ways.

James 4:3: "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning that He is such a caring God. Let's sing together verses 3 and 4 of **"Does Jesus Care?"**: *"Does Jesus care when I've tried and failed To resist some temptation strong; When for my deep grief there is no relief, Though my tears flow all the night long? Does Jesus care when I've said goodbye To the dearest on earth to me, And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks, Is it aught to Him? Does He see? Oh yes, He cares; I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares."*

December 23 — The Sin Unto Death (1 John 5:16)

1 John 5:16: *“If anyone should see his brother sinning a sin not towards death, he shall ask and He shall give him life--those who are not sinning towards death. There is a sin towards death, not concerning that am I saying that he should make request.”*

Verse 16: “If anyone should see his brother sinning a sin not towards death, he shall ask and He shall give him life--those who are not sinning towards death. There is a sin towards death, not concerning that am I saying that he should make request.”

There is “sin” which leads to “death.” Then, there is sin which happens in the life of a Christian. This sin is an accident that comes in a moment of weakness or frustration. This is the “sin” John is referencing.

The apostle returns to his thoughts in chapter 3:9: “Everyone who has been born of God is not practicing sin, because His seed is remaining in him; and he is not able to keep on sinning because he has been born of God.”

Sometimes a Christian may sin so seriously that God judges that sin with swift, physical death. In this case, it is a sin that leads to death. In Acts 4:1-11, Ananias and Sapphira are an example of this extreme sin.

However, most of the sins one sees a Christian brother commit are a common occurrence, not of such a serious nature. For these sins, a believer ought to pray, knowing that if any sin is continued long enough, it is a threat to a fellow Christian’s life.

My responsibility regarding the problem of sin in my life was spoken about in chapter 1:9: “If we are confessing our sins, faithful is He and just that He should forgive us our sins, and should cleanse us from every unrighteousness.”

We can have boldness to come into His presence even to the point where we can pray for a sinning brother and see him restored in the things of the Lord.

“If anyone should see his brother sinning,” referring to a Christian brother, “not towards death,” because his sin has been forgiven and cleansed by faith in the Lord Jesus, “he shall ask and He shall give him life.”

“There is a sin towards death, not concerning that am I saying that he should make request.” There is “sin unto death” for the person who is not a Christian, but also for the one who is. The “sin unto death” for a person who is not a Christian is the rejection of Jesus Christ or the denial that He has come in the flesh to die on the cross for our sins. The “sin unto death” for a Christian is physical death.

John is writing to Christians and addressing our fellowship with the Father. I believe he is referencing the same issue Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 11:30: "For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."

The "sin unto death" for the Christian is the Father saying to His sinning child, "If you are going to persist in disobedience, it is better for you to come on home with Me than to remain there on earth jeopardizing My cause."

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 2 and 3 of "**Calvary Covers It All**": *"The stripes that He bore and the thorns that He wore Told His mercy and love evermore (evermore); And my heart bowed in shame as I called on His name, And Calvary covers it all. How matchless the grace, when I looked in the face Of this Jesus, my crucified Lord (of my Lord); My redemption complete I then found at His feet, And Calvary covers it all. Calvary covers it all, My past with its sin and stain; My guilt and despair Jesus took on Him there, And Calvary covers it all."*

December 24 — The Attitude That Created Christmas (Philippians 2:5-6 Phillips)

Philippians 2:5-6: "Let Christ Himself be your example as to what your attitude should be for He, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal."

My homemade translation from the Greek text for these two verses reads:

Verse 5: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Verse 6: "Who existing in the form of God, looked not upon this being equal with God a prize to be grasped eagerly."

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NLT): "You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that by His poverty He could make you rich."

Weymouth translates this verse:

"The very spirit which was in Christ Jesus be in you also."

Keith L. Brooks states:

"Insofar as we yield to Him, the mind of the Master will become the master of our minds."

MAY THE MIND OF CHRIST MY SAVIOR LIVE IN ME FROM DAY
TO DAY

BY HIS LOVE AND POWER CONTROLLING ALL I DO AND SAY.

Pamela Reeve has expressed it in a song: *"Think through me thoughts of God, My Father quiet me Til in thy holy presence hushed I think thy*

thoughts with Thee. Think through me thoughts of God And let my own thoughts be. Silenced before eternal truth As it is found in Thee. Think through me thoughts of God, That always, everywhere The stream that through my being flows May bless men, not impair."

"For He, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal."

This verse does not mean that when Christ became man, He ceased to be God. The Son of God did not stand on His rights, but laid them aside to meet a need. The words translated "grasped eagerly" has the idea of a treasure to be clutched and retained at all costs.

He laid aside all of these things for us so we saw Him constantly borrowing throughout his life: a place for His birth, a house to sleep in, a boat to preach from, an animal to ride on, a room to eat His last supper in, and finally, a tomb to be buried in.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of Fanny Crosby's hymn, **"Tell Me the Story of Jesus"**: *"Tell me the story of Jesus, Write on my heart ev'ry word; Tell me the story most precious, Sweetest that ever was heard. Tell how the angels, In chorus, Sang as they welcomed His birth, 'Glory to God in the highest! Peace and good tidings to earth.' Tell me the story of Jesus, Write on my heart every word; Tell me the story most precious, Sweetest that ever was heard."*

December 25 — The Action That Created Christmas (Philippians 2:7-8 Phillips)

Philippians 2:7-8: "But stripped Himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man and, having become man, He humbled Himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying, and the death He died was the death of a common criminal."

My homemade translation from the Greek text for this verse reads:

Verse 7: "But emptied Himself, having taken the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."

At the moment when He divested Himself of the apparel of the Son, He took the apron of a servant.

Lightfoot points out:

"Jesus Christ in emptying Himself stripped Himself of the insignia of His majesty."

Jesus Christ leapt into the world of humanity and split the eons of time in half with His coming. By His death, He accomplished the redemption of man.

He stepped down from making the solar systems to helping in the

carpenter's shop. He laid aside the scepter to take the towel to wash the disciples' feet.

Charles Wesley says it well in verse 3 of his hymn, **"And Can It Be That I Should Gain"**: *He left His Father's throne above So free, so infinite His grace; Emptied Himself of all but love, And bled for Adam's helpless race; 'Tis mercy all, immense and free; For, O my God, it found out me. Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?"*

My homemade translation from the Greek text for verse 8 reads:

Verse 8: "And being found in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

This is the depths of degradation. He went all the way to the death of a common criminal. Jesus Christ came all the way down from the throne to the lowest death.

On this morning of celebration for His birthday, let's sing that wonderful Christmas carol written by Martin Luther, **"Away in a Manger."** Please join me in singing verses 1 and 3: *"Away in a manger, No crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus Laid down His sweet head; The stars in the sky Looked down where He lay, The little Lord Jesus, Asleep on the hay. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay Close by me forever, And love me, I pray; Bless all the dear children In Thy tender care, And take us for Heaven To live with Thee there."*

December 26 — A Sin Not Towards Death (1 John 5:17)

1 John 5:17: *"Every unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not towards death."*

Verse 17: "Every unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not towards death."

We do not have the little word "a" occurring in the Greek text. This verse could be translated simply: "Every unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not towards death."

J. Vernon McGee says:

Believers who are alive today have all sinned, but we haven't sinned a sin unto death. We did something that was wrong, it was unrighteousness, but God didn't take us home. If He were taking home every believer who sinned, I would have been taken home a long time ago.

John wants to emphasize that sin is sin, whether we confess it or not. He is referencing the sin which "entangles our feet as we run the race" in this section.

Sin which is committed as an accident by a Christian is not towards death. When the sin is committed, the Christian will flee into the Lord's presence to experience confession and repentance in order that fellowship with the Father might be restored.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT): "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now He is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 1 and 4 of **"He Is So Precious to Me"**: *"So precious is Jesus, my Saviour, my King; His praise all the day long with rapture I sing; To Him in my weakness for strength I can cling, For He is so precious to me. I praise Him because He appointed a place Where, some day, thro' faith in His wonderful grace, I know I shall see Him, shall look on His face, For He is so precious to me. For He is so precious, so precious to me; For He is so precious, so precious to me. 'Tis Heaven below, my Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me."*

December 27 — Sin is an Accident for the Saint (1 John 5:18)

1 John 5:18: *"We are knowing that everyone who has been born of God is not continually sinning. But He who was born of God is keeping him, and the evil one is not laying hold of him."*

Verse 18: "We are knowing that everyone who has been born of God is not continually sinning. But He who was born of God is keeping him, and the evil one is not laying hold of him."

In this verse, John is affirming that anyone "born of God" is a person whose true, inward nature is inherently sinless.

A believer's new man or new self, is fundamentally impervious to sin. Hence, "the evil one" is not able to be "laying hold of him."

Sin is no longer a pattern of life for a Christian. As we discovered earlier, sin for the Christian is an accident rather than a way of life. We have been released from the power of sin by the new divine nature within — the seed of life.

"But He who was born of God is keeping him, and the evil one is not laying hold of him." This phrase could be translated: "but he who was born of God is keeping himself."

Psalm 119:9, 11: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By

living according to Your word, I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.”

“And the evil one is not laying hold of him,” or he *“is not kindling a fire, is not clinging to him, cannot harm him, cannot even touch him.”*

This reminds me of the restraint the Lord placed upon Job at the time of his testing.

Jesus said to Simon Peter in Luke 22:31-32: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Colossians 3:2: “My life is hidden with Christ in God.”

John 17:15: “I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verses 1 and 2 of Fanny Crosby’s wonderful hymn, **“He Hideth My Soul”**: *“A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, A wonderful Savior to me; He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock, Where rivers of pleasure I see. A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, He taketh my burden away; He holdeth me up, and I shall not be moved, He giveth me strength as my day. He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shadows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life with the depths of His love, And covers me there with His hand, And covers me there with His hand.”*

December 28 — Safe & Secure (1 John 5:19)

1 John 5:19: *“We are knowing that we are out of God, and the whole world is lying in the power of the evil one.”*

Verse 19: “We are knowing that we are out of God, and the whole world is lying in the power of the evil one.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

“They are distinct from the satanically-controlled world system and basically free from its power. They need not listen to worldly ideas.”

They do not need to succumb to worldly desires.

With a message of assurance and certainty, John says: “We are knowing that we are out of God.”

The apostle also draws the contrast of those who do not have the Son and do not have the life in the final phrase: “and the whole world is lying in the power of the evil one.” Once more, he points out the opposition between the Father and the world.

However, because of His love, Christ is the satisfaction not only for

our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world – that world that is “lying in the power of the evil one.”

If they will only come to Christ.

As we worship and praise the Lord this morning, let’s sing verses 1 and 3 of George Beverly Shea’s famous hymn, **“I’d Rather Have Jesus”**: *“I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold; I’d rather be His than have riches untold; I’d rather have Jesus than houses or lands. I’d rather be led by His nail-pierced hand. He’s fairer than lilies of rarest bloom; He’s sweeter than honey from out the comb; He’s all that my hungering spirit needs. I’d rather have Jesus and let Him lead. Than to be the king of a vast domain, Or be held in sin’s dread sway; I’d rather have Jesus than anything This world affords today.”*

December 29 — Knowing the Truth (1 John 5:20)

1 John 5:20: *“Now we are knowing that the Son of God has come, and has given to us insight, in order that we may be knowing the truth, and we are in the truth in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”*

Verse 20: “Now we are knowing that the Son of God has come, and has given to us insight, in order that we may be knowing the truth, and we are in the truth in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

The blessed assurance is that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, has actually come. He has also given us “insight.”

Ephesians 1:18: “The eyes of your hearts having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what is the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

We see the tragic contrast in Ephesians 4:18-19: “Being those who have their understanding darkened, who have been estranged from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, through the dullness of their hearts; who being calloused, they gave themselves over to debauchery, for the practice of all kinds of sinful things and greediness.”

“The Son of God has come, and has given to us insight,” with the purpose, “in order that we may be knowing the truth.”

John 8:32: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

“And we are in the truth in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” Jesus Christ is divine. He is God. He can provide “eternal life” for us.

This morning, let's sing a very familiar hymn. Please join me in singing verses 1 and 5 of **"He Keeps Me Singing"**: *"There's within my heart a melody, Jesus whispers sweet and low; 'Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still, In all of life's ebb and flow.' Soon He's coming back to welcome me Far beyond the starry sky; I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown, I shall reign with Him on high. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know, Fills my ev'ry longing, Keeps me singing as I go."*

December 30 — Keep Your Guard Up (1 John 5:21)

1 John 5:21: *"Little children, guard yourselves from idols."*

Verse 21: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols."

This is John's final warning:

1. In chapter 2:15: "Stop loving the world, neither the things which are in the world..."
2. In chapter 4:1: "Beloved, stop believing every spirit..."
3. In this verse: "Guard yourselves from idols."

An "idol" is anything which takes the devotion which belongs to God for itself. It can be (1) a home, (2) school, (3) parents, (4) television, (5) athletic events or (6) anything else that comes before God.

There are so many distractions - computer devices, electronic games, social media, television shows, phones, etc. - that can take away our focus and devotion to our blessed Lord and fellowship with Him.

Dr. Mitchell asks:

Is there anything or anybody that takes the place of Christ in your heart? In your devotion? Do you have any ambitions which displace Him in your heart?

With the hymnwriter, we can sing **"Whiter Than Snow"**: *"Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole; I want Thee forever to live in my soul. Break down ev'ry idol, cast out ev'ry foe. Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."*

Isaiah 61:10: "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

2 Timothy 1:12: "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

As we finish studying this passage, let's ask ourselves the questions that matter:

1. Do I know Jesus Christ personally?
2. Does He live in my life? As a result of that relationship, have I experienced the joy of fellowship with Him?
3. Are there any idols keeping me from this fellowship?
4. Is there misplaced love and communion?
5. Is there faulty love and belief?

Hosea 10:12: “Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.”

How appropriate that we would sing this hymn this morning as we complete our study of 1 John. Join me in singing verses 1-4 of **“There Shall Be Showers of Blessing”**: *“There shall be showers of blessing; This is the promise of love; There shall be seasons refreshing, Sent from the Saviour above. ‘There shall be showers of blessing:’ Send them upon us, O Lord; Grant to us now a refreshing, Come, and now honor Thy Word. ‘There shall be showers of blessing:’ Oh, that today they might fall, Now as to God we’re confessing, Now as on Jesus we call! Showers of blessing, Showers of blessing we need Mercy drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead.”*

December 31 — Pressing on the Upward Way (Philippians 3:13-14 Phillips)

Philippians 3:13-14: *“My brothers, I do not consider myself to have fully grasped it even now. But I do concentrate on this: I leave the past behind and with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead, I go straight for the goal—my reward the honour of being called by God in Christ.”*

My homemade translation from the Greek text for this verse reads:

Verse 13: “Brethren, I am not considering myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing: I am forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forward to what is laying ahead.”

The apostle Paul is passionate in his purpose.

We could interpret this as: “I still haven’t reached the pinnacle of Christian perfection. I am not all that I should be, nor have I accomplished all I have outlined in the previous verses.”

“But one thing: I am forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forward to what is laying ahead.”

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (Phillips): “We are handicapped on all sides, but we are never frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone: we may be knocked down but we are never knocked out!”

F.B. Meyer says:

“If we could press on, we must learn to forget. Don’t look back and quote these things as your highest, lest, like Lot’s wife, you be petrified and unable to advance.”

Shakespeare said:

“What’s gone and past help should be past grief.”

Winston Churchill described it this way:

“If the present quarrels with the past, there can be no future.”

My homemade translation from the Greek text for verse 14 reads:

Verse 14: “I am pressing onward toward the goal for the prize of the call from above of God in Christ Jesus.”

This is a picture of going all out for the finish. Paul is giving everything he has as he races straight toward the goal.

AWAKE , MY SOUL, STRETCH EVERY NERVE,
AND PRESS WITH VIGOR ON.
A HEAVENLY RACE DEMANDS THY ZEAL,
AND AN IMMORTAL CROWN.

Simon of Cambridge in his old age said:

“I cannot but run with all my might, for I am close to the goal.”

Let’s celebrate the closing of this year with a passionate desire to be pressing on the upward way. Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of “**Higher Ground**”: *“I’m pressing on the upward way, New heights I’m gaining ev’ry day; Still praying as I’m onward bound, ‘Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.’ My heart has no desire to stay Where doubts arise and fears dismay; Tho’ some may dwell where these abound, My prayer, my aim, is higher ground. Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven’s tableland, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”*

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