



A Great While Before Day

VOLUME XIV

PART ONE:
January 1–June 30

**A New Devotional from
DON & PEARL ANDERSON**

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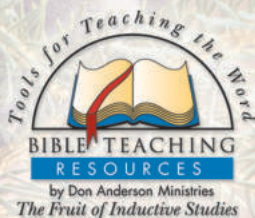
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A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

Volume XIV (January–June)

Daily Devotional

by Don and Pearl Anderson

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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 translation from the original text.

Our devotions in this issue will cover the epistles of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and the first part of Titus. Issue 2 will continue with the second half of Titus.

JANUARY

January 1—It’s All in the Leadership (1 Timothy 1:1–2)

1 Timothy 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior, and Christ Jesus our hope;”

1 Timothy 1:2: “To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Verse 1: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus.” Paul was a man who would go anywhere at any cost, to do anything necessary to reach someone with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:17: “But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am joying and rejoicing with you all.”

Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.”

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command.” This is a military term. It is “an order that must be obeyed.” The apostle never forgot that he was a man under orders.

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior, and Christ Jesus our hope.” God the Father is pictured as “our Savior,” and Jesus Christ as “our Hope.”

Demarest says: “In our weakness and failure, we need not despair. Christ is our hope! In the worst of times and circumstances, we need not despair. Christ is our hope! In the final moment of death, we need not despair. Christ is our hope!”

Verse 2: “To Timothy, my true child in the faith.” Paul says of Timothy in Philippians 2:22: “But you are knowing the proof of him, that as a child to a father, he served with me for the gospel.” Timothy is the real deal. He is loyal, loving and looking to the Lord.

In his greeting to Timothy, Paul wishes for him three things: (1) grace, (2) mercy, and (3) peace. This should come from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Grace points toward God. It is unmerited favor. *Mercy* points toward man. We are wretched sinners. *Peace* is the result of reconciliation.

In the last phrase of verse 2, we have the source of the *grace*, *mercy*, and *peace*. It is from: “God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Verse 1 ended with “Christ Jesus our hope” and verse 2 ends with “Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning with one of George Beverly Shea’s beautiful hymns. Please sing with me verses 1 and 2 of “**The Wonder of It All**”: *“There’s the wonder of sunset at evening, The wonder as sunrise I see; But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul Is the wonder that God loves me. There’s the wonder of springtime and harvest, The sky, the stars, the sun; But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul Is a wonder that’s only begun. O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all! Just to think that God loves me. O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all! Just to think that God loves me.”*

January 2—Standing by the Truth (1 Timothy 1:3)

1 Timothy 1:3: *“Even as I urged you to remain longer in Ephesus when I was going to Macedonia, in order that you might instruct certain ones not to teach a different (heretical) doctrine.”*

Verse 3: Paul went straight to Ephesus from Rome after he was released from house arrest to continue ministry with Timothy. Acts 28:30–31: “And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.”

While in Ephesus, Paul feels the desire to go to Macedonia, where he can once again visit the saints in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Yet, he feels there are strong needs that must be addressed first in Ephesus.

His strategy is to leave Timothy there while he continues on to Macedonia. His purpose is: “in order that you might instruct certain ones [negatively] not to teach a different (heretical) doctrine.”

Gary Collins in his book, *You Can Make a Difference*, says:

If you want to make a difference, don’t spend time worrying about bigness. Instead, humble yourself before the Lord, do your

work as well as you can, and assume that He will lift you up and increase your influence if that is His plan. Don't seek after big numbers and prominence, but if you become well-known, don't resist. On the other hand, remember that small and faithful difference makers are sometimes more influential than the famous and powerful."

Wiersbe says: "He was conveying this idea: 'Timothy, you are not only a pastor of the church in a difficult city. You are also a Christian soldier under orders from the King. Now pass these orders along to the soldiers in your church!'"

This morning, I find myself singing Stuart Hamblin's great little chorus, **"They That Wait Upon the Lord."** It was inspired by Isaiah 40:31. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing: *"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles; They shall run, and not be weary; They shall walk, and not faint. Teach me, Lord, teach me, Lord, to wait."*

January 3—Don't Get Distracted (1 Timothy 1:4)

1 Timothy 1:4: *"Nor to pay attention to legends and endless genealogies, which give rise to endless speculation rather than (acceptance in faith of God's administration) the divine training that is in faith."*

Verse 4: Paul's job description for Timothy's mission in Ephesus is:

1. Instruct certain ones not to teach a different (heretical) doctrine.
2. Do not pay attention to legends and endless genealogies.

"Different (heretical) doctrine" and "legends and endless genealogies" result in giving "rise to endless speculation rather than (acceptance in faith of God's administration) the divine training that is in faith."

Stay focused on the Gospel!

It is so easy to begin spinning your wheels in the realm of trivia, and ultimately fail in your mission to present divine truth in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bill McCartney in his book, *What Makes a Man?*, says: "Charles Colson tells that old story about the man who tried to save Sodom from destruction. The city's inhabitants ignored him, then asked mockingly, 'Why bother everyone? You can't change them.' 'Maybe I can't change them,' the man replied, 'but if I still shout and scream it will at least prevent them from changing me!'"

Lock points out: "The word that we translate 'endless speculation' is only here in the New Testament. He translates it 'out-of-the-way researches.'"

Hendricksen says: "Not only must they desist from wrong teaching but also from wrong thinking, for the former is the result of the latter. The individuals in question were occupying their minds with a dangerous fad."

Charles L. Swindoll in *The Finishing Touch* says: "After thinking about this

for quite awhile, I am ready to suggest six blind spots we dare not overlook: authoritarianism, exclusiveness, greed, sensuality, unaccountability, and rationalization.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of “**Sitting at the Feet of Jesus.**” Mary has chosen what will not be taken away from her. What a safe place to be in these times of dangers, distractions, and difficulties: “*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.*”

January 4—Focused on Right Things (1 Timothy 1:5)

1 Timothy 1:5: “Now the goal of our instruction is (divine) love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a genuine faith (without hypocrisy).”

Verse 5: “Now the goal of our instruction.” A statement of goal is essential in leadership. Paul was a goal-oriented person.

Philippians 3:14: “I am pressing onward toward the goal for the prize of the call from above of God in Christ Jesus.”

1 Corinthians 9:24–27: “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”

Hebrews 12:1–2: “Therefore, since we are having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us be running with perseverance the race lying before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of faith, who for the joy lying before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Alan Kay of Apple Computers once said: “The best way to predict the future is to make it happen.”

Someone said: “Set high goals and keep raising them.”

Paul J. Meyes in his Executive Seminar *Principle-Centered Leadership* said: “Our purpose is to develop leaders who have clearly defined goals, positive attitudes, and leadership skills, empowering them to utilize more of their God-given potential.”

Max Lucado in *And the Angels Were Silent* said: “They hadn’t learned the first lesson of leadership. A man who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back on the crowd.”

Zig Ziglar says: “95% of humanity have no goals program.”

Charles R. Swindoll in *Laugh Again* says:

Folks like us can appreciate the frustrations Charlie Brown frequently has, as portrayed in Charles Schultz’s famous “Peanuts” cartoons. Like the one where Lucy is philosophizing and Charlie is listening. As usual, Lucy has the floor, delivering one of her dogmatic lectures.

“Charlie Brown,” she begins, “life is a lot like a deck chair. Some place it so they can see where they’re going. Others place it to see where they’ve been. And some so they can see where they are at the present.”

Charlie sighs, “I can’t even get mine unfolded!”

Do you have specific spiritual goals you have set?

1. Reading the Word
2. Reading good books
3. Prayer time
4. Scripture memory
5. Other personal goals you want to achieve

How about goals for your marriage and family? Goals for your physical fitness and exercise? What about professional goals?

In this statement of Paul’s goal, he has a primary goal with secondary specifications. The primary goal is “divine love.” This is fruitage of the Spirit flowing from his lips. He wants this “divine love” to flow out of the secondary specifications of:

1. A pure heart
2. A good conscience
3. A genuine faith (without hypocrisy)

There are three words of authenticity in our verse this morning: (1) pure, (2) good, and (3) genuine.

Gary R. Collins in his book, *You Can Make a Difference*, says:

How to be a Difference Maker

1. Get and keep the right mindset (Hebrews 12:1).
2. Keep working to clear out the sin in your life (Hebrews 12:1).
3. Set some goals and stick with them (Hebrews 12:1).
4. Fix your eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2).
5. Expect resistance (Hebrews 12:3, 7, 12).
6. Build relationships (Hebrews 12:14).
7. Keep a long range perspective (Hebrews 12:16, 17).
8. Be a people helper (Hebrews 13:1, 3).
9. Show hospitality (Hebrews 13:2).
10. Be a marriage builder (Hebrews 13:4).

11. Be content with what you have (Hebrews 13:5).
12. Learn from those who are leaders (Hebrews 13:1, 17).
13. Select your teachers carefully (Hebrews 13:9).
14. Commit yourself to prayer (Hebrews 13:18, 19).

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing 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.”*

January 5—Missing the Mark (1 Timothy 1:6–7)

1 Timothy 1:6: *“From which things certain ones, having missed the mark, have turned away to fruitless discussions,”*

1 Timothy 1:7: *“Desiring to be teachers of the law, not understanding neither what they are saying nor about which they are speaking so confidently.”*

Verse 6: “From which things” refers to the goal of verse 5: “divine love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a genuine faith (without hypocrisy).”

Verse 7: There are three key phrases in verses 6 and 7 describing what is going on in Ephesus. “From which [these] things certain ones”:

1. Having missed the mark
2. Have turned away to fruitless discussions
3. Desiring to be teachers of the law

Paul, then, makes a negative statement characterizing their qualifications to teach:

1. Not understanding what they are saying
2. Not understanding about which they are speaking so confidently

Max Lucado in his book, *And the Angels Were Silent*, said:

Paul Loetz took a bad fall that left him with a punctured lung, broken ribs, and internal bruising. Lying in an emergency room, barely conscious, he probably thought things couldn’t get much worse.

They did.

As he looked up from his hospital bed, the two doctors responsible for his care began arguing over who would get to put a tube into his crushed chest. The argument became a shoving match and one doctor threatened to have the other removed by security police.

“Please, somebody save my life,” Loetz pleaded as doctors fought over him.

The two doctors were arguing over procedure. While they were debating two other physicians assumed responsibility for the patient and saved his life.

Gary R. Collins in *You Can Make a Difference* said: “A local businessman recently posted a big sign in front of his store: ‘For Sale. One set of encyclopedias—never used. Teenage son knows everything.’”

You will never find this arrogant attitude with a person who is constantly sitting at the feet of Jesus. Please worship and praise the Lord 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.”*

January 6—The Law is Good (1 Timothy 1:8)

1 Timothy 1:8: *“Now we are knowing that the law is good if anyone is using it lawfully (for the purpose it was designed).”*

Verse 8: Romans 7:12: “So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

Romans 3:19–20: “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; because by the works of the Law there shall not be declared righteous any flesh in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

Galatians 3:19: “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made.”

Galatians 3:24–25: “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

J. Vernon McGee says: “We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.’ The Law reveals the will of God—it is morally excellent. It is good for moral conduct but not for obtaining salvation. It cannot save a sinner, but it can correct him or reveal that he is a sinner.”

Max Lucado in his book, *And the Angels Were Silent*, says: “Jesus condemns religion by the rules. With eyes blazing and pistols firing, Jesus rips hole after hole in the hot-air balloon of the Pharisees. His sermon on Tuesday is a one-sided shootout. The result is a permanent proclamation of God against systematic salvation.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing that wonderful little chorus by Bill and Gloria Gaither, **“There’s Something About That**

Name: “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, There’s just something about that name! Master, Saviour, Jesus, Like the fragrance after the rain; Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Let all heaven and earth proclaim; Kings and kingdoms will all pass away, But there’s something about that name!”

January 7—God Doesn’t Grade on the Curve (1 Timothy 1:9)

1 Timothy 1:9: “Knowing this, that the law is not laid down for a law-abiding person but for the lawless and rebellious (undisciplined, disobedient), for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane (godless), for those who murder fathers and those who murder mothers, for murderers (manslayers).”

Verse 9: Paul launches into a statement of purpose with regard to the law. This verse has both a negative and a positive statement.

Negatively, “Knowing this, that the law is not laid down for a law-abiding person,” but positively, “for the lawless and rebellious (undisciplined, disobedient), for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane (godless), for those who murder fathers and those who murder mothers, for murderers (manslayers).”

The purpose of the law is to *convince* and *convict* of sin.

Paul makes a list:

1. The lawless. Those who know the laws of right and wrong, and who break them deliberately and open-eyed.
2. Rebellious (undisciplined, disobedient). They refuse to accept and obey any authority.
3. The ungodly. They deliberately and defiantly withhold from God that which is His right.
4. Sinners. They have no moral standards left.
5. The unholy. They violate the ultimate sanctities and the ultimate decencies of life.
6. Profane (godless). These men soil everything they touch.
7. Murderers of fathers.
8. Murderers of mothers.
9. Murderers (manslayers).

After reading this awful list, let’s worship and praise the Lord for our blessed Redeemer. Please join me in singing verse 1 of **“I Will Sing of My Redeemer”**: “*I will sing of my Redeemer And His wondrous love to me; On the cruel cross He suffered From the curse to set me free. Sing, O sing, of my Redeemer, With His blood, He purchased me; On the cross, He sealed my pardon, Paid the debt and made me free.*”

January 8—No Wiggle Room with the Law (1 Timothy 1:10)

1 Timothy 1:10: “*for the (sexually) immoral, for homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, perjurers and whatever else is contrary to the correct (sound) teaching.*”

Verse 10: This morning, Paul is continuing his list of those who are judged by the law. He listed nine in verse 9 and lists five more in verse 10.

10. The (sexually) immoral.

Matthew 5:27–28: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery;’ 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.”

11. Homosexuals.

Charles Colson in his book, *The Body*, says: “So much for orthodoxy. And all this from those who bear the name of Martin Luther, who called homosexuality ‘an idolatrous distortion instilled by the devil.’”

12. Kidnappers.

13. Liars. Those who do not hesitate to lie.

14. Perjurers.

Barclay says: “Men who did not hesitate to lie and to twist the truth to gain dishonorable ends.”

Then, we have the final, all-inclusive statement: “whatever else is contrary to the correct (sound) teaching.”

Galatians 3:13: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.’”

Join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **“I Will Sing of My Redeemer”**: “*I will tell the wondrous story, How my lost estate to save, In His boundless love and mercy, He the ransom freely gave. Sing, O sing, of my Redeemer, With His blood, He purchased me; On the cross, He sealed my pardon, Paid the debt and made me free.*”

January 9—A Glorious Gospel (1 Timothy 1:11)

1 Timothy 1:11: “*According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I was entrusted.*”

Verse 11: There are four things that make this gospel glorious:

1. It *convicts* of sin.

2. It *converts* and *changes* us.

3. It *calls* us to a holy walk.

4. It *clarifies* the future.

This glorious gospel makes it possible for us to be declared righteous by the work of Christ upon the cross.

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.”

Mahatma Gandhi said seven things will destroy us:

1. Wealth without Work
2. Pleasure without Conscience
3. Knowledge without Character
4. Commerce without Morality
5. Science without Humanity
6. Religion without Sacrifice
7. Politics without Principle

What a glorious gospel! We have a living Christ who has fulfilled all the requirements of the law which each of us have broken, and provided the redemption that is ours with His shed blood.

This morning, let's worship and praise our dear Redeemer by singing verse 3 of **“I Will Sing of My Redeemer”**: *“I will praise my dear Redeemer, His triumphant power I'll tell, How the victory He giveth Over sin and death and hell. Sing, O sing, of my Redeemer, With His blood, He purchased me; On the cross, He sealed my pardon, Paid the debt and made me free.”*

January 10—Attitude of Gratitude (1 Timothy 1:12)

1 Timothy 1:12: *“I am feeling grateful to the One who strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, because He deemed me trustworthy, having appointed me for service.”*

Verse 12: There are three statements emphasized in this verse:

1. Strengthened me
2. Deemed me trustworthy
3. Appointed me

Barclay uses four words to summarize the verse: (1) chose, (2) trusted, (3) appointed, and (4) empowered.

Gratitude is an attitude of effective leaders. It is not an attitude of a proud person. That person believes they are always getting less than they deserve.

This first phrase could be literally translated from the Greek: “thanks I am having.” The word “thanks” or “gratitude” is in the emphatic position.

“I am feeling grateful to the One who strengthened me.” This is in the present tense, meaning this is prevalent all the time. Paul is expressing his inadequacy in himself and his need for help.

I heard someone say: “I could be unstoppable if I could just get started.”

Philippians 4:13: “I am having strength for all things in the One who is making me strong.” Paul realized God was looking for *availability*, not *ability*.

ity. He was looking for instruments through whom He could pour His own strength and accomplish His purposes through that life.

"I am feeling grateful to the One who strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord." The reason: "because He deemed me trustworthy." The Lord did not give up on me. He trusted me after my conversion experience.

The way this trust was manifested is seen in the last phrase: "having appointed me for service."

Psalms 18:16: "He reached down from on high and took hold of me; He drew me out of deep waters."

What an honor it is to serve Our Heavenly Father and Blessed Lord Jesus Christ! We proclaim His Good News to sinful man.

There is a song called, "It's an Honor to Serve." These are the words to the chorus: *"It's an honor to serve, To join the fight, To lift my voice and to lay down my life. Giving glory to God. Seeking none in return. It's an honor, an honor to serve."*

Psalms 75:6-7: "No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, He exalts another."

Paul never got over the privilege of his position in serving the Lord.

If God has picked you up, tuned you up, and now uses you to play the melodies of heaven upon your strings, rejoice in the work of the Master Musician as He makes sweet music through your life.

This morning, let's make sweet music worshipping and praising the Lord. Let's sing together 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."*

January 11—My Ugly Past (1 Timothy 1:13)

1 Timothy 1:13: *"Though I was formerly a slanderer and a persecutor and a violent man, but I was shown mercy because, being ignorant, I acted in unbelief."*

Verse 13: The apostle is demonstrating the miracle of God's grace. He is magnifying that grace and goodness by looking at his past to see the miracle of salvation.

"Though I was formerly [1] a slanderer and [2] a persecutor and [3] a violent man." The word "but" forms the contrast and we read: "I was shown mercy."

Lenski says: "But, wonder of wonders: 'I was mercied.'"

Paul says the reason he was "shown mercy" was because: "being ignorant, I acted in unbelief."

J. Edgar Hoover said:

Through many years of active public life and through observing many kinds of people, I have found that the strongest,

wisest, most competent and reliable man is the one who is first to admit his own inadequacy. Contradictory though it may sound, he is strong because he is humble, and he always remembers that man is a creation of God. No rule of life is more basic. When one leans on his own understanding, lives by his own strength, boasts of his own accomplishments, and claims he is his own master, the result is untold suffering. Even though his position is maintained and his material wealth increases, success quickly turns to failure when God is forgotten. There is no peace of mind, no personal satisfaction, no experience of true inner joy. To trust in the Lord with all the heart is a mark of strength! It is the only path to true fulfillment.

Won't you join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of Fanny J. Crosby's **"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. Close to Thee, close to Thee, Close to Thee, close to Thee."*

January 12—God's Grace (1 Timothy 1:14)

1 Timothy 1:14: *"And the grace of our Lord was present in great abundance, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."*

Verse 14: It is a tremendous story of the miracle of God's grace, the story of the prodigal son experiencing the grace of the Father when he returns home.

This verse reminds me of the hymn, "I Know Whom I Have Believed,": *"I know not why God's wondrous grace To me He hath made known, Nor why unworthily, Christ in love, Redeemed me for His own."*

The manifestation of grace causes the sinner to accept by faith God's wonderful provision. It is a result of love produced by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary observes:

The grace of our Lord was present in great abundance like a vessel running over and overflowing. Everything Paul lacked, God's grace had more than amply supplied.

This verb appears only here in the New Testament. It means "to be present in great or super abundance." It is the definition of Christ's strengthening in verse 12.

Barclay says of John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace":

So when John Newton became a converted man and a preacher of the gospel, he wrote a text in great letters, and fastened it above the mantelpiece of this study where he could not fail to see it: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." John

Newton composed his own epitaph and it ran: “John Newton, Clerk, once an Infidel and Libertine, a Servant of Slaves in Africa, was by the Mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Preserved, Restored, Pardoned, and Appointed to Preach the Faith he had so long laboured to destroy.”

On his deathbed, John Newton told a young clergyman: “Our friendship will no doubt cause you to inquire for me. But I can tell you already where you’ll most likely find me—I’ll be sitting at the feet of the thief whom Jesus saved in His dying moments on the cross!”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of “**Close to 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.”*

January 13—I Am the Worst Sinner (1 Timothy 1:15)

1 Timothy 1:15: *“Reliable is the word, and worthy of wholehearted acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost.”*

Verse 15: Luke 19:10: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

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.”

Make no mistake! Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

“Reliable is the word, and worthy of wholehearted acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost.” The apostle is making a profound expression of humility.

Wiersbe says: “If Jesus could save Saul of Tarsus, the chief of sinners, then He can save anybody! We admire Paul’s humility, and we note that he considered himself to be the ‘least of the apostles’ (1 Corinthians 15:9) and the ‘least of all saints’ (Ephesians 3:8).”

When we put these two thoughts together, we can say:

1. If God can save the chief of sinners, then He can save us.
2. If the best of men need saving, we need to be saved too.

Paul is an illustration of both.

Lenski, commenting on the words of “worthy of wholehearted acceptance,” says: “‘Worthy of all acceptance’ = complete acceptance in every way, without reservation, without hesitation, without the least doubt.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing Bill and Gloria Gaither’s song, “**Jesus is Lord of All.**” Please join me in singing verse 1: *“All my tomorrows, all my past—Jesus is Lord of all. I’ve quit my struggles, contentment*

at last! Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all. Lord of all.”

January 14—Unlimited Patience (1 Timothy 1:16)

1 Timothy 1:16: “But on this account I was shown mercy, in order that in me first Jesus Christ might demonstrate His unlimited patience, as an example to those who will be believing on Him for life eternal.”

Verse 16: “But on this account, I was shown mercy.” Paul says he is a pattern and example.

Then, the purpose is given: “in order that in me first Jesus Christ might demonstrate His unlimited patience.”

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.”

Paul’s thought is: Christ has shown mercy toward me, the greatest of sinners. My conversion should serve as a heartening example for lesser sinners.

This morning, I find myself meditating on John Newton’s great hymn, “Amazing Grace”: “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see. ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed! Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; ‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.

Notice the single condition of salvation is stated in the latter part of our verse. It is an example to those who will be believing on Him for life eternal.

Let’s join together in worship and praise singing verse 2 of “**Jesus is Lord of All**”: “All of my conflicts, all my thought—Jesus is Lord of all. His love wins the battles I could not have fought; Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all. Lord of all.”

January 15—Singing the Doxology (1 Timothy 1:17)

1 Timothy 1:17: “Now to the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Verse 17: The apostle has been speaking of very personal, yet beautiful and wonderful things. He has been overwhelmed by the grace of God on his behalf.

Paul bursts forth in a praise of doxology. He speaks to “the King of the ages,” and the One who is “immortal, invisible,” and “the only God.” He gives Him: “honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

The phrase, “honor and glory,” eternally causes us to think of 1 Timothy 6:16: “Who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Contemplation of God’s grace prompted him to one of his doxologies. Filled with awe and adoration of the Lord. ‘King of the ages’ equals God’s sovereignty over all the ebb and flow of human history. ‘Immortal’ and ‘invisible’ are the 2 central attributes. Eternality and essence. Only God equals His uniqueness in a typical Jewish, monotheistic fashion.”

The apostle opens the passage in verse 12 feeling grateful and verbalizes that gratitude in verse 17. John the Baptist in John 3:30 said: “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“Jesus is Lord of All”**: *“All of my longings, all my dreams—Jesus is Lord of all. All of my failures His power redeems; Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life, Jesus is Lord of all. Lord of all.”*

January 16—Fight the Good Fight (1 Timothy 1:18)

1 Timothy 1:18: *“This charge I am entrusting to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies that were made long ago concerning you, in order that with their aid you may fight the good fight (put up a splendid fight).”*

Verse 18: “This charge I am entrusting to you, Timothy, my son.”

Helen Keller said: “Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.”

Spurgeon says: “Thus, there will be three effects of nearness to Jesus—humility, happiness, and holiness. May God give them to thee, Christian.”

Wiersbe says: “... the word ‘charge’ means ‘an urgent command handed down from a superior officer.’”

The word “charge” could be translated *“order, command, precept, or advice.”*

The name “Timothy” means *“honour to God.”* It is an encouragement for him to be faithful to his duty.

“In accordance with the prophecies that were made long ago concerning you, in order that with their aid you may fight the good fight (put up a splendid fight).” The apostle concludes this verse with a purpose clause: “in order that with their aid you may fight the good fight (put up a splendid fight).”

You can count on life being a battle all the way to the end.

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.”

When the Christian is following the four C’s of effective leadership, he will have a battle:

1. *Compassion* is doubted.
2. *Convictions* are questioned.

3. *Character* is suspicious.

4. *Courage* is seen as crazy.

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."

Exodus 14:13–14: "Moses answered the people, 'Do not be afraid ... The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.'"

David, in the Valley of Elah against Goliath the Giant, says in 1 Samuel 17:47: "The battle is the Lord's."

2 Chronicles 20:17: "You will not have to fight this battle."

2 Chronicles 32:8: "With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles."

Our day calls for study, sacrifice and servanthood, not selfish personal pursuits!

Winston Churchill said: "I have nothing to offer you but blood, sweat, and tears. Victory at all cost, victory instead of terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival."

After losing his arm to cancer, Dave Dravecky said: "May He give you the strength to turn your setbacks into comebacks. And when you can't come back may He give you the grace to put out your hand in His—even if you have only one hand to give—and there may you find peace."

Join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing together verse 1 of "**The King is Coming**": *"The market place is empty No more traffic in the street All the builder's tools are silent No more time to harvest wheat Busy housewives cease their labor And in the courtroom, no debate Work on earth has been suspended As the King comes through the gate. The King is coming! The King is coming! I just heard the trumpet sounding And now His face I see. Oh the King is coming! The King is coming! Praise God He's coming for me!"*

January 17—Hold on to Faith & A Good Conscience (1 Timothy 1:19)

1 Timothy 1:19: *"Holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having rejected (repudiated), have suffered shipwreck in their faith."*

Verse 19: Paul speaks of two pieces of equipment for the good fight: (1) faith and (2) a good conscience.

Gary R. Collins in *You Can Make a Difference* says: "Real heroes and effective difference makers don't walk away from life. Instead they confront it, with all its terrors and ambiguities, and make positive changes."

Barbara Johnson in her book, *Where Does a Mother Go to Resign?*, says: "Think about this: 'In love's service, only the wounded can serve, for they alone understand the cry of the bleeding heart.'"

"Holding faith" is continuing to trust in the midst of the conflict.

Pressure, people, and politics have swayed many the leader.

Joe Aldrich in his book, *Prayer Summits: Seeking God's Agenda for Your Community*, says:

"There is no finish line," says Nike.

Nike is wrong. One divine puff and Israel's flame was out. An entire nation crossed one line too many, a divine "finish line," and God said, "I've had it, you're finished!"

They'd stoned one too many prophets, built one too many pagan temples, listened to one too many apostate priests, offered one too many sons on a pagan altar.

The defection was virtually complete. With few exceptions, everyone abandoned Yahweh and the temple in Jerusalem.

"Holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having rejected (repudiated), have suffered shipwreck in their faith." Lock says of the word I have translated "rejected" or "repudiated" that the word implies violent effort, a kicking against the pricks of their own conscience.

"Faith" is a pure liquid and "a good conscience" is the glass that holds it.

What does it mean when Paul says: "have suffered shipwreck in their faith"? "Shipwreck" can come through:

1. Doctrine
2. Deception
3. Disqualification
4. Deeds done
5. Desires that get out of hand
6. A lack of Discipline

Paul had been through real shipwrecks and knew the damage they created. One of my all-time favorite pictures while growing up was of a young man at the wheel of a ship in the midst of a storm. The Lord Jesus is standing behind him with His hand on his shoulder and with His other hand pointing the direction. I took the words of this poetic piece and put them beneath that picture:

AND NOW I HAVE A CAPTAIN;
HE'LL GUIDE, I KNOW HE WILL.
I'VE GIVEN JESUS FULL COMMAND
SINCE HE SAID, "PEACE, BE STILL."

HE WHISPERED, "PEACE, BE STILL," TO ME;
MY HEART OBEYED HIS WILL.
HIS WORD MADE CALM THE ROLLING SEA
WHEN HE SAID, "PEACE, BE STILL."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **“The King is Coming”**: *“Happy faces line the hallways Those whose lives have been redeemed Broken homes that He has mended Those from prison He has freed And little children and the aged Hand in hand stand all aglow Who were crippled, broken, ruined, Clad in garments white as snow. The King is coming! The King is coming! I just heard the trumpet sounding And now His face I see. Oh the King is coming! The King is coming! Praise God He’s coming for me!”*

January 18—God Gave Them Over (1 Timothy 1:20)

1 Timothy 1:20: *“Among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, in order that they might be taught (disciplined) not to be blaspheming (speak profanely).”*

Verse 20: Paul mentions two who “have suffered shipwreck in their faith.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Excommunication from a congregation meant abandonment to realms controlled by Satan.”

We have the experience of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, also.

The Lord says 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.”

Paul concludes the verse with a purpose clause: “in order that they might be taught (disciplined) not to be blaspheming (speak profanely).”

Brennan Manning in his book, *The Signature of Jesus: On the Pages of our Lives*, says: “It recalls the deathbed exhortation of Francis of Assisi, ‘Let us begin, my brothers, for up to now we have done but little.’”

This morning, let’s join together in worship and praise singing verse 3 of **“The King is Coming”**: *“I can hear the chariots rumble I can see the marching throng And the flurry of God’s trumpets Sound the end of sin and wrong. Regal roads are now unfolding. Heaven’s grandstand’s all in place. Heaven’s choir is now assembled, Start to sing Amazing Grace. Oh the King is coming! The King is coming! I just heard the trumpet sounding And now His face I see. Oh the King is coming! The King is coming! Praise God! Praise God! Praise God! He’s coming for me!”*

January 19—Exhortation to Pray (1 Timothy 2:1)

1 Timothy 2:1: *“I am exhorting, therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made on behalf of all men.”*

Verse 1: “I am exhorting, therefore, first of all.” It is essential to begin with prayer. The apostle uses four words in his description of the process of prayer:

1. Petitions—It comes from a word meaning “to lack” and signifies prayer which springs from a sense of need.

2. Prayers—It is a religious term that was used only of prayer to God. We bring to God's attention: forgiveness, strength, steadfastness, victory over temptation and a myriad of other things.
3. Intercessions—This specific word is only used in this verse and 4:5 in the New Testament. It suggests the confidence of prayer, of personal and confiding communication with God on the part of one qualified to approach Him.

The three previous words indicate the character of the praying.

4. Giving of Thanks—The word “thanksgiving” points out the spirit in which our prayers are to be offered.

Prayer is designed to involve us in God's plan, not to involve God in our plans.

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.”

Selfishness, Satan, and our Sin keep us from our appointments with the Lord.

Joe White in *Over the Edge and Back* says: “Prayer is like having a cell phone in your pocket. The red ‘hold’ button is always blinking. God is always on the other end of the line. Just push ‘line one’ and start talking.”

God is our 800 number and our 911 open for all emergencies!

Stephen W. Brown in *Welcome to the Family* suggests: “Every day, set aside a specific time for prayer; don't allow anything to interfere with that time except a funeral—yours.”

John Bunyan was right: “Pray often; for prayer is a shield for the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.”

In *The Kneeling Christian* by an unknown Christian, he said:

Do we realize that there is nothing the devil dreads so much as prayer? His great concern is to keep us from praying. He loves to see us “up to our eyes” in work—provided we do not pray. He does not fear because we are eager and earnest Bible students—provided we are little in prayer. Someone has wisely said, “Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.” All this is so familiar to us—but do we really pray? If not, then failure must dog our footsteps, whatever signs of apparent success there may be.

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of that great hymn, “**No One Understands Like Jesus**”: “*No one understands like Jesus, He's a friend beyond compare; Meet Him at the throne of mercy, He is waiting for You there. No one understands like Jesus. When the days are dark and grim; No one is so near, so dear as Jesus; Cast Your ev'ry care on Him.*”

January 20—Pray for Your Leaders (1 Timothy 2:2)

1 Timothy 2:2: “*On behalf of kings and all those who are in a place of prominence, in order that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and reverence.*”

Verse 2: In the previous verse, the apostle has said these prayers should “be made on behalf of all men.” In this verse, Paul gets specific that prayers should also be on behalf of (1) kings and (2) all those who are in a place of prominence.

Romans 13:1: “Let every person be putting himself in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which are existing are established by God.”

In this situation, we can pray for their salvation if they do not know Christ as Savior.

Paul expresses the purpose behind his exhortation for prayer in the last phrase: “in order that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life.”

This life is to be lived in “all piety and reverence.” The word I have translated “piety” is the word for “godliness.” It occurs 10 times in Paul’s writings and all are included in the pastoral epistles.

Joe Aldrich in his book, *Prayer Summits: Seeking God’s Agenda for Your Community*, says:

The cycle of spiritual decline is no mystery. Alexander Fraser Tyler (1747–1813) wrote a book describing the fall of the Athenian Republic. He suggested that nations progress through the following sequence:

1. From bondage to spiritual faith
2. From spiritual faith to great courage
3. From great courage to liberty
4. From liberty to abundance
5. From abundance to selfishness
6. From selfishness to complacency
7. From complacency to apathy
8. From apathy to dependency
9. From dependency back into bondage

1 Chronicles 4:10: “Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request.”

Luke 1:74–75: “To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.”

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord by singing together verse 2 of “**No One Understands Like Jesus**”: “*No one understands like Jesus, Ev’ry woe He*

sees and feels; Tenderly He whispers comfort, And the broken heart He heals. No one understands like Jesus. When the days are dark and grim; No one is so near, so dear as Jesus; Cast Your ev'ry care on Him."

January 21—Good and Pleasing to the Lord (1 Timothy 2:3–4)

1 Timothy 2:3: "This is good and pleasing in the presence of God our Savior,"

1 Timothy 2:4: "Who is desiring all men to be saved and to come to an experiential knowledge of the truth."

Verse 3: The word "this" points us back to the prior purpose in verse 2: "in order that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and reverence." This kind of life is "good and pleasing in the presence of God our Savior."

Verse 4: "Who" refers to "God our Savior" in verse 3. He is desiring all men (1) to be saved and (2) to come to an experiential knowledge of the truth.

1 John 5:14–15: "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. 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."

"All men" is in the first, emphatic position in the Greek sentence.

Guy King says: "There is not a person, never has been, nor ever will be, whom God does not wish to save. He has done all that can be done to accomplish that end."

Let's continue our worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of "**No One Understands Like Jesus**": "No one understands like Jesus, When the foes of life assail; You should never be discouraged, Jesus cares and will not fail. No one understands like Jesus. When the days are dark and grim; No one is so near, so dear as Jesus; Cast Your ev'ry care on Him."

January 22—Only One Way (1 Timothy 2:5)

1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus,"

Verse 5: The emphasis is upon the word, "one." There is (1) one God and (2) one mediator. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* points out three truths in verses 5 and 6:

1. One God
2. One way to approach Him
3. He gave Himself up to die as a ransom

J. Vernon McGee says: "I don't put my hand in His; He puts His hand in mine. That is the wonder of it all! He has come down and put His hand in

mine and taken hold of me, but He also holds on to God because He is God, and He has brought us together.”

Robert Murray McCheyne once remarked: “If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet the distance makes no difference. He is praying for me!”

In John 14:6 (J.B. Phillips translation), the Lord Jesus makes it quite clear in the Upper Room, just prior to Calvary in answer to Thomas’s question: “‘I myself am the road,’ replied Jesus, ‘and the truth and the life. No one approaches the Father except through me.’”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of **“No One Understands Like Jesus”**: *“No one understands like Jesus, When you falter on the way, Tho’ you fail Him, sadly fail Him, He will pardon You today. No one understands like Jesus. When the days are dark and grim; No one is so near, so dear as Jesus; Cast Your ev’ry care on Him.”*

January 23—The Price Has Been Paid (1 Timothy 2:6)

1 Timothy 2:6: *“Who gave Himself a ransom on behalf of all, which was to be attested to (the testimony) in its due seasons (at the right time).”*

Verse 6: In this verse, the word “who” is referring back to “Christ Jesus” in verse 5: “who gave Himself a ransom on behalf of all.”

Matthew 20:28: “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

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.”

This verse tells us Jesus paid our “ransom,” and He paid it “at the right time.”

Galatians 4:4–5: “But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

I find myself singing a great old hymn, **“Jesus Paid It All.”** Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2: *“I hear the Saviour say, ‘Thy Strength indeed is small; Child of weakness, watch and pray, Find in Me thine all in all.’ Lord, now indeed I find Thy pow’r and Thine alone, Can change the leper’s spots, And melt the heart of stone. Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.”*

January 24—Appointed as a Herald (1 Timothy 2:7)

1 Timothy 2:7: *“For which [testimony] I was appointed a herald and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) a teacher of Gentiles in faith and truth.”*

Verse 7: God appointed Paul as a herald and apostle.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “There were some exclusive Jews in Ephesus and this statement is made for them. God desires everyone to be saved and the call to truthfulness is a stylistic device designed to stress the importance of his point.”

Romans 9:1: “I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience is bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit.”

Joe Aldrich in his book, *Prayer Summits: Seeking God’s Agenda for Your Community*, says:

Ultimately, our actions are controlled by our dominant thoughts.

If I sow a thought, I’ll reap an act.

If I sow an act, I’ll reap a habit.

If I sow a habit, I’ll reap a character.

If I sow a character, I’ll reap a destiny.

If in the secret recesses of my mind I mull over that which is wrong, fantasize over evil, a day will come when that which populates the theater of my mind becomes reality. Satan will see to that! That is why we are to bring all thoughts into captivity to Christ.

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord by singing verses 3 and 4 of “**Jesus Paid It All**”: “*For nothing good have I Whereby Thy grace to claim, I’ll wash my garments white In the blood of Calv’ry’s Lamb. And when, before the throne, I stand in Him complete, ‘Jesus died my soul to save,’ My lips shall still repeat. Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.*”

January 25—Men and Women Praying (1 Timothy 2:8)

1 Timothy 2:8: “*I am desiring therefore that the men be praying in every place, lifting up holy hands, without anger or disputing (skeptical criticism).*”

Verse 8: “I am desiring therefore that the men be praying in every place.” Paul returns to his thoughts from 2:1: “I am exhorting, therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made on behalf of all men.”

“Lifting up holy hands.”

J. Vernon McGee says:

This was a custom practiced in the early church. It revealed the dedication in the lives of those praying. Now there are those who lift up their hands in services today, and they are sometimes criticized for it. There is nothing wrong with lifting up your

hands if it is something you feel you want to do. Personally, I have always hesitated to do it because I am not too sure about my hands, whether they are clean or not—clean physically or otherwise.

Notice that Paul says “holy hands.” This would mean that they are hands dedicated to God’s service. My friend, you ought not to poke up your hands in a meeting if those hands are not used for the service of Christ.

Take notice that Paul concludes this verse with the phrase: “without anger (wrath) or disputing (skeptical criticism).”

Hiebert says:

The concluding phrase “without wrath and disputing” sets forth two conditions for effectual public prayer. “Wrath” relates to the personal attitude toward others, the inner disposition of ill-will and resentment. We cannot truly pray for those with whom we are angry, nor can we be angry with those for whom we truly pray.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Broken human relationships affect one’s ability to pray.”

1 Peter 3:7 (J.B. Phillips translation): “Similarly, you husbands should try to understand the wives you live with, honouring them as physically weaker yet equally heirs with you of the grace of eternal life. If you don’t do this, you will find it impossible to pray properly.”

Dr. Andrew Bonar, a saintly man, wrote in his diary:

Tonight I gave myself to a time of waiting upon the Lord. I had not been much in the spirit of prayer, but now several things have become clear to me. I realize I have not communed enough with the Lord, nor come to Him as often as I should. Little forethought has been given to the requests I’ve made. There has been much conversing and outward engagement with men, but I have not been occupied enough with God Himself.

It is Paul’s desire that we “be praying in every place.” He also says in 1 Thessalonians to “pray without ceasing.”

There are six prayers I would suggest to you this morning:

1. Search me
2. Break me
3. Stretch me
4. Lead me
5. Use me
6. Fill me with Your Person and Your Power

It seems most appropriate that we worship and praise the Lord for that blessed invitation of prayer. Please join me this morning in singing verses 1 and 2 of **“Sweet Hour of Prayer”**: *“Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, That calls me from a world of care, And bids me at my Father’s throne Make all my wants and wishes known; In seasons of distress and grief, My soul has often found relief, And oft escaped the tempter’s snare, By thy return, sweet hour of prayer. Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, Thy wings shall my petition bear, To Him whose truth and faithfulness Engage the waiting soul to bless; And since He bids me seek His face, Believe His Word and trust His grace, I’ll cast on Him my ev’ry care, And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.”*

January 26—Inner Beauty Takes Priority (1 Timothy 2:9)

1 Timothy 2:9: *“In the same way, I am desiring that women should adorn themselves in appropriate apparel, having along with this modesty and decency (good judgment), not with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothes.”*

Verse 9: In no way is Paul degrading the role of women. The apostle is talking about roles in relationships that affect both the marriage and the body of Christ. Inner beauty takes priority.

Charles Colson in his book, *The Body*, says:

Women have not been treated as equals in the workplace, in the culture, or in the church. That inequity needs to be changed.

But the politically correct movement is interested in more than achieving equality, fairness, or insensitivity. Lurking just beneath its surface is an angry, militant agenda that is not really concerned with the words themselves.

Thus, while it may parade under the banner of sensitivity and relevance and other benign terms, the militant feminist agenda is actually an assault on the revealed, propositional truth of God and His plan for men and women. And the tragedy is that it has duped a lot of people, preying on the understandable resentment of many evangelical women and imposing unwarranted guilt on evangelical men.

“In the same way” is referencing verse 8: “I am desiring therefore that the men be praying in every place, lifting up holy hands, without anger or disputing (skeptical criticism),” but now he is addressing the women.

Paul begins his discourse by dealing with the outerwear of the woman. “In this same way, I am desiring that women should adorn themselves” (1) “in appropriate apparel, having along with this” (2) “modesty” and (3) “decency (good judgment).”

Wiersbe says: “The word translated ‘modest’ simply means ‘decent and orderly.’ It is related to the Greek word from which we get the English word ‘cosmetic.’ A woman’s clothing should be decent, orderly, and in good taste.”

Hendriksen adds: “Modesty indicates a sense of shame, a shrinking from trespassing the boundaries of propriety; hence, proper reserve.”

“And decency (good judgment)” is using good sense.

In these verses we will be studying the next few mornings, Paul uses the negative and positive approach three times. It is seen:

1. At the end of verse 9 and the beginning of verse 10
2. In verse 12
3. In verse 14

Positively, “Women should adorn themselves in appropriate apparel, having along with this modesty and decency (good judgment),” but negatively “not with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothes.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Hair, gold, pearls, and clothes are not wrong in themselves, but become inappropriate when they indicate misplaced values.”

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

It is not a question of right or wrong, but a question of priority. If it were a question of right or wrong, then it would be wrong to wear clothes.

Guy King says: “Ladies! Look nice; but for pity’s sake be natural.”

I love the way Phillips translates Philippians 2:13: “For it is God who is at work within you, giving you the will and the power to achieve his purpose.”

There is a wonderful little prayer chorus I find myself singing this morning. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verses 1 and 2 of “**Let the Beauty of Jesus**”: *“Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me, All His wonderful passion and purity; Oh, Thou Spirit divine, All my nature refine Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. Let the fruit of the Spirit be seen in me, Grant me grace all sufficient that I may be True and faithful each day, Every step of the way, Pointing souls to the Saviour on Calvary.”*

January 27—A Living Faith Will Show (1 Timothy 2:10)

1 Timothy 2:10: “*But with that which is fitting for women professing godliness by means of good works.*”

Verse 10: In the previous verse, we had the negative statement: “not with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothes.” With the word, “but,” we have an additional contrasting positive statement: “But with that which is fitting for women professing godliness by means of good works.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Reject the world’s yardstick for measuring beauty and adopt heaven’s standard.”

1 Samuel 16:7: “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”

Wiersbe reminds us:

There were devoted women who ministered to Jesus in the days of His earthly ministry (Luke 8:1–3). They were present at His crucifixion and burial, and it was a woman who first heralded the glorious news of His resurrection. In the book of Acts, we meet Dorcas (9:36), Lydia (16:14), Priscilla (18:1–3), and godly women in the Berean and Thessalonian churches (17:4, 12). Paul greeted at least eight women in Romans 16; and Phoebe, who carried the Roman epistle to its destination, was a deaconess in a local church (Romans 16:1).

This morning, I would like for us to sing together a wonderful hymn that meant a lot to me in my younger years as I made spiritual decisions. Let’s sing together in worship and praise verse 1 of **“Living for Jesus”**: *“Living for Jesus a life that is true, Striving to please Him in all that I do; Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free, This is the pathway of blessing for me. O Jesus, Lord and Savior I give myself to Thee, For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, My heart shall be Thy throne; My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.”*

January 28—Pure and Reverent Behavior (1 Timothy 2:11)

1 Timothy 2:11: *“Let a woman be learning in quietness, subordinating herself in every respect.”*

Verse 11: Paul inserts this command in the middle of the passage. “Let a woman be learning.” This is an imperative in the present tense, meaning it is an ongoing, daily instruction.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Paul is teaching here that the women are to receive instruction from male leadership with quietness and full submission. They should not attempt to turn the tables by clamoring for the office of congregational teacher or by grasping for authority over men.”

“Quietness” does not mean complete silence or not talking. It is used elsewhere to mean *“settled down, undisturbed, and not unruly.”*

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.”

This is a far cry from our contemporary scene with feminism running rampant. Someone described feminism as “Wonder Woman and the Wimp.”

Joe White in *Over the Edge and Back* says: “The greatest faith of all comes when you get on your knees and say, ‘God, You can run my life a lot better than I can. I give it up to You. Come into my heart and take over. Here are the keys to my life. You be the driver. I can’t do it alone anymore.’”

E.V. Hill said: “Friend, if you are a leader and no one is following you, you’re just going for a walk.”

Charles R. Swindoll in *The Grace Awakening* says: “As I examine these words, I find that the wife’s primary responsibility is to know herself so well and to respect herself so much, she gives herself to her husband without hesitation.”

Let us focus in this passage on rules, roles and relationships rather than rights, rebellion and restraints.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**Living for Jesus**”: “*Living for Jesus who died in my place, Bearing on Calv’ry my sin and disgrace; Such love constrains me to answer His call, Follow His leading and give Him my all. O Jesus, Lord and Savior I give myself to Thee, For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, My heart shall be Thy throne; My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.*”

January 29—Fulfilling Our Roles (1 Timothy 2:12)

1 Timothy 2:12: “*I do not allow a woman to teach nor to have authority (domineer) over a man, but to be in silence.*”

Verse 12: Paul amplifies his command in verse 11. He is using a negative and positive approach. Negatively, “I do not allow a woman to teach (and we could include the words ‘a man’), nor to have authority (domineer) over a man,” but positively forming the contrast, “to be in silence.”

Wiersbe points out: “Women are permitted to teach. Older women should teach the younger women (Titus 2:3–4). Timothy was taught at home by his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15). But in their teaching ministry, they must not ‘lord it over’ men. There is nothing wrong with a godly woman instructing a man in private (Acts 18:24–28); but she must not assume authority in the church and try to take the place of a man. She should exercise ‘quietness’ and help keep order in the church.”

Benjamin Franklin said: “Sin is not hurtful because it is forbidden, but it is forbidden because it is hurtful. Nor is duty beneficial because it is commanded, but it is commanded because it is beneficial.”

Carolyn Custis James in her book, *When Life and Beliefs Collide*, says:

Jesus’ greatest passion for his followers, both men and women, was that they would enjoy this kind of intimate relationship

with God. It is not overstating things to say that Jesus' mission was to make great theologians out of all of us.

More than simply granting women permission to learn as his disciples, Jesus calls Mary, Martha, and the rest of us to make knowing God our highest priority.

This morning, I feel this hymn is most appropriate to conclude our devotional time. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **"Living for Jesus"**: *"Living for Jesus wherever I am, Doing each duty in His holy name; Willing to suffer affliction and loss, Deeming each trial a part of my cross. O Jesus, Lord and Savior I give myself to Thee, For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, My heart shall be Thy throne; My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone."*

January 30—God's Original Design (1 Timothy 2:13–14)

1 Timothy 2:13: *"For Adam was first formed, then Eve."*

1 Timothy 2:14: *"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman having been led astray, has fallen into transgression."*

Verse 13: Paul states the reason for his previous statements in verses 11 and 12, beginning with the word, "for."

Why is this important in God's sight? Because it manifests an understanding and acceptance of His design for the human race.

Wiersbe says it well: "We must keep in mind that priority does not mean superiority. Man and woman were both created by God and in God's image. The issue is only authority: Man was created first."

Verse 14: Once again, the apostle is using the negative and positive approach as he continues his illustration of God's original intention in the creation of Adam and Eve. Negatively, "And Adam was not deceived," but positively, "the woman having been led astray, has fallen into transgression."

I think it is important to realize at the onset of this particular exposition that Adam bears responsibility as well. This is recorded graphically in 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."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out: "Look what happens when creation order is reversed and the man abdicates the leadership role to the woman."

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing that final verse of the hymn, verse 4 of **"Living for Jesus"**: *"Living for Jesus through earth's little while, My dearest treasure, the light of His smile; Seeking the lost ones He died to redeem, Bringing the weary to find rest in Him. O Jesus, Lord and Savior I give myself to Thee, For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, My heart shall be Thy throne; My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone."*

January 31—The Woman's Role (1 Timothy 2:15)

1 Timothy 2:15: “Nevertheless, she shall be saved in the bearing of children, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control.”

Verse 15: Genesis 3:16 (The Amplified Bible): “To the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your grief and your suffering in pregnancy and the pangs of childbearing; with spasms of distress you will bring forth children. Yet your desire and craving will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

Barclay says: “Women will find life and salvation, not in attending meetings, and not in addressing meetings, but in motherhood, which is their crown.”

Wiersbe said: “Paul laid down a general principle that encouraged the believing women of that day. Their ministry was not to “run” the church, but to care for the home and bear children to the glory of God.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “The words ‘if they’ refers to the mothers. A woman will find her greatest satisfaction and meaning in life, not in seeking the male role, but in fulfilling God’s design for her as wife and mother with all faith, love, holiness, and self-control.

My wife, Pearl, wrote this beautiful and poetic piece:

LORD, HOW I LONG TO SERVE THEE UPON SOME GREAT MISSION FIELD
AND HAVE THE WORLD SEE, HOW MUCH I LOVE THEE
BY THIS MY SACRIFICE.
“NAY,” CAME HIS VOICE SO GENTLE, YET SO FIRM.
“WALK WITHIN THY HOUSE,” WITH A PERFECT HEART
AND DO NOT FOR OTHER THINGS YEARN.”

THEN LORD MAKE WITHIN THESE WALLS,
A PERFECT SACRIFICE OF THY GRACE.
A PLACE WHERE ALL WHO ENTER
MAY SEE THY FACE
AND REST AND BE RENEWED.

MAY THOSE WHO DWELL HERE LORD,
FIND ALWAYS WARM WELCOME,
PEACE AND HAPPY WORDS.
THAT WHEN THEY GO,
THEIR OWN HEARTH TO BUILD,
THEY WILL HAVE A PERFECT PATTERN,
AND THY PERFECT WILL FULFILL.

However, roles do not stifle achievement and great accomplishments. Christian women can and have achieved overwhelming things in their lifetimes. When this happens in the body of Christ, it is our responsibility to celebrate with joy their success and accomplishments.

As the old cowboy said: “When there are two on a horse, one rides behind.”

God is into the three R’s: (1) Relationships, (2) Roles, and (3) Respect. Out of this comes the Blessed Alliance.

Let’s join together in worship and praise singing both verses of this wonderful prayer chorus. Please sing verses 1 and 2 of **“In His Time”**: *“In His time, in His time; He makes all things beautiful, in His time. Lord, please show me every day As You’re teaching me Your way, That You do just what You say In Your time. In Your time, in Your time; You make all things beautiful, in Your time. Lord, my life to You I bring; May each song I have to sing Be to You a lovely thing In Your time.”*

FEBRUARY

February 1—Desiring a Good Work (1 Timothy 3:1)

1 Timothy 3:1: “Trustworthy is the saying: ‘Whoever is aspiring to the office of an overseer is desiring a good work.’”

Verse 1: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* observes two things in this verse:

1. It is valid to aspire to church leadership.
2. Church leadership is a noble task.

Micah 6:8: “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Alexander Strauch in his book, *Biblical Eldership*, says: “The greatest encouragement and incentive an elder can have is to know that he performs an exceedingly honorable and praiseworthy task—one that is worthy of the total sacrifice of one’s life.”

Dr. V. Raymond Edman, former president of Wheaton College, said: “Our job is not to train leaders, but to train servants.”

A biblical leader should be (1) Sensitive to the Father, (2) Spirit-filled, and (3) a Servant.

Stephen Covey in *Principle-Centered Leadership* says:

In effect, every morning they “yoke up” and put on the harness of service, thinking of others.

See yourself, each morning yoking up, putting on the harness of service in your various stewardships. See yourself taking the straps and connecting them around your shoulders as you prepare to do the work assigned to you that day. See yourself allowing someone else to adjust the yoke or harness. See yourself yoked up

to another person at your side—a co-worker or spouse—learning to pull together with that person.

This reminds me of the Lord's invitation in Matthew 11:28–30 (Phillips): "Come to me, all of you who are weary and over-burdened, and I will give you rest! Put on my yoke and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

This morning, I find myself worshipping and praising the Lord with that wonderful hymn, "**Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting.**" Please join me in singing 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.*"

February 2—Credentials for Leadership (1 Timothy 3:2)

1 Timothy 3:2: "*It is necessary, therefore, that the overseer be above reproach (give no grounds for accusation), one wife's husband, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching.*"

Verse 2: Desire alone is not enough, it must be matched with character.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out: "More is required than mere willingness to serve."

In these next six mornings, the verses we study will be highlighting fifteen requirements of a leader.

Qualification #1: "It is necessary, therefore, that the overseer be above reproach (give no grounds for accusation)."

So many potential leaders believe they have failed in their past, and as a result, cannot qualify for leadership.

I think we need to recall what Paul said in Philippians 3:13–14: "Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward those things which are in front."

If you have dealt with the past and it is under the blood. If you are presently forsaking those things from the past and walking in fellowship with the Lord by cleansing your heart and life by the reading of the Word and having a willingness to be submissive to the convicting work of the Spirit. Then, I believe it is possible for you to qualify as one the Lord can use.

Satan will always point us to the past to intensify our (1) uncertainties, (2) insecurities, and (3) inadequacies.

It is the Spirit's work to point us to the present and to the future.

After the death of James Lewis Pettigru, the citizens of the community erected a tombstone in his honor inscribed with these words:

UNAWED BY OPINION
UNSEDUCED BY FLATTERY
UNDISMAYED BY DISASTER
HE CONFRONTED LIFE WITH COURAGE
AND DEATH WITH CHRISTIAN HOPE

“It is necessary, therefore, that the overseer be above reproach (give no grounds for accusation), one wife’s husband.”

Qualification #2: “One wife’s husband,” or we could say a one-woman man. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “A qualified leader has his affections centered exclusively on his wife.”

Qualification #3: “Temperate.” The word means “well-balanced.”

This word is used only three times in the New Testament:

1. Here in verse 2
2. In verse 11
3. In Titus 2:2

Getz points out: “Here he means a man who has a clear perspective on life and a correct spiritual orientation . . . does not lose his physical, psychological, and spiritual orientation. He remains stable and steadfast, he is ‘calm, cool, and collected.’”

Qualification #4: “Self-controlled.”

Hendricksen says: “The self-controlled or sensible man is the man of sound mind. He is . . . not swayed by sudden impulses over which he exercises no mastery.”

Barclay says of “sophron” or being self-controlled: “The man who is sophron is the man who has every part of his nature under perfect control, which is to say that the man who is sophron is the man in whose heart Christ reigns supreme.”

Qualification #5: “Respectable.”

Barclay says: “The companion word is the word, kosmos, which we have translated well-behaved. This word kosmos means orderly, honest, decorous.”

Proverbs 4:18: “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter ‘til the full light of day.”

This person has a well-ordered life.

Qualification #6: “Hospitable.”

This Greek word means literally “love of a stranger.” Hospitality is not to impress people but to express the love of God to others.

Qualification #7: “Skillful in teaching.”

2 Timothy 2:15 (Phillips): “For yourself, concentrate on winning God’s approval, on being a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, and who knows how to use the word of truth to the best advantage.”

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing 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.”

February 3—Conduct Is Critical (1 Timothy 3:3)

1 Timothy 3:3: “Not addicted to wine (a drunkard), not a bully (fist fighter), but gentle (kind), peaceable, not loving money (greedy).”

Verse 3: In this verse, our list of leader qualifications continues.

Qualification #8: “Not addicted to wine (a drunkard).”

He does not linger long over his wine.

Qualification #9: “Not a bully (fist fighter).”

Wiersbe says: “‘Not contentious, not looking for a fight.’ Charles Spurgeon told his Pastor’s College students, ‘Don’t go about the world with your fist doubled up for fighting, carrying a theological revolver in the leg of your trouser.’”

Charles Colson in *The Body* says: “As has been said, the church is like Noah’s ark: The stench inside would be unbearable if it weren’t for the storm outside.”

Charles R. Swindoll in *Laugh Again* describes:

In a parable she entitles “A Brawling Bride,” Karen Main paints a vivid scene, describing a suspenseful moment in a wedding ceremony. Down front stands the groom in a spotless tuxedo handsome, smiling, full of anticipation, shoes shined, every hair in place, anxiously awaiting the presence of his bride. All attendants are in place, looking joyful and attractive. The magical moment finally arrives as the pipe organ reaches full crescendo and the stately wedding march begins.

Everyone rises and looks toward the door for their first glimpse of the bride. Suddenly there is a horrified gasp. The wedding party is shocked. The groom stares in embarrassed disbelief. Instead of a lovely woman dressed in elegant white, smiling behind a lace veil, the bride is limping down the aisle. Her dress is soiled and torn. Her leg seems twisted. Ugly cuts and bruises cover her bare arms. Her nose is bleeding, one eye is purple and swollen, and her hair is disheveled.

“Does not this handsome groom deserve better than this?” asks the author. And then the clincher: “Alas, His bride, THE CHURCH, has been fighting again!”

Qualification #10: “Gentle (kind).”

Philippians 4:5: “Let your sweet reasonableness be known to all men; the Lord is near.”

Qualification #11: “Peaceable.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates his word “not quarrelsome.”

Qualification #12: “Not loving money (greedy).”

A pastor made the following announcement before the offering: “I would like to remind you that what you are about to give is tax deductible, cannot be taken with you, and the love of it is considered by the Bible to be a root of all kinds of evil.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing 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.”*

February 4—Leadership at Home (1 Timothy 3:4)

1 Timothy 3:4: *“Presiding over his own house in a beautiful manner, keeping his children under control with true dignity.”*

Verse 4: The leadership requirements are continued in this verse.

Qualification #13: “Presiding over his own house in a beautiful manner, keeping his children under control with true dignity.”

As Howard Hendricks said: “You show me a leader who is great in public and I will show you a leader who is even greater in private.”

An unknown author, writing about his own father, expressed in poetic form some thoughts with which many of us will identify:

HIS SHOULDERS ARE A LITTLE BENT,
HIS YOUTHFUL FORCE A TRIFLE SPENT,
BUT HE’S THE FINEST MAN I KNOW,
WITH HEART OF GOLD AND HAIR OF SNOW.

HE’S SELDOM CROSS AND NEVER MEAN;
HE’S ALWAYS BEEN SO GOOD AND CLEAN;
I ONLY HOPE I’LL ALWAYS BE
AS KIND TO HIM AS HE’S TO ME.

SOMETIMES HE’S TIRED AND SEEMS FORLORN,
HIS HAPPY FACE IS LINED AND WORN;
YET HE CAN SMILE WHEN THINGS ARE BAD:
THAT’S WHY I LIKE MY GRAY-HAIRED DAD.

HE DOESN'T ASK THE WORLD FOR MUCH—
JUST COMFORT, FRIENDLINESS, AND SUCH;
BUT FROM THE THINGS I'VE HEARD HIM SAY,
I KNOW IT'S UP TO ME TO PAY
FOR ALL THE DEEDS HE'S DONE FOR ME
SINCE I SAT ROCKING ON HIS KNEE;

OH, NOT IN DOLLARS, DIMES, OR CENTS—
THAT'S NOT A FATHER'S RECOMPENSE;
NOR DOES HE WORSHIP WEALTH AND FAME—
HE'D HAVE ME HONOR JESUS' NAME.

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord by singing together verse 4 of **"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."*

February 5—A Good Question (1 Timothy 3:5)

1 Timothy 3:5: *"For if a man does not know how to preside over his own house, how shall he take care of God's assembly?"*

Verse 5: This verse points us to the reason for Qualification #13: If a man does not know how to manage at home, how will he at church?

Getz observes: "Paul viewed the well-ordered home as the true test of a man's maturity and ability to lead other Christians, especially a home that has passed the test of time."

Bob Kraning, associate pastor of the First Evangelical Free Church of Fullerton, spoke these words at a Christian Conference: "The ultimate success of my life will not be judged by the number of those who admire me for my accomplishments, but by the number of those who attribute their wholeness to my love for them—by the number of those who have seen their true beauty and worth in my eyes."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of that wonderful prayer hymn, **"Open My Eyes That I May See"**: *"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 / mind / way, illumine me, Spirit divine!"*

February 6—Careful with a New Convert (1 Timothy 3:6)

1 Timothy 3:6: “*Not a new convert, lest having his mind blinded by pride, he fall under similar judgment as the devil.*”

Verse 6: We continue our leadership requirements from Paul.

Qualification #14: “Not a new convert.”

Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Getz says: “To ‘become conceited’ actually means to become blinded by pride, to lose perspective. More literally, Paul is saying that a new Christian can actually wrap himself in a ‘smoke screen of pride.’ And when this happens, says Paul, he will ‘fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.’”

Wiersbe adds: “‘Novice’ literally means ‘one newly planted,’ referring to a young Christian. Age is no guarantee of maturity, but it is good for a man to give himself time for study and growth before he accepts a church.”

Robert Clinton in *The Making of a Leader* says: “Leadership is a lifetime of lessons. It is not a set of do-it-yourself correspondence courses that can be worked through in a few months or years.”

Tom L. Eisenman in his book, *Temptations Men Face*, says:

A good chef knows what a long soak in a fine marinade will do for a tough piece of meat. There is no way to slap on a glaze at the last second and get the same fine result. This is God’s way with us. We soak in the marinade of His grace for a lifetime, and there is simply no way to rush the process without ruining the meat.

A lifetime of soaking in the marinade of God’s grace can transform even the toughest sinner into a heavenly delicacy.

This morning, please join in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of “**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 eyes / mind / way, illumine me, Spirit divine!*”

February 7—A Faithful Witness (1 Timothy 3:7)

1 Timothy 3:7: “*Moreover it is a necessity for him also to be having a good testimony from those on the outside, in order that he might not fall into disgrace and into the trap of the devil.*”

Verse 7: This morning, the apostle gives us our final leadership requirement.

Qualification #15: “To be having a good testimony from those on the outside.”

As we have considered these fifteen qualifications together, there is no question that they come from Christlike character.

“It is a necessity for him also to be having a good testimony from those on the outside.”

1 Thessalonians 4:11–12: “[We exhort you] ... to make it your ambition to live quietly and to busy yourselves with your own affairs and to work with your hands, even as we commanded you; in order that you may behave decently toward those who are outside and you may not be having need of anything.”

1 Peter 2:12: “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.”

Ryberg says it beautifully:

LORD, HELP ME WALK SO CLOSE TO THEE
THAT THOSE WHO KNOW ME BEST CAN SEE
I LIVE AS GODLY AS I PRAY
AND CHRIST IS REAL FROM DAY TO DAY.

Sheldon Vanauken, a friend of C.S. Lewis, said:

The best argument for Christianity is Christians: their joy, their certainty, their completeness. But the strongest argument against Christianity is also Christians—when they are somber and joyless, when they are self-righteous and smug in complacent consecration, when they are narrow and repressive, then Christianity dies a thousand deaths.

Francis of Assisi said: “Preach the gospel all the time; if necessary use words.”

The purpose of this final qualification is seen in the last phrase: “in order that he might not fall into disgrace and into the trap of the devil.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Satan likes nothing better than to disgrace God’s work and God’s people by trapping church leaders in sin before a watching world.”

2 Timothy 2:26: “And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

Tom L. Eisenman in *Temptations Men Face* says: “When Satan tries to freeze your progress by bringing up your past, you bring up to him his future. God has already freed you from the bondage of past sin. Live as a free man.”

Let’s continue our time of worship and praise this morning by singing together 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 eyes / mind / way, illumine me, Spirit divine!*”

February 8—Deacons Not Distracted (1 Timothy 3:8–9)

1 Timothy 3:8: “Deacons, in like manner, should be worthy of respect, not insincere (double-tongued), not addicted to much wine, not fond of dishonest gain.”

1 Timothy 3:9: “Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”

In the previous mornings, we were considering the fifteen requirements for a leader or elder. Now, Paul describes the characteristics of deacons.

There are three points we will note about the office of deacon.

1. There is no reference to the teaching duties of deacons.
2. There is no reference to the governing of the house of God by the deacons.
3. There is no reference to deacons serving the whole church in a representative way.

The deacons were helpers of the elders. As far as we can tell, they do not have spiritual work involved in their role. The Greek word “deacon” means “servant.”

Verse 8: This verse shows us one positive characteristic and three negative characteristics.

Qualification #1: “Worthy of respect.”

After this one positive characteristic for being a deacon, the apostle then adds three negative characteristics.

Qualification #2: “Not insincere (double-tongued).”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “‘Double-tongued’ means dishonest and hypocritical.”

“Double-tongued” is speaking one thing to one person and something different to another. This word is only found here in the New Testament. If someone is not insincere, you can depend on what that person says.

Qualification #3: “Not addicted to much wine.”

The key word is “addicted.” I will not be enslaved.

Qualification #4: “Not fond of dishonest gain.”

Wiersbe says: “Deacons handle offerings and distribute money to needy people in the church.”

John 12:6: “Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.”

A minister received a call from the Internal Revenue Service asking about a member of his church. “He stated on his income tax return,” said the official, “that he gave \$3,000 last year to your church. Is that correct?” “I don’t have the records here, and I would have to check on it,” said the minister, “But I’ll say this—if he didn’t, he will.”

Verse 9: Having considered four characteristics in verse 8, we see a fifth characteristic in this verse.

Qualification #5: “Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”

This takes us back to chapter 1:5: “Now the goal of our instruction is (divine) love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and a genuine faith (without hypocrisy).”

Wiersbe says: “Deacons ... must base their decisions on the Word of God, and they must back up their decisions with godly lives.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of “**Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**”: *“Saviour, like a shepherd lead us, Much we need Thy tender care; In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, For our use Thy folds prepare. Blessèd Jesus, Blessèd Jesus! Thou hast bought us, Thine we are. Blessèd Jesus, Blessèd Jesus! Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.”*

February 9—Internship (1 Timothy 3:10)

1 Timothy 3:10: *“And these, moreover, are to be first put to the test (put on probation); then being blameless let them be serving as deacons.”*

Verse 10: Acts 6:3: “But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.”

This verse instructs that deacons must first prove their quality over time in the ordinary activities of life and ministry. After they have shown themselves irreproachable, then let them serve as deacons.

Wiersbe says: “This is the principle in Matthew 25:21: ‘Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things.’”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “This word ‘blameless’ means ‘being free from accusation.’ It is only in Paul’s writings. It means unaccused, free from any charge at all.”

Stephen R. Covey in *Principle-Centered Leadership* adds: “The head coach of a professional football team told me that some of his players don’t pay the price in the off season. ‘They come to camp out of shape,’ he said. ‘Somehow they think they can fool me and Mother Nature, make the team, and play great in the games.’”

This morning, let us worship and praise the Lord together as we sing verse 2 of “**Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**”: *“We are Thine, do Thou befriend us, Be the guardian of our way; Keep Thy flock, from sin defend us, Seek us when we go astray. Blessèd Jesus, Blessèd Jesus! Hear Thy children when they pray. Blessèd Jesus, Blessèd Jesus! Hear Thy children when they pray.”*

February 10—Lady Leaders (1 Timothy 3:11)

1 Timothy 3:11: “Women, likewise, [should be] worthy of respect, not given to slandering (gossipers in the Greek), temperate, trustworthy in all things.”

Verse 11: Paul now turns to list four characteristics of women leaders.

Romans 16:1: “Now I am recommending to you Phoebe, our sister, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.” The word for “servant” could be translated “*deaconess*.”

Wiersbe says: “We thank God for the ministry of godly women in the local church, whether they hold offices or not!”

“[These] women, likewise, [should be]”:

Qualification #1: “Worthy of respect.”

This correlates with chapter 3:8: “Deacons, in like manner, should be worthy of respect.”

Qualification #2: “Not given to slandering (gossipers in the Greek).”

This is the Greek word “diabolous,” which is the word we translate “*devil*,” for he is the chief slanderer.

Qualification #3: “Temperate.”

“Temperate” means “*well-balanced*.” This word also occurred back in chapter 3:2 and occurs in Titus 2:2. It means calm, cool, and collected.

Qualification #4: “Trustworthy in all things.”

This could be translated “*faithful in everything*.”

While writing these devotionals, I was reading a book called *The Insanity of God* by Nik Ripken. He talked about being in China and having an opportunity to speak to the House Church Leadership, 170 in number. He found there were a number of women among them. He said:

I learned that the women at this conference had planted churches all over that province and neighboring provinces. When I asked them about the biggest challenges facing House Church leaders and pastors, they explained to me that they did not have those titles. All the women here at this conference, they explained, are evangelists and church planters. I was beginning to learn a lot more about what those titles meant. To this point, I assumed that being a leader or a pastor of a House Church was the most dangerous position. After listening to these women, however, I began to wonder.

I asked them how they had become evangelists and church planters. They told me, “Oh, it is just common sense.” “What do you mean?” I asked. “Once churches are planted, the leaders are often imprisoned,” they explained. “When those leaders are

away, other people begin to lead. Sometimes those leaders are taken to prison, too. Every time, though, others rise up to take their place. We simply do what we have been trained to do. We take God's Word and we share it."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of "**Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**": *"Thou hast promised to receive us, Poor and sinful though we be; Thou hast mercy to relieve us, Grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free. Blessèd Jesus, Blessèd Jesus! Early let us turn to Thee. Blessèd Jesus, Blessèd Jesus! Early let us turn to Thee."*

February 11—Influential Leadership (1 Timothy 3:12)

1 Timothy 3:12: *"Let the deacons be one-wife sort of men (husbands of one wife), managing their children and their own homes commendably."*

Verse 12: Now, Paul returns to the home front, discussing the deacon's marriage and family. We observed some of these same statements regarding the elders in chapter 3:4–5: "Presiding over his own house in a beautiful manner, keeping his children under control with true dignity. For if a man does not know how to preside over his own house, how shall he take care of God's assembly?"

Guthrie says: "Domestic orderliness and parental control are as necessary in a deacon as in an overseer and the requirements stated are in this respect identical with the previous list."

Marriage and family are top priorities in the realm of spiritual leadership.

A missionary heard about a native who had five wives. "You are violating a law of God," said the good missionary. "So you must go and tell four of those women they can no longer live here or consider you their husband." The native thought a few moments, then said, "Me wait here. You tell 'em."

We know the Lord is in the business of blessing the obedient heart. How appropriate that we join together singing verse 4 of "**Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**": *"Early let us seek Thy favor, Early let us do Thy will; Blessèd Lord and only Saviour, With Thy love our bosoms fill. Blessèd Jesus, Blessèd Jesus! Thou hast loved us, love us still. Blessèd Jesus, Blessèd Jesus! Thou hast loved us, love us still."*

February 12—The Fruit of Good Leadership (1 Timothy 3:13)

1 Timothy 3:13: *"For those who have served in the office of a deacon commendably gain for themselves a good standing and much confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

Verse 13: The apostle gives us the reason for these qualifications given in the previous verses: "For those who have served in the office of a deacon commendably gain for themselves" two things:

1. A good standing

2. Much confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus

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."

Wiersbe says:

What an encouragement to a faithful deacon! God will "promote" him spiritually and give him more and more respect among the saints, which means greater opportunity for ministry. A faithful deacon has a good standing before God and men, and can be used of God to build the church. He has a spiritual boldness that makes for effective ministry.

There is a great reward for those who are faithful in their servanthood leadership.

Matthew 20:26–27: "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave."

Charles R. Swindoll in his book, *Laugh Again*, said: "He was thoroughly and radically converted, like the man who wrote these words:"

I HAD WALKED LIFE'S PATH WITH AN EASY TREAD,
HAD FOLLOWED WHERE COMFORT AND PLEASURE LED;
AND THEN BY CHANCE IN A QUIET PLACE—
I MET MY MASTER FACE TO FACE.

WITH STATION AND RANK AND WEALTH FOR GOAL,
MUCH THOUGHT FOR BODY BUT NONE FOR SOUL,
I HAD ENTERED TO WIN THIS LIFE'S MAD RACE—
WHEN I MET MY MASTER FACE TO FACE.

I HAD BUILT MY CASTLES, REARED THEM HIGH,
TILL THEIR TOWERS HAD PIERCED THE BLUE OF THE SKY;
I HAD SWORN TO RULE WITH AN IRON MACE—
WHEN I MET MY MASTER FACE TO FACE.

I MET HIM AND KNEW HIM, AND BLUSHED TO SEE
THAT HIS EYES FULL OF SORROW WERE FIXED ON ME;
AND I FALTERED, AND FELL AT HIS FEET THAT DAY
WHILE MY CASTLES VANISHED AND MELTED AWAY.

MELTED AND VANISHED; AND IN THEIR PLACE
I SAW NAUGHT ELSE BUT MY MASTER'S FACE;

AND I CRIED ALOUD: "OH, MAKE ME MEET
TO FOLLOW THE MARKS OF THY WOUNDED FEET."

MY THOUGHT IS NOW FOR THE SOULS OF MEN;
I HAVE LOST MY LIFE TO FIND IT AGAIN
EVER SINCE ALONE IN THAT HOLY PLACE
MY MASTER AND I STOOD FACE TO FACE.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing 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!"*

February 13—How To Function (1 Timothy 3:14–15)

1 Timothy 3:14: *"These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you quickly;"*

1 Timothy 3:15: *"But if I am delaying, you may know how it is necessary for men to be conducting themselves in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God, a pillar and support of the truth."*

Verse 14: "These things" points back to the qualifications in verses 1–13.

2 John 12: "Having many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that your joy may be made full."

Verse 15: "But" forms the contrast to the previous desire of the apostle to come quickly. "If I am delaying." This could be a real possibility in the apostle's schedule.

"You may know how it is necessary for men to be conducting themselves."

In these previous thirteen verses, Paul has carefully outlined what is "necessary for men to be conducting themselves" acceptably in the realm of leadership.

Barclay says: "First and foremost the church must be a family. In a dispatch written after one of his great naval victories, Nelson ascribed his victory to the fact that he 'had the happiness to command a band of brothers.' Unless a Church is a band of brothers it is not a true Church at all."

The church is a band of brothers and sisters locked together by their love of the Savior.

Lenski says: "'God living' is the tremendous opposite of dead idols."

In this passage, the Church is (1) an assembly, (2) a pillar, and (3) a support of the truth.

Wiersbe says: “The local church puts Jesus Christ on display in the lives of faithful members.”

The hymn writer expresses it beautifully:

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION, YE SAINTS OF THE LORD
IS LAID FOR YOUR FAITH IN HIS EXCELLENT WORD!
WHAT MORE CAN HE SAY THAN TO YOU HE HATH SAID,
TO YOU WHO FOR REFUGE TO JESUS HAVE FLED?

The word “support” occurs only here in the New Testament. It is a reference to “a *foundation*,” or a “*mainstay*.”

A “support of the truth.” “The truth” refers to the scriptures, but also to Jesus Christ. It is a “support” of the written and living Word.

Please join me in worship and praise as we 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!*”

February 14—Jesus, the Leader (1 Timothy 3:16)

1 Timothy 3:16: “*And most certainly great is the mystery of godliness; Who was made visible in the flesh, proved to be right by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.*”

Verse 16: The apostle begins this verse with a word that only occurs here in the New Testament. I have translated it “and most certainly.” It is “*without controversy*” and “*by common consent*.”

Hendriksen says: “The heart of this gospel and of our whole devotion is Christ.”

The word “great” in the Greek text is “mega.” We hear people talk about business deals that are going to bring “mega-bucks” or it is a “mega-deal.” In other words, it is tremendous, sublime, important, or big.

“Great is the mystery of godliness.”

Ephesians 5:32: “This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”

Paul advises this is something without controversy to be considered and absorbed. It is not something to be *preached*, but to be *pondered*.

Just as “the mystery of lawlessness” is centered in a person: the man of sin; so “the mystery of godliness” is centered in a person: our King and Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We will learn that godliness is not wrapped up in a *performance*, but in a *person*, even Jesus Christ himself.

Godliness = a godly life. It is nothing more than Christ manifesting himself in our *conduct* and *conversation*. Godliness is the result of a genuine work of God in an individual's life. The person is never the same after that: "by their fruits you shall know them."

We see "the mystery of godliness" in six steps:

1. The mission attempted—"who was made visible in the flesh."
2. The mission accomplished—"proved to be right by the Spirit."
The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "This refers to God's demonstration through the resurrection."
3. The mission affirmed—"seen by angels."

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS WHAT THE ANGELS SING,
AND I EXPECT TO HELP THEM
MAKE THE COURTS OF HEAVEN RING.
AND WHEN I SING REDEMPTION'S STORY,
THEY WILL FOLD THEIR WINGS,
FOR ANGELS NEVER FELT THE JOY
THAT OUR SALVATION BRINGS.

4. The mission announced—"proclaimed among the nations."

Acts 1:8, the last words of the resurrected Christ: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

5. The mission applied—"believed on in the world."

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."

6. The mission ascended—"taken up in glory."

The mission was successful!

The countdown for the second mission began with the successful completion of the first.

How appropriate for us to worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 4 of "**Face to Face**": "*Face to face! O, blissful moment! Face to face, to see and know; Face to face with my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Who loves me so. 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!*"

February 15—Satan Targets Leaders (1 Timothy 4:1)

1 Timothy 4:1: “But the Spirit explicitly is saying that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and to teachings of demons (demonic teachings).”

Verse 1: “But the Spirit” in Matthew 24 and 25, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation 6–19 reveals these future things.

“But the Spirit explicitly is saying.” It is without disguise, clearly or unmistakably, or in express terms. “That in latter times.” This is not last times, but “latter times.”

J. Vernon McGee says: “The ‘latter times’ mentioned here refers to our times today. Paul was speaking of what lay ahead for the church in his day.”

“Some will fall away from the faith.”

Matthew 24:11: “And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many.”

“But the Spirit explicitly is saying that in latter times some will” do two things:

1. Fall away from the faith.
2. Pay attention to deceitful spirits and to teachings of demons (demonic teachings).

They are turning their minds away from truth and begin to pay attention to error.

Guy King says: “They come to a man at a time of intellectual doubt, or of devastating sorrow, or of spiritual failure, or even of bodily weakness—and they insinuate the seed of what is false, which becomes in course of time, the very ruin of a soul, the catastrophe of a life.”

We have learned in chapter 3 of (1) the mystery of godliness, and now in chapter 4, (2) the mystery of iniquity that surrounds Satan and his work.

Joel Rosenberg in a *National Review* of August 2006 said:

As a devout Shiite Muslim, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is telling colleagues in Tehran that he believes the end of the world is rapidly approaching. He also believes that the way to hasten the coming of the Islamic Messiah known as the “Hidden Imam” of the “Mahdi” is to launch a catastrophic global jihad, first against Israel (the “little Satan” and then against the U.S. (the “Great Satan”). What’s more, Ahmadinejad is widely believed to be pursuing nuclear weapons that would give him the ability to carry out his apocalyptic religious views.

How do we gain the victory? How do we fight the good fight?

Let me suggest six ways to victory:

1. Wear your armor at all times
2. Pray
3. Study the Word of God

4. Memorize the Word of God
5. Focus on Obedience
6. Be Accountable to the Lord and your fellow brothers and sisters

1 John 4:1–4:

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. In this you are knowing the Spirit of God: every spirit that is confessing Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. 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. 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.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing Martin Luther's great hymn, **"A Mighty Fortress is Our God."** Let's sing together 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."*

February 16—A Numbed Conscience (1 Timothy 4:2)

1 Timothy 4:2: *"By the hypocritical preaching of liars, seared (with a red hot branding iron) in their own consciences."*

Verse 2: At the beginning of this verse, the little word "by" expresses the instrument Satan uses to get across his false teachings—"by the hypocritical preaching."

Matthew 7:15–16a: "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits."

This is fake and phony preaching.

One of the commentators translated this phrase: "in the hypocrisy of one speaking in lies."

Judas Iscariot was a perfect illustration of this thought. John 13:2: "And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him."

"By the hypocritical preaching of liars, seared (with a red hot branding iron) in their own consciences." Sin has cauterized their conscience. This is the only use of this word in the New Testament.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "It is a word meaning 'to brand' or 'cauterize.' In this condition, they are ready to do Satan's bidding."

Wiersbe says: “The word ‘seared’ means cauterized. Just as a person’s flesh can be branded so that it becomes hard and without feeling, so a person’s conscience can be deadened. Whenever we affirm with our lips something that we deny with our lives, whether people know it or not, we deaden our consciences just a little more.”

Selfishness kills sensitivity! Self-righteousness hardens the heart!

MEN LUST, BUT THEY KNOW NOT WHAT FOR;
THEY WANDER, AND LOSE TRACK OF THE GOAL;
THEY FIGHT AND COMPETE, BUT THEY FORGET THE PRIZE;
THEY SPREAD SEED, BUT SPURN THE SEASONS OF GROWTH;
THEY CHASE POWER AND GLORY, BUT MISS THE MEANING OF LIFE.

—GEORGE GILDER

Psalm 51:6: “Surely You desire truth in the inner parts; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place.”

When a person has fallen prey to a cauterized conscience, he does not even realize (1) he is lying, or (2) he is a drunk, or (3) he is living an immoral lifestyle, or (4) he is greedy, or (5) he is selfish.

When you have cauterized the conscience and crucified character, you have kissed Christianity goodbye. Charisma without character is the surest way to chaos.

Acts 24:16: “In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by 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.*”

February 17—Marriage and Menus (1 Timothy 4:3)

1 Timothy 4:3: “*Forbidding to marry, to abstain from foods, which God created for reception with thanksgiving by those who believe and who have experiential knowledge of the truth.*”

Verse 3: The *pattern* of their preaching was seen in verse 2. Now, we see their *practice* in verse 3.

Richard J. Neuhaus says: “[The] moralizing and legalizing of the Gospel of God’s grace is a dull heresy peddled to disappointed people who are angry because they have not received what they had no good reason to expect.”

Gary R. Collins in *You Can Make a Difference* says: “Visionary difference

makers are people of prayer, action, perseverance, and excitement—individuals who radiate zeal and a sense of purpose. But visionaries are not always high-profile people who are determined to change the world.”

In this verse, the two keys to victory over Satan are in the last phrases. These people are those who:

1. Believe
2. Have experiential knowledge of the truth

They are the ones who are able to be free from the shackles of performance and legalism. They enter into a relationship of grace with the Lord Jesus Christ.

This morning, please join me in singing together 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.”*

February 18—God Saw That It Was Good (1 Timothy 4:4–5)

1 Timothy 4:4: *“Because every created thing of God is good and nothing is to be thrown away if it is received with thanksgiving.”*

1 Timothy 4:5: *“For it is consecrated through the word of God and prayer.”*

Verse 4: Paul states the reason for his opposition to these teachers who forbid marriage and teach abstinence from certain foods: “every created thing of God is good and nothing is to be thrown away if it is received with thanksgiving.”

Romans 14:14: “I am knowing and have been persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who is thinking anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out: “Adultery and gluttony are abuses. We are rather to receive things with thanksgiving and not with taboos.”

The last phrase says: “if it is received with thanksgiving.” We certainly have a vindication for grace at meals.

Verse 5: This verse states the reason for the expression of thanksgiving in verse 4. The word “consecrated” is in the emphatic position, stated first in the Greek sentence. “For it is consecrated through” (1) “the Word of God and” (2) “prayer.”

These two things also form the pattern for protection against a satanic victory. As we are effective to use the Word of God in prayer, we will continue to experience God’s victory in our pursuit of the path of leadership.

I found this little prayer at the end of a January *Our Daily Bread* many years ago: “Father in heaven, giver of every good and perfect gift, give me a

thankful heart with which to receive and share your blessings. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."

Andrew Murray says: "Christlike praying in secret will be the secret of Christlike living in public."

Victory over our enemy is only going to come as we become increasingly (1) people of the Word and (2) people who pray.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing 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."*

February 19—A Good Servant (1 Timothy 4:6)

1 Timothy 4:6: *"By continually making known these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourishing yourself on the words of faith and the good teaching which you have closely followed."*

Verse 6: "By continually making known these things to the brethren." Paul is referencing his teachings in the previous verses 1–5. He has spoken clearly of Satan's program of falsehood and cauterized consciences. By these things, "you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus."

Charles R. Swindoll in *Laugh Again* says: "In our selfish, grab-all-you-can-get society, the concept of cultivating an unselfish, servant-hearted attitude is almost a joke to the majority."

Our blessed Lord concluded his story in Matthew 25:21: "Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master." Our society has edited those words to say: "Well done, thou good and faithful, selfish clod! Your bottom line is impressive."

Paul, Peter, James, Jude, and John all refer to themselves as servants in the text of scripture.

It is important this morning as we meditate on servanthood, that we remember Richard J. Foster's words in *Celebration of Discipline*:

But when we choose to be a servant, we give up the right to be in charge. There is a great freedom in this. If we voluntarily choose to be taken advantage of, then we cannot be manipulated. When we choose to be a servant, we surrender the right to decide who and when we will serve. We become available and vulnerable.

Robert H. Schuller in *Life's Not Fair but God is Good* says: "Anybody can be a blessing. You only need three things: a head, a heart, and hands."

John 20:21: “Jesus therefore said to them again, ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’”

“By continually making known these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourishing yourself on the words of faith and the good teaching which you have closely followed.”

There are two parts to the nourishment that will sustain Timothy in his ministry in Ephesus:

1. The words of faith
2. The good teaching

Wiersbe says: “The ‘good minister’ preaches the Word that he himself feeds on day by day. But it is not enough to preach the Word; he must also practice it.

Nourishing one’s self involves two practices:

1. Feeding on the Word
2. Obeying the Word

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord by singing together verse 1 of that wonderful Margaret Clarkson hymn, “**So Send I 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.”*

February 20—Training Toward Godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)

1 Timothy 4:7: “But be shunning unhallowed and old womanish tales. Be training (exercising) yourself toward godliness.”

Verse 7: In the remaining verses of this passage, the apostle is giving Timothy a further opportunity to follow the good teaching he shares. A good servant will follow the ten commands given in this passage.

Command #1: “But be shunning unhallowed and old womanish tales.”

The word “but” forms the contrast. This verse is in the present tense, instructing continual daily behavior. This command encourages nourishing on the good stuff, cutting out junk food and disciplining yourself on the things you see, think, and read.

These worldly, old wives’ tales had nothing of nourishment within them for the spiritual man.

Command #2: “Be training (exercising) yourself toward godliness.”

Paul is encouraging Timothy to be healthy in his eating and exercise. The doctrines should be followed by practice. Godliness comes by faith and spiritual food that results in fruit. This godliness will take work!

Philippians 2:12: “So then, my beloved ones, just as you always obeyed, not as in my presence only but now much more in my absence, with a reverential fear and trembling be working out your own salvation.”

Someone has said: “Failure to prepare is preparation for failure.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 2 and 3 of “**So Send I 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.*”

February 21—The Priority of Spiritual Training (1 Timothy 4:8)

1 Timothy 4:8: “*For physical training (bodily exercise) is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable with respect to all things, holding promise for the present life and of that about to come.*”

Verse 8: The apostle gives the reason for the previous two commands.

J. Vernon McGee says: “Paul is not saying bodily exercise is wrong. He is saying, ‘Let’s hold things in correct perspective.’”

Demarest says: “‘I’m physically fit, but spiritually flabby.’ That may become the epitaph on too many of our headstones.”

Richard Semaan has written a little tract called *The Daily Dozen: 12 Exercises for Spiritual Fitness*. They are:

1. Know the Lord
2. Love the Lord
3. Obey the Lord
4. Trust in the Lord
5. Wait for the Lord
6. Rest in the Lord
7. Pray to the Lord
8. Hope in the Lord
9. Serve the Lord
10. Thank the Lord
11. Grow in the Lord
12. Share the Lord

“For physical training (bodily exercise) is profitable for a little,” but in contrast, “godliness [which is spiritual] is profitable with respect to all things, holding promise for” (1) “the present life and” (2) “of that about to come.”

The promise for “the present life” is seen in John 10:10b: “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.”

“And of that about to come” is the blessed assurance that we will hear from His lips, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

Let us accept the biblical challenge of Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every

encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verses 4 and 5 of **“So Send I 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. So send I you to hearts made hard by hatred, To eyes made blind because they will not see, To spend, tho’ it be blood, to spend and spare not; So send I you to taste of Calvary.”*

February 22—Focus on the Word (1 Timothy 4:9)

1 Timothy 4:9: *“Reliable is the word and worthy of wholehearted acceptance.”*

Verse 9: This statement confirms what was said in verse 8: “For physical training (bodily exercise) is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable with respect to all things, holding promise for the present life and of that about to come.”

Hiebert says: “The words of verse 9, ‘Faithful is the saying,’ are best regarded as referring to what precedes rather than to what follows. They constitute the apostolic seal upon what has just been said about the superiority of godliness.”

What delights the heart of God the most is to see growth in godliness on the part of His children.

1 Peter 2:2–3 (Phillips): “You are babies, new-born in God’s family, and you should be crying out for unadulterated spiritual milk to make you grow up to salvation! And so you will, if you have already tasted the goodness of the Lord.”

2 Peter 3:18 (Phillips): “On the contrary, you should grow in grace and in your knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—to him be glory now and until the dawning of the day of eternity!”

Wiersbe says:

Phillips Brooks said, “The great purpose of life—the shaping of character by truth.” Godly character and conduct are far more important than golf trophies or home-run records, though it is possible for a person to have both. Paul challenged Timothy to be as devoted to godliness as an athlete is to his sport. We are living and laboring for eternity.

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of that wonderful hymn, **“How Firm a Foundation”**: *“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said, To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?”*

February 23—Fixed Our Hope (1 Timothy 4:10)

1 Timothy 4:10: *“For this purpose we are toiling and struggling (wrestling), because we have fixed our hope upon the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”*

Verse 10: The word “for” points us back to verse 8 and gives the reason for what was said. “For this purpose” we are (1) toiling and (2) struggling (wrestling).

Both of these words, toiling and struggling, have athletic overtones. The word “toiling” reminds us of Philippians 2:16: “Holding fast (forth) the word of life, to the end that I may have a ground for glorying in the day of Christ, because I ran not in vain nor labored in vain.”

It is a picture of athletic fatigue. It is the will to go on when you hit the wall in the marathon of life.

Vince Lombardi said: “Fatigue makes cowards of us all.”

“Struggling” is the agony of the workout. Colossians 1:29: “And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”

They are “toiling and struggling” to be godly.

“Because we have fixed our hope upon the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

1 Timothy 2:4: “Who is desiring all men to be saved and to come to an experiential knowledge of the truth.”

J. Vernon McGee says: “‘Specially of those that believe.’ He is the Savior of all men, but you can turn Him down if you want to.”

Titus 2:11–12 (Phillips): “For the grace of God, which can save every man, has now become known, and it teaches us to have no more to do with godlessness or the desires of this world but to live, here and now, responsible, honourable, and God-fearing lives.”

This morning, sing with me in worship and praise verse 2 of **“How Firm a Foundation”**: *“Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed, For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid; I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.”*

February 24—Being an Example (1 Timothy 4:11–12)

1 Timothy 4:11: *“These things be commanding and teaching.”*

1 Timothy 4:12: *“Let no one look down on you (think little of) because you are young; but keep on becoming an example of the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in faith, in purity.”*

Verse 11: The words “these things” point us back to verses 6–10. This is command #3 in a series of ten commands in the passage.

Command #3: “These things be commanding and teaching.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates: “‘Command’ as ‘insist upon’ and ‘these things’ refer to the immediate context. Paul was prodding Timothy to be firm and courageous in his ministry.”

Verse 12: This is the next command in the text.

Command #4: “Let no one look down on you (think little of you) because you are young; but keep on becoming an example of the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in faith, in purity.”

Paul is encouraging Timothy to maintain his dignity by being spiritually mature. Timothy is probably around 35 years of age when the apostle writes this letter to him.

There are five areas where Timothy is challenged to be an example:

1. Communication
2. Conduct
3. Compassion
4. Confession
5. Chastity

In *communication*, Paul says: “Keep on becoming an example of the believers in word.” He encourages Timothy to be careful about letting the Spirit control his tongue.

Regarding *conduct*, the apostle encourages becoming an example “in behavior.” 1 Peter 2:15: “For so is the will of God, that by doing good you might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

The third area points to the motivating factor of ministry, *compassion*: “Becoming an example ... in love.” This is agape love which is produced by the Spirit of God dwelling within us.

The fourth area is *confession*: “But keep on becoming an example of the believers ... in faith.” Proverbs 3:5–6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Finally *chastity*, “becoming an example ... in purity.” Psalm 119:9, 11: “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 5 of “**How Firm a Foundation**”: “*The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to its foes; That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.*”

February 25—Reading and Teaching the Word (1 Timothy 4:13)

1 Timothy 4:13: “*Until I am coming, give yourself to the reading, the exhortation (preaching), the teaching.*”

Verse 13: Paul continues the commands. These are top priorities.

Command #5: “Give yourself to the reading, the exhortation (preaching), the teaching.”

The apostle outlines the three main tasks of the minister:

1. Reading
2. Exhorting (Preaching)
3. Teaching

Elton Trueblood says:

Man is so made that he cannot find genuine satisfaction unless his life is transcendent in at least two ways. It must transcend his own ego in that he cares more for a cause than for his own existence, and it must transcend his own brief time in that he builds for the time when he is gone and thereby denies mortality.

Frank Buchman says: “The world is anxiously waiting to see what Jesus Christ can do in, by, for, and through one man wholly given to him—God-led. You can be that man.”

This morning, we will sing the hymn that asks the poignant question. Please join me singing verse 1 of “**HAVE I DONE MY BEST FOR JESUS?**”: “*I wonder, have I done my best for Jesus, Who died upon the cruel tree? To think of His great sacrifice at Calv’ry! I know my Lord expects the best from me. How many are the lost that I have lifted? How many are the chained I’ve helped to free? I wonder, have I done my best for Jesus, When He has done so much for me?*”

February 26—Use Your Gifts to Edify Others (1 Timothy 4:14)

1 Timothy 4:14: “*Do not neglect the gift which is in you, which was given you through prophecy with the laying on of hands of the elders.*”

Verse 14: This could be a gentle rebuke if we translate it: “stop neglecting the gift which is in you.” It is a present negative statement.

Command #6: “Do not neglect the gift which is in you.”

Later on, Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:6: “And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”

Walter M. Bortz, II, in *We Live Too Short and Die Too Long* says: “Goethe observed, ‘To be is to do.’ Life is not a spectator sport. Stagnation is not conducive to good function anywhere in the universe.”

Elton Trueblood says: “We stop growing and slip into mental and spiritual flabbiness when we ignore our devotional lives, avoid serving, or stop thinking.

Vance Havner says: “Stop praying, ‘Lord, use me’ and get useable and the Lord will wear you out.”

Vince Lombardi said: “Weariness is just a state of mind. You’re only as tired as you think. The key is mental discipline.”

Paul speaks to the Corinthians about spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12–14. He says in 1 Corinthians 12:7: “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” Then, in 1 Corinthians 12:11: “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.” Later on in 1 Corinthians 12:18, he says: “But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.”

Spiritual gifts always point outward to ministry.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning singing verse 2 of **“Have I Done My Best for Jesus?”**: *“The hours that I have wasted are so many, The hours I’ve spent for Christ so few; Because of all my lack of love for Jesus. I wonder if His heart is breaking too. How many are the lost that I have lifted? How many are the chained I’ve helped to free? I wonder, have I done my best for Jesus, When He has done so much for me?”*

February 27—Practice Leads to Progress (1 Timothy 4:15)

1 Timothy 4:15: *“Be practicing these things, be living (throwing yourself into) in them in order that your progress may be evident to everyone.”*

Verse 15: In this verse, we have two additional commands. It is important to recognize these commands are in the present tense. Therefore, we should observe these commands daily.

Command #7: “Be practicing these things.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates: “The word ‘practicing’ as ‘give careful thought to.’”

Command #8: “Be living (throwing yourself into) in them.”

Hiebert says: “‘Give thyself wholly to them’ is literally, ‘go on being in them.’”

Hendriksen translates: “In these things be (absorbed).”

John Bradley and Jay Carty with Russ Korth in *Unlocking Your Sixth Suitcase* say: “This element is their key to breaking through to a high level of achievement in their respective sports.”

Paul is encouraging Timothy to get focused, put on his game face, and do battle.

The purpose behind these two commands is seen in the final phrase: “in order that your progress may be evident to everyone.”

J. Vernon McGee says:

One of the greatest things ever said concerning Dwight L. Moody was said by a neighbor: “Every time Mr. Moody comes

home, you can just tell how much he's grown spiritually." Are you further along spiritually today than you were this time last year? Are you growing in grace and the knowledge of Christ? The only way to do so is by reading the great truths of the Word of God.

Let's sing together in worship and praise verse 3 of **"Have I Done My Best for Jesus?"**: *"I wonder, have I cared enough for others, Or have I let them die alone? I might have helped a wand'rer to the Savior, The seed of precious Life I might have sown. How many are the lost that I have lifted? How many are the chained I've helped to free? I wonder, have I done my best for Jesus, When He has done so much for me?"*

February 28—Pay Attention and Persevere (1 Timothy 4:16)

1 Timothy 4:16: *"Keep on paying careful attention to yourself and to the teaching; keep on continuing in them (sticking to it), for in doing this you will save yourself and those who are hearing you."*

Verse 16: We have the final two commands in this verse.

Command #9: "Keep on paying careful attention to yourself and to the teaching."

Command #10: "Keep on continuing in them (sticking to it)."

"Attention to yourself" refers back to verse 12 and "to the teaching" back to verse 13.

The reason for these two final commands is seen in the statement: "for in doing this you will save" (1) "yourself and" (2) "those who are hearing you." "You will save yourself" from the pitfalls and errors in the ministry. There will be salvation available to "those who are hearing you."

It is important to notice these commands are also in the present tense. These should be daily practices in our lives.

Stephen Charnock in his book, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, says: "Every minute that passeth speaks the fewer remaining till the time of death; and as we are every hour further from our beginning, we are nearer our end."

Joshua 24:14a, 15a: "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve."

In Luke 15, the prodigal son says to his father in arrogance, "Give me so I can go." Then in his humility and brokenness as he returns, he says, "Father, make me as one of your hired servants."

John Bradley and Jay Carty with Russ Korth in *Unlocking Your Sixth Sense* say: "Five frogs are on a log. Four decide to jump. How many are left? Five—because deciding to jump and jumping are two separate actions. Actually jumping validates the strength of the decision to jump."

What a glorious anticipation to hear from the lips of our Savior: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of **“Have I Done My Best for Jesus?”**: *“No longer will I stay within the valley, I’ll climb to mountain heights above; The world is dying now for want of someone To tell them of the Savior’s matchless love. How many are the lost that I have lifted? How many are the chained I’ve helped to free? I wonder, have I done my best for Jesus, When He has done so much for me?”*

February 29—Respect Your Elders (1 Timothy 5:1–2)

1 Timothy 5:1: *“Do not rebuke an older man, but entreat him as a father; younger men as brothers.”*

1 Timothy 5:2: *“Older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all (with absolute) purity.”*

Verse 1: We are now reading through chapter 5 of 1 Timothy. There will be eight commands in this passage.

William Law says:

Let every day be a day of humility. Condescend to all the weaknesses and infirmities of your fellow creatures. Cover their frailties. Love their excellencies. Encourage their virtues. Relieve their wants. Rejoice in their prosperities. Be compassionate in their distress. Receive their friendship. Overlook their unkindness. Forgive their malice. Be a servant of servants and condescend to do the lowliest of offices of the lowest of mankind.

This first command from the apostle, Paul, is a negative command.

Command #1: “Do not rebuke an older man.”

Timothy is admonished to treat elderly men with respect, not with rough rebukes, but with gentle exhortations. Paul advises Timothy to (1) “entreat him [an older man] as a father” and (2) “younger men as brothers.”

Verse 2: The apostle urges Timothy to treat the older women as he would treat his mother, Eunice.

2 Timothy 1:5: “For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.”

The “younger women (are to be treated) as sisters, in all (with absolute) purity.”

This is the same word we had back in 1 Timothy 4:12: “Let no one look down on you (think little of you) because you are young; but keep on becoming an example of the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in faith, in purity.”

This morning, let's sing together in worship and praise 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."*

MARCH

March 1—Sensitive to Widows' Needs (1 Timothy 5:3–4)

1 Timothy 5:3: *"Be showing respect to widows who really are widows."*

1 Timothy 5:4: *"But if a widow is having children or grandchildren, let them be learning first to show piety to their own household and to make a return to those who brought them up; for this is acceptable in the sight of God."*

Verse 3: This is the second command in the passage.

Command #2: "Be showing respect to widows who really are widows."

Please keep in mind this is a fundamental law of leadership: A good leader treats people with respect and meets legitimate needs.

Naomi, Ruth, and Anna are some of the great widows of scripture who come to mind.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "Paul is referring to widows who are really in need."

Wiersbe says: "However, the church must be careful not to waste its resources on people who really are not in need."

Verse 4: This is command #3.

Command #3: "Let them be learning first to show piety to their own household and to make a return to those who brought them up."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary explains this verse further: "In God's economy, the first responsibility for caring for the needs falls on the family, not the church, and surely not the state. Such action is pleasing to God."

The phrase "let them be learning first to show piety to their own household" helps us understand God's priorities regarding the care of widows. Charity begins at home.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of Fanny Crosby's 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. 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."*

March 2—Widows All Alone (1 Timothy 5:5)

1 Timothy 5:5: “Now the one who is a widow and has been left completely alone has set her hope on God and is continuing in her petitions and prayers night and day.”

Verse 5: This verse gives an example of a widow who needs help: “one who is a widow and has been left completely alone.”

One is reminded of Anna in Luke 2:36–37: “And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.”

Philippians 4:6–7 (Phillips): “Don’t worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.”

When Prince Albert died, Queen Victoria made one of the saddest statements I have ever heard. Her words were uttered through her tears: “Now there is no one left to call me Victoria.”

Joe White in *Over the Edge and Back* said: “As one dear old country preacher once said, ‘God may not get there when you want Him to, but He’ll be there right on time.’”

Stephen Charnock in *The Existence and Attributes of God* says:

He that is in danger of drowning, and hath the waves come over his head, will with all the might he hath, lay hold upon anything near him, which is capable to save him. God lets his people sometimes sink into such a condition, that they may lay the faster hold on him who is near to all that call upon him.

Let’s continue our worship and praise this morning by singing verse 2 of “**He Hideth My Soul**”: “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.”

March 3—Widows Be Living Above Reproach (1 Timothy 5:6–7)

1 Timothy 5:6: “But the one who is living luxuriously is dead while she is living.”

1 Timothy 5:7: “And these things be commanding in order that they may be above reproach.”

Verse 6: Whereas we have the godly widow in verse 5, this verse describes the widow with worldly priorities.

A widow said, “My husband didn’t leave a bit of insurance.” Her friend asked, “Then where did you get that gorgeous diamond ring?” The widow answered, “Well, he left a thousand dollars for a casket and five thousand dollars for a stone. This is the stone.”

Ecclesiastes 2:10–11: “I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.”

The word we have translated “living luxuriously” is also used in James 5:5: “You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.”

As we look at this widow, we hope she will recognize her plight, come to her senses and make a decision to return home like the prodigal son in the far off country.

Verse 7: Of the eight commands, command #4 is in this verse.

Command #4: “And these things be commanding in order that they may be above reproach.”

“These things” refers back to verses 1–6. Then, we have the reason: “in order that they may be above reproach.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “If the wrong women are on the list, their sensual lifestyles will bring reproach on the entire group.”

I am reminded of Paul’s words to Timothy in his second letter, 2 Timothy 4:10: “For Demas deserted me, having loved this present world, and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of “**He Hideth My Soul**”: “*With numberless blessings each moment He crowns, And filled with His fullness divine, I sing in my rapture, O, glory to God For such a Redeemer as mine! 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.*”

March 4—Caring for the Needs of Your Family (1 Timothy 5:8)

1 Timothy 5:8: “*But if a certain one is not caring for the needs of his own people, and especially the members of his family, he has repudiated the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*”

Verse 8: A good and godly leader treats people with respect and meets legitimate needs. In this argument, Paul is referring back to 2 Timothy 5:4: “But if

a widow is having children or grandchildren, let them be learning first to show piety to their own household and to make a return to those who brought them up; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.”

The word “caring” can be translated “to think ahead” or “to provide by seeing needs in advance” according to *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

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.”

1 John 3:18: “Little children, let us not be loving by word nor by the tongue, but in deed and truth.”

Glenn Schwartz in his book, *When Charity Destroys Dignity*, says: “As for me, I had taken my place, and I was free because I had done all that I knew to do. Such freedom is priceless.”

The verse we sing this morning celebrates the total provision of our Blessed Lord for eternity. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of “**He Hideth My Soul**”: *“When clothed in His brightness, transported I rise To meet Him in clouds of the sky, His perfect salvation, His wonderful love, I’ll shout with the millions on high. 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.”*

March 5—Qualifications of a Godly Widow (1 Timothy 5:9–10)

1 Timothy 5:9: “*Let not a widow be enrolled who is less than 60 years old, who was the wife of one husband.*”

1 Timothy 5:10: “*With a reputation for good works, if she reared children, if she showed hospitality to strangers, if she washed the saints’ feet, if she aided the distressed, if she devoted herself to every good work.*”

Verse 9: In this verse and the next, we have command #5.

Command #5: “Let not a widow be enrolled who is less than 60 years old, who was the wife of one husband; with a reputation for good works, if she reared children, if she showed hospitality to strangers, if she washed the saints’ feet, if she aided the distressed, if she devoted herself to every good work.”

In these verses, Paul outlines three qualifications for those who are true widows.

Qualification #1: She must not be less than 60 years old.

Qualification #2: She must have been “the wife of one husband.”

Marriage stability and commitment are important in God’s work.

Verse 10: In this verse, we see the third qualification.

Qualification #3: She must be well known for her good works.

Paul provides examples of five characteristics of “a reputation for good works.” The little word “if” highlights these examples in the passage:

1. If she reared children
2. If she showed hospitality to strangers
3. If she washed the saints' feet
4. If she aided the distressed
5. If she devoted herself to every good work

We are reminded of Proverbs 31 when we read this list.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of **"God Will Take Care of You"**: *"Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev'ry day, o'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you."*

March 6—Vulnerability of Younger Widows (1 Timothy 5:11–12)

1 Timothy 5:11: *"But younger widows refuse, for when they feel sensuous impulses that alienate them from Christ, they are desiring to marry."*

1 Timothy 5:12: *"Incurring condemnation because they have broken their first pledge."*

Verse 11: The commands continue.

Command #6: "But younger widows refuse."

The apostle states the reason for this command: "for when they feel sensuous impulses that alienate them from Christ, they are desiring to marry."

Paul is advising that younger women not be included in the list of those receiving assistance. He believes the younger women might be faced with normal sexual desires which would overcome their dedication to Christ, whereas the older women would have their active sexual lives behind them.

Verse 12: This verse continues with the reason for Paul's command in verse 11: "Incurring condemnation because they have broken their first pledge."

Barclay says:

It is not that the younger widows are condemned for marrying again. What is condemned is this ... the widow might decide to remain a widow all her life, and to dedicate her life to Christ and the Church. Now a woman doing that was regarded as having taken Christ as her bridegroom, and as being herself the bride of Christ. So then, if she broke her vows, and wished to marry again, she was regarded as having broken her marriage vow to Christ.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary agrees saying: "... the first pledge taken on joining the list of widows wherein the woman vowed to serve Christ entirely without thought of remarriage."

Ecclesiastes 5:4–5: “When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.”

A minister was planning a wedding at the close of the Sunday morning service. After the benediction, he had planned to call the couple down to be married for a brief ceremony before the congregation. For the life of him, he couldn't think of the names of those who were to be married. “Will those wanting to get married please come to the front?” he requested. Immediately, nine single ladies, three widows, four widowers and six single men stepped to the front.

In my wedding services, I always conclude with Psalm 89:33–34: “But I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered.”

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by affirming that God will take care of us. Please join me in singing verse 2 of **“God Will Take Care of You”**: *“Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you; When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev'ry day, o'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.”*

March 7—Satan Loves a Sitting Target (1 Timothy 5:13)

1 Timothy 5:13: *“And at the same time they also are learning to be idle (lazy), going about from house to house; and not only idle, but also gossipy and meddlesome (paying attention to things that do not concern them), saying things which they ought not to say.”*

Verse 13: This verse includes the second of Paul's reasons for refusing the younger widows:

1. They are desiring to marry.
2. They cannot handle being idle.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary describes the word “gossipy”:

It is only used here in this form and also means “foolish.”

The verb form is seen in 3 John 10: “For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and he forbids those who desire to do so, and puts them out of the church.”

Steve Brown in *Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks* relates this story: “I heard about a pastor who was criticized because he supposedly went to a meeting his wife was attending and forced her to leave. In self-defense, he took out an ad in the local newspaper, which read:”

In the first place, I never attempted to influence my wife as to her choice of a meeting.

In the second place, my wife didn't attend the meeting in question.

In the third place, I did not attend the meeting.

In the fourth place, neither my wife nor myself had any inclination to attend the meeting.

In the fifth place, I do not now have, and never have had, a wife.

STOP YOUR CARNAL, WICKED MEDDLING,
SET YOUR SIGHTS ON WHAT IS RIGHT;
HONOR CHRIST BY FULL DEVOTION,
MAKE HIS SERVICE YOUR DELIGHT.

—BOSCH

2 Thessalonians 3:11–12: “For we are hearing that certain ones among you are walking around undisciplined, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we are commanding and exhorting in the Lord Jesus Christ in order that with quietness they be working and eating their own bread.”

Let's celebrate the Lord's wondrous provision for each of us. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of **“God Will Take Care of You”**: *“All you may need He will provide, God will take care of you; Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev'ry day, o'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.”*

March 8—Younger Widows Marry (1 Timothy 5:14)

1 Timothy 5:14: *“Therefore, I am desiring that the younger widows marry, be bearing children, be managing household affairs, giving the opponent no occasion for abuse (criticism).”*

Verse 14: “Therefore” introduces the final section of Paul's instructions to the church regarding its responsibility to widows.

The apostle gives three instructions for the young widows: (1) marry, (2) be bearing children, and (3) be managing household affairs. By following these guidelines, they will be “giving the opponent no occasion for abuse (criticism).”

Since Paul mentions Satan in the following verse, he could be referencing him as the “opponent” in this verse.

Psalm 119:42: “Then I will answer the one who taunts me, for I trust in Your word.”

1 Corinthians 16:9: “For a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”

Wiersbe says:

The result of all this is a good testimony that silences the accusers. Satan (the adversary) is always alert to an opportunity to invade and destroy a Christian home. The word occasion is a military term that means “a base of operations.” A Christian wife who is not doing her job at home gives Satan a beachhead for his operations, and the results are tragic.

This morning, let’s continue singing about the wonderful truth of God’s provision. Please join me singing verse 4 of **“God Will Take Care of You”**: *“No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev’ry day, o’er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.”*

March 9—Satan Studies Our Game Films (1 Timothy 5:15)

1 Timothy 5:15: *“For already certain ones have been turned aside after Satan.”*

Verse 15: Make no mistake. Satan is active and waiting for opportunities to accomplish his purposes.

2 Corinthians 2:11: “In order that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan for we are not ignorant of his schemes.”

2 Corinthians 4:4: “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.”

2 Corinthians 11:3: “But I am fearing, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

2 Corinthians 12:7: “And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet me - in order that I may not be exalting myself.”

Jesus warned 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.”

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.”

Ephesians 6:10–11: “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “It is too late for some. No doubt Paul is aware of specific cases in the churches where younger women had been placed on the list and then had broken their vows.”

We sing together in worship and praise this morning one of the great old hymns. Please join me in verse 1 of “**Lead On, O King Eternal**”: *“Lead on, O King Eternal, The day of march has come; Henceforth in fields of conquest Your tents shall be our home, Through days of preparation Your grace has made us strong, And now, O King Eternal, We lift our battle song.”*

March 10—Assume Family Responsibilities (1 Timothy 5:16)

1 Timothy 5:16: *“If a certain person who is a believer is having widows, let him be taking care of them and let not the church be burdened, in order that it may give assistance to those who are truly widows.”*

Verse 16: In this verse, Paul completes his commands to the church regarding widows.

Command #7: “Let him (or her) be taking care of them.”

Command #8: “Let not the church be burdened.”

There are a large number of expositors who believe Paul is speaking to women who are believers. They are able to take care of the widows and handling that responsibility. Paul is directing this responsibility so “the church will not be burdened.”

The apostle concludes the verse with this purpose: “in order that it may give assistance to those who are truly widows.” This verse provides a great framework for a church’s domestic policies and references back to the beginning of this passage in 1 Timothy 5:3: “Be showing respect to widows who really are widows.”

What do you do when the stress and the pain exceed your limits?

David Roper in his book, *A Burden Shared*, says: “Never give up! One is never too old to be fruitful. ‘Age is not decay; it is ripening, the swelling of the fresh life within’ (George MacDonald). No one has ever out-lived the power of God.”

Deuteronomy 33:27a: “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verses 2 and 3 of “**Lead On, O King Eternal**”: *“Lead on, O King Eternal, Till sin’s fierce war shall cease, And holiness shall whisper The sweet amen of peace; For not with swords’ loud*

clashing, Nor roll of stirring drums, With deeds of love and mercy The heav'nly kingdom comes. Lead on, O King Eternal, We follow, not with fears; For gladness breaks like morning Where'er Your face appears; Your cross is lifted ov'r us; We journey in its light: The crown awaits the conquest; Lead on, O God of might."

March 11—Worthy of Double Honor (1 Timothy 5:17–18)

1 Timothy 5:17: *"Let the elders that are ruling well be deemed worthy of double honor, especially those who are working hard in preaching and teaching."*

1 Timothy 5:18: *"For the scripture is saying, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing the grain,' and 'The worker is worthy of his pay.'"*

Verse 17: There are three key words that stand out and help us understand the elder's job description: (1) ruling well, (2) preaching, and (3) teaching.

"Let the elders that are ruling well be deemed worthy of double honor. What does the term "double honor" mean? Does it mean honor now as well as in eternity?

Wiersbe says: "'Double honor' can be translated 'generous pay.' (The word honor is used as in 'honorarium.')

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "The elders received a stipend. When they excelled in this ministry of leadership, they were worthy of double honor, or twice the remuneration."

This verse begins a passage of eight commands for elders.

Command #1: "Let the elders that are ruling well be deemed worthy of double honor, especially those who are working hard in preaching and teaching."

Verse 18: The apostle is using two passages of scripture from the book of Deuteronomy and the gospel of Luke. He is speaking about an "ox" and a "worker."

1. "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain."—Deuteronomy 25:4

2. "The worker is worthy of his pay."—Luke 10:7

This verse begins with the word "for" and provides the reason for the first command in verse 17.

J. Vernon McGee says: "I have known very few preachers who I thought were money-lovers; most men are in the ministry for a different motive than that. You are not going to hurt the preacher if you give him a generous offering. Be generous also to a visiting Bible teacher if his ministry is a blessing to you."

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord by singing verse 1 of **"Give Your Best to the Master"**: *"Give of your best to the Master; Give of the strength of your youth; Throw your soul's fresh, glowing ardor Into the battle for truth. Jesus has set the example; Dauntless was He, young and brave; Give Him your loyal devotion."*

tion, Give Him the best that you have. Give of your best to the Master; Give of the strength of your youth; Clad in salvation's full armor, Join in the battle for truth."

March 12—Spiritual Discipline (1 Timothy 5:19–20)

1 Timothy 5:19: "Do not entertain a charge against an elder unless it be confirmed by two or three witnesses."

1 Timothy 5:20: "Those who are sinning, be rebuking in the presence of all, in order that the rest may be having fear."

Verse 19: The command in this verse is negative.

Command #2: "Do not entertain a charge against an elder unless it be confirmed by two or three witnesses."

Deuteronomy 19:15: "One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

Wiersbe warns: "Church discipline usually goes to one of two extremes. Either there is no discipline at all, and the church languishes because of disobedience and sin. Or the church officers become evangelical policemen who hold a kangaroo court and violate many of the Bible's spiritual principles."

Verse 20: "Those" refers to the elders sinning.

Command #3: "Those who are sinning, be rebuking in the presence of all."

Paul states the purpose behind this command in the last section of the verse: "in order that the rest may be having fear."

This public rebuke could be just in the presence of the other elders, or it could be before the whole church since they are affected by a person in leadership.

Wiersbe reminds us: "The purpose of discipline is restoration, not revenge. Our purpose must be to save the offender, not to drive him away. Our attitude must be one of love and tenderness (Galatians 6:1–3). In fact the verb restore that Paul used in Galatians 6:1 means 'to set a broken bone.' Think of the patience and tenderness involved in that procedure!"

Stephen Charnock in *The Existence and Attributes of God* says: "Herein is the wonder of divine wisdom, that God many times makes a sin, which meritoriously fits us for hell, a providential occasion to fit us for heaven; when it is an occasion of a more humble faith and believing humility, and an occasion of a thorough sanctification and growth in grace, which prepares us for a state of glory."

1 Samuel 12:20: "'Do not be afraid,' Samuel replied. 'You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart.'"

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of **“Give Your Best to the Master”**: *“Give of your best to the Master; Give Him first place in your heart; Give Him first place in your service, Consecrate every part. Give, and to you shall be given; God His beloved Son gave. Gratefully seeking to serve Him, Give Him the best that you have. Give of your best to the Master; Give of the strength of your youth; Clad in salvation’s full armor, Join in the battle for truth.”*

March 13—No Prejudice or Partiality (1 Timothy 5:21)

1 Timothy 5:21: *“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and the elect angels, that these things you are to guard without showing prejudice, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.”*

Verse 21: Paul is giving a very solemn, present tense charge to young Timothy. The gravity of this charge can be seen in the list of those in presence as witness: (1) God, (2) Christ Jesus, and (3) the elect angels.

This verse is the fourth command.

Command #4: “These things you are to guard without showing prejudice, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.”

“These things” refers to the disciplinary action in the previous verses.

The apostle wants Timothy to understand that rank and leadership are not exempt. Timothy must be resolute and take action when needed.

Prejudice and partiality have no place in leadership. Paul advises Timothy to be consistent in carrying out this disciplinary action with integrity as well as:

1. Without showing prejudice or prejudging against
2. Doing nothing in a spirit of partiality or showing favor

The two words Paul used that we have translated “prejudice and partiality” are only used here in the New Testament.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates “prejudice” as “prejudging” and “partiality” as “an inclination toward someone” and says: “We have ‘God,’ ‘Christ,’ and ‘the elect angels’ all witnessing this scene; and all 3 of them are associated with righteous judgment.”

Barclay says:

Timothy is urged to administer his office without favoritism and without prejudice. B.S. Easton writes: “The well-being of every community depends on impartial discipline.” There is nothing which does more harm than when some people are treated as if they could do no wrong, and when others are treated as if they could do no right. Justice is a universal virtue.

James 2:9: “But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.”

Prejudice regards attitude whereas *partiality* involves action.

This morning, let's examine our hearts. When was the last time you spent time in prayer before the Lord asking him specifically to reveal your prejudices and any partiality to certain individuals?

Let's sing together in worship and praise verse 3 of **"Give Your Best to the Master"**: *"Give of your best to the Master; Naught else is worthy His love. He gave Himself for your ransom, Gave up His glory above: Laid down His life without murmur, You from sin's ruin to save; Give Him your heart's adoration, Give Him the best that you have. Give of your best to the Master; Give of the strength of your youth; Clad in salvation's full armor, Join in the battle for truth."*

March 14—Don't Be in a Hurry (1 Timothy 5:22)

1 Timothy 5:22: *"Lay hands [of ordination] on no one hastily; neither be a partner in others' sins; keep yourself pure."*

Verse 22: This verse contains three commands of the eight included in this passage.

Command #5: "Lay hands [of ordination] on no one hastily."

Command #6: "Neither be a partner in others' sins."

Command #7: "Keep yourself pure."

In these three commands, Paul addresses the issues of haste, convictions, and confession:

1. Do not get in a hurry (haste).
2. Condemn rather than condone sin (convictions).
3. Confess your own sins (confessions).

"Lay hands [of ordination] on no one hastily." This command is a present tense imperative. Someone has said that haste makes waste! Another has said that Satan rushes men, but God leads them.

Psalm 27:14: "Wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart, and wait for the Lord."

Wiersbe says: "Only God knows the hearts of everyone (Acts 1:24). The church needs spiritual wisdom and guidance in selecting its officers. It is dangerous to impulsively place a new Christian or a new church member in a place of spiritual responsibility."

"Neither be a partner in others' sins." This also is a present imperative and could be translated: "neither be sharing or participating in others' sins." When we fail to take disciplinary action against someone who has sin in his life, we become partners with him.

"Keep yourself pure" is also in the present tense. Keeping pure means you are (1) staying away from the sins of others and (2) confessing your own sins regularly.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “One cannot deal with sin in another’s life if one’s own life is not pure.”

Pure does not mean perfect! This means you have dealt with all known sin in your life.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Phillips): “With these promises ringing in our ears, dear friends, let us keep clear of anything that smirches body or soul. Let us prove reverence for God by consecrating ourselves to him completely.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of one of my all-time favorite prayer hymns, “**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.*”

March 15—Take Care of Physical Needs (1 Timothy 5:23)

1 Timothy 5:23: “*No longer drink only water, but be using a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.*”

Verse 23: The final command of this series of eight is personal. It makes both a negative and positive statement. Negatively, “no longer drink only water,” but positively in contrast, “be using a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.”

Paul is qualifying Timothy’s concept of purity to allow him some medicinal help for his physical ailments.

C.S. Lewis said: “I didn’t go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don’t recommend Christianity.”

Paul may be feeling anxiety over Timothy’s neglect of his bodily needs. Early in the epistle, the apostle spoke of physical exercise and now he adds medicinal directions.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 9:27 (Phillips): “I am my body’s sternest master, for fear that when I have preached to others I should myself be disqualified.”

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord 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.*”

March 16—Sin Has Consequences (1 Timothy 5:24)

1 Timothy 5:24: “*The sins of some men are known to all (conspicuous), going ahead to judgment; and in the case of certain individuals, they are following after.*”

Verse 24: The certainty of God’s judgment upon sin is clear in this passage. Paul gives additional warnings in:

1. Romans 1—where God gives them over to judgment.
2. 1 Corinthians 11—they are to examine themselves.
3. Hebrews—“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
4. Romans—“The wages of sin is death.”

Wiersbe says: “In other words, the church must carefully investigate the lives of potential leaders to make sure that there is nothing seriously wrong.”

Stephen Covey in *Principle-Centered Leadership* says:

John Wesley’s mother taught her son, ‘Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, takes off your relish for spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of the body over the mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may seem in itself.’

Steve Brown in *Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks* says: “How difficult it is for us to admit our mistakes, and how much easier it would be on us and others if we would.”

I have a friend who drove twenty miles in the wrong direction to keep from admitting to his wife that he had taken a wrong turn. (Well, actually, it wasn’t a friend; it was me.)

Proverbs 28:13: “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

Stephen Charnock in his book, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, says: “He fills hell with His severity, heaven with His glory, His people with His grace.”

David says it well in Psalm 51:10–12: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”

Let’s continue our worship and praise by singing together 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.*”

March 17—Good Works Are Known (1 Timothy 5:25)

1 Timothy 5:25: *“Likewise also, the good works are known to all (conspicuous), and those that are otherwise not able to be hidden.”*

Verse 25: In the previous verse, Paul spoke about sin in our lives, but now he speaks about “good works.” Whereas some sins are conspicuous and others are hidden, likewise are “good works” but they will not be permanently.

Earl Jabay in *The God-Players* says:

Accepting responsibility for what we have done amiss is surely a first and needful step out of the darkness of sin into which we have plunged ourselves. It is deeply disturbing to come to realize that our malfunctioning lives are of our own creation; that our mistakes were our mistakes; that what we are now reaping is only what we have earlier sown. Necessary and beneficial though this is, however, it is only the beginning of a solution to our problems.

Leighton Ford in *Transforming Leadership* says: “There is a prayer written by my friend Lloyd Ogilvie that I often use, praying it quietly just before I speak. It sums up what we have been saying ... recognizing that when we ask and trust him Jesus Christ will indeed communicate through us.”

Lord, here’s my mind, think your thoughts in me. Be my wisdom, knowledge, and insight. Here is my voice. You told me not to worry about what I am to say, but that it would be given me what to say and how to say it. Free me to speak with silence or with words, whichever is needed. Give me your timing and tenderness. Now Lord, here is my body. Release creative affection in my face, my touch, my embrace. And Christ, if there is something I am to do by your indwelling presence, however menial or tough, control my will to do it.

I think it would end our devotional time well this morning to sing verse 4 of “**Cleanse Me**”: “O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee. Send a revival—start the work in me. Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need. For blessings now, O Lord, I humbly plead.”

March 18—Respect Your Employers (1 Timothy 6:1)

1 Timothy 6:1: *“Let all who are under the yoke as slaves consider their own masters worthy of all respect in order that the name of God and the teaching might not be brought into disrepute.”*

Verse 1: Ephesians 6:5 (Phillips): “Slaves, obey your human masters sincerely with a proper sense of respect and responsibility, as service rendered to Christ himself.”

Colossians 3:22 (Phillips): “Slaves, your job is to obey your masters, not with the idea of currying favour, but as a sincere expression of your devotion to God.”

1 Peter 2:18 (Phillips): “You who are servants should submit to your masters with proper respect—not only to the good and kind, but also to the difficult.”

We can and should respect those who are unbelievers. The apostle states the reason for this respect at the end of the verse: “in order that the name of God and the teaching might not be brought into disrepute.”

You can affect “the name of God and the teachings” by not handling yourself correctly as an employee. It is vitally important to treat one’s master (or employer) with “all respect” because this forms the basis for a good witness at work. Handling yourself well at work can be a credit or discredit.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “The matter of the uses and abuses of authority is first and foremost a problem of attitude.”

Social goals should always be subordinate to spiritual values.

1 Samuel 15:22–23: “But Samuel replied: ‘Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.’”

Truett Cathy of Chick-Fil-A said: “To be a good leader, you must be a good follower. That is the very first thing.”

The message in the devotional this morning is that a good leader has learned to live comfortably under authority.

Let’s end our devotional time this morning with that little prayer chorus that solves all the questions about authority. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of “**Make Me a Servant**”: *“Make me a servant, humble and meek; Lord, let me lift up those who are weak. And may the prayer of my heart always be: Make me a servant, make me a servant, Make me a servant today.”*

March 19—Serve Better the Christian Employers (1 Timothy 6:2)

1 Timothy 6:2: *“And those who are having believing masters, let them not be despising them because they are brothers, but rather serve all the better, because those who benefit by their helpful service are believers and beloved.”*

Verse 2: In the previous verse, Paul advised them to treat their masters “worthy of all respect,” even though they were unbelievers. In this verse, he commands them to “not be despising them.”

We need to note the single condition of salvation is stated as “believing.”

Paul gives a negative and positive statement in this verse. Negatively, “let them not be despising them because they are brothers,” but positively, “rather serve all the better, because those who benefit by their helpful service are believers and beloved.”

This word “despising” also occurs in 1 Timothy 4:12: “Let no one look down on you (think little of you) because you are young; but keep on becoming an example of the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in faith, in purity.” We could translate the word “*think lightly or entertain wrong ideas.*”

The apostle then states the reason: “because they are brothers.”

As a result of coming to know Jesus Christ, the master and the slave have now become brothers in God’s family.

“But rather serve all the better.” This is in the present tense. It should be daily and ongoing.

Colossians 3:22–23: “Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.”

“Because those who benefit by their helpful service are believers and beloved.” This is a present participle and could be translated “because those who are benefiting by their helpful service.”

It is good to notice these believing masters are characterized in three ways; (1) brothers, (2) believers, and (3) beloved.

Wiersbe says: “The danger here is that a Christian slave might take advantage of his master because both are saved.”

After washing their feet in the Upper Room, the Lord Jesus said to them in John 13:14–17: “If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.”

Galatians 6:9–10: “And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of that wonderful hymn, “**Make Me a Blessing**”: “*Out in the highways and byways of life, Many are weary and sad; (are weary and sad) Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife Making the sorrowing glad. Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing, Out of my life (out of my life) May Jesus shine; Make me a blessing, O Saviour, I pray, (I pray Thee, my Saviour,) Make me a blessing to someone today.*”

March 20—Stay on Track in Your Teaching (1 Timothy 6:3)

1 Timothy 6:3: “*These things be teaching and exhorting. If anyone is teaching a different doctrine, and is not giving assent to the wholesome sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the teaching which is according to godliness.*”

Verse 3: The apostle continues his commands.

Command #3: “These things be teaching and exhorting.”

“These things” refers to the statements made in the previous two verses. Timothy is told to be teaching and to be exhorting.

Paul now returns to the false teachers: “If anyone is teaching a different doctrine, and is not giving assent to” the following two things, they are guilty of false teaching:

1. The wholesome sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ
2. The teaching which is according to godliness

“And (he) is not giving assent.” This person has a problem with the authority of the Word. “To give assent” would be “*to come to the same conclusions.*” He “is not giving assent” to the correct sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor is he studying the Word.

The word “wholesome” is a medical word meaning “*healthy*” or literally “*the healthy words.*”

These false teachers are stubbornly “teaching a different doctrine,” and they are pridefully “not giving assent to the wholesome sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the teaching which is according to godliness.”

Hudson T. Armerding in *The Heart of Godly Leadership* says:

In summary, the meek person is God-centered rather than self-centered, committed to service rather than success, and investing in the eternal rather than the temporal. And he has become this way because he has responded to our Savior’s invitation: “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me” (Matthew 11:29).

Earl Jabay in *The God-Players* says:

Consider how difficult it is for us to be dependent on the ideas of others. We much prefer self-originated thoughts. Nothing is so precious to us as an idea which we can call our very own. Second-hand thoughts imply a dependency upon others which is a slur upon our intelligence. Quite honestly, we would often prefer to be wrong with our self-originated ideas than right with the ideas of others.

Any teaching that does not result in “godliness” is not good teaching. Truth = Godliness. Truth changes the life! Error does not!

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord Jesus together by singing verse 2 of **"Make Me a Blessing"**: *"Tell the sweet story of Christ and His love; Tell of His pow'r to forgive; (His pow'r to forgive.) Others will trust Him if only you prove True, ev'ry moment you live. Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing, Out of my life (out of my life) May Jesus shine; Make me a blessing, O Saviour, I pray, (I pray Thee, my Saviour,) Make me a blessing to someone today."*

March 21—The False Teacher (1 Timothy 6:4)

1 Timothy 6:4: *"He is conceited, without understanding; but is having a morbid craving for controversy and a dispute about words, from which comes envy, strife, abusive speech (hurting the good name of another), false suspicions."*

Verse 4: In these next two verses, Paul describes the false teachers in five ways:

1. Conceited
2. Craving for controversy and a dispute about words
3. Constant irritation
4. Corrupted in mind
5. Bereft of the truth

First, Paul says: "He is conceited, without understanding." *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* translated the word "conceited" as *"puffed up."* These false teachers have inflated egos and they understand nothing.

Wiersbe says: "A believer who understands the Word will have a burning heart, not a big head."

J. Vernon McGee says: "There are some proud men in the ministry, and they do cause trouble. Pride will always cause trouble, and it is unbecoming in a child of God."

Steve Brown in *Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks* says: One time, just before presidential candidate Al Smith gave a speech, a heckler yelled out, "Smith, tell them all you know, it won't take long." "No," Smith replied, "I'll tell all we both know. It won't take any longer."

"Conceited could be translated *"without understanding."* The conceited person cuts himself off from the two vital sources of understanding: (1) God and (2) fellow believers.

"But (he) is having a morbid craving for controversy and a dispute about words."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out: "A 'morbid craving' is: he is 'sick,' he is 'ailing,' and he is 'diseased with.'"

It is a "morbid craving" for two things:

1. Controversy
2. A dispute about words

“From which comes” could be translated “*from which is coming*” since it is present tense. The five negative fruits from these word battles are:

1. Envy, filled with ill will
2. Strife, unwilling to admit defeat
3. Abusive speech, defiant irreverence
4. False suspicions

The fifth fruit will be discussed in tomorrow morning’s devotional.

Let’s sing together in worship and praise verse 3 of “**Make Me a Blessing**”:

“Give as ‘twas given to you in your need; Love as the Master loved you; (the Master loved you.) Be to the helpless a helper indeed, Unto your mission be true. Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing, Out of my life (out of my life) May Jesus shine; Make me a blessing, O Saviour, I pray, (I pray Thee, my Saviour,) Make me a blessing to someone today.”

March 22—Corrupted in Mind & Bereft of the Truth (1 Timothy 6:5)

1 Timothy 6:5: “*Constant irritation of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, thinking that godliness is a way of gain.*”

Verse 5: In this verse, we have the fifth negative fruit from these word battles:

5. Constant irritation

Their “constant irritation” comes with their persistent collisions with others. They are rubbed the wrong way. Further, they are: (1) corrupted in mind and (2) bereft of the truth.

In verse 4, Paul said they are “without understanding,” now in this verse, he adds they are “bereft of the truth.”

At the close of a service conducted by a famous evangelist, a woman came up to him and was terribly upset. “I’ll never come to hear you again as long as I live,” she said. “I have been insulted and—well, you just stroked the fur the wrong way.” “No,” the evangelist replied calmly. “I didn’t stroke the fur the wrong way. I stroked the fur the right way, but the cat was going in the wrong direction.”

“Corrupted in mind” reminds us of 2 Corinthians 4:4: “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.”

“Bereft of the truth.” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* translates this “who have been robbed of the truth,” and then adds the words “by Satan” in parenthesis.

Luke 8:5, 12: “The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road; and it was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air ate it up. And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.

As we consider the verse from yesterday, Paul describes the false teachers in these five ways:

1. Conceited
2. Craving for controversy and a dispute about words
3. Constant irritation
4. Corrupted in mind
5. Bereft of the truth

Because they are “corrupted in mind” and “bereft of the truth,” they are: “thinking that godliness is a way of gain.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Greed was their core motivation.”

John 2:14–16: “And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, ‘Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a house of merchandise.’”

Richard L. Strauss in *Growing More Like Jesus* says:

We have an obligation to get angry when religious charlatans milk sacrificial contributions from their low-income adherents with every manipulative technique they can devise, while they themselves live in luxurious homes, drive extravagant cars, and fly around the country in their own private jets. Such exploitation infuriated Jesus.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing together verse 1 of one of my favorite prayer hymns, “**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.*”

March 23—Godliness with Contentment (1 Timothy 6:6)

1 Timothy 6:6: “But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

Verse 6: A good leader has the right attitude toward money.

The word “but” forms the contrast to the previous verses 1 Timothy 6:4–5: “He is conceited, without understanding; but is having a morbid craving for controversy and a dispute about words, from which comes envy, strife, abusive speech (hurting the good name of another), false suspicions, constant irritation of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, thinking that godliness is a way of gain.”

“Godliness” does not give financial gain, but it is itself “gain” when accompanied with “contentment.” Anyone pursuing financial gain will never experience real, deep-down contentment.

Hendriksen says: "The truly godly person is not interested in becoming rich. He possesses inner resources which furnish riches far beyond that which earth can offer."

When we think of "godliness," the other possibilities are:

1. Ungodliness with discontentment
2. Godliness with discontentment

There is no such thing as ungodliness with contentment.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "This word 'contentment' communicates 'self-sufficiency,' yet the sufficiency of oneself is due to the sufficiency of God."

2 Corinthians 9:8: "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, in order that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed."

Philippians 4:11: "Not that I am speaking because of need, for I have learned in whatever circumstances I am to be content (self-sufficient)."

Benjamin Franklin said: "A little house well filled, a little field well tilled, and a little wife well willed, are great riches."

Wiersbe says: "The word contentment means 'an inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of outward circumstances.'"

"Godliness with contentment is (a great) gain." It is a good investment.

Philippians 1:21: "For to me, to be living is Christ, and to have died, that would be a gain."

Philippians 3:7: "But whatever things were gain to me, these things I have considered as loss for the sake of Christ."

Let's continue our worship and praise this morning as we sing 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."*

March 24—Nothing In & Nothing Out (1 Timothy 6:7–8)

1 Timothy 6:7: *"For we brought nothing into the world, so that (as a result) we can take nothing out of it."*

1 Timothy 6:8: *"And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."*

Verse 7: This verse begins with the word "for," which indicates a statement of reason for the previous verse: "godliness with contentment is great gain."

The apostle tells us that we came in with nothing and we will go out with nothing.

Someone said: "Life to many people is nothing on both ends and a mess in the middle."

Job 1:20–21: “At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.’”

Ken Davis in *Lighten Up!* shares:

John Ortberg learned this valuable lesson from his grandmother. The genteel woman was a ruthless Monopoly player. She seemed unbeatable. But one day the young Ortberg prevailed. His enthusiastic celebration was interrupted by a lesson he never forgot. He was gloating over his victory, gleefully dragging all the property and money he’d won toward himself. His grandmother said, “Just remember, John: When the game is over, it all goes back in the box. The money, the hotels, the cars—everything goes back in the box.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: “Alone you stood before God when he called you; alone you had to answer that call; alone you had to struggle and pray; and alone you will die and give an account to God.”

Verse 8: Something to eat and something to cover us—food, clothes, and shelter equal contentment.

Richard J. Foster in *Freedom of Simplicity* says: “One of the most profound effects of inward simplicity is the rise of an amazing spirit of contentment.”

Barclay says: “Contentment comes when we escape the servitude to things.”

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together 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!*”

March 25—Focus on Ministry Not Money (1 Timothy 6:9)

1 Timothy 6:9: “*But those who are desiring to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many useless and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.*”

Verse 9: In this verse, we have changed from “we” to “those,” and the word “but” forms the contrast.

“But those who are desiring to be rich.” Proverbs 28:20: “A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.”

“But those who are desiring to be rich fall into”: (1) temptation, (2) a snare, (3) many useless desires, and (4) many harmful desires. This verb is in the present tense.

1. Temptation—attractive and alluring, but alters their course
2. Snare—a trap, used of things that bring danger and death, suddenly and unexpectedly

3. Many useless desires—futility

4. Many harmful desires—destroying health, happiness, and home

“Which plunge men into ruin and destruction.” The word “plunge” is in the present tense and was used of ships. It could be translated literally “*are sinking*.”

Luke 5:7: “And they signaled to their partners in the other boat, for them to come and help them. And they came, and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.”

Brennan Manning in his book, *Lion and Lamb*, says:

The Bethlehem mystery will ever be a scandal to aspiring disciples who seek a triumphant Savior and a prosperity Gospel. The infant Jesus was born in unimpressive circumstances, no one can say exactly where. His parents were of no social significance whatsoever, and His chosen welcoming committee were all turkeys, losers, and dirt-poor shepherds. But in this weakness and poverty the shipwrecked at the stable would come to know the love of God.

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing together 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!”*

March 26—A Root of All the Evils (1 Timothy 6:10)

1 Timothy 6:10: “*For a root of all the evils is the love of money, which certain ones in reaching for it have been led astray from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.*”

Verse 10: The word “root” is in the emphatic position. This verse provides the reason why “those who are desiring to be rich fall” into all of these various dangers: “for a root of all the evils is the love of money.”

The root determines the fruit. They would rather have money than the Master.

Colossians 2:7: “Having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.”

MacArthur says: “Money itself is not evil since it is a gift from God (Deut. 8:18); Paul condemns only the love of it, which is so characteristic of false teachers.”

“For a root of all the evils is the love of money, which [for the love of money] certain ones in reaching for it have been”:

1. Led astray from the faith
2. Pierced themselves with many sorrows

The word “reaching for” could be translated “*stretching oneself, reaching out one’s hand, aspiring to*” or “*striving for*.” This is the result of making money the first priority in their lives.

Matthew 27:3–5: “Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ But they said, ‘What is that to us? See to that yourself!’ And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.”

Being led astray, reminds us of the prodigal son who took the inheritance his father had given him and went to the far country to squander it.

This verse is key to understanding leadership. A good leader has a right attitude toward money.

John Wesley said: “Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can.”

Let’s celebrate our eternal salvation this morning by singing verse 1 of that very familiar old hymn, “**Love Lifted Me**”: “*I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore, Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more; But the Master of the sea, Heard my despairing cry, From the waters lifted me, Now safe am I. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help Love lifted me.*”

March 27—Perseverance Is the Price (1 Timothy 6:11)

1 Timothy 6:11: “*But as for you, O man of God, be fleeing these things; but be going after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.*”

Verse 11: The word “you” is in the emphatic position.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “‘But’ contrasts with some people of verse 10 who chase after riches.”

Wiersbe says: “The phrase ‘but thou’ indicates a contrast between Timothy and the false teachers. They were men of the world, but he was a ‘man of God.’ This special designation was also given to Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and David; so Timothy was in good company.”

Ted W. Engstrom in *The Making of a Christian Leader* says:

Solid, dependable, loyal, strong leadership is one of the most desperate needs in America and in our world today. We see the tragedy of weak men in important places—little men in big jobs. Business, industry, government, labor, education, and the church are all starving for effective leadership. So today, perhaps more than ever before, there is such a need for leadership and teamwork to cope with the needs.

“But as for you, O man of God, be fleeing these things.” This is a present imperative for daily practice.

Hiebert says: “‘Be ever fleeing,’ never let them catch you; the margin of safety can never be too great.”

“These things” equal greed plus the accumulation of wealth, the love of money and its attendant evils.

“But [in contrast] be going after [continually seeking]” these six things:

1. Righteousness—personal integrity
2. Godliness—the result of a relationship that continually pursues what pleases Him
3. Faith—an ever-deepening trust in our Father
4. Love—the agape love that is produced by the Spirit of God
5. Patience—possibly better translated “perseverance,” an active state of maintaining victory under stress
6. Gentleness—the virtue by which a man rightly treats his fellow man and regards himself

These characteristics should be our goal and focus! They are worthwhile. We should seek out to cultivate these virtues in our spiritual life. They delight the heart of God.

David Jeremiah says: “Faith that throws in the towel today won’t have one to wave in victory tomorrow.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of “**Love Lifted Me**”: *“All my heart to Him I give, Ever to Him I’ll cling, In His blessed presence live, Ever His praises sing, Love so mighty and so true Merits my soul’s best songs; Faithful, loving service, too, To Him belongs. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help Love lifted me.”*

March 28—Fight the Good Fight (1 Timothy 6:12)

1 Timothy 6:12: *“Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and confessed the good confession before many witnesses.”*

Verse 28: Paul gives a series of three present imperatives:

1. Be fleeing these things
2. Be going after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness
3. Fight the good fight of faith

Timothy has already been following these imperatives, but the apostle encourages him to continue. When we put these together, Paul tells Timothy to (1) keep on fleeing, (2) keep on following after, and (3) keep on fighting.

Jeanne Sutton said: “We drench ourselves with the grace of exhaustion and the ecstasy of knowing we are worthy to receive it.”

It is the runner who puts the last ounce of effort into the race who feels the glorious satisfaction of having given everything to the moment.

Paul urges Timothy to keep on fighting and hanging in there!

“Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and confessed the good confession before many witnesses.” We are in a war on three fronts: (1) the world, (2) the flesh, and (3) the devil.

This is the fourth command in these two verses. It is in the aorist tense while the other three are in the present tense. We could translate this: “Get a grip on the eternal life to which you were called and confessed the good confession before many witnesses.”

David makes the good confession in the Valley of Elah to Saul. He says in 1 Samuel 17:37: “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of “**Love Lifted Me**”: *“Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves; He will lift you by His love Out of the angry waves. He’s the Master of the sea, Billows His will obey; He your Saviour wants to be, Be saved today. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help Love lifted me.”*

March 29—A Charge to Keep (1 Timothy 6:13–14)

1 Timothy 6:13: *“I am giving you a charge in the presence of God, who causes all things to live, and Christ Jesus, the one who in His testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession.”*

1 Timothy 6:14: *“To keep the principles stainless, above reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Verse 13: “I am giving you a charge in the presence of God, who causes all things to live.” God is the source and the sustainer of life.

“And Christ Jesus, the One who in His testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession.” 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 18:37: “Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘So You are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’”

Verse 14: In this verse, we come to the content of Paul’s charge to young Timothy. It is: “To keep the principles stainless, above reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It is believed Paul made reference to the whole realm of the Christian life in the words “the principles.”

Stephen Covey in his book, *Principle-Centered Leadership*, says: “The ethic of the principle-centered leader is expressed well in the following plea: ‘From

the cowardice that is afraid of new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truth, from the arrogance that thinks it has all truth, O God of Truth deliver us.”

The apostle charges Timothy: “to keep the principles stainless, above reproach,” and keep on doing this: “until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” To watch over, guard and keep “the principles” stainless, spotless, without blemish, and above reproach.

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord by 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.”*

March 30—The Coming Is On Schedule (1 Timothy 6:15–16)

1 Timothy 6:15: *“Which in His own time He shall show forth—the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of those who are reigning as kings and Lord of those who are ruling as lords.”*

1 Timothy 6:16: *“Who alone is having immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man has ever seen nor is able to see, to whom be honor and power forever, Amen.”*

Verse 15: “Which in His own time” reminds us of Ecclesiastes 3:11: “He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”

“Which in His own time He shall show forth—the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of those who are reigning as kings and Lord of those who are ruling as lords.” Make no mistake. Jesus Christ is the Supreme Sovereign.

Revelation 19:16: “And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.’”

Philippians 2:9–11: “Therefore also God exalted Him to the highest place, and graciously bestowed upon Him the name which is above every name, in order that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess (plainly and openly agree) that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Verse 16: In the previous verse, the focus is on the Son, our Savior, but the focus is on the Father in this verse.

There are three things said about the Father:

1. Immortal
2. Inscrutable (inhabiting light, unapproachable)
3. Invisible

He is distinct from all other kings. He is immortal, but all other kings die.
John 11:25–26: “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’”

“Who alone is having immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light.” The word translated “unapproachable” is only here in the New Testament. In Acts 9, we learn Paul was very much aware of this great light. He was struck down by it on the road to Damascus at the point of his own conversion.

Paul describes the Father:

1. Who alone is having immortality
2. Dwelling in unapproachable light
3. Whom no man has ever seen nor is able to see

The apostle concludes his doxology: “to whom be honor and power forever. Amen.”

Let’s sing together in worship and praise 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.”

March 31—A Word to the Wealthy (1 Timothy 6:17)

1 Timothy 6:17: *“To those who are wealthy in the present age (now generation), charge them not to be roud, neither to have, their hope set upon the uncertainty of wealth, but upon God the one who is continually providing us all things abundantly for [our] enjoyment.”*

Verse 17: “To those who are wealthy in the present age (now generation), charge them.” This present imperative applies to all of us. We would be rich in Timothy’s congregation.

“Not to be proud.” Do not be arrogant or feeling entitled. The word translated “proud” or “haughty” is used only here and in Romans 11:20: “Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, and you stand only by your faith. Stop being conceited, but be fearing.”

Paul has given the wealthy two charges, both negative commands:

1. Not to be proud
2. Neither to have their hope set upon the uncertainty of wealth (which can be fleeting)

Job is a graphic illustration of the uncertainty of wealth. In just a few hours, everything was gone—homes, family, and business.

Proverbs 23:5: “Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.”

“But upon God the one who is continually providing us all things abundantly for [our] enjoyment.” We must choose between the temporal or the eternal.

Romans 15:13: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may be abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

The focus in this passage is upon God. He is “the one who is continually providing us all things.”

Philippians 4:19: And my God shall fill to the full your every need according to His riches (wealth) in glory in Christ Jesus.”

This wonderful God of ours is “the one who is continually providing us all things abundantly.” His reason: “for (our) enjoyment.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of “**Faith Is the Victory**”: *“To him that overcomes the foe, White raiment shall be giv’n; Before the angels he shall know His name confessed in Heav’n. Then onward from the hills of light, Our hearts with love aflame, We’ll vanquish all the hosts of night, In Jesus, conquering name. Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory! O, glorious victory, That overcomes the world.”*

APRIL

April 1—Wealthy in Good Works (1 Timothy 6:18)

1 Timothy 6:18: *“To be doing good, to be wealthy in good works, to be generous, sharers with others.”*

Verse 18: In this verse and the next, Paul lays out a four-fold strategy for those who find themselves materially wealthy in this present life. He advises how they can be faithful in this stewardship and also their responsibility in view of their blessings:

1. Doing good
2. Wealthy in good works
3. Generous sharing with others
4. Laying away for themselves a good foundation with a view to the future

2 Corinthians 6:10: “As sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.”

There are two words occurring only here in the New Testament: (1) generous and (2) the word we have translated “sharers with other.” It is the picture of someone who is liberal and generous in giving of what they have.

I found this little statement on the top of a letter that was wrapped around a generous gift to the ministry:

WHAT THE HEART GIVES AWAY IS NEVER GONE;
IT IS KEPT IN THE HEARTS OF OTHERS.

Winston Churchill says: “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

Let’s sing together in worship and praise this morning verses 1 and 2 of **“Praise the Saviour, Ye Who Know Him!”**: *“Praise the Savior, ye who know Him! Who can tell how much we owe Him? Gladly let us render to Him All we are and have. Jesus is the Name that charms us; He for conflict fits and arms us; Nothing moves and nothing harms us While we trust in Him.”*

April 2—Laying Away for the Future (1 Timothy 6:19)

1 Timothy 6:19: *“Laying away for themselves a good foundation with a view to the future, in order that they may lay hold of that which is truly life.”*

Verse 19: This verse gives us the fourth and final statement of stewardship for wealthy Christians. The first three were seen in the previous verse:

1. Doing good
2. Wealthy in good works
3. Generous sharing with others

Now, in this verse:

4. Laying away for themselves a good foundation with a view to the future

Like the words “generous” and “sharers with others” in the previous verse, the word for “laying away” only occurs in this verse.

Several of the phrases that occur remind us of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:19–21: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

“Laying away for themselves a good foundation with a view to the future.” Matthew 7:24–28 (Phillips): “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a sensible man who builds his house on the rock. Down came the rain and up came the floods, while the winds blew and roared upon that house—and it did not fall because its foundations were on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not follow them can be compared with a foolish man who built his house on sand. Down came

the rain and up came the floods, while the winds blew and battered that house till it collapsed, and fell with a great crash.”

Barclay says: “And they are told that such wise use of wealth will build for them a good foundation in the world to come. As someone put it: ‘What I kept, I lost; what I gave I have.’”

Jim Elliott said: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”

The purpose behind these four stewardship statements is seen in the last part of this verse. All is “in order that they may lay hold of that which is truly life.” They are to be “laying away” in the first part of this verse, in order that they may “lay hold” in the latter part of the verse.

Wiersbe says: “Riches can lure a person into a make-believe world of shallow pleasure. But riches plus God’s will can introduce a person to life that is real and ministry that is lasting.”

Real and true life is not in material wealth.

If we can remember and recognize what a proper Christian attitude ought to be toward material things, we will keep our principles and priorities straight.

When we fulfill this four-fold strategy, then we are those who are “laying hold of that which is truly life.”

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 3 and 4 of “**Praise the Saviour, Ye Who Know Him!**”: “*Trust in Him, ye saints, forever; He is faithful, changing never; Neither force nor guile can sever Those He loves from Him. Keep us, Lord, O keep us cleaving To Thyself, and still Believing, Till the hour of receiving Promised joys with Thee.*”

April 3—Guard the Deposit (1 Timothy 6:20–21)

1 Timothy 6:20: “*O Timothy, guard the deposit, turning away from profane and empty talk and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.*”

1 Timothy 6:21: “*Which certain ones announcing, missed the mark concerning the faith. Grace be with you all.*”

Verse 20: Paul has a final two-fold charge for his young understudy Timothy: (1) guard the deposit and (2) turn away from three things:

1. Profane talk
2. Empty talk
3. Contradictions

“O Timothy, guard the deposit.” The apostle is speaking of the deposit of the truth. He is encouraging Timothy to live up to his name which means “*to honor God.*”

The Greek words in this verse communicate: (1) empty talk, (2) godless chatter, and (3) contemporary jargon. The word for “contradictions” is only

used here. It can mean “opposition” or “objection.”

The words translated “falsely called” are also only used here, meaning “*falsely bearing a name which is knowledge.*”

A good leader sticks by his principles and priorities. Daniel 1:8: “But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.” Paul is encouraging Timothy to remain faithful.

On the dashboard of every life, there are four red lights: (1) spiritual, (2) emotional, (3) physical, and (4) mental. When any one or all of these lights come on, you are in danger of surrendering principles and priorities to satisfy the need of the moment. Any one of them can be your undoing.

How careful we must be to keep a balance in our lives that will glorify God in our leadership.

Verse 21: Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:6: “From which things certain ones, having missed the mark, have turned away to fruitless discussions.”

Many folks are missing the mark today. Later in 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul shares his struggles with other disciples: “For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.”

With this final phrase, the apostle uses the plural: “Grace be with you all.” This reveals that he wrote for the benefit of others as well as for Timothy.

At the conclusion of this passage of 1 Timothy, we must ask the question: “Are we willing to allow our hearts to be examined with regard to our principles and priorities?”

Haggai 1:5: “Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Give careful thought to your ways.’”

Lamentations 3:40: “Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.”

It seems most appropriate this morning to sing that wonderful prayer hymn. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of “**I Need Thee Every Hour**”: “*I need Thee ev’ry hour, Most Gracious Lord; No tender voice like Thine can peace afford. I need Thee, O, I need Thee; Ev’ry hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee.*”

April 4—The Credentials (2 Timothy 1:1–2)

2 Timothy 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.”

2 Timothy 1:2: “To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, (and) peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Verse 1: It is going to be our privilege and pleasure to study the apostle

Paul's final letter before his execution. He had his day in court and the outcome must have been the death sentence. He is simply waiting for this sentence to be carried out. The apostle is incarcerated in a dark, damp prison cell that is nothing more than a pit in the ground with a cover over the top.

What an incredible life! What a fruitful, faithful, follower of our Lord! We wonder how this beloved apostle, this great servant of Jesus Christ going to handle this death-sentence from the courts.

Paul begins the letter in his typical manner, naming the writer and his title: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus." I believe there are two reasons Paul used this title in a personal letter:

1. This is a serious matter.
2. He recognized it would reach a wider audience than Timothy.

There are two reasons why he is an apostle: (1) the will of God and (2) the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus. He is going to be executed, but he has not lost confidence in the will of God. There is tremendous fulfillment, excitement and joy in letting God fulfill His plan and purpose in our lives.

It is good to observe that physical death in no way affects eternal life.

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God according to the promise of life that [promise of life] is in Christ Jesus." It isn't found anywhere else.

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.'"

Verse 2: "To Timothy, my beloved child." Friendship is always important, but even more so late in the game.

In this verse, Paul desires three things for young Timothy: (1) grace, (2) mercy, and (3) peace. This comes from "God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord." These precious gifts are only available to those who are:

1. Walking in the will of God
2. Proclaiming by life and lip the promise of life

Hughes says: "'Grace' to the undeserving, 'mercy' to the helpless, and 'peace' to the restless. How sweet it was—and how soothing to Timothy's soul."

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 2 of **"I Need Thee Every Hour"**: *"I need Thee ev'ry hour, Stay Thou near by; Temptations lose their pow'r When Thou art nigh. I need Thee, O, I need Thee; Ev'ry hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee."*

April 5—Filled With Gratitude (2 Timothy 1:3)

2 Timothy 1:3: *"I am feeling grateful to God, whom I am serving with a pure conscience, the way my forefathers did, as unceasingly I am having you on my mind in my prayers night and day."*

Verse 3: What an incredible statement! “I am feeling grateful to God. Even in these most difficult circumstances that are bringing about the conclusion of his life, the apostle Paul is still focusing on the thankful heart.

Never lose your attitude of gratitude! The only way to keep that attitude is by focusing on the following: (1) *sovereignty*, (2) *submission*, and (3) *satisfaction*.

God is *sovereign*. It is our responsibility to be *submissive* to His plan and purpose. Ultimately, it will bring maximum *satisfaction*.

Three things stand out in this verse about the apostle:

1. He is thankful—feeling grateful to God for the privilege of serving Him as long as life shall last.
2. He is serving with a pure conscience, the way his forefathers did. Many times in his life, Paul’s motives were called into question. Each time, he called on God to witness he was genuine and his motives were above board.

Hughes says:

The old warrior is chained in a dripping, winter-cold dungeon awaiting the executioner’s axe, and as he surveys his life—his conversion and then the kaleidoscope of sermons preached, ship-wrecks, confrontations, deliverances, stonings, beatings, and victories—his conscience is absolutely clear. There is no guilt, no weight of unresolved sins, nothing to confess. He has been true to the gospel and his calling. He was not sinless, but he was blameless, and he was faithful.

Hughes says further: “What a way to end life—thankful, with a ‘clear conscience,’ engaged in perpetual prayer! And what a motivating example to Timothy!”

Lord, help me to maintain a continual contentedness under Your sovereign hand. Enable me to address the issues in my life that need to be addressed, that I might depart this life with a pure conscience.

3. He is praying night and day.

Paul’s fellowship and communion with God was witnessed as he poured into the ear of God every longing of his heart.

The apostle wants Timothy to know he was on his mind and in his prayers. What is your response when your time left on earth is limited? Paul advises:

1. Have an *attitude* of gratitude
2. *Address* issues in your life
3. *Appeal* to God in prayer

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of **“I Need Thee Every Hour”**: *“I need Thee ev’ry hour, In joy or pain; Come quickly and abide, Or life is in vain. I need Thee, O, I need Thee; Ev’ry hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee.”*

April 6—Longing to See You (2 Timothy 1:4)

2 Timothy 1:4: “*Greatly longing to see you, when I recall to mind your tears, in order that I may be filled with joy.*”

Verse 4: “Greatly longing” describes the feelings you have when you are away from the one(s) you love. Paul expresses the yearning of his heart. He longs to see Timothy once again. His beloved physician, Luke, is the only one who is with him now. All of his other friends are either serving the Lord somewhere in the surrounding cities or have deserted him. Because he had such a close relationship with Timothy, he knew it would be a great encouragement to his faith to see Timothy once more.

In the apostle’s loneliness and desire to see his beloved friend, Paul remembers the last time they were together and Timothy’s “tears” over their parting. These “tears” were a comfort to Paul. They expressed the deep love that Timothy had for him.

The purpose for remembering this last occasion is seen in the last phrase of the verse: “in order that I may be filled with joy.” Remembering past good times helps us when we are suffering.

Paul’s joy in Jesus Christ could not be extinguished by external circumstances. His joy was the same as the Savior’s the night before He went to the cross. We read in John 15:11 (KJV): “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

Fenelon in *The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics* says:

What I want for you is the calmness of heart that comes from sitting before God with a heart full of love for Him. Don’t become preoccupied with outward matters. Take care of your affairs in due season with a calm, quiet attention. You will accomplish more by quietly working in the presence of God than by the restless activity that comes from your old nature.

This morning, let’s worship and praise our Savior by singing verse 4 of **“I Need Thee Every Hour”**: “*I need Thee ev’ry hour, Most Holy One; O make me Thine indeed, Thou blessed Son. I need Thee, O, I need Thee; Ev’ry hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee.*”

April 7—Faith in the Family (2 Timothy 1:5)

2 Timothy 1:5: “*Having been reminded of the genuine faith which is in you, which lived first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I have been convinced that (it is) in you as well.*”

Verse 5: Paul used the word “recall” in the previous verse and “reminded” in this verse. He spoke of his “forefathers” in verse 3. Now he speaks of Timothy’s family in this verse.

Timothy's family background reminds me of Psalm 71:17–18: "Since my youth, O God, You have taught me, and to this day I declare Your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare Your power to the next generation, Your might to all who are to come."

The key phrase is: "having been reminded of the genuine faith which is in you." It is "faith" free from insincerity. He is the real deal! His *heart*, his *head*, and his *hands* are all singing the same tune!

James 3:17: "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy."

The apostle has seen enough of Timothy's life and ministry to conclude: "I have been convinced that (it is) in you as well." Paul knows the "faith" of Timothy is genuine and sincere. What you see on the outside is what you find on the inside!

The "faith" Paul sees in Timothy is the same faith which first lived in Timothy's "grandmother, Lois" and "[his] mother, Eunice." What a joy it must be to young Timothy to know his spiritual father has confidence that his faith is "genuine."

What kind of a religious legacy are you leaving? Are you starting a new one or carrying one on? The devil rejoices more over one hypocrite than over ninety-nine real sinners.

I find myself praying every day for our 12 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

THE HEIGHTS BY GREAT MEN REACHED AND KEPT
WERE NOT ATTAINED BY SUDDEN FLIGHT,
BUT THEY, WHILE THEIR COMPANIONS SLEPT,
WERE TOILING UPWARD IN THE NIGHT.

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Please join me in worship and praise singing verse 1 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.*"

April 8—Stirring Up the Flame (2 Timothy 1:6)

2 Timothy 1:6: "*And for this reason I am reminding you to be stirring up the flame of the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*"

Verse 6: "And for this reason." Paul is reminding in this verse for the reason

in the previous verse: “I have been convinced that [this genuine faith is] in you as well.” He reminds Timothy: “to be stirring up the flame of the gift of God.”

This present tense encourages us to keep stirring up the flame and don’t let it die down!

Wiersbe says: “Timothy did not need any new spiritual ingredients in his life; all he had to do was ‘stir up’ what he already had.”

Charles Spurgeon says:

And this brings us, secondly, to the consideration of—how we are to stir up our gifts.

First, we should do it by examination to see what gifts we really have. There should be an overhauling of all our stores to see what we have of capital entrusted to our stewardship. May I ask you for a minute to sit quietly and take stock of all God has given you.

At the same time of our salvation, we also receive a gift or gifts for service. These are God-given abilities.

Romans 12:11 (Phillips): “Let us not allow slackness to spoil our work and let us keep the fires of the spirit burning, as we do our work for God.”

Paul tells Timothy to *light it up, lay it on* and *leave a legacy*.

Let’s take a moment to meditate on the question: What causes burn-out? What causes the flame to die down and to be nearly lost in the smoldering ashes? I believe it is four things:

1. Sin
2. Satan
3. Stress (that comes from focusing more on material things than spiritual things)
4. Sorrow or tragedy (that comes into our lives)

How do we stir up the flame? I have listed six suggestions:

1. Deal with sin and compromise
2. Return to Calvary
3. Pursue a pure conscience
4. Focus on His Holiness
5. Surrender to His Sovereignty
6. Be filled with the Spirit

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord with great joy by singing verse 2 of “**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.”*

April 9—God Provides the Resources (2 Timothy 1:7)

2 Timothy 1:7: “For God did not give to us a spirit of fearfulness (cowardice) but of power and of love and of self-discipline (good judgment).”

Verse 7: This verse provides the reason Paul commanded Timothy “to be stirring up the flame of the gift of God” in the previous verse. Timothy was naturally a timid individual which made him fearful of what might come his way.

This verse has one negative and three positive phrases. Negatively, “God did not give us a spirit of fearfulness (cowardice),” but positively “of power, and of love and of self-discipline (good judgment).”

MacArthur says: “When we are vacillating and apprehensive, we can be sure it is because our focus is on ourselves and our own human resources rather than on the Lord and His available divine resources.”

Acts 4:31: “And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”

In contrast to this “spirit of fearfulness,” we, as believers, have been given three characteristics of the “gift” of the Holy Spirit:

1. Spirit of Power

Acts 1:8 (KJV): “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”

2. Love

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.”

2 Corinthians 5:14: “For the love of Christ is controlling us, bringing us to this conclusion, that one died for all, therefore all died.”

3. Self-discipline (good judgment)

Barclay says: “[This word] is the control of oneself in the face of panic or of passion.”

LIVES OF GREAT MEN ALL REMIND US
WE CAN MAKE OUR LIVES SUBLIME,
AND, DEPARTING, LEAVE BEHIND US
FOOTPRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME.
LET US, THEN, BE UP AND DOING,
WITH A HEART FOR ANY FATE;

STILL ACHIEVING, STILL PURSUING,
LEARN TO LABOR AND TO WAIT.
—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

W.H.H. Aitken said: “Lord, take my lips and speak through them; take my mind and think through it; take my heart and set it on fire.”

Randy Alcorn in his book, *In Light of Eternity: Perspectives on Heaven*, says: “Your death will be like the final buzzer at a basketball game. No shots taken thereafter will count. If you’ve failed to use your money and possessions and time and talent and energies for eternity, then you’ve failed—period.”

At your death, the autobiography you’ve written with the pen of faith and the ink of words will go into eternity unedited, to be seen and read “as is” by angels, the redeemed, and God himself.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 3 of **“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.”*

April 10—Suffering for the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:8)

2 Timothy 1:8: *“Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony borne by our Lord, nor of me His prisoner but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.”*

Verse 8: The word “therefore” points us back to the Spirit’s provision in the previous verse: “of power and of love and of self-discipline (good judgment or sound mind)” and instructs “do not be ashamed.” This provides everything you need.

In light of what Paul said in the previous verse, he now commands Timothy not to be “ashamed” of the following: (1) the testimony borne by our Lord and (2) Paul, His prisoner.

If Timothy was afraid of what might happen to him if he were outspoken on these issues or afraid of what has happened to Paul, his fear might cause him to:

1. Be still when he should speak
2. Be careful when he should be courageous and speak his convictions

I’m sure Timothy reflected upon the consequences of the witness of the Lord Jesus who suffered Calvary for his stand. Now, Paul is suffering his life for his testimony.

The word “ashamed” is a key word in this passage. Mark 8:38: “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation,

the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

In Romans 1:16, Paul said: “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.”

Lord, help me maintain a continual contentedness under Your sovereign hand.

WHEN YOU’RE HEADING DOWN A LONG ROAD WITH A HEAVY LOAD,
DON’T LOOK BACK, AND DON’T LOOK TOO FAR AHEAD,
JUST KEEP TAKING IT A STEP AT A TIME AND YOU’LL GET THERE.

—TEXAS BIX BENDER

Both Peter and Paul emphasize that suffering is a part of the Christian experience.

I have been reading *The Valley of Vision*, which is a collection of Puritan prayers in my morning devotional time. This morning, I read these words: “If Thou shouldst give me choice to live in pleasure and keep my sins or to have them burn away with trial, give me sanctified affliction.”

“But join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.”

Philippians 4:13: “I am having strength for all things in the One who is making me strong.”

Barclay says: “The gospel was, and is, power, power to conquer self, power to master circumstances, power to go on living when life is unlivable, power to be a Christian when being a Christian looks impossible.”

Fenelon in *Let Go* says: “You have great need of the power of the Holy Spirit, both to sustain you in this time of trouble, and also to restrain you in your natural desire to find a way out.”

Jay Carty in *Sport Shorts Calendar* says: “Sweat is the cologne of accomplishment.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning with my all-time favorite hymn. Please join me in singing verse 1 of “**Day by Day**”: “*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.*”

April 11—A Holy Calling (2 Timothy 1:9)

2 Timothy 1:9: “*The one who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.*”

Verse 9: Paul reminds Timothy of the One whom he would be ashamed if he does not follow this admonition. It is Jesus Christ who first saved us from our sins and then “called us with a holy calling” into His service.

Wiersbe says: “We are part of a great eternal plan that God determined ‘before the world began.’ God knows the end from the beginning. He has purposes for His people to accomplish for His glory. Suffering is a part of His plan. Jesus Christ suffered in the will of God here on earth, and all those who trust in him will also suffer.”

Charles Spurgeon says: “If you are to be saved, it must be an act of sovereign grace.”

Let’s meditate for a few moments on the first phrase: “the One who saved us and called us with a holy calling.” If you are saved eternally, it was accomplished by someone else.

He is “the one who saved us” in response to our faith. Then, He “called us with a holy calling.” 1 Peter 1:15–16: “But according to the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

“Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.” We have a negative and positive approach in this verse. Negatively, “not according to our works,” but in contrast positively, “according to His own purpose and grace.” His “purpose” is to save. It is accomplished by His “grace.”

Salvation cannot be attained by good works!

“Which [referring to His own purpose and grace] was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.” How could we have anything to do with our eternal salvation when the whole plan was crafted before the foundation of the world?

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing 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.”*

April 12—The Appearing of Our Savior (2 Timothy 1:10)

2 Timothy 1:10: *“But now has been made known through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who on the one hand broke the power of death and on the other brought to light, life and immortality through the gospel.”*

Verse 10: In the previous verse, Paul spoke of the past. In this verse, he speaks of the future.

“But now has been made known through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus.”

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.”

God became man in the incarnation. Jesus Christ came into the world and lived the perfect, sinless life. As the Lamb of God, He became sin for us. He who knew no sin so that we might be made righteousness of God in Him.

Paul describes for us the work of Christ in this verse:

1. Who on the one hand broke the power of death
2. On the other [hand] brought to light, life and immortality through the gospel

As Paul faces the penalty of death, this is a wonderful comfort. He knows that death no longer has its power and hold upon mankind because of the death of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said to Martha in John 11:25–26: “I am the resurrection, and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

In these last three verses, Paul deeply admonishes Timothy:

1. Do not be ashamed of the testimony borne by our Lord
2. Understand Jesus has taken away the power of life and death and brought to light, life and immortality

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing 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.”*

April 13—Paul’s Appointment (2 Timothy 1:11)

2 Timothy 1:11: *“For which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.”*

Verse 11: This verse is a summary of Paul’s ministry with the three words: (1) preacher (or could be translated “herald”), (2) apostle, and (3) teacher.

The good news of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ did not make Paul content to have eternal life. Instead, it motivated him to service, wearing himself out in every way to share the message of this good news with every person.

2 Corinthians 4:7–10 (Phillips): “This priceless treasure we hold, so to speak, in a common earthenware jar—to show that the splendid power of it belongs to God and not to us. 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.

Consider these three words:

1. Herald—one who brought the announcement from the king. Like wise, Paul was a herald in this sense, bringing a message from the King of kings.
2. Apostle—a sent one. Paul was sent on a mission.
3. Teacher—one who conveys the truth to others so they may pass it on. It is a teacher's responsibility to bring the truth to light and make it clear. This may have been Paul's most important role.

We read in verse 10: "Christ Jesus ... brought to light, life and immortality, through the gospel."

Charles Spurgeon said: "If saints are immortal until their work on earth is done, some saints are going to be around for quite some time."

John Eldredge in *The Journey of Desire: Searching for the Life We've Only Dreamed Of* says: "Sanctified resignation has become the new abiding place of contemporary Christians."

Mike Bickle in his book, *Passion for Jesus: Growing in Extravagant Love for God*, says: "I have to remind myself that I am not called to be a spiritual politician. I am called to be a man filled with holy passion and extravagant affection for Jesus."

Let's join together in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of "**He Is Able to Deliver Thee**": "*'Tis the grandest theme thro' the ages rung; 'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue; 'Tis the grandest theme that the world e'er sung, 'Our God is able to deliver thee.' He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Tho' by sin opprest, Go to Him for rest: 'Our God is able to deliver thee.'*"

April 14—Paul's Testimony (2 Timothy 1:12)

2 Timothy 1:12: "*For this reason, I am also suffering these things, But I am not ashamed, for I am knowing whom I have believed and I have been convinced that He is able to guard that which has been entrusted to Him until that day.*"

Verse 12: The words "for this reason" point back to Paul's statement in the previous verse: "I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher."

It is for this reason: "I am also suffering these things."

Paul gives a personal testimony: "I am not ashamed." These are probably similar statements as he made during his grand jury hearing that resulted in the death penalty.

"For I am knowing whom I have believed and I have been convinced that He is able to guard that which has been entrusted to Him until that day."

The apostle is “suffering,” but “not ashamed” for these two reasons given at the end of the verse:

1. I am knowing whom I have believed.

It is not “what” but “whom” I have believed, referring to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. I have been convinced that He is able to guard that which has been entrusted to Him until that day.

The word “entrusted” is in the perfect tense. It includes the past, present and the future.

Wiersbe says: “Note his emphasis on the person of Christ: ‘I know whom I have believed.’ Salvation is not the result of believing certain doctrines, though doctrines are important. A sinner is saved because he believes in a Person—Jesus Christ the Saviour.”

Paul has been faithful in his service to the Lord. He knew the deposit of this life and service into the hands of God would be safekeeping against that day.

The apostle is proud to be a servant of the Lord. He has been honored to serve Him!

As Paul looks to the past: “I am knowing whom I have believed,” and still believes in the present. Then, as he looks to the future: “I have been convinced that He is able to guard that which has been entrusted to Him until that day.”

Tony Evans in *The Perfect Christian: How Sinners Like Us Can Be More Like Jesus* says: “When trials come, instead of getting mad, get glad because you know that God is up to something good in your life.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 2 and 3 of **“He Is Able to Deliver Thee”**: *“’Tis the grandest theme in the earth or main; ’Tis the grandest theme for a mortal strain; ’Tis the grandest theme, tell the world again, ’Our God is able to deliver thee.’ ’Tis the grandest theme, let the tidings roll, To the guilty heart, to the sinful soul; Look to God in faith, He will make thee whole, ’Our God is able to deliver thee.’ He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Tho’ by sin opprest, Go to Him for rest: ’Our God is able to deliver thee.’”*

April 15—Holding Fast (2 Timothy 1:13)

2 Timothy 1:13: *“Be holding fast the standard of sound words which you heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”*

Verse 13: Paul encourages Timothy to do whatever is needed to get the job done. This is one of two commands Paul gives Timothy in verses 13 and 14. The first command is in the present tense, an ongoing command. This instruction is one of the necessary steps each of us must take in order to finish well.

Command #1: Be holding fast the standard of sound words.

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.”

1 Corinthians 16:13–14: “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.”

Texas Bix Bender in *Don't Dig Under the Outhouse & Other Cowboy Commandments* says: “Stand up straight and give folks something to look at.”

Someone said: “Courage is an outgrowth of strong conviction and an evidence of good character.”

Wiersbe says of this passage: “Throughout the centuries God’s work has been done by men and women who stand steadfast in their hours of trial. It would have been convenient for them to have compromised, but they stood firm. Paul was such a man, and he encouraged Timothy to follow his example.”

“Be holding fast the standard of sound words.” The “sound words” are “*healthy*” or “*health-giving*” words.

Quinn and Wacker paraphrase this verse: “With that faith and charity which are yours in Christ Jesus, stick to the model of the wholesome words that you heard from me.”

MacArthur says: “Courage in Christian ministry, as well as in Christian living in general, is not possible apart from strong biblical convictions.”

“Be holding fast.” Don’t whine, waver, whimper or walk away. Ride out the hurricane or tornado. Hang tough!

The tides of the culture are strong, but we are anchored to the rock!

Write out in ten words or less your main objective or goal in life. The words I wrote out are: I want to be a man that God can use.

Knight says: “Paul is saying very plainly that the attitudes and actions of ‘faith’ and ‘love’ found in Christ are essential to one who is to preserve the apostolic standard.”

Paul has challenged Timothy to:

1. Stir up the flame of the gift of God—verse 6
2. Not be ashamed—verse 8
3. Be holding fast the standard of sound words—verse 13

“In faith and love.”

Fenelon says: “Learn to be lenient with the less important matters, but maintain your firmness over that which is essential.”

Remember that true firmness is gentle, humble and calm. A sharp tongue, a proud heart and an iron hand have no place in God’s work.

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord by singing verse 1 of that great old hymn, “**Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah**”: “*Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim thro’ this barren land; I am weak, but Thou art mighty, Hold*

me with Thy pow'rful hand; Bread of Heaven, Feed me till I want no more; Bread of Heaven, Feed me till I want no more."

April 16—Guard the Precious Deposit (2 Timothy 1:14)

2 Timothy 1:14: *"Guard the precious deposit which has been entrusted to you through the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in us."*

Verse 14: In the previous verse, we had the first command: "Be holding fast the standard of sound words." In this verse, we have the second command.

Command #2: Guard the precious deposit.

Whereas we had "Christ Jesus" in the previous verse, we have "the Holy Spirit" in this verse.

The command "guard the precious deposit" refers to the gospel or the "standard of sound words" in verse 13. This good news has been "entrusted" to Timothy: "through the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in us."

Paul wisely adds "through the Holy Spirit" to his command to "guard the precious deposit." He knows Timothy could not guard this deposit on his own. "Through the [power of] the Holy Spirit" all things are possible.

I love the motto of the French Foreign Legion: "If I falter, push me on. If I stumble, pick me up. If I retreat, shoot me."

John Chrysostom says: "We should keep our mind fixed on one point only; how we may do what is best with the resources we have been given."

Acts 20:24 (Phillips): "But frankly I do not consider my own life valuable to me so long as I can finish my course and complete the ministry which the Lord Jesus has given me in declaring the good news of the grace of God."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of **"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"**: *"Open now the crystal fountain, Whence the healing waters flow; Let the fiery, cloudy pillar Lead me all my journey thro'; Strong Deliv'rer, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield; Strong Deliv'rer, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield."*

April 17—The Opposition (2 Timothy 1:15)

2 Timothy 1:15: *"You are knowing this, that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes."*

Verse 15: In this verse, Paul gives the reason for his concern about Timothy's faithfulness in guarding the message he was given. He also gives the reason why he commanded: "be holding fast the standard of sound words." The reason is: "all who are in Asia turned away from me."

Among these were two men: "Phygellus and Hermogenes." There are many people who start out on fire for the Lord, but then sizzle down to a slow burn.

In the remainder of this passage, we will be studying the biographies of the (1) faithful and (2) unfaithful.

At this time, Asia is the western segment of modern Turkey. The largest city is Ephesus where Timothy was pastoring.

“You are knowing this, that all who are in Asia turned away from me.” In marriage counseling, we often hear the words “you never” or “you always.”

Hughes says: “Certainly ‘everyone [all]’ was not strictly literal (all Christians in Asia), because Timothy, Onesiphorus and his household, and others like them were residents of Asia. But the defections were so staggering that it felt as if everyone had ‘deserted’ him—an ‘exaggeration characteristic of depression.’”

This is seen in Elijah in 1 Kings 19:9–10: “There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ He replied, ‘I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.’” The Lord responds in 1 Kings 19:18: “Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.”

It is easy to lose perspective in the midst of the battle.

Paul uses the same word that he uses for “turn away” in Titus 1:14: “Not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.”

Barclay says: “In the end, the same thing happened to Paul as happened to Jesus, his Master. His friends forsook him and fled.”

There could be two reasons for this desertion:

1. Fear of guilt by association
2. Self-preservation

This poem says it well:

WHERE THE GOING’S SMOOTH AND PLEASANT
YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND THE THrong,
FOR THE MANY—MORE’S THE PITY—
SEEM TO LIKE TO DRIFT ALONG.

BUT THE STEPS THAT CALL FOR COURAGE,
AND THE TASK THAT’S HARD TO DO
IN THE END RESULTS IN GLORY
FOR THE NEVER-WAVERING FEW.

—EDGAR A. GUEST

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 3 of **"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"**: *"When I tread the verge of Jordan, Bid my anxious fears subside; Death of death, and hell's destruction, Land me safe on Canaan's side; Songs of praises I will ever give to Thee; Songs of praises I will ever give to Thee."*

April 18—The Visiting Angel (2 Timothy 1:16)

2 Timothy 1:16: *"May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain."*

Verse 16: In contrast from the previous verse regarding Phygellus and Heremogenes, Paul expresses a wish that "the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus" for two reasons:

1. He often refreshed me
2. He was not ashamed of my imprisonment

Earlier in verse 8, Paul asked Timothy "not to be ashamed of the testimony borne by our Lord, nor of me a prisoner." Then in verse 12, he stated he is "not ashamed, for I am knowing whom I have believed and I have been convinced that He is able to guard that which has been entrusted to Him until that day."

Onesiphorus is the epitome of courage. He is a man who was willing to pay the price for his beliefs. He went to Rome when all other Christians were trying to get away because of the fiery persecutions and ongoing danger in the city for anyone who professed the name of Christ.

Proverbs 17:17: "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Paul describes Onesiphorus's actions and attitude in this verse:

1. Actions—He often refreshed me
2. Attitude—He was not ashamed of my imprisonment

How did Onesiphorus "refresh" the apostle? Here are two suggestions:

1. His courage in coming to Rome at this time.
2. His compassion to hurt so deeply for Paul that he made great efforts to visit him and minister to his needs.

Like the Good Samaritan, Onesiphorus arrived and took action meeting needs.

Hendriksen says: "... by bringing him food, drink, literature. One is reminded of the services which, with great danger to himself, Jonathan rendered to David."

I'm sure these visits to the prison cell of the apostle seemed insignificant at the time, yet how gloriously they were transformed into tremendous service because a faithful child of God was obedient.

"Onesiphorus" means *"profit bringer."*

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of **"When We See Christ"**: *"Oft times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear, We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair; But Christ will soon appear to catch His Bride"*

away, All tears forever over in God's eternal day. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race till we see Christ."

April 19—Searched and Found Me (2 Timothy 1:17–18)

2 Timothy 1:17: *"But when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me."*

2 Timothy 1:18: *"May the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And what services he rendered in Ephesus you are knowing very well."*

Verse 17: Onesiphorus is one of my favorite characters in the Bible. He will never be in the "Hall of Fame," but the last shall be first and the first shall be last. He is unknown, but involved in what he can do.

This verse begins with the word "but," continuing the contrast between Onesiphorus and Phygellus & Hermogenes. This contrast involves those who were "ashamed" of Paul's imprisonment and deserted him. "But," in contrast, "when he [Onesiphorus] was in Rome:"

1. He eagerly searched for me.
2. He found me.

In passionate pursuit of Paul, Onesiphorus seeks out the apostle until he is found. He went to great efforts because he cared. Isn't it great how God brings us together!

Just for a moment, think of the many difficulties Onesiphorus experienced in his search for Paul: confusion, the Christian population is depleted, fire, many prisoners, the streets are a war zone, nobody knew where to find him, doors slammed in his face and folks scared to share what they knew.

Verse 18: In verse 16, Paul's prayer was: "May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus." In this verse, he says: "May the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day." He is referring to the Day 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."

Onesiphorus will be there receiving a reward for his faithfulness. He is the epitome of courage that Paul has referenced in these verses. We have noted five things Onesiphorus has carried out in these verses:

1. He often refreshed the apostle in verse 16.
2. He was not ashamed of Paul's imprisonment in verse 16.
3. He eagerly searched for the apostle in verse 17.
4. He found the apostle in verse 17.
5. He rendered tremendous services in the city of Ephesus in verse 17.

We spend so much time on self-fulfillment we have forgotten servanthood.
We should be busy giving of ourselves instead of trying to find ourselves.

PSALM FOR A DARK NIGHT

LORD, JUST TODAY I READ
THAT PAUL AND SILAS WERE
STRIPPED AND BEATEN
WITH WOODEN WHIPS.
“AGAIN AND AGAIN THE RODS
SLASHED ACROSS THEIR BARED BACKS”
BUT IN THEIR DESOLATE DUNGEON
THEIR FEET CLAMPED IN STOCKS
THEY PRAYED.
THEY SANG.
THEY PRAISED.
IN THIS MUSTY MIDNIGHT OF MY LIFE
IMPRISONED IN THE DUNGEON OF CONFUSION
BOUND BY CHAINS OF ANGUISH
HELP ME, PLEASE HELP ME
TO PRAY
TO SING
TO PRAISE
UNTIL THE FOUNDATION SHAKES
UNTIL THE GATES FLING OPEN
UNTIL THE CHAINS FALL OFF
UNTIL I AM FREE
TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS
WITH OTHER CHAIN-BOUND PRISONERS.

—RUTH HARMS CALKIN

Won't you join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of “**When We See Christ**”? *“Sometimes the sky looks dark with not a ray of light, We're tossed and driven on, no human help in sight; But there is One in heav'n who knows our deepest care, Let Jesus solve your problem just go to Him in pray'r. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race till we see Christ.”*

April 20—Be Strong (2 Timothy 2:1)

2 Timothy 2:1: *“You therefore, my son, be strong by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.”*

Verse 1: The word “You” is in the emphatic position in the Greek sentence, which means it is the word most emphasized. Paul is moving the focus back to Timothy from these others in Asia. The apostle encourages Timothy to be like Onesiphorus.

“You therefore, my son.” Paul was the father Timothy never had, and Timothy was the son Paul never had.

“You therefore, my son, be strong by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.” Grace is God’s gracious enabling power. The command “be strong” is present passive imperative. The key to Timothy’s strength is continual dependence on his spiritual resources.

1 Timothy 1:12: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service.”

I have an electric leaf blower. When the power cord is plugged in, the leaf blower works great. However, when I stretch the cord and it pulls out of the socket, I am no longer connected to my power source and it shuts down. Paul advised Timothy to keep connected to your power source. It is He who can get you through anything and everything. Don’t try to do it on your own!

Jeremiah 32:27: “I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?”

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.”

Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

Psalms 28:7: “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to Him in song.”

James 4:6: “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, ‘God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” We must accept our own weakness and declare our dependence by availing ourselves of God’s divine resources.

We need strengthening “grace” to face the three T’s: (1) *temptations*, (2) *trials*, and (3) *tests*. The Lord supplies daily grace for daily needs.

2 Corinthians 12:9: “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is adequate for you, for power is finding its consummation (or reaching perfection) in the presence of weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses in order that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“When We See Christ”**: *“Life’s day will soon be o’er, all storms forever past, We’ll cross the great divide, to glory, safe at last; We’ll share the joys of heav’n a harp, a home, a crown, The*

tempter will be banished, we'll lay our burden down. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race till we see Christ."

April 21—Discipleship (2 Timothy 2:2)

2 Timothy 2:2: *"And the things you heard from me, in the presence of many witnesses, these things entrust to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also."*

Verse 2: In verse 1, Paul focused on *maintenance*, but he moves to *mission* in this verse. The *maintenance* for our ministry is the strength that is provided: "by the grace which is in Christ Jesus." Our *mission* is our duty and obligation in verse 2.

The strengthening in verse 1 will result in the service of verse 2.

"And the things you heard from me, in the presence of many witnesses, these things entrust to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also." Paul is encouraging Timothy to continue on the path of faithful followers before him. The word "entrust" is the word for "commit" or "safe-keeping" or "for transmission." The word "faithful" means "trustworthy, reliable, or dependable." When you are picking men to carry on the message, focus on the faithful—men who are faithful in (1) conduct and (2) commitment.

Every Christian is a link between two generations.

William Barclay says: "There can be no such thing as secret discipleship, for either the secrecy destroys the discipleship, or the discipleship destroys the secrecy. A man's Christianity should be perfectly visible to all men."

Paul Harvey says: "Too many Christians are no longer fishers of men, but keepers of the aquarium."

Warren W. Wiersbe says: "You are a Christian today because somebody cared. Now it's your turn."

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of that wonderful song, "**Pass It On**": *"It only takes a spark to get a fire going, And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing; That's how it is with God's Love, Once you've experienced it, You spread His love to everyone You want to pass it on."*

April 22—A Good Soldier (2 Timothy 2:3)

2 Timothy 2:3: *"Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."*

Verse 3: In these first three verses, Paul has discussed the *maintenance*, the *mission*, and now the *manner* of ministry:

1. Verse 1—Maintenance: “be strong by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.”
2. Verse 2—Mission: “entrust to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also.”
3. Verse 3—Manner: “suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

In these next verses, we will see three illustrations of serving: (1) a soldier in verses 3 & 4, (2) an athlete in verse 5, and (3) a farmer in verse 6. When we think about a soldier, the apostle focuses on ministry as a warfare. There are three points that are important to understand in warfare:

1. Knowledge—the greater the knowledge of the enemy, the better the chance for victory
2. War on three fronts—against the world, the flesh, and the devil
3. Satan’s home field advantage

The Word of God makes very clear that suffering is a vital part of God’s program in making us more like His Son.

“Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” We are in constant spiritual warfare from the minute we become Christians until we depart this earth to be with the Lord. Satan is a schemer and deceiver. He is constantly shooting his fiery darts at us on a regular basis.

C.S. Lewis says: “The real problem is not why some pious, humble, believing people suffer, but why some do not.”

Steve Brown in his book, *Approaching God: How to Pray*, says:

My friend Lea Clower says that religion is for people who want to stay out of hell, and Christianity is for people who have been there. He’s right. I grow so tired of those people who “tip-toe through the tulips” with Jesus. Their testimony is filled with victory, success, accomplishment, joy, and peace. One gets the feeling that they have a special relationship with God and that God is sort of a bellhop, bringing them whatever they desire.

This morning, let’s continue to worship and praise the Lord by singing verses 2 and 3 of “**Pass It On**”: *“What a wondrous time is spring, When all the trees are budding The birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming; That’s how it is with God’s love, Once you’ve experienced it. You want to sing, it’s fresh like spring, You want to pass it on. I wish for you my friend This happiness that I’ve found; You can depend on Him It matters not where you’re bound, I’ll shout it from the mountain top, I want my world to know The Lord of love has come to me I want to pass it on.”*

April 23—Focused on the Mission (2 Timothy 2:4)

2 Timothy 2:4: “No one engaging in military service is allowing himself to become entangled in civilian pursuits in order that he may please the One who enlisted him as a soldier.”

Verse 4: No one serving in the military allows himself to get distracted. For the Christian soldier, his whole purpose is: “that he may please the One [Christ Jesus] who enlisted him as a soldier.” The soldier’s single focus is on the conflict.

The word “entangled” can be described as “a sheep with his wool caught in the thorns.” No one serving in the military becomes: “entangled in civilian pursuits.” There are no prenuptial agreements, no stipulations, no contracts to be hassled over before a person joins the military.

The purpose of the soldier’s single-focus is seen in the last phrase: “in order that he may please the One who enlisted him as a soldier.” This is single-minded devotion without trivial pursuits.

What causes us to mix up our priorities and forget what pleases our heavenly Father? We lose sight of:

1. Why we are here
2. What we are expected to do
3. The big picture of what is going on—that we are involved in a war

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 1 and 2 of Isaac Watts’s great hymn, “**When I Survey the Wondrous Cross**”: “*When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the death of Christ, my God. All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.*”

April 24—Competing by the Rules (2 Timothy 2:5)

2 Timothy 2:5: “And if a person is competing in the athletic games, he is not being crowned as the winner unless he competed according to the rules.”

Verse 5: Paul turns from the illustration of the soldier to a runner or athlete, someone familiar with discipline, perseverance and obedience. The athlete is “competing” to be crowned, but the apostle says: “he is not being crowned as the winner unless he competed according to the rules.”

This reminds me of a statement hanging on my wall: “The runner who puts the last ounce of effort into the race feels the glorious satisfaction of having given everything to the moment.” We drench ourselves with the grace of exhaustion and the ecstasy of knowing we are worthy to receive it.

I love this translation of 1 Corinthians 9:26a (TLB): “So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step.”

There's a Gary Peterson picture hanging in my house called "The Finisher." The runner is laying out, spread eagle, with one finger across the finish line. There's a moon in the sky and tracks all around him of those who have finished ahead of him. I take great comfort every time I see that picture.

Let's sing together in worship and praise verses 3 and 4 of "**When I Survey the Wondrous Cross**": *"See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown? Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all!"*

April 25—Sowing & Reaping (2 Timothy 2:6–7)

2 Timothy 2:6: *"The hard-working farmer must be the first to receive his share of the crops."*

2 Timothy 2:7: *"Think over what I am saying, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things."*

Verse 6: In the previous verses, Paul illustrated the Christian commitment with the soldier and the athlete. In this verse, Paul likens the Christian experience to the hard-working farmer. There is patience involved in (1) tilling the soil, (2) sowing the seeds, and (3) harvesting the crops.

The soldier demonstrates wholehearted dedication, and the runner exemplifies playing by the rules. Finally, the farmer shows us that these qualities must be followed by hard work.

Are we going to be devoted to the task? Will we play the game according to the rules? Do we work hard at the task He has given us to do?

What are the results of these efforts:

1. Peace for the soldier in warfare
2. Victory for the athlete in the race
3. Fruit for the farmer's harvest

Psalm 126:5–6: *"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him."*

John 15:8: *"By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."*

The apostle concludes his letter to Timothy, pointing him to the Lord for understanding in verse 7.

Verse 7: This verse can be a personal admonition for all of us. The command to "think over" is in the present imperative. These things ought to be part of our thinking all of the time. The Greek word "to think over" can mean *"to perceive, apprehend, understand and gain an insight into."*

I love this poem by Norman Macleod:

COURAGE, BROTHER, DO NOT STUMBLE,
THOUGH YOUR PATH BE DARK AS NIGHT
THERE'S A STAR TO GUIDE THE HUMBLE,
TRUST IN GOD, AND DO THE RIGHT.
PERISH POLICY AND CUNNING,
PERISH ALL THAT FEARS THE LIGHT
WHETHER LOSING, WHETHER WINNING,
TRUST IN GOD, AND DO THE RIGHT.
SOME WILL HATE YOU, SOME WILL LOVE YOU,
SOME WILL FLATTER, SOME WILL SLIGHT;
CEASE FROM MAN, AND LOOK ABOVE YOU,
TRUST IN GOD, AND DO THE RIGHT.

Joel Rosenberg in *The Invested Life* says:

God desires to pour out abundance of spiritual and emotional capital in your life, directly and through older and wiser believers. And he wants to use you to pour spiritual and emotional capital into the lives of others along the way. You will be changed. Others will change. God will call this process of spiritual investing, making disciples. It's the heart of the great commission. It is the vision of a great local church. It is the secret of a healthy, joyful, secure and significant life. We call it the invested life.

This morning, let's sing an old hymn from my childhood. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verses 1 and 3 of **"Bringing In The Sheaves"**: *"Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness, Sowing in the noon-tide and the dewy eve; Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping, We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves. Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master, Though the loss sustained our spirit often grieves; When our weeping's over, He will bid us welcome, We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves. Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves, We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves, Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves, We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves."*

April 26—Stay Focused on Jesus (2 Timothy 2:8)

2 Timothy 2:8: *"Be keeping in mind Jesus Christ, who has been raised from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel."*

Verse 8: Our passage opens with a command: "Be keeping in mind Jesus

Christ.” We can think about Paul’s illustrations of the soldier, athlete and farmer, but the central thoughts and focus need to be on Jesus!

Hebrews 12:2: “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of faith, who for the joy lying before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

It is easy to get distracted and focus on the circumstances rather than the Savior.

Take heed that we do not take our eyes off Jesus and put them on the service He has called us to do, or the problems of daily living, or the attractiveness of the world.

This verse is a present imperative to daily and continually: “Be keeping in mind Jesus Christ.”

Isaiah 26:3: “Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee.”

There are two things Timothy should remember about Jesus Christ “according to my gospel”:

1. He has been raised from the dead
2. A descendant of David

Jesus Christ is a living Savior. He is (1) alive, (2) available, (3) active, and (4) aware of what is going on in our individual lives. Our living Christ makes us different from all other religions of the world. We do not have a dead leader, but a living Savior.

The “descendant of David” refers to Him as the Messiah, the soon coming King.

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.”

He lives! He is the all-powerful King of kings and Lord of lords!

How appropriate to 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!”*

April 27—The Word of God is Not Bound (2 Timothy 2:9)

2 Timothy 2:9: *“In which sphere of action I am suffering hardship even to the point of imprisonment as a criminal, but the Word of God has not been bound.”*

Verse 9: When the apostle uses the phrase “in which sphere of action,” he references the “gospel” in verse 8. This “gospel” is why he is “suffering hardship.”

Paul is not only “suffering hardship,” but wearing chains as “a criminal.” He concludes the verse: “but the Word of God has not been bound.” They can chain Paul, but not the gospel!

What a tremendous note of triumph! You can bind the *minister*, but not the *message*. You can bind the *witness*, but not the *word*.

A.W. Tozer says: “We need right now a return to a gentle dogmatism that smiles while it stands stubborn and firm on the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever!”

THE WORD OF GOD [CANNOT BE] BOUND

LAST EVE I PASSED BESIDE A BLACKSMITH
AND HEARD THE ANVIL RING THE VESPERED CHIME,
AND LOOKING IN I SAW UPON THE FLOOR
OLD HAMMERS WORN WITH BEATING YEARS OF TIME.
HOW MANY ANVILS HAVE YOU HAD,
SAID I TO WEAR AND BATTER ALL THESE HAMMERS SO?
JUST ONE, SAID HE, THEN WITH A TWINKLING EYE,
THE ANVIL WEARS THE HAMMERS OUT YOU KNOW.
AND SO THOUGHT I THE ANVIL OF GOD’S WORD
FOR AGES SKEPTICS BLOWS HAVE BEAT UPON,
YET THOUGH THE NOISE OF FALLING BLOWS WAS HEARD,
THE ANVIL IS UNHARMED. THE HAMMERS GONE.

—UNKNOWN AUTHOR

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together 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!*”

April 28—I Am Suffering for Others (2 Timothy 2:10)

2 Timothy 2:10: “*Because of this I am enduring all things for the sake of those who are chosen, in order that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*”

Verse 10: “Because” points back to the last phrase in the previous verse: “Because of this.” Because the Word of God has not been bound, “I am enduring all things.”

God is sovereign and all of these things work together for good. A little prayer I often pray is: “Lord, help me to maintain a continual contentedness under Your sovereign hand.”

Oswald Chambers says: “If God can accomplish His purposes in this world through a broken heart, then why not thank Him for breaking yours?”

“Because of this I am enduring [or persevering] all things.” He is doing this “for the sake of those who are chosen.” His purpose is: “in order that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Per the *Encarta World English Dictionary*, perseverance is determined continuation with something; steady and continued action or belief usually over a long period and especially despite difficulties or setbacks.

This is single-minded steadfastness.

Romans 15:5: “Now may the God of perseverance and encouragement give to you to be thinking the same thing with one another according to Christ Jesus.”

Dolly Parton said: “I never stopped trying, and I never tried stopping.”

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!”*

April 29—A Trustworthy Word (2 Timothy 2:11)

2 Timothy 2:11: “Trustworthy is the Word: For if we died together with Him, we shall also live together with Him.”

Verse 11: These words are probably part of an early Christian hymn. Paul is speaking of the ramification of the resurrection.

J. Vernon McGee asks the question:

When did we die with Him? When He died over nineteen hundred years ago. When we come to Christ and receive Him as our Savior, His death becomes our death. We are identified with Him and are raised with Him in newness of life. This means that this very day He wants to live His life out through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John Hunter points out: “The secret of a changed life is an exchanged life. Jesus Christ doesn’t want my dedication, he wants my death. A dead man can’t do anything. He can only decay.”

OH TO BE SAVED FROM MYSELF, DEAR LORD.

OH TO BE LOST IN THEE.

OH THAT IT MIGHT BE NO MORE I,

BUT CHRIST THAT LIVES IN ME.

—UNKNOWN AUTHOR

Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of one of Bill & Gloria Gaither's great songs, **"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."*

April 30—We Are Persevering (2 Timothy 2:12)

2 Timothy 2:12: *"If we are persevering, we shall also reign with Him; If we shall deny Him, He also will deny us."*

Verse 12: The Greek word for perseverance, "hupomeno," is in the present tense and could be translated: "If we are continually persevering moment by moment."

Paul longs for Timothy to endure and not turn away from the gospel, but be like (1) the suffering soldier, (2) the rule-keeping athlete, and (3) the hard-working farmer. If he endures, he will also "reign with Him."

1 Chronicles 16:31: "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns!'"

Revelation 3:21: "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

Wiersbe says:

What a pair of paradoxes! Death leads to life! Suffering leads to reigning in glory! We have nothing to fear! The important thing is that we not "disown" our Lord, for if we disown Him here, He will disown us before the Father (Matt. 10:33). In that great "roll call" in glory, when the "medals" are given out, we will lose our reward if we disown His name.

Revelation 3:11: "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown."

In this verse, the choice is between reigning with Him or rejection by Him.

This morning, please 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."*

MAY

May 1—He Is Remaining Faithful (2 Timothy 2:13)

2 Timothy 2:13: *“If we are unfaithful, He is remaining faithful for He is not able to deny Himself.”*

Verse 13: It doesn't matter what we do—“He is remaining faithful.” What a tremendous promise to realize that despite our unfaithfulness, He abides faithful because He does not change.

Numbers 23:19: “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?”

Lamentations 3:22–23: “Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

1 Thessalonians 5:24: “Faithful is the one who is calling you, who also will do it.”

Nothing we do affects the character of God.

Psalm 89:33: “But I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered.”

Lord, when my heart gets tired and my soul gets weary strengthen me with your grace.

This morning, let's sing together in worship and praise that great old hymn, **“Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”** Please join me singing verse 1: *“‘Great is Thy faithfulness,’ O God my Father, There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; As thou hast been Thou forever wilt be. ‘Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!’ Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, ‘Great is Thy faithfulness,’ Lord, unto me!”*

May 2—Disputing About Words (2 Timothy 2:14)

2 Timothy 2:14: *“These things be reminding them, charging them in the presence of God not to be disputing about words, which results in not even one useful thing, in addition to ruining the ones who are hearing.”*

Verse 14: Since we know that it is Satan's plan to distract and to destroy, we need to keep our focus upon Jesus and upon the one thing He wants us to do, in order to make the fantastic finish we all desire.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Timothy was to keep reminding others of these things. The verb is a present imperative, which means that this was to be Timothy's regular practice.”

MacArthur says:

Satan attempts to obliterate God's truth with this own falsehood. He attempts to keep the fallen world in spiritual darkness and to confuse and discourage God's people. It was Satan's deceit that lured Eve and then Adam to distrust God, which brought sin and death into His perfect creation and separated now-sinful mankind from the holy God. Since that time, humanity has existed in the muck and morass of sin and deceit.

Francois Fenelon says:

Woe to those weak and timid souls who are divided between God and their world! They want and they do not want. They are torn by desire and remorse at the same time.... They have a horror of evil and a shame of good. They have the pains of virtue without tasting its sweet consolations. O how wretched they are.

Command #1: "These things be reminding them, charging them in the presence of God."

These people are guilty of "disputing about words" when their mission should be to discourse on the Word. A dispute over words leads to confusion and frustration. As a result of "disputing over words," the apostle says, negatively, there is "not even one useful thing," and positively, it upsets "the ones who are hearing."

The Greek word we have translated "ruining" is "katastrepho" which means "to turn down or over." It is where we get the word "catastrophe." It is here only in the New Testament. This could be translated: "charging them in the presence of the Lord not to wage thoroughly useless word-battles which upset the listeners."

Wiersbe says: "An approved worker does not waste his time arguing about 'words to no profit' (2 Tim. 2:14) because he knows that such arguing only undermines God's work."

Don't become word warriors!

Fenelon in *The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics* says: "Don't be angry about what people say. Just follow God and let them talk. As far as people are concerned, you will never be able to satisfy them. Silence, peace and union with God should comfort you from all that people speak against you."

Let's sing one of the great old hymns of the church. Please join me in worship and praise singing verse 1 of "**Standing on the Promises**": *"Standing on the promises of Christ my King, Thro' eternal ages let His praises ring; Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing, Standing on the promises of God. Standing, standing, Standing on the promises of God my Savior; Standing, standing, I'm standing on the promises of God."*

May 3—Present Yourself to God (2 Timothy 2:15)

2 Timothy 2:15: “*Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.*”

Verse 15: Whereas the command in the previous verse regarded Timothy's ministry, the command in this verse regards Timothy himself.

Command #2: “Make every effort to present yourself to God.” This should be made with the passionate desire that your presentation would be “approved” by Him.

Then, Paul turns to an illustration, “as a workman.” Negatively, “who does not need to be ashamed,” and positively, “guiding the word of truth along a straight path.”

Isaiah 50:7: “Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.”

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 single focus for the apostle Paul is “guiding the word of truth along a straight path.” It is the one thing we are to do. The centrality of the Word is the key to a successful life finish.

Billy Sunday said: “More men fail through lack of purpose than through the lack of talent.”

Stephen Covey in his book, *The Eighth Habit*, says:

Passion comes from the heart and is manifest as optimism, excitement, emotional connection, determination. It fires unrelenting drive. Enthusiasm is deeply rooted in the power of choice rather than circumstance. Enthusiasts believe that the best way to predict the future is to create it. In fact, enthusiasm becomes a moral imperative, making the person part of the solution rather than part of the problem of feeling essentially hopeless and helpless.

Joni Eareckson Tada in *Diamonds in the Dust: 366 Sparkling Devotions* says: “We would take giant steps forward in our fellowship with the Lord if we would but take our eyes and hands off what is not permitted and place our eyes on Jesus and our hands on His Word.”

Let's join together in worship and praise singing verse 2 of “**Standing on the Promises**”: “*Standing on the promises that cannot fail, when the howling storms of doubt and fear assail, By the living Word of God I shall prevail, Standing on the promises of God. Standing, standing, Standing on the promises of God my Savior; Standing, standing, I'm standing on the promises of God.*”

May 4—Avoid Empty Talk (2 Timothy 2:16–17)

2 Timothy 2:16: *“But be avoiding profane, empty talk; for they will make further progress in ungodliness.”*

2 Timothy 2:17: *“And their word will spread as does cancer. Of whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus.”*

Verse 16: Command #1 regarded Timothy’s ministry: “These things be reminding them, charging them in the presence of God. Command #2 regarded Timothy himself, the man: “Make every effort to present yourself to God. Command #3 involves a problem, a menace, in Ephesus.

Command #3: “Be avoiding profane, empty talk.”

The word “but” forms the contrast to verse 15. In verse 14, the apostle spoke about two things that happen when you “dispute about words”:

1. Not even one useful thing comes from it.
2. It is ruining the ones who are hearing.

We see two more things that result from not “avoiding profane, empty talk”:

1. They make further progress in ungodliness (verse 16).
2. Their word will spread as does cancer (verse 17).

It is godless chatter, empty babbling, profane drivel.

Someone asked the Christian Indian what he thought of the minister’s message. Thinking for a moment, he summed up his opinion in six words: “High wind. Big thunder. No rain.”

“But be avoiding profane, empty talk,” for the reason: “for they will make further progress in ungodliness.”

Verse 17: The word “and” connects the thoughts with the previous verse. Not only will they “make further progress with ungodliness,” but “their word will spread as does cancer.”

Let’s continue our worship and praise this morning by singing verse 3 of **“Standing on the Promises”**: *“Standing on the promises of Christ the Lord, Bound to Him eternally by love’s strong cord, Overcoming daily with the Spirit’s sword, Standing on the promises of God. Standing, standing, Standing on the promises of God my Savior; Standing, standing, I’m standing on the promises of God.”*

May 5—Missed the Mark of Truth (2 Timothy 2:18)

2 Timothy 2:18: *“Who missed the mark concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they are upsetting the faith of some.”*

Verse 18: The “who” points back to “Hymenaeus and Philetus” in the previous verse. Paul remarks about two things regarding their teaching:

1. Missed the mark concerning the truth
2. Upset the faith of some believers

The centrality of the cross and resurrection to the gospel is obvious.

1 Peter 1:3–4: “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, unto an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, which has been reserved in heaven for you.”

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.”

Mark Twain said: “The trouble with the world is not that people know too little, but that they know so many things that ain’t so.”

Please celebrate and worship this morning as we sing verse 4 of **“Standing on the Promises”**: *“Standing on the promises I cannot fall, List’ning every moment to the Spirit’s call, Resting in my Savior as my all in all, Standing on the promises of God. Standing, standing, Standing on the promises of God my Savior; Standing, standing, I’m standing on the promises of God.”*

May 6—The Foundation of God Stands (2 Timothy 2:19)

2 Timothy 2:19: *“Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this inscription: ‘The Lord knows those who are His, and let everyone who is naming the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.’”*

Verse 19: Even though there are those who are:

1. Being ruined by the false teaching
2. Progressing more and more toward ungodliness
3. Following the disease of error
4. Missing the mark of truth
5. Upsetting their faith

“Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands.”

Matthew 16:18 (TLB): “You are Peter, a stone, and upon this rock I will build My church; and all the powers of hell shall not prevail against it.”

The foundation of God has the following inscription: “The Lord knows those who are His, and let everyone who is naming the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.” The first part speaks of the heritage: “the Lord knows those who are His,” and the second part speaks of holiness: “let everyone who is naming the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.” They are His and they are holy.

Winston Churchill said: “You ask: ‘What is our aim?’ I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival.”

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord with joy as we sing verse 1 of **“The Solid Rock”**: *“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."

May 7—Useful Vessels (2 Timothy 2:20)

2 Timothy 2:20: *"Now in a large house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some indeed for honorable use and some for dishonorable use."*

Verse 20: In this verse, we have a negative and positive statement. Negatively, "not only vessels of gold and silver," but positively, "also vessels of wood and of earthenware and some indeed for honorable use and some for dishonorable use."

Isaiah 52:11: "Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing. Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the Lord."

MacArthur says:

The honorable vessels represent believers who are faithful and useful to the Lord. They are the good soldiers, the competitive athletes, the hardworking farmers mentioned in verses 3–6. By contrast, the dishonorable vessels are the cowardly soldiers, the lazy athletes, and the slothful farmers, defiled people fit only for the most menial, undistinguished purposes. Honor and dishonor therefore refer to the ways in which genuine believers are found useful to the Lord in fulfilling the work to which He has called them. In this sense, all believers should be, but are not always, vessels of honor.

Wiersbe says:

It is worth noting that the name Timothy comes from two Greek words which together mean "God-honoring." Paul was encouraging Timothy to live up to his name!

There are some of us Christians whom God cannot employ in higher service—our poor character, our humdrum quality, preclude us from better engagement, unless some means can be found of changing us completely.

We can say the following of these Christians:

1. They have no commitment.
2. They never get serious.
3. They have material priorities.

I have looked through the Scriptures noting some of the dishonorable vessels recorded: (1) Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, (2) Nadab and Abihu, (3) Hophni and Phineas, (4) Cain in the first family, (5) Ham, who rode out judgment

in the ark, (6) Ishmael, (7) Esau, (8) Judas Iscariot, (9) Ananias and Sapphira, (10) Diotrephes, (11) Demas, and (12) Alexander the coppersmith.

Since we are His workmanship and created in Christ Jesus for good works, we can be confident as we yield ourselves to Him. The desire of His perfect will is that we might be “vessels of gold ... for honorable use.”

LIE STILL AND LET HIM MOLD THEE.
OH LORD I WOULD OBEY.
THOU ART THE MIGHTY POTTER
AND I THE YIELDING CLAY.
BEND ME, OH BEND ME TO THY WILL,
WHILE IN THY HAND I AM LYING STILL.
—UNKNOWN AUTHOR

Please join me in worship and praise this morning 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.”*

May 8—Prepared for Good Work (2 Timothy 2:21)

2 Timothy 2:21: *“If therefore, a person cleanse himself from these, he shall be a vessel for honorable use, having been set apart, useful to the master, having been prepared for every good work.”*

Verse 21: Paul is applying the truth as he changes the word “vessel” to a “person”: “if therefore, a person cleanse himself from these.”

God does not do his work through dirty vessels. Therefore, the challenge comes before us to be clean. Recognizing our uncleanness, what are the steps we can take?

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.”

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.”

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.”

Bishop Andrews from his private devotion said:

What things soever from infancy even until now even until
this moment, witting or unwitting, within or without, sleeping

or waking, in words, deeds, thoughts, through the fiery darts of the enemy, through the unclean desires of the flesh, I have sinned against Thee, have mercy upon me, O God, and forgive me.

After cleansing comes the promise: “He shall be a vessel for honorable use, set apart, and useful to the master, equipped for every good work.”

Paul describes four characteristics of this clean vessel. It is:

1. Used for honorable works
2. Set apart
3. Useful to the master
4. Prepared for every good work

I love the way the New Living Translation translates Psalm 19:12–14: “How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep your servant from deliberate sins! Don’t let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

The key is to be made useful to the Master.

2 Corinthians 4:7: “But we are having this treasure in earthenware vessels in order that the extraordinary (quality of the) power may be of God and not from ourselves.”

This morning, 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.*”

May 9—A Pure Heart (2 Timothy 2:22)

2 Timothy 2:22: “*Now be fleeing from the passions of youth, but pursuing after righteousness, faith, love, peace in company with those who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart.*”

Verse 22: This verse tells us how to be a vessel of honorable use. Three commands in these next two verses form a critical battle plan for victory in the face of satanic seduction. The two commands in this verse:

Command #1: “Be fleeing from the passions of youth.”

Command #2: “Be pursuing after righteousness, faith, love, peace in company with those who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart.”

These commands are in the present tense and, therefore, should be continual. In the next verse, we have the third command:

Command #3: “Be avoiding foolish and stupid speculation.”

Our verse this morning has a negative and positive command. Negatively, “be fleeing from the passions of youth,” and positively, “be pursuing after right

teousness, faith, love, peace in company with those who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart.”

“Be fleeing from the passions of youth.” You must have a plan to be successful. Recognize the dangers of pornographic websites, scrutinize the TV shows and movies you watch, be careful to avoid things that arouse and stir up temptations.

Be “pursuing after” four things: (1) righteousness, (2) faith, (3) love, and (4) peace in company (accountability) with those who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

Satan is a master at the art of seduction. Just as he seduced Eve in the garden, he is constantly looking for opportunities to exercise his mastery with each of us.

Luke 4:13: “And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning for the glorious victory that is ours through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Please sing with me in celebration 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.*”

May 10—The Servant of the Lord (2 Timothy 2:23–24)

2 Timothy 2:23: “*But be avoiding foolish and stupid speculations knowing that they are giving birth to quarrels.*”

2 Timothy 2:24: “*Now the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome but to be kind toward all, skillful in teaching, bearing evil without resentment.*”

Verse 23: Yesterday, we learned two commands for avoiding Satanic seduction: (1) “Be fleeing from the passions of youth” and (2) “Be pursuing after righteousness, faith, love, peace in company with those who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart.” This verse has our third command.

Command #3: “Be avoiding foolish and stupid speculations”

Paul advises Timothy to avoid all of the “what-ifs” knowing: “they are giving birth to quarrels.”

Acts 17:11: “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the Word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.”

Barclay says: “Once a leader is involved in senseless and unchristian controversy, he has forfeited all right to lead.”

Verse 24: The apostle describes “the servant of the Lord” in a negative and positive way. Negatively, he “must not be quarrelsome,” but positively, he must have four characteristics:

1. Being kind toward all
2. Teaching skillfully
3. Bearing evil without resentment
4. Correcting those who are opposing in gentleness (in the next verse)

I love the statement in the front of my mama’s bible: “Fill my mouth with worthwhile stuff, and nudge me when I have said enough.”

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing together 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.”*

May 11—The Snare of the Devil (2 Timothy 2:25–26)

2 Timothy 2:25: *“In gentleness correcting those who are opposing; if perhaps God may grant them repentance resulting in a knowledge of the truth.”*

2 Timothy 2:26: *“And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him, under the spell of his will.”*

Verse 25: The servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome, but he is to be (1) kind toward all, (2) skillful in teaching, (3) bearing evil without resentment, and (4) in gentleness correcting those who are opposing.

This correction should be done with “gentleness,” not in anger, but with soft words. The reason for this “gentleness” is “if perhaps God may grant them repentance resulting in a knowledge of the truth.”

The word “may” is a wish-prayer. This prayer will be answered if the following two things are true:

1. The servant of the Lord is gentle in his approach.
2. The Spirit of God is there in conviction to guide into truth.

Fenelon in *The Seeking Heart: Volume 4: The Library of Spiritual Classics* says: “Remember that you are not called to be well-served, but to serve Him well. Learn to be gentle and patient with all that disturbs you.”

Brennan Manning says: “Often I have been asked, ‘Brennan, how is it possible that you became an alcoholic after you got saved?’ It is possible because I got battered and bruised by loneliness and failure, because I got discouraged, uncertain, and guilt ridden and took my eyes off Jesus.”

James 4:7–10: “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands,

you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

Verse 26:

MacArthur says:

... [come to their senses] literally means to return to soberness, indicating that falsehood and sin produce what might be called a type of spiritual inebriation, a stupor resulting in loss of judgment and proper control of one’s faculties. The destructive effect of false teaching and sin numbs the conscience, confuses the mind, erodes conviction and paralyzes the will.

We understand how Satan’s “snare” works when we read James 1:13–16 (Phillips):

A man must not say when he is tempted, “God is tempting me.” For God has no dealings with evil, and does not Himself tempt anyone. No, a man’s temptation is due to the pull of his own inward desires, which can be enormously attractive. His own desire takes hold of him, and that produces sin. And sin in the long run means death—make no mistake about that, brothers of mine!

Erwin W. Lutzer said: “No matter how many pleasures Satan offers you, his ultimate intention is to ruin you. Your destruction is his highest priority.”

George Bernard Shaw said: “If you take too long in deciding what to do with your life, you’ll find you’ve done it.”

Recognizing Satanic seduction, I am keeping my eyes on Jesus.

Won’t you join me in worship and praise this morning 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.”*

May 12—Tough Times (2 Timothy 3:1)

2 Timothy 3:1: *“But be knowing this, that in the last days hard times will set in.”*

Verse 1: We could translate the word “but” as “yet,” and the whole verse could be translated: “yet [in contrast] to present evils, there will be greater ones in the future.” “But be knowing this” is in the present tense so it should be a daily discipline.

“In the last days hard times will set in.” They are days that are cruel and hard to bear. I believe Paul means that evil will have the upper hand. Moral

foundations will be shaken. Religious expression will be nothing more than an empty form and ritual. This is Satan's last all-out effort, his best shot! It's his final assault of evil.

As you look around at the nations of the world in turmoil, you find almost a unanimous verdict. We are living and experiencing the "hard times" of the last days.

Vance Havner said:

Our world is fast becoming a madhouse and the inmates are trying to run the asylum. It is a strange time when the patients are writing the prescriptions, the students are threatening to run the schools, the children to manage the homes, and church members—not the Holy Spirit—to direct the churches. Such lawlessness always brings a dictator and of the line will be Anti-christ, now in the offing awaiting his cue."

Let's focus on the Lord Jesus in these hard times. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing 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."*

May 13—Me First (2 Timothy 3:2)

2 Timothy 3:2: *"For men will be fond of themselves (selfish), lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy."*

Verse 2: Why are there going to be difficult times that will set in? The word "for" expresses the reason why the last days will be hard times: "for men will be fond of themselves (selfish), lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, slanderers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy."

There are nineteen reasons spelled out in verses 2–5. This is life in Satan's snares. There are eight reasons spelled out in this verse:

Characteristic #1: "Men will be fond of themselves (selfish). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* translates this word "self-centered or narcissistic." Self is in the place where God belongs.

In my book, *Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger*, I make the following statement: "Another tragedy of America is that many have replaced God-given initiative with selfish entitlement. 'In God We Trust' may still be inscribed on our coins but 'Me First' is engraved upon our hearts. We crave our rights, and selfishness consumes us like a cancer."

All sin begins in selfishness. I love me. I love myself. I set my picture on the shelf.

Characteristic #2: “Lovers of money.” How often do we hear the phrase: Me and My Money? Judas is a great illustration of a person who preferred money to the Master.

Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Characteristic #3: “Boasters.” This word refers to a man who makes a claim to good things or qualities which he does not really possess. The focus on self and the bottom line naturally causes a person to say to the world: “look what I have done.”

Selfish people are typically boastful and proud.

Characteristic #4: “Arrogant.” This is the opposite of the word “humble.”

Barclay says: “The word is ... derived from two Greek words which mean to show oneself above.”

Characteristic #5: “Slanderers.” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* calls them abusive. Our contemporary culture is flooded with abuse—physical, verbal, and sexual.

Characteristic #6: “Disobedient to parents.”

Characteristic #7: “Ungrateful.” It could be translated “unthankful.” A person who is “unthankful” is a person who is proud. When man refuses to recognize he has a debt both to God and to man, he then becomes thankful.

Characteristic #8: “Unholy.” This sort of a person is controlled by his lower passions.

MacArthur says: “The unholy person is driven by self-love to gratify his lusts and passions of whatever sort, as fully as possible with no thought to propriety, decency, or personal reputation.”

This morning, please join me as we sing together in worship and praise 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.”*

May 14—No Self-Control (2 Timothy 3:3)

2 Timothy 3:3: *“Without natural affection, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, not loving the good.”*

Verse 3: In this verse, we have six more characteristics.

Characteristic #9: “Without natural affection.” Paul is referring to a love which is natural in a family relationship, the love of a child for a parent or parent for the child. This is a breakdown in the family relationship. When you

have a unit where everyone is looking out for themselves, you are going to have chaos. It is relationship without responsibility.

The hate in the hard heart of a terrorist is beyond understanding.

Characteristic #10: “Irreconcilable.” This word has the picture of one who is so filled with bitterness that he is unwilling to get along with others. This person can’t get along with anyone and cannot forgive.

When we are tempted to be irreconcilable, we should hear again the voice of our blessed Lord saying: “Father forgive them!”

Characteristic #11: “Malicious gossips.” This is the same word used for “slanderers.” The Greek word is the same that is used for “devil.” He is the greatest slanderer of all.

Ironside said: “Satan is the accuser of the brethren, so let’s leave the dirty work to him.”

MacArthur says: “Engulfed and blinded by self-love, malicious gossips do the very work of Satan.”

Characteristic #12: “Without self-control.”

Barclay says: “A man can reach a stage when, so far from controlling it, he can become a slave to some habit or desire. That way is the inevitable way to ruin, for no man can master anything unless he first masters himself.”

There are many kinds of addictive behaviors that are manifested from lack of self-control: drugs, alcohol, smoking, sex, pornography, and a host of others;

MacArthur says: “‘Without self-control’ describes the person who has jettisoned inhibitions and shame, who does not care about what people think or about what happens to them because of what he does ... becomes a slave to his passions and ambitions.”

Characteristic #13: “Brutal.” There are some who would translate this word as “savage.” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* translates it “untamed, the opposite of civilized.”

You realize we are living in dangerous and brutal times when you see all the violence, murders, abortions, abuses, road rage, and a myriad of other acts.

Characteristic #14: “Not loving the good.” He is a person who has no association with that which is good, edifying, and proper. His appetites have been fixed upon that which is sensuous and self-gratifying.

Isn’t it great to know that we are not destined for this outcome? Our blessed Lord has prepared a wonderful future for us. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing 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.”*

May 15—Lovers of Pleasure (2 Timothy 3:4)

2 Timothy 3:4: *“Traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”*

Verse 4: This verse includes four more characteristics of these hard times.

Characteristic #15: “Traitors.” According to *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, these people are “disposed toward betrayal.” Loyalty and devotion are absent from their vocabulary.

Judas was a traitor to Jesus when he chose to take the thirty pieces of silver. Demas was seen as a traitor because he deserted the apostle Paul for love of the present world as well as Phygelus and Hermogenes.

Quinn and Wacker say: “The man bent on advancing his own interests is a born traitor.”

Characteristic #16: “Reckless.”

MacArthur says: “The reckless person is careless, negligent, and rash.”

Barclay says: “It describes the man who is swept on by passion and impulse and desire to such an extent that he is totally unable to think wisely and sensibly. Far more harm is done from want of thought than almost anything else.”

Characteristic #17: “Conceited.” We could express this in the phrase: “He sure has a big head!”

Characteristic #18: “Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” “Pleasure” has taken the place that belongs only to God.

You could say of many in our generation and the next that they are self-loving, pleasure-seeking hedonists.

Benjamin Franklin said: “He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals.”

I believe the answer is to stay focused on the Lord Jesus. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of this wonderful hymn, **“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. 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.”*

May 16—Outward Form of Godliness (2 Timothy 3:5)

2 Timothy 3:5: *“While having an outward form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and turn away from such men as these.”*

Verse 5: We have the nineteenth and final characteristic in this verse.

Characteristic #19: “While having an outward form of godliness, although they have denied its power.” These people go through all the motions of ritual and religion without relationship. They are false teachers and strangers to the power that changes lives.

Paul advises: “turn away from such men as these.”

Wiersbe says: “It is important to note that these people operate under the guise of religion: ‘having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof’ (3:5). They are ‘religious’ but rebellious!”

A.W. Tozer says it well: “Every soul belongs to God and exists by his pleasure. God being who and what he is, and we being who and what we are, the only thinkable relation between us is one of full lordship on his part and complete submission on ours. We owe him every honor that it is in our power to give him.”

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?”

A.W. Tozer in *Renewed Day by Day: Daily Devotional Readings: Volume I* says: “A new Decalogue has been adopted by the neo-Christian of our day, the first word of which reads, ‘Thou shalt not disagree,’ and a new set of Beatitudes, too, which begins ‘Blessed are they that tolerate everything, for they shall not be made accountable for anything.’”

Won’t you join me in worship and praise as we sing together 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.*”

May 17—Silly Women (2 Timothy 3:6)

2 Timothy 3:6: “*For of these are those who are worming their way into houses and captivating silly women having been overwhelmed by their sins, who are being led on by various desires.*”

Verse 6: In this verse, we have a statement of the reason Paul gave Timothy the command at the end of the previous verse: “turn away from such men as these.” The reason being: “for of these are those who are worming.”

They are creepers. These men are following their master Satan’s modus operandi as he slithered into the garden in Genesis 3. They are dominated by desires and led by lust.

“For of these are those who are worming their way into houses and captivating silly women.” They are setting the same traps Satan set back in chapter 2. The word “silly” could be translated “*unstable*” or “*needy*” women.

These women:

1. Have been overwhelmed by their sins. They have piled up a great many sins and they are very guilty. They have been many places and

committed a long list of the wrong things. The burden of their sin on their conscience has caused this guilt and neediness. The woman at the well is a good example. They are not willing to face the truth.

2. Are being led on by various desires.

I am reminded of the lyrics of John Denver's song, "**Some Days are Diamonds (Some Days Are Stone)**":

NOW THE FACE THAT I SEE IN THE MIRROR
MORE AND MORE IS A STRANGER TO ME
MORE AND MORE I CAN SEE THERE'S A DANGER
IN BECOMING WHAT I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE.
SOME DAYS ARE DIAMONDS,
SOME DAYS ARE STONE,
SOMETIMES THE HARD TIMES WON'T LEAVE ME ALONE.
SOMETIMES THE COLD WINDS BLOW A CHILL IN MY BONES,
SOME DAYS ARE DIAMONDS,
SOME DAYS ARE STONE.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing 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."*

May 18—No Truth (2 Timothy 3:7)

2 Timothy 3:7: *"Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

Verse 7: Because they endeavor to find the answers to life apart from Jesus Christ, they are on a futile journey. "Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Jesus Christ said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by Me."

Wiersbe says:

They are burdened with guilt and looking for some escape from bondage and fear. They find themselves unable to control their various desires. The emphasis here may be on sexual problems. Finally, they are always searching for truth, trying this approach and that; yet they are never able to be satisfied. This kind of person is fair bait for the cultists and the religious racketeers.

Tony Evans in *Are Christians Destroying America? How to Restore a Decaying Culture* says:

In case I haven't made it clear yet, let me say it right here: The future of American culture is squarely in the hands of Christians. Our problem is not so much the presence of unrighteousness as it is the loss of God's glory. Unrighteousness and evil have dominated our culture because God's glory has departed, and that departure is primarily the result of the removal of Christ's lampstand from the church (Revelation 2:5).

Make no mistake about it. America's future is not in the hands of the politicians or the social scientists. Most don't know what to do. They are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7).

John 8:32 (KJV): "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 17:3 (KJV): "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

John 17:8 (KJV): "For the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me."

Let's join together in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of "**He Is So Precious to Me**": *"I praise Him because He appointed a place Where, some day, through 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."*

May 19—Depraved in Mind (2 Timothy 3:8)

2 Timothy 3:8: *"Now in the same manner as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also are these opposing the truth, men depraved in mind, disqualified concerning the faith."*

Verse 8: The apostle uses an illustration to describe the activity of these false teachers. "Jannes and Jambres" were the magicians who opposed Moses when he went on his first mission to bring the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt at the Lord's direction.

The unnamed magicians were able to duplicate the (1) sticks to snakes (but Moses' snake swallowed up their snakes), (2) water turning to blood, and (3) plague of the frogs. However, this changed at plague three of the ten plagues: They were unable to replicate the others.

When the gnats were plaguing Egypt, they stated: "This is the finger of God!" They were unable to duplicate the gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail storm,

locusts or darkness. They were most affected by the tenth plague: death of the first-born.

Paul's reference illustrates these false teachers might start out on fire and even duplicate some results initially, but eventually it will fall apart for them. Their folly will become evident to all.

There are three things said of "Jannes and Jambres":

1. Opposed the truth
2. Depraved in mind
3. Disqualified concerning the faith

They were *rebellious, rotten, and ruined*.

Wiersbe says: "Satan is an imitator who produces counterfeit Christians... who infiltrate the church and create divisions. God's people need discernment in these difficult days."

Max Lucado in *Grace for the Moment: Inspirational Thoughts for Each Day of the Year* says: "The crowd challenges, 'Follow us and fit in.' Jesus promises, 'Follow me and stand out.'"

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord by singing that wonderful hymn by Isaac Watts. Please join me in verse 1 of **"Am I a Soldier of the Cross?"**: *"Am I a soldier of the cross, A follow'r of the Lamb? And shall I fear to own His cause, Or blush to speak His name?"*

May 20—No Further Progress (2 Timothy 3:9)

2 Timothy 3:9: *"But they will not make further progress, for their folly shall become quite evident to all, as also that of those two came to be."*

Verse 9: The word "but" forms the contrast: "they will not make further progress." They will be stopped "for" the reason: "their folly shall become quite evident to all as also that of those two came to be." Plague after plague took place, but "Jannes and Jambres" were unable to duplicate the plagues in any way.

Barclay says: "The defeat of error depends, not on skill in controversy, but in the demonstration in life of the more excellent way."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *The Cost of Discipleship* said: "It will always be true that the wisest course for the disciple is always to abide solely by the Word of God in all simplicity."

Daniel Webster said: "The most solemn thought that has ever entered my mind is my accountability to my Maker."

Will you follow the culture or be one of those who forms a counter-culture? Will you follow those who have "an outward form of godliness, although they have denied its power"? Will you "turn away" and find reality through a Redeemer and a relationship by faith with the Lord Jesus Christ? The choice is yours. We hope you will say: "Lord, where you lead me I will follow."

1 Corinthians 16:13–14: “Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.”

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of “**Am I a Soldier of the Cross?**”: “*Must I be carried to the skies On flowery beds of ease, While others fought to win the prize, And sailed thro’ bloody seas?*”

May 21—A Good Disciple (2 Timothy 3:10)

2 Timothy 3:10: “*But you followed faithfully my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, steadfastness, love, perseverance.*”

Verse 10: “But you” is in contrast to the nineteen characteristics of the hard times and false teachers. In this verse, Paul mentions nine characteristics Timothy had “followed [carefully and] faithfully” from the apostle:

Characteristic #1: Teaching

Timothy has seen that Paul’s *life* and *lip* match. The apostle truly is a *mentor* and *model* of the teaching which he communicates. Timothy has followed Paul’s teaching in this regard. He has been faithful in guiding the word of truth along a straight path.

Characteristic #2: Conduct

Philippians 3:17 (The Living Bible): “Dear brothers, pattern your lives after mine, and notice who else lives up to my example.”

Characteristic #3: Purpose

Paul had a specific aim in life. I believe it is best expressed in Philippians 1:20 (Phillips): “It all accords with my own earnest wishes and hopes, which are that I should never be in any way ashamed, but that now, as always, I should honour Christ with the utmost boldness by the way I live, whether that means I am to face death or to go on living.” Paul’s purpose was to glorify God.

Characteristic #4: Faith

Paul trusted God and then Timothy trusted God.

Characteristic #5: Steadfastness

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.”

Characteristic #6: Love

This love has been manifested in the life of the apostle. It has been the love of Christ flowing through him, which is a fruitage of the Spirit.

Characteristic #7: Perseverance

Vince Lombardi said: “The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.”

Barbara Johnson in *God’s Most Precious Jewels Are Crystallized Tears* shares: “Like Thelma, the bumblebee seems an unlikely prospect for success. Its body

is too big; its wingspan too short. ‘But’ as Thelma loves to say, ‘nobody told that fool it can’t fly!’”

This morning, let’s worship and praise together as we sing verse 3 of **“Am I a Soldier of the Cross?”**: *“Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace, To help me on to God?”*

May 22—Not Only to Believe But to Suffer (2 Timothy 3:11)

2 Timothy 3:11: *“Persecutions, sufferings, such as came to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra, what manner of persecutions I endured; and out of them all the Lord delivered me.”*

Verse 11: Yesterday, we observed seven of the nine characteristics Timothy has faithfully followed from Paul: teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, steadfastness, love, and perseverance. In this verse, the apostle continues the list, speaking of persecutions and sufferings, and the location of some of these events: (1) Antioch, (2) Iconium, and (3) Lystra. The book of Acts records these accounts.

Characteristic #8: Persecutions

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!”

Characteristic #9: Sufferings

Paul has spoken often of suffering in this second epistle of Timothy.

2 Timothy 1:8: “Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony borne by our Lord, nor of me His prisoner but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.”

2 Timothy 2:3: “Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

2 Timothy 2:9: “In which sphere of action I am suffering hardship even to the point of imprisonment as a criminal, but the Word of God has not been bound.”

We have a wonderful, victorious phrase at the conclusion of this verse: “out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

Isaiah 54:17: “‘No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,’ declares the Lord.”

Romans 8:37: “But in all things we are winning a most glorious victory through the One who loved us.”

How appropriate that we include this last verse in our meditation this morning. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 4 of **“Am I a Soldier of the Cross?”**: *“Sure I must fight, if I would reign; Increase my courage, Lord; I’ll bear the toil, endure the pain Supported by Thy Word.”*

May 23—Persecuted for Godliness (2 Timothy 3:12)

2 Timothy 3:12: “*And indeed all those who are desiring to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*”

Verse 12: Paul makes a summary statement to Timothy advising him to expect suffering if he plans to live in a “godly [manner] in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 1:29: “Because to you it has been given in the behalf of Christ, not only to be believing on Him, but also to be suffering in His behalf.”

1 Peter 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 footprints.”

The Lord Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:10–12: “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 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.”

Romans 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.”

In my book, *Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger*, I share:

My precious Pearl paints the graphic picture of the way it all happens:

AH, SUFFERING MY PAINFUL FRIEND;
YOU TAKE THE BUBBLE OF COMFORT
I HAVE SO CAREFULLY BUILT AROUND MYSELF
AND IN A SEEMINGLY CRUEL FASHION
SNATCH IT FROM MY CLINGING HANDS
AND DASH IT TO THE GROUND;
WHERE IT BREAKS INTO A HUNDRED PIECES
AND LEAVES ME EXPOSED AND TREMBLING.
AGAIN, I MUST MAKE THE CHOICE:
DO I RETREAT OR DO I MOVE ON?

Kristine Wyrzten sings a song, “**The Fire**”: *“I’ve been through a fire that has deepened my desire, to know the living God more and more. It hasn’t been much fun, but the work that it has done in my life has been worth the hurt. You see sometimes we need the hard times to bring us to our knees, otherwise we do as we please and never heed Him. For He always knows what’s best and it’s when we are distressed that we really come to know God as He is.”*

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said: “God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart.”

In essence, Paul tells Timothy: It's a law of life for believers. "All those who are desiring to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." You are not alone in this suffering and persecution. Even as I have faced the persecution, so you will face the same.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 1 of "**I Know Who Holds Tomorrow**": *"I don't know about tomorrow; I just live from day to day. I don't borrow from its sunshine, For its skies may turn to gray. I don't worry o'er the future, For I know what Jesus said; And today I'll walk beside Him, For He knows what is ahead. Many things about tomorrow I don't seem to understand; But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand."*

May 24—From Bad to Worse (2 Timothy 3:13)

2 Timothy 3:13: *"But evil men and imposters will go on from bad to worse, leading astray and being led astray."*

Verse 13: The word "but" forms the contrast between the righteous in the previous verse and the wicked in this verse.

The entire passage of Psalm 1 contrasts the righteous and the wicked, but Psalm 1:6 (NKJV) summarizes it well: "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

Paul says three things about the "evil men and imposters." They:

1. Go on from bad to worse
2. Are leading astray
3. Are being led astray

Not only are they leading others astray, but they are being led astray by (1) Satan, (2) self, and (3) sin. The contrast between the believer and unbeliever is:

1. For the believer, things go from bad to better.
2. For the unbeliever, things go from bad to worse.

Wiersbe says: "The only way to defeat Satan's lies is with God's truth. 'Thus saith the Lord!' is the final answer to every question. Evil men and deceivers are going to get worse and worse. They will deceive more and more."

Jesus advises in His final message on the Mount of Olives in Matthew 24:4-6: "And Jesus answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will mislead many. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.'"

Let's join together in worship and praise singing verse 3 of "**I Know Who Holds Tomorrow**": *"I don't know about tomorrow, It may bring me poverty, But the One who feeds the sparrow Is the One who stands by me. And the path that be my portion May be through the flame or flood, But His presence goes before me, And*

I'm covered with His blood. Many things about tomorrow I don't seem to understand; But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand."

May 25—Stay By What You Have Learned (2 Timothy 3:14–15)

2 Timothy 3:14: *"But you be remaining in the things which you learned and became convinced of, knowing from whom you learned them."*

2 Timothy 3:15: *"And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

Verse 14: Once again, we have the words "but you" we saw in 2 Timothy 3:10: "But you followed faithfully my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, steadfastness, love, perseverance." In verse 10, it was "followed faithfully," but now in verse 14, it is "be remaining"—staying the course. The culture is falling away, but you stay constant!

The apostle is focusing on loyalty and devotion, the constancy of fidelity.

Wilkinson said: "The world crowns success, but God crowns faithfulness."

To make a fantastic finish involves sticking to the written Word and the Living Word. It involves our total and complete devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

The command in this verse is "Be Remaining." Don't be led astray by the storms of opposition which are blowing against you, but remain steadfast "in the things which you have learned." Remember your heritage and faith you have learned from your grandmother, Lois, your mother, Eunice, and the apostle Paul.

When German pastor and theologian, Helmut Thielicke, was asked what he will say to Jesus at His return; he replied: "I knew You meant it!"

F.B. Meyer said: "Don't waste your time waiting and longing for large opportunities which may never come. But faithfully handle the little things that are always claiming your attention."

Paul advises Timothy to hang in there, take it a day at a time, and be faithful.

Verse 15: Paul is reminding Timothy once again of his "childhood," his heritage of being raised in a Christian home and learning the Scriptures at an early age.

The apostle also tells Timothy the Scriptures "are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

We read the written Word and receive the Living Word—changing our lives and destinies eternally.

Wiersbe says: "As soon as your child is born, surround him with the Word of God and prayer. You will not have this opportunity after he grows up."

This morning, let's sing one of Ralph Carmichael's great songs in our morning meditation. Please join me in worship and praise singing verses 1 and 2 of **"Reach Out to Jesus"**: *"Is your burden heavy as you bear it all alone? Does the road you travel harbor danger yet unknown? Are you growing weary in the struggle of it all? Jesus will help you when on His name you call. Is the life you're living filled with sorrow and despair? Does the future press you with it's worry and it's care? Are you tired and friendless, have you almost lost your way? Jesus will help you, just come to Him today. He is always there hearing ev'ry prayer, faithful and true. Walking by our side, In His love we hide all the day through. When you get discouraged just remember what to do, Reach out to Jesus, He's reaching out to you."*

May 26—Equipped by the Word (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

2 Timothy 3:16: *"Every Scripture is God-breathed and beneficial for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for training in righteousness."*

2 Timothy 3:17: *"In order that the man of God may be adequate, having been equipped for every good work."*

Verse 16: In this verse, Paul shares his belief about the Scriptures and the value of the Scriptures in our lives. He makes the statement: "Every Scripture is God-breathed." Today, there are many critics who would deny this fact. They say the Bible is only a work of man. Paul knew differently.

Not only are the Scriptures "God-breathed," but they are "beneficial." Paul gives us four "beneficial" purposes for the Scriptures:

1. Teaching
2. Conviction
3. Correction
4. Training in righteousness

The Word of God was designed for teaching us, testing us, turning us, and training us.

Paul advises Timothy to stay in the Word. In it, he will find everything he needs to meet all the demands of living the Christian life.

Warren Wiersbe in *Preaching and Teaching with Imagination* says: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for: doctrine—what is right; reproof—what is not right; correction—how to get right; instruction in righteousness—how to stay right."

Verse 17: This is the statement of purpose for why the Word of God is "God-breathed and beneficial for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for training in righteousness." It is: "in order that the man of God may be adequate, having been equipped for every good work."

In verse 16, we have the *power* and the *profit* of the Word of God. The *power* is that "Scripture is God-breathed." The *profit* is teaching, conviction,

correction and training in righteousness that can be ours. Now we have the *purpose*: “in order that the man of God may be adequate, having been equipped for every good work.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: “Daily, quiet reflection on the Word of God as it applies to me ... becomes for one a point of crystallization for everything which gives interior and exterior order to my life.”

This morning, let’s worship and praise the Lord by singing one of my favorite old hymns. Please join me singing verse 1 of **“Trust and Obey”**: *“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.”*

May 27—Accountability (2 Timothy 4:1)

2 Timothy 4:1: “I am charging you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, the One who is about to be judging the living and the dead and by His appearing and His kingdom.”

Verse 1: In view of his impending death, Paul makes his final appeal and charge to young Timothy: “in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus.” The apostle provides a three-fold reminder of what is ahead:

1. “Who [Jesus Christ] is about to be judging the living and the dead.”

This statement is a reminder that when you die, it isn’t over.

2. He is coming again. “And by His appearing and His kingdom.”

We are to be passionate and keep our sense of urgency and faithfulness because He is going to examine our lives as faithful Christians. However, we also must realize He will be returning soon. We don’t want to waste our last opportunity to be faithful to Him in service before His returning.

The next great promise and thrill we can look forward to with expectancy is “by His appearing and His kingdom.”

3. “His kingdom.” This time when we will rule and reign with Christ.

“The One who is about to be judging the living and the dead and by His appearing and His kingdom.” The One who’s coming again and the One who will set-up His kingdom. Paul’s passion for the Judge who is coming to set-up His kingdom has not changed because of his impending death.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: “Alone you stood before God when He called you; alone you had to answer that call; alone you had to struggle and pray; and alone you will die and give an account to God.”

Please join me in worship and praise 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."

May 28—Preach the Word (2 Timothy 4:2)

2 Timothy 4:2: “Preach the Word, hold yourself in readiness when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient, reprove, rebuke, exhort with unlimited patience and teaching.”

Verse 2: This is the content of the charge, summed up in five rapid-fire commands exhorted in this verse. Given that Jesus Christ will “be judging the living and the dead,” He is coming again and He will set up His kingdom; make haste and work with *passion* to:

1. Preach the Word

In the last passage, we studied Paul’s concept of the Word in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “Every Scripture is God-breathed and beneficial for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for training in righteousness. In order that the man of God may be adequate, having been equipped for every good work.” On the basis of this foundation, the apostle is admonishing young Timothy to be faithful in proclaiming the truth of the Word of God. Life’s answers are in the Word.

2. Hold yourself in readiness when it is convenient and when it is inconvenient

The word “readiness” is a very interesting word. It means to “*stand by, be ready, and be on hand.*” Keep your sense of urgency.

Press the truth and focus back on to Jesus Christ on all occasions. Be alert and ready for every opportunity.

3. Reprove (error)

4. Rebuke sin

5. Exhort with unlimited patience and teaching

The meaning of the word “passion” includes elements of intense emotion, love, intense enthusiasm for something, fervency, and intensity. The whole passage indicates Timothy must ramp up his efforts. He must be intense, eager, and excited about the charge he has been given.

Only passions can elevate the soul to great things!

Enthusiasm, excitement, and expectation summarize this charge to Timothy.

“Let It Be Said of Us” by Promise Keepers: *“Let it be said of us That the Lord was our passion, That with gladness we bore Every cross we were given; That we fought the good fight, that we finished the course; Knowing within us the power of the risen Lord. Let the cross be our glory And the Lord be our song! By mercy made holy, by the Spirit made strong. Let the cross be our glory and the Lord be our song!”*

‘Till the likeness of Jesus be through us made known. Let the cross be our glory and the Lord be our song. Let it be said of us, We were marked by forgiveness; We were known by our love And delighted in meekness; We were ruled by His peace, Heeding unity’s call, Joined as one body That Christ would be seen by all.’

This morning, let’s join together in worship and praise 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.”*

May 29—Turning from the Truth (2 Timothy 4:3–4)

2 Timothy 4:3: *“For the time will come when they will not listen willingly to wholesome instruction, But after their own desires, they will accumulate to themselves a great many teachers who are tickling their ears.”*

2 Timothy 4:4: *“And they will turn away their ears from the truth and will wander off into myths.”*

Verse 3: Paul states the reason for the charge and its importance: “for the time will come.” It is probably already present with many of the difficulties they have encountered in the Ephesian church.

They will not willingly listen to wholesome instruction. These are popular teachers providing the latest trend or “tickling.” This word is only here in the New Testament. They stand against the truth and support systems that justify selfishness.

“For the time will come when they will not listen willingly to wholesome instruction.” The word “but” form the contrast: “but after their own desires, they will accumulate.” “Accumulate” means to *“heap up.”*

“They will accumulate to themselves [false teachers] a great many teachers who are tickling their ears.”

1 Kings 22:13–14: “The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, ‘Look, as one man the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably.’ But Micaiah said, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, I can tell him only what the Lord tells me.’”

Verse 4: We are responsible for who we give attention and what we hear. This verse states the sad consequences of listening to false prophets.

Let’s worship and praise the Lord with a joyful heart this morning 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.”*

May 30—Fulfill Your Ministry (2 Timothy 4:5)

2 Timothy 4:5: *“But you be self-possessed under all circumstances, bear hardship patiently, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”*

Verse 5: The words “but you” forms the contrast to the false teachers and those who “wander off into myths.” There were strong contrasts in 2 Timothy 3:13 and 14, also. Paul exhorts young Timothy with four commands:

1. Be self-possessed under all circumstances
2. Bear hardship patiently
3. Do the work of an evangelist
4. Fulfill your ministry

When Paul tells Timothy to “be self-possessed under all circumstances,” he is telling him to be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. He is to keep his self-control. When other minds are fearful and unable to think, they tend to pull away from those things known since childhood. The apostle wants Timothy to keep his head in all situations.

Wiersbe says:

A young preacher once complained to Charles Spurgeon, the famous British preacher of the 1800s, that he did not have as big a church as he deserved.

“How many do you preach to?” Spurgeon asked.

“Oh, about 100,” the man replied.

Solemnly Spurgeon said, “That will be enough to give account for on the day of judgment.”

This morning, we will sing about the ultimate reward for faithfulness in ministry. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing 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.”*

May 31—Facing the Finish Line (2 Timothy 4:6)

2 Timothy 4:6: *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”*

Verse 6: The last verse was the end of the charge. It ended with “but you” and the guidance for Timothy. In this verse, Paul switches over to “for I.” This expresses the urgency and real reason for the charge. Paul is preparing for his death.

Paul has just told Timothy to “fulfill your ministry,” with the understanding that his own is ending.

Death is a departure not perishment. The very same word “departure” is found in 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.”

Demarest said:

One of the most poignant moments in the history of baseball was the final farewell of Lou Gehrig in Yankee Stadium. Suffering from an incurable disease, the great and revered first baseman stood at the plate and tearfully said farewell to the fans who had cheered him on for many years. Sooner or later, the time comes when each of us must “hang up the spikes.” That time had come for Paul. What a farewell speech!

It has been 30 years since the apostle’s Damascus road experience. He has been through all that life holds for each of us.

“At the time of my departure.” The word “departure” means “breaking camp” or “setting sail.”

Barbara Johnson in *He’s Gonna Toot and I’m Gonna Scoot* quotes this chorus by Herbert Buffum and Alfred B. Smith: “*I’m going higher, yes, higher some day. I’m going higher to stay; Over the clouds and beyond the blue sky, Going where none ever sicken or die—Loved ones to meet in that “Sweet by and by,” I’m going higher some day.*”

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”

Won’t you join me this morning as we sing a wonderful song by Andre Crouch? Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of “**Through It All**”: “*I’ve had many tears and sorrows, I’ve had questions for tomorrow, There’ve been times I didn’t know right from wrong. But in every situation, God gave me blessed consolation, That my trials come to only make me strong. Through it all, through it all, Oh, I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, Oh, I’ve learned to trust in God. Through it all, through it all, I’ve learned to depend upon His Word.*”

JUNE

June 1—Finished Work (2 Timothy 4:7)

2 Timothy 4:7: “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.*”

Verse 7: These final words from the apostle Paul remind me of David’s final words to his son, Solomon, in 1 Kings 2:2–3: “‘I am about to go the way of all the earth,’ he said. ‘So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands,

his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go.”

In verse 6, Paul looks at the present. He is ready to face his impending death. However, in verse 7, the apostle looks to the past as most do when they are ready to die. Paul makes three wonderful statements:

1. I have fought the good fight.
2. I have finished the course.
3. I have kept the faith.

“I have fought the good fight.” Paul likens the Christian life to a “fight.” It truly is warfare throughout our entire lives on three fronts: (1) sin, (2) Satan, and (3) the system. As Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:3, he has “suffer[ed] hardship ... as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

“I have finished the course.” Paul repeatedly compared life to a race.

“I have kept the faith.” He has not “turned away” or “forsaken the Lord Jesus,” but has “kept the faith” until the end.

John 17:4 (KJV): “I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.”

Jennifer Armstrong in *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance* says: “Pain and aches, boat journeys, marches, hunger and fatigue seemed to belong to the limbo of forgotten things, and there remained only the perfect contentment that comes of work accomplished.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verses 2 and 3 of **“Through It All”**: *“I’ve been to lots of places, I’ve seen a lot of faces, There’ve been times I felt so all alone. But in my lonely hours, Yes, those precious lonely hours, Jesus lets me know that I was His own. For if I’d never had a problem, I wouldn’t know God could solve them, I’d never know what faith in God could do. Through it all, through it all, Oh, I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, Oh, I’ve learned to trust in God. Through it all, through it all, I’ve learned to depend upon His Word.”*

June 2—Facing the Future (2 Timothy 4:8)

2 Timothy 4:8: *“In the future there is reserved for me, the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

Verse 8: Paul looks forward to the future with great anticipation and joy. He knows he will be rewarded for his faithfulness in service to the Lord at the judgment seat of Christ. He will receive the crown of righteousness.

The Lord is “the righteous Judge” and the just umpire. It is from His lips we long to hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

1 Peter 1:4: “Unto an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, which has been reserved in heaven for you.”

In the little book of Haggai, there is a phrase that is repeated 5 times: “Give careful thought to your ways.”

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.”

I would like to invite you to worship and praise the Lord this morning with a wonderful hymn. Please join me singing verses 1 and 2 of **“Find Us Faithful”**: *“We’re pilgrims on the journey of the narrow road. And those who’ve gone before us line the way. Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary. Their lives a stirring testament To God’s sustaining grace. Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses Let us run the race not only for the prize. But as those who’ve gone before us Let us leave to those behind us A heritage of faithfulness passed on through Godly light. O May all who come behind us, find us faithful. May the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe. And the lives we live inspire them to obey. O May all who come behind us, find us faithful.”*

June 3—I Need Your Help (2 Timothy 4:9)

2 Timothy 4:9: “Make every effort to come to me soon.”

These final verses of Paul’s letter to Timothy regard servanthood. Servanthood involves being spent in service and giving the gift of ourselves.

Jim Elliot said: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

We must learn one of the great lessons of Scripture: We never outgrow servanthood. Many in our culture today change their focus to the laws of entitlement when they reach the age of 65. They are no longer willing to serve. This will result in two things: (1) loneliness and (2) early death.

Fenelon in *The Seeking Heart* says:

Remember that you are not called to be well-served, but to serve Him well. Learn to be gentle and patient with all that disturbs you.

To do small things that are right continually, without being noticed, is much more important. These small acts attack your pride, your laziness, your self-centeredness, and your oversensitive nature.

Many marriage problems are solved simply by getting our minds back on each other. Marriage is a laboratory designed by the Lord to teach us how to be servants.

MacArthur sets the tone for these final verses we will study in 2 Timothy:

As he faced the executioner's ax, many of these people were on his mind. In passing on the mantle of ministry to Timothy, he brought the young pastor up to date on the spiritual condition, activities, and whereabouts of certain men and women. Some of them, including Timothy, he hoped would visit him before he died.

Verse 9: Please come quickly! Our passage opens up with a command. The word "soon" tells us it is a command with urgency. It could be translated: "*quickly, at once, without delay, or as soon as possible.*"

It will take Timothy 4 to 6 months to travel mostly over land, but also by sea to reach Paul. The apostle is encouraging Timothy to make haste to start this journey.

Wallace O. Chariton in *This Dog'll Hunt* says: "There are two chances, slim and none, and slim is saddling up to leave town."

Barker says:

Sooner or later, every person knows loneliness, discouragement and failure. At such times you are tempted to say, "Yes, I know about it. But what does God know about it? What does He know about loneliness? How can God understand discouragement? God knows what failure is like? Ha!"

Have you forgotten that Man who hung on the cross—a lonely, discouraged failure? That is the message of the cross: God knows. God says, in effect, "I know; I understand anything that a man may suffer." The cross is God's signature for the lonely, the discouraged, the failures, to see that He has been through it too. Our God knows what it is like.

Dag Hammarskjöld said: "Pray that your loneliness may spur you into finding something to live for, great enough to die for."

Oswald Chambers said: "It is one thing to go through a crisis grandly, and another thing to go through every day glorifying God when nobody is paying any attention to you."

Someone said: "Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while and leave footprints on our heart and we are never, ever the same."

Let's join together in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **"Find Us Faithful"**: "*After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone. And our children sift through all we've left behind. May the clues that they discover And the memories they uncover Become the light that leads them to the road we each must find. O May all who come behind us, find us faithful. May the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe. And the lives we live inspire them to obey. O May all who come behind us, find us faithful.*"

June 4—Failure to Finish (2 Timothy 4:10)

2 Timothy 4:10: “For Demas deserted me, having loved this present world, and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.”

Verse 10: The word “for” provides an additional reason why Paul has requested Timothy “to make every effort to come to me [Paul] soon.”: “for Demas deserted me.”

Two verses come to mind regarding Demas:

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.”

Jeremiah 4:3: “This is what the Lord says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: ‘Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns.’”

Demas’s desertion is probably due in part to Paul’s own testimony in 2 Timothy 4:6: “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.” Paul knew the pain of desertion from those who should have been loyal and carried the message of the Gospel. Instead, they made choices to put other things first in their lives above the Lord.

The precise sense of the verb “desert” is “*to leave one helpless.*”

Each of us has the choice to dedicate or desert. Demas chose the latter. He would never be able to say: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.”

Matthew 27:46: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’”

Hebrews 13:5: “Let your manner of life be free from the love of money, being satisfied with what you are having; for He Himself has said: ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.’”

Jeremiah 2:13: “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

Demas made the mistake of loving the world more than the Lord Jesus Christ and “His appearing.”

I love Gary Larson’s *Farside* cartoon of two old gentlemen sitting on a tiny little island with a couple of palm trees. One says to the other: “Thanks for being my friend, Wayne.”

The Scripture records that Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew and Lot chose the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for the well-watered plains of Jordan. Judas Iscariot chose silver over the Savior. Peter possibly faced a similar choice when he denied he knew the Lord on that night before the crucifixion.

“For Demas deserted me, having loved this present world, and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Of Crescens nothing is known... Unlike Demas, there is no hint of any defection on their part.”

“Titus to Dalmatia.” We know this of Titus:

1. He was a test-case at the Jerusalem council. He was an uncircumcised Gentile who knew the Savior.
2. He was involved in ministry in the city of Corinth.
3. His previous ministry before this assignment was on the island of Crete.

It appears he had left Crete and was sent by the apostle to Dalmatia.

Barker says: “Nineteen hundred years later, archaeologists excavated Crete. They came across remains of chapels and churches dating back to early Christian times. These bore the inscription, ‘Dedicated to our beloved St. Titus.’”

David Roper in *The Strength of a Man* describes worldliness in this way:

Worldliness, then, is a preoccupation with ease and affluence. It elevates creature comfort to the point of idolatry; large salaries and comfortable life-styles become necessities of life. Worldliness is reading magazines about people who live hedonistic lives and spend too much money on themselves and wanting to be like them. But more importantly, worldliness is simply pride and selfishness in disguises.

Eda LeShan in *It's Better to Be Over the Hill Than Under It* said: “Old age is no excuse for copping out. Each of us can find ways in which to make a difference.”

Thomas A. Dorsey was a musical evangelist. He was away on ministry when the Lord chose to take his wife home. He wrote this beautiful prayer song. Join me as we worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of “**Take My Hand, Precious Lord**”: “*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.*”

June 5—Useful in Service (2 Timothy 4:11)

2 Timothy 4:11: “*Luke alone is with me. Pick up Mark and be bringing him with you, for he is useful to me for service.*”

Verse 11: Paul asked Timothy to pick up Mark on his journey to see the apostle. It is not known where Mark was at this time.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Of all Paul’s close associates, only the ‘beloved physician’ Luke was with Paul.”

Hendricksen says: “Luke and Paul had much in common. Both were educated men, men of culture. Both were big-hearted, broad-spirited, sympathetic.”

Above all, both were believers and missionaries.”

Luke, Mark and Timothy together for Paul’s departure. What a tough team for tough times!

Barker says of Mark: “Even tough, crusty old Paul willingly admitted in the end that John Mark had found a purpose and was no longer a religious bum.”

Mark was a deserter in the early stages of his life. However, he went on to prove himself very useful or helpful in service. It is exciting to see a young man, like Mark, who made the choice to desert, but then turned around to dedicate himself to service.

I am reminded of what Paul says in Philippians 3:13 (TLB): “No, dear brothers, I am still not all I should be, but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead.”

Mark’s life could be described in 2 Timothy 2:21: “If therefore, a person cleanse himself from these, he shall be a vessel for honorable use, having been set apart, useful to the Master, having been prepared for every good work.”

Charles R. Swindoll says: “God is a specialist at making something useful and beautiful out of something broken and confused.”

Oswald Chambers said: “God will make us broken bread and poured out wine to feed and nourish others.”

Martin Luther said: “A good servant is a real godsend; but truly ‘tis a rare bird in the land.”

“Luke alone is with me. Pick up Mark and be bringing him with you. Paul requests Mark: “for he is useful to me for service.” Paul is still focused on ministry in these final hours and days of his life.

Who better to continue in ministry than the author of the gospel that presents the Lord Jesus as the perfect 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.”

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **“Take My Hand, Precious Lord”**: *“When my way grows drear, Precious Lord, linger near; When my life is almost gone; Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand lest I fall; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home.”*

June 6—Deployment (2 Timothy 4:12)

2 Timothy 4:12: “But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus.”

Verse 12: Tychicus means “fortunate.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Tychicus, another of Paul’s faithful traveling companions ... and messengers ... had been sent ... to Ephesus. The reference is cryptic and evidently self-explanatory to Timothy. Perhaps

Tychicus delivered the letter; perhaps he was even, by prior arrangement, to relieve Timothy temporarily.... In any case Tychicus was another of Paul's absent companions.

Barker says:

Tychicus acted as a combination letter-carrier and trouble-shooter. The letters each carry a few words about Tychicus at the close. Paul knew these Christians in Asia Minor would want to have the latest reports on how he was and how the Church was doing elsewhere. Tychicus was to fill them in on all the news.

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord by singing verse 1 of one of my favorite old hymns, **"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!"*

June 7—Bring My Personal Things (2 Timothy 4:13)

2 Timothy 4:13: *"When you are coming, be bringing the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, also the books, especially the parchments."*

Verse 13: This is the third request in this section. In verse 9, he asked Timothy to make haste in coming. In verse 11, he requested Timothy pick up Mark on this way. Now, Paul asked for specific personal items: "When you are coming, be bringing the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, also the books, especially the parchments."

It is very instructive that Paul longs to have his "books" and "parchments" to continue studying the glories of the Savior even while he is awaiting his death.

Martin Luther said: "For several years I have read the bible through twice in 12 months. It is a great and powerful tree, each word of which is a mighty branch. Each of these branches have I well shaken, so desirous was I to know what each one bore and what it would give me. And the shaking of them has never disappointed me."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Meditating on the Word* said: "Every day in which I do not penetrate more deeply into the knowledge of God's Word in holy scripture is a lost day for me. I can only move forward with certainty upon the firm ground of the Word of God."

Early in this letter, Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15: "Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path." Paul's focus continues to be on Jesus Christ.

Won't you join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"**: *"Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged, Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness, Take it to the Lord in prayer."*

June 8—The Opposition (2 Timothy 4:14)

2 Timothy 4:14: *"Alexander, the coppersmith, did me a great deal of harm; the Lord will pay him back according to his deeds."*

Verse 14: In verse 10, we read: "Demas deserted me." In this verse, Paul tells us: "Alexander, the coppersmith, did me a great deal of harm."

Milne says: "Alexander had something to do with Paul's arrest or the prosecution against him."

Barclay says: "That verb literally means *'to display'*; and it was in fact often used for the laying of information against a man. Informers were one of the great curses of Rome at this time."

There is no bitterness, spent emotional energy or hatred involved in this statement from Paul. He knows "the Lord will pay him [Alexander] back according to his deeds." There is no need for revenge on his part. It is in the Lord's hands.

Psalm 62:1–2: "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken."

Genesis 50:20: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 3 of **"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"**: *"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."*

June 9—Warring (2 Timothy 4:15)

2 Timothy 4:15: *"And you also be guarding yourself against him for he vigorously opposed our words."*

Verse 15: In this verse, the apostle warns Timothy: "And you also be guarding yourself against him." The next phrase provides the reason: "for he vigorously opposed our words."

Is there anyone who has done you a "great deal of harm?" An offense you need to release into the Lord's hands and allow Him to handle that situation?

How do you hear “well done”? I believe those who hear these words have a reputation for being faithful servants to their:

1. Master
2. Mate
3. Ministry

George Bernard Shaw said:

This is the true joy in life ... being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one ... being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.... I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It's a sort of splendid torch which I've got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

I love to worship and praise the Lord when it would be so easy to be negative. Please join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of **“Blest Be the Tie That Binds”**: *“Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Christian love! The fellowship of kindred minds Is like to that above. Before our Father’s throne We pour our ardent prayers; Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our comforts and our cares.”*

June 10—Everybody Left (2 Timothy 4:16)

2 Timothy 4:16: *“At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.”*

Verse 16: The word “stood” is key in this verse: “at my first defense no one stood with me,” and the next verse: “but the Lord stood with me.” One of the Greek writers paraphrased this section: “No one stood by me as my advocate. It is a legal term.

“At my first defense no one stood with me, but all deserted me.” This word “deserted” is the same word in 2 Timothy 4:10: “For Demas deserted me, having loved this present world.”

Our Lord Jesus experienced all of the challenges that Paul is experiencing in these verses. Remember that He came into Jerusalem the last time with great accolades, riding on the back of a donkey. Thunderous praise was coming from the multitude as they cried out in Matthew 21:9: “Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!”

Then, in the short time from Sunday to Thursday, He was apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane. On Friday, the crowds were shouting: “Crucify

Him! Crucify Him!” Matthew 26:56: “‘But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.’ Then all the disciples left Him and fled.”

As we consider these final verses in this epistle may our prayer be two-fold:

1. Lord, I long to finish well.
2. Lord, keep me from being an embarrassment to you in the finishing of my race.

Failure to prepare is preparation for failure.

Paul’s prayer-wish is expressed in the final phrase of this verse: “may it not be counted against them.” The Lord Jesus had the same response in Luke 23:34: “But Jesus was saying, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.”

This was also true of Stephen 30 years earlier as he was being stoned to death. His final words were recorded in Acts 7:60: “And falling on this knees he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them!’ And having said this, he fell asleep.”

MacArthur says:

Whatever kind of trial it was, not one of Paul’s friends and fellow believers had supported him. As with the noun “defense,” the Greek verb behind “supported” may have been a legal term, referring to official testimony in court. No one stood by Paul or testified on his behalf; instead they all deserted him.

Calvin Miller in *The Valiant Papers* said: “Death is such an instant storm that by the time you reach for an umbrella, you already need your water wings.

Fenelon says:

There is no true and constant gentleness without humility. While we are so fond of ourselves, we are easily offended with others. Let us be persuaded that nothing is due to us, and then nothing will disturb us. Let us often think of our own infirmities, as we shall become indulgent toward those of others.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verses 3 and 4 of **“Blest Be the Tie That Binds”**: *“We share our mutual woes, mutual burdens bear; And often for each other flows The sympathizing tear. When we asunder part It gives us inward pain; But we shall still be joined in heart, And hope to meet again.”*

June 11—The Lord Stayed (2 Timothy 4:17)

2 Timothy 4:17: “But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the Lion’s mouth.”

Verse 17: In the previous verse, we read: “all deserted me,” but in this verse, we read: “the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.” Paul is bearing witness that in the midst of this “first defense” he sensed the Lord’s *presence* and *power*.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego experienced the Lord’s *presence* and *power* as a fourth person walked with them in the fire.

The Lord was faithful to stand with Paul and strengthen him.

Psalm 109:30–31: “With my mouth I will greatly extol the Lord; in the great throng I will praise Him. For He stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save his life from those who condemn him.”

Philippians 4:13: “I am having strength for all things in the One who is making me strong.”

Colossians 1:11: “Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness, and patience, joyously.”

Isaiah 41:10: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Paul states the *purpose* in the Lord’s *presence* and *power*: “in order that through me the proclamation might be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the Lion’s mouth.” The *purpose* is three-fold:

1. Through Paul, the proclamation might be fully proclaimed.
2. All the Gentiles might hear.
3. It would be witnessed that Paul was delivered out of the Lion’s mouth.

What does Paul mean when he says: “I was delivered out of the Lion’s mouth”? Here are three possible suggestions to his reference:

1. The Roman amphitheater—where Christians were fed to lions
2. Nero—who tortured and killed Christians in many ways
3. Satan—since he is characterized as a “roaring lion” in 1 Peter 5:8

Possibly, it is none of these suggestions, but a reference to his physical death or serious danger since he was spared immediate execution.

Psalm 22:21: “Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.”

Daniel 6:22: “My God sent His angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in His sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king.”

Paul’s farewell to the Ephesian leadership is in Acts 20:24: “But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.”

Wiersbe says: "What a man! His friends forsake him, and he prays that God will forgive them. His enemies try him, and he looks for opportunities to tell them how to be saved! What a difference it makes when the Holy Spirit controls your life."

Larry Crabb in his book, *Shattered Dreams: God's Unexpected Pathway to Joy*, says: "The search to discover God requires that we abandon ourselves, that we give up control of what matters most, and that we place our confidence in Someone we cannot manage. These requirements are as vital as they are difficult."

True greatness is to serve unnoticed and to work unseen!

Romans 8:37: "We are more than conquerors," literally means: "*we are in the process of winning.*"

Won't you join me in worship and praise as we sing 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.*"

June 12—The Lord Will Do What Is Necessary (2 Timothy 4:18)

2 Timothy 4:18: "*The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen.*"

Verse 18: Just before she died, hymnwriter Frances Havergal asked a friend to read Isaiah 42. Halfway through verse 6, which reads, "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You," Miss Havergal stopped her. "Called, held, kept," she whispered. "That's enough. I'll just go home to Glory on those words!" A few minutes later she entered the presence of the Lord. Although Isaiah 42:6 refers to Christ, Miss Havergal, in applying it to herself, was expressing her confidence in God to keep her safe until the very end.

Haddon W. Robinson says: "When we know God stands with us, it doesn't matter who stands against us."

Romans 8:31: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?"

Romans 8:37–39: "But in all things we are winning a most glorious victory through the One who loved us. For I stand convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things about to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

William Culbertson says: "It is important to start right, but it is imperative to end well."

“The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen.” What a fantastic finish! What a way to go out! Singing the doxology. It really doesn’t get much better!

Frances Fenelon said:

We consider ourselves immortal, or at least as though [we are] going to live for centuries. Folly of the human spirit! Every day those who die soon follow those who are already dead. One about to leave on a journey ought not to think himself far from one who went only two days before. Life flows by like a flood.

How do you finish victoriously? Go out singing the doxology and looking forward with great anticipation to the moment you die—when you instantaneously enter into the presence of the Lord, the One who said to the thief on the cross: “Today you will be with Me in paradise.”

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing together verse 2 of “**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.*”

June 13—Personal Greeting (2 Timothy 4:19–20)

2 Timothy 4:19: “*Greet Prisca and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.*”

2 Timothy 4:20: “*Erastus remained in Corinth, but Trophimus, being ill, I left behind in Miletus.*”

Verse 19: In these remaining verses of the epistle, Paul mentions nine different names of individuals. This verse includes some of his favorite folks. These are wonderful homefolks who have stood behind the scenes and served well over the years in ministry with the Apostle Paul.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Priscilla and Aquila, [they are] the well-known couple who taught Apollos in Ephesus.”

Paul spoke of the household of Onesiphorus in 2 Timothy 1:16–18: “May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me. May the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And what services he rendered in Ephesus you are knowing very well.”

Barker says:

At Winchester, Virginia, in the lovely Shenandoah Valley, there is a quiet old cemetery where a shaft of granite commem-

orates the unknown dead of the Confederate Army. On it are inscribed the words,

WHO THEY ARE NONE KNOWS

WHAT THEY WERE ALL KNOW

Those are the words we can apply to the Priscillas and Aquilas of the world—the quiet, gentle, kindly Christians who, in everyday living, are truly “fellow workers in Christ Jesus.”

Verse 20: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “Erastus was an old associate of Timothy (Acts 19:22) and his whereabouts would presumably be of interest; the same would be true of the information about Trophimus ... an Ephesian.”

Acts 19:22: “And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.”

MacArthur says:

The Erastus [who] remained at Corinth probably was “the city treasurer” of Corinth, who sent greetings through Paul to the church at Rome (Romans 16:23). He also may have been the man whom the apostle sent with Timothy to minister in Macedonia (Acts 19:22).

Trophimus was a native of the province of Asia, specifically the city of Ephesus, and had accompanied Paul from Greece to Troas (Acts 20:1–6). He probably helped carry the offering to the church in Jerusalem, where he was the unintentional cause of Paul’s arrest for presumably bringing a Gentile into the temple (Acts 21:29). On his trip to Rome, Paul sadly had to leave him sick at Miletus.

How appropriate for us to end our morning meditation singing together in worship and praise 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.”*

June 14—I Need You to Come (2 Timothy 4:21–22)

2 Timothy 4:21: *“Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren are sending greetings to you.”*

2 Timothy 4:22: *“The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.”*

Verse 21: “Make every effort to come before winter.” This verse reminds us of verse 9: “come to me quickly.” The wind, rain, and cold are on their way and Paul needs his cloak, also.

Remember when Paul was shipwrecked in Acts 27. They traveled during perilous times and shipwrecked. The winter weather is described in Acts 27:20: "And since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned." From November 10 until March 10, the seas were closed.

Philippians 4:22: "All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household." What a tremendous testimony! In the eye of the storm, there are followers remaining faithful unto the Lord. At this time, they send their greetings to Timothy.

Paul has greetings from: "Eubulus and Pudens and Linus and Claudia." Then he states: "and all the brethren are sending greetings to you."

Verse 22: The word "you" in verse 21 then "yours" in verse 22 refers to Timothy. However, the word "you" in verse 22 is plural so it applies to the readers of the epistle as well.

One day, I had an opportunity to lead Bobby Brown to the Lord. Bobby was a third baseman for the New York Yankees during their golden years. He played with Bobby Richardson who, when he retired, traveled around the country sharing his Christian testimony. On a television show one night, he closed with this poem which I really like:

YOUR NAME MAY NOT APPEAR DOWN HERE
IN THIS WORLD'S HALL OF FAME,
IN FACT, YOU MAY BE SO UNKNOWN
THAT NO ONE KNOWS YOUR NAME;
THE OSCARS AND THE PRAISE OF MEN
MAY NEVER COME YOUR WAY,
BUT DON'T FORGET GOD HAS REWARDS
THAT HE'LL HAND OUT SOMEDAY.

THIS HALL OF FAME IS ONLY GOOD
AS LONG AS TIME SHALL BE;
BUT KEEP IN MIND, GOD'S HALL OF FAME
IS FOR ETERNITY;
TO HAVE YOUR NAME INSCRIBED UP THERE
IS GREATER MORE BY FAR
THAN ALL THE FAME AND ALL THE PRAISE
OF EV'RY MAN-MADE STAR.

THIS CROWD ON EARTH MAY SOON FORGET
WHEN YOU'RE NOT AT THE TOP.
THEY'LL CHEER LIKE MAD UNTIL YOU FALL

AND THEN THEIR PRAISE WILL STOP;
NOT GOD, HE NEVER DOES FORGET,
AND IN HIS HALL OF FAME,
BY JUST BELIEVING ON HIS SON,
FOREVER—THERE'S YOUR NAME.

I TELL YOU, FRIEND, I WOULDN'T TRADE
MY NAME, HOWEVER SMALL,
THAT'S WRITTEN THERE BEYOND THE STARS
IN THAT CELESTIAL HALL;
FOR ALL FAMOUS NAMES ON EARTH,
OR GLORY THAT THEY SHARE;
I'D RATHER BE AN UNKNOWN HERE,
AND HAVE MY NAME UP THERE.
—WALT HUNTLEY

Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 1 of **“Is Your All on the Altar?”**: *“You have longed for sweet peace, and for faith to increase, And have earnestly, fervently prayed; But you cannot have rest or be perfectly blest, Until all on the altar is laid. Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid? Your heart, does the Spirit control? You can only be blest and have peace and sweet rest, As you yield Him your body and soul.”*

June 15—The Process of Godliness (Titus 1:1)

Titus 1:1: *“Paul, a bondslave of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God’s chosen-out ones and a knowledge of truth which is according to godliness.”*

Let’s take a moment to meet Titus since we have concluded Paul’s epistles to Timothy. The apostle developed a great confidence in Titus. He took him to the Jerusalem conference (Galatians 2:1–3). Hendricksen has suggested that Titus was employed as a test case to prove to the conference that Gentiles could be heirs of salvation without submitting to Jewish circumcision.

Additionally, Paul sent Titus to Corinth when that church congregation was divided and troubled. This particular letter was written to Titus when he was on the Isle of Crete.

Verse 1: Paul describes himself in two ways:

1. A bondslave of God
2. An apostle of Jesus Christ

A genuine bondsslave is characterized by two things: (1) submission of will to the one served and (2) obedience to his commands.

Paul introduces himself not only as a minister, but a missionary—a sent one. This message he takes is in the latter part of this verse: “for the faith of God’s chosen-out ones and a knowledge of truth which is according to godliness.”

The key words in this verse are (1) faith, (2) truth, and (3) godliness. They describe the process of becoming more like Christ.

“For the faith of God’s chosen-out ones.” The apostle recognizes the foundation of the relationship begins by the single condition of faith.

“A knowledge of truth.” Evangelism is not Paul’s only purpose. He also needs to exhort and edify the new believer with the truth of the Word of God for growth. There is a principle involved: Godliness does not come by experience, but by taking in the Word of God and deepening the relationship with the Lord.

The more I know His word, the more I know of Him and what He wants of me.

“Which is according to godliness.” We have the progression from faith to truth to godliness. It is a growth process designed by the Father for His children. Godliness is the result of growth in the truth. It does not come by service, but provides the foundation for a witness.

Therefore, the process is from faith to food to fruit.

How relevant this verse is to godliness. This morning, let’s sing together in worship and praise verse 2 of **“Is Your All on the Altar?”**: *“Would you walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, And have peace and contentment alway? You must do His sweet will to be free from all ill, On the altar your all you must lay. Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid? Your heart, does the Spirit control? You can only be blest and have peace and sweet rest, As you yield Him your body and soul.”*

June 16—Soon We Shall Be Like Him (Titus 1:2)

Titus 1:2: *“In the hope of life eternal, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago.”*

Verse 2: Now, Paul looks to the future and the result of following the process of faith, to the knowledge of the truth, to godliness in life. This process of faith-truth-godliness means “soon we shall be like Him. For we shall see Him as He is.”

What God has promised, He will faithfully fulfill.

Numbers 23:19: “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?”

I saw a road sign recently: “Road complete.” The minute we step into the presence of the Lord, our road is complete and we “shall be like Him.”

It is godliness now and glory later.

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.”

This morning, let’s sing that wonderful song, **“His Eye Is on the Sparrow.”** Please join me with joy in your hearts as we sing verse 1: *“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. 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.”*

June 17—In His Time (Titus 1:3)

Titus 1:3: *“But in His own seasons He made known His Word in a proclamation with which I was entrusted in accordance with the commandment of God our Savior.”*

Verse 3: During His earthly ministry, Jesus was often aware that His hour had not yet come. Then, prior to the cross experience, He speaks the phrase, “My hour has come.”

Galatians 4:4–5: “But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

“In His own seasons” and at His own time, Jesus made known His Word.

There is a *promise* in the previous verse and a *proclamation* in this verse. Paul was entrusted with this proclamation that was “in accordance with the commandment of God our Savior.”

Acts 1:6–7: “And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, ‘Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.’”

2 Peter 1:19–21: “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. But knowing this first of all, that every prophecy of Scripture is not originating from one’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men being carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

After he met Jesus Christ, Stuart Hamblin wrote some great songs. This is one of my favorites. Please join me in worship and praise singing verse 1 of **“Until Then”**: *“My heart can sing when I pause to remember, A heartache here is but a stepping stone Along a trail that’s winding always upwards, This troubled world is not my final home, But until then my heart will go on singing, Until*

then with joy I'll carry on, Until the day my eyes behold the city, Until the day God calls me home."

June 18—A True Child in a Common Faith (Titus 1:4)

Titus 1:4: "To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior."

Verse 4: We are introduced to Titus as Paul's "true child in a common faith."

This reminds me of Philemon 1:10: "I appeal to you for my son, Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains."

Evidently, Titus has come to know Jesus Christ through Paul's ministry. As a result of his faith, he became Paul's spiritual son.

"My true child in a common faith." Paul had seen enough evidences of the faith-truth-godliness process in the life of Titus to know he was a true believer. The apostle spoke of this faith in verse 1: "for the faith of God's chosen-ones." It is what makes him an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Titus is the real deal. He is the genuine article.

Paul desires for Titus: "Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior." Grace and peace are never reversed. A man must experience God's grace before he can know God's peace. The source of these gifts are from "God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior."

Here is a summary of Titus's life from a Biblical perspective:

1. Titus was converted by Paul, probably in Antioch. He was a Greek on both sides of his family.
2. Paul took Titus, an uncircumcised man, to be a test case to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.
3. The Corinthians urged Paul to come to Corinth when he was at Ephesus, but he remained until Pentecost. Titus carried the first letter to the Corinthians.
4. Titus joined Paul in Macedonia where he told Paul what happened in Corinth. Then, Paul sent Titus back to complete the work Paul had begun, sending Trophimus and Tychicus with him.
5. Following Paul's escape from prison the first time and while on a missionary tour, Paul went to Crete. Finding great disorder, Paul left Titus to set things in order.
6. Paul asked Titus to join him in Nicopolis for the winter after a successor came. He sent Artemus or Tychicus to take his place.
7. Titus was still in Crete when Paul sent the letter of Titus by Zenas and Apollos. In the letter, he charged Titus to take charge of the two men and help them on their way.

8. Paul told Timothy from prison that Titus had gone to Dalmatia.

9. These scriptures indicate Titus's appreciative nature.

A vital part of the process of becoming godly is to spend time in the Word of God.

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verse 2 of **“Until Then”**: *“The things of earth will dim and lose their value If we recall they're borrowed for awhile And things of earth that cause the heart to tremble, Remembered there will only bring a smile, But until then my heart will go on singing, Until then with joy I'll carry on, Until the day my eyes behold the city, Until the day God calls me home.”*

June 19—Titus Trusted With Ministry (Titus 1:5)

Titus 1:5: *“For this reason I left you in Crete, in order that you might set in order the things which remain and appoint elders in every city as I direct you.”*

Verse 5: We have learned in the previous verses that godliness is a process. It takes time. There are no instant results.

How does godliness appear in a human instrument? An authentic acceptance of Jesus Christ will be accompanied by an insatiable appetite for His Word.

When Paul and Titus were ministering on the island of Crete, Paul felt led by the Lord's will to leave Titus there to lead two very important projects:

1. Set in order the things which remain
2. Appoint elders in every city

In this verse, Paul reminds Titus of his job description in Crete regarding these two projects.

“In order that you might set in order the things which remain.” Apparently, much teaching was still required along with some basic organizational structure for the churches that were being formed.

“Appoint elders in every city as I direct you.” This list overlaps in some areas with the list we studied in 1 Timothy 3. Others are different. Together, there are approximately 20 qualifications of for leadership in the local congregation of believers. We will study 15 in the next few verses.

Paul had some role in approving these appointments as referenced in the conclusion of this verse: “as I direct you.” The directions could be what follows in verses 6–9.

This morning, let's worship and praise the Lord by singing verse 3 of **“Until Then”**: *“This weary world with all its toil and struggle May take its toll of misery and strife The soul of man is like a waiting falcon, When it's released it's destined for*

the skies, But until then my heart will go on singing, Until then with joy I'll carry on, Until the day my eyes behold the city, Until the day God calls me home."

June 20—Goals for the Godly (Titus 1:6)

Titus 1:6: *"If a certain man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who are believers, not accused of dissipation or rebellion."*

Verse 6: There are four characteristics of the godly man we will consider in this verse.

Getz points out:

Paul did not say, Look for me with the gift of pastor-teaching or the gift of administration or the gift of helps or the gift of exhortation. In fact, there is very little reference to any ability or skill. Rather, out of the 20 qualifications listed, 19 have to do with a man's reputation, ethics, morality, temperament, habits, and spiritual and psychological maturity; and the other one has to do with his ability to lead his own family.

These are goals for the godly. This is how we begin to look as He works in us. Let us review these qualifications:

Qualification #1: "Above reproach." This is repeated in verse 7: "a man of God has a good reputation." This is probably an overarching characteristic. The Amplified Bible and J.B. Phillips translate this first qualification as "unquestioned integrity."

Qualification #2: "The husband of one wife." As the Greek text expresses it, he is to be *"a one-woman man."*

Qualification #3: "Having children who are believers."

Gets says: "Paul viewed the well-ordered home as a true test of man's maturity and ability to lead other Christians."

Qualification #4: "Not accused of dissipation or rebellion." The elder should have children who are believers and not open to accusation of dissipation or rebellion.

The Amplified Bible translates this "not open to the accusation of being loose in morals and conduct, or unruly and disorderly." J.B. Phillips translates it "not likely to be accused of loose living and lawbreaking." The NIV says "A man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient."

Let's worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing verse 1 of that wonderful hymn, **"Make Me a Blessing":** *"Out in the highways and byways of life, Many are weary and sad; (are weary and sad) Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife Making the sorrowing glad. Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing, Out*

of my life (out of my life) May Jesus shine; Make me a blessing, O Saviour, I pray, (I pray Thee, my Saviour,) Make me a blessing to someone today."

June 21—I Did It My Way (Titus 1:7)

Titus 1:7: *"For the overseer must be above reproach as God's superintendent; not self-willed (stubborn), not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of dishonest gain."*

Verse 7: In this verse, Paul states the reason for the concentration on family in the previous verse: "For the overseer must be above reproach as God's superintendent."

Qualification #5: "Not self-willed (stubborn)."

Getz says: "An overbearing Christian is a person who is a law unto himself. He almost always has to have his own way. Others are always wrong. He is always right. He is his own authority."

Qualification #6: "Not quick-tempered."

Getz says: "A Christian man is not to be quick-tempered, to allow himself to become suddenly upset and disturbed. This kind of man flies off the handle.... He is easily threatened and is quick to retaliate."

When a man runs out of reason or he is wrong and won't admit it, he invariably gets angry, if only to make up in temper what he lacks in sense. Wisdom is always on the side of self-control.

Qualification #7: "Not addicted to wine."

Ephesians 5:18: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."

Qualification #8: "Not pugnacious."

Qualification #9: "Not fond of dishonest gain." It is our responsibility as ministers of the Gospel to feed the flock, not fleece it.

Please join me in worship and praise for our morning meditation as we sing together verse 2 of **"Make Me a Blessing"**: *"Tell the sweet story of Christ and His love; Tell of His pow'r to forgive; (His pow'r to forgive.) Others will trust Him if only you prove True, ev'ry moment you live. Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing, Out of my life (out of my life) May Jesus shine; Make me a blessing, O Saviour, I pray, (I pray Thee, my Saviour,) Make me a blessing to someone today."*

June 22—A Man of Wisdom and Understanding (Titus 1:8)

Titus 1:8: *"But hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, holy, disciplined (self-controlled)."*

Verse 8: The word "but" forms a contrast with the previous verses. Paul spoke negatively in verses 6 and 7, but speaks positively in this verse as he continues his list of qualifications for leadership.

Qualification #10: “Hospitable.” The Greek word means “*the love of a stranger.*”

Getz says: “Hospitality is not a new concept ... even considered a sacred responsibility.”

Romans 12:13: “Contributing to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality.”

Qualification #11: “Loving what is good.” This is loving good people and good things.

Qualification #12: “Sensible.”

Getz says: “Paul’s thrust in this passage is to instruct Christians to have a proper view of themselves in relationship to God and other Christians.”

Qualification #13: “Just.”

Getz points out: “A just man ... is one who can make mature judgments.”

Qualification #14: “Holy.” Devout. Godliness will reflect itself in a holy walk. It is observable behavior.

Qualification #15: “Disciplined (Self-controlled).” A person who is in control of his physical, psychological, and spiritual faculties, who is not in bondage to fleshly desires, his impulses and his passions.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of “**Make Me a Blessing**”: *“Give as ‘twas given to you in your need; Love as the Master loved you; (the Master loved you.) Be to the helpless a helper indeed, Unto your mission be true. Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing, Out of my life (out of my life) May Jesus shine; Make me a blessing, O Saviour, I pray, (I pray Thee, my Saviour,) Make me a blessing to someone today.”*

June 23—A Man of the Word (Titus 1:9)

Titus 1:9: “*Clinging to the trustworthy message, which is in accordance with the teaching, in order that he may be able both to be exhorting in sound doctrine and to be refuting those who are contradicting.*”

Verse 9: Paul is calling for a viable ministry with an inerrant Word. There are two reasons this leader should be “clinging to the trustworthy message”:

1. To be exhorting in sound doctrine
2. To be refuting those who are contradicting

Getz says: “As maturing Christians then, we must constantly be in the process of learning more of God’s Word and understanding it. ‘Be diligent,’ said Paul, ‘to present yourself approved to God, as a workman who is not to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.’”

This man is pursuing the path of obedient to His Word.

There are three lessons we have learned from these verses:

1. The picture of godliness is a picture of Jesus Christ.
2. Godliness involves submission and obedience to His Word.

3. Godliness is the result of discipline.

For this morning's meditation, I have chosen a favorite from George Beverly Shea. Please join me in worship and praise singing verse 1 of **"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. 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."*

June 24—No Such Thing as a Godly Rebel (Titus 1:10)

Titus 1:10: *"For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision."*

Verse 10: In this previous verse, Paul instructed the leader must be "exhorting in sound doctrine and to be refuting those who are contradicting." This verse provides the reason for this exhorting and refuting: "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision." These teachers are characterized in three ways:

1. Rebellious men. They are not submissive to the teaching of God's Word.
2. Empty talkers. They speak words that are empty of purpose.
3. Deceivers. They deceive themselves as well as those who listen to them in their theological convictions.

J.B. Phillips translates this verse: "For there are many, especially among the Jews, who will not recognize authority, who talk nonsense, and yet in so doing have managed to deceive men's minds."

Won't you join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 2 of **"I'd Rather Have Jesus"**: *"I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause; I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause; I'd rather have Jesus than worldwide fame. I'd rather be true to His holy name. 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."*

June 25—True: What God Does; False: What Man Does (Titus 1:11)

Titus 1:11: *"Who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things which they should not for the sake of dishonest gain."*

Verse 11: The whole focus of these false teachers is in opposition from godly qualifications outlined by the apostle Paul.

These false teachers who are "rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers" must be silenced for two reasons:

1. They are upsetting whole families.
2. They are teaching things they should not for the sake of dishonest gain.

Truth builds and unites the family unit.

True godliness trusts the God who so graciously has worked in their lives to supply their needs. False godliness is hoping to gain material advantage.

Barnes points out: "This phrase 'must be silenced' occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means properly to check or to curb as with a bridle, to restrain or bridle in and then to put to silence. It is of course implied here that this was to be done in a proper way, in accordance with the Spirit of the Gospel.

This morning, please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **"I'd Rather Have Jesus"**: *"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."*

June 26—Liars! Evil Beasts! Lazy Gluttons! (Titus 1:12)

Titus 1:12: *"A certain one of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'"*

Verse 12: The apostle quotes from one of their own philosophers to point out that others, like themselves, recognized the people of Crete were characterized as being "liars, evil beasts and lazy gluttons."

"Liars." They cannot tell the truth. "Evil beasts." This seems to be a reference to their brutishness and self-centeredness. "Lazy gluttons." The literal Greek is *"unemployed stomachs."* These folks have no intention of working for their food.

Untruthful. Selfish. Pleasure-loving.

Barclay says:

The Cretans were notorious liars and cheats and gluttons and traitors. Here precisely is the wonderful thing. Knowing that and actually experiencing it, Paul does not say to Titus, "Leave them alone. They are bad and all men know it." [He says] Go and convert them. There are few passages which so demonstrate the divine optimism of the Christian missionary and evangelist who refuses to regard any man as hopeless. The greater the evil, the greater the challenge. It is the Christian conviction that there is no sin which is too great for the grace of Jesus Christ to encounter and to conquer.

Let's join together in worship and praise by singing verses 1 and 2 of **"He Lifted Me"**: *"In loving kindness Jesus came, My soul in mercy to reclaim, And from the depths of sin and shame Thro' grace He lifted me. He called me long before I heard, Before my sinful heart was stirred, But when I took Him at His Word, For-*

*giv'n He lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand, He lifted me,
From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!"*

June 27—Discipline Them! (Titus 1:13)

Titus 1:13: *"This testimony is true, for this cause be rebuking them severely, in order that they may be sound in the faith."*

Verse 13: Paul exhorts Titus to disciple these men by presenting them with the truth. The teaching of these rebellious men, empty talkers, these deceivers of the circumcision has done nothing to affect the personal lives of these Cretans. Logically, there must be something wrong with their teaching. This leads us to a principle. When truth is presented, lives will be affected by that truth. Godliness is the result of truth.

Could it be that the absence of honesty, love, and hard work in life causes one to examine what is being taught? It is painful, but truth gets down to where we live. It brings about a change in our personal lives.

Paul wants these Cretans to be rebuked severely with this purpose in mind: "in order that they may be sound in the faith."

Please join me in worship and praise this morning as we sing verses 3 and 4 of "**He Lifted Me**": *"His brow was pierced with many a thorn, His hands by cruel nails were torn, When from my guilt and grief, forlorn, In love He lifted me. Now on a higher plane I dwell, And with my soul I know 'tis well; Yet how or why, I cannot tell, He should have lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand, He lifted me, From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!"*

June 28—Turning Away From the Truth (Titus 1:14)

Titus 1:14: *"Not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who are turning themselves away from the truth."*

Verse 14: The purpose behind Paul's directive to Titus to discipline the Cretans by rebuking them severely is seen positively in verse 13: "in order that they may be sound in their faith," but negatively in this verse, so they will "not [be] paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who are turning themselves away from the truth."

Why are they dishonest, selfish and unmotivated? This is the key to why their lives are such a mess. There is such an absence of true godliness among them. They are "turning themselves away from the truth."

By listening to teachers of error who were "turning themselves away from the truth" of the Word of God, their personal lives displayed an absence of true godliness.

These men of error were teaching Jewish myths, commandments of men and traditions of men rather than the exhortations, instructions and commandments of God.

This morning, I would like to sing one of my all-time favorite hymns written by John W. Peterson. As you thank the Lord for the Gospel and what it has done in our lives, won't you join me in worship and praise and joy as we sing together verse 1 of **"Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul"**: *"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)"*

June 29—Nothing Is Pure (Titus 1:15)

Titus 1:15: *"All things are pure, to those who are pure; But to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled."*

Verse 15: Proverbs 23:7 (KJV): "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. The mind and conscience affect conduct.

Kent says:

To unbelievers, however, nothing is clean because their sinful lives, thoughts, and motives which are at cross purposes with God will infect even that which is intrinsically pure. Such persons are defined in their intellectual and moral natures so that their decisions and attitudes are no longer reliable guides. Only the light of the gospel and the regeneration of the Spirit can bring such persons into real purity.

"All things are pure to those who are pure." In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said in Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

As a man is purified by the blood of Jesus Christ, then all things are pure to this person. Having the mind and conscience purified and cleansed, the new believer has a different perspective.

Psalms 119:9–11: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

The little word “but” forms the contrast to those who are characterized in two ways: (1) defiled and (2) unbelieving. These individuals do not know Christ as their Savior and nothing is pure.

Personal relationships are defiled because of greed, resentment, bitterness, jealousy, envy, and strife.

The godly man sees the happenings of life from a positive perspective, from the hand of a loving God that brings about good in his life. The defiled man forms a critical spirit and becomes stubborn and resentful when difficulty comes into this life, believing that he has less than he deserves.

The reason “nothing is pure” to those who are “defiled and unbelieving” is given in the last phrase: “both their mind and their conscience are defiled.”

The emphasis in the Scripture is upon bringing every thought captive under the obedience of Christ, letting this mind be in us which was also in Christ.

Philippians 4:8–9: “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect (honorable), whatever is righteous, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is appealing (attractive), if there is any virtue and if there is anything worthy of praise, let your mind be dwelling on these things. The things also which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things be practicing; and the God of peace shall be with you.”

Not only is the mind defiled, but the conscience as well.

Acts 24:16: “In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.”

To the man who has a pure mind and a clear conscience, all things are pure.

Rejoice and praise the Lord with me this morning that we have experienced the blessed alternative. Let’s sing 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)”*

June 30—By Their Fruit You Shall Know Them (Titus 1:16)

Titus 1:16: *“They are confessing to know God, but by their deeds, they are denying Him, being detestable and disobedient, and with reference to every good work disapproved.”*

Verse 16: In Matthew 7:16 Jesus said, “by their fruit ye shall know them.” These who are “defiled and unbelieving” have been confessing to know God. It is easy to confess with one’s lips that there is a knowledge of God and a believer.

However, when you look at their lives, you see an absence of godliness. By their deeds and the fruitage of their lives, you see four things described in this verse:

1. Denying Him by their deeds
2. Detestable
3. Disobedient
4. Disapproved

Flowing out of my life will be evidences that I am in His Word.

In James 2, the message is that “faith without works is dead.”

Their personal lives are “detestable”—vile, repulsive, and ugly. In addition, they are “disobedient” to the truth of the Word of God.

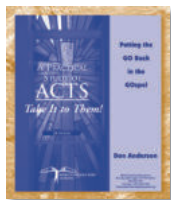
“And with reference to every good work disapproved.” Their “good works” is all from the flesh. It is for show. With regard to true, authentic godliness and good works flowing from a living faith in their lives; everything they do is “disapproved.”

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.”

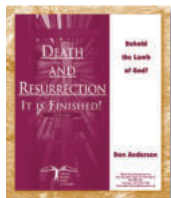
I am excited to sing this verse this morning. Please join me in worship and praise as we sing verse 3 of **“Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul”**:

“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)”

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