

The Epistle to the Colossians

STUDIES 1 - 10

TEACHER MANUAL

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

The Epistle To The Colossians

Studies 1 - 10

Teacher Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Study | Title | Pages |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | The Apostle And The Epistle | 1 |
| 2 | Praying And Giving Thanks | 9 |
| 3 | The Pre-Eminence Of Christ | 18 |
| 4 | The Pastor's Conflict | 25 |
| 5 | Receiving And Walking In Christ | 31 |
| 6 | A Chapter On Holy Living | 38 |
| 7 | John Mark: He Turned Back! | 43 |
| 8 | Epaphras: An Example To Follow | 50 |
| 9 | Demas: The Snare Of Worldliness | 55 |
| 10 | Archippus: Fulfilling Our Ministry | 64 |

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

THE APOSTLE AND THE EPISTLE

STUDY 1

Scripture Portion: Colossians 1:1-8

Paul's letter to the Colossians was written about A.D. 62 to the Church at Colosse, a city in Asia Minor situated on the Aegean Sea. It is generally supposed that Epaphras founded, and afterwards ministered to this church and that Paul never visited the city, as seemingly indicated by -

Colossians 1:4 - *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,*

Colossians 1:9 - *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*

Colossians 2:1 - *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;*

Paul's object in writing was to send help and guidance in connection with serious heresy which had come into the Colossian church, a false doctrine which was a mixture of speculative oriental mysticism and Judaistic legalism.

The former does despite to the Person and Work of Christ. The latter propagates the false notion that salvation is obtainable by works. How up-to-day Colossians is! You can trace these heresies in practically every modern false system.

In **Colossians 1:1-8** - *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,
2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,
4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,
5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;
6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:
7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;
8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*

The apostle gives us a fivefold description.

PAUL'S DESCRIPTION OF THE LORD.

The false teaching which had come into the church at Colosse was derogatory to the Person of Christ, so Paul speaks of Him in a threefold way.

Paul gives Him, His full title.

Colossians 1:2b-3 - *.....Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Let us give our Lord Jesus His full title and acknowledge His lordship.

1 Corinthians 12:3 - *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

Paul emphasizes His deity.

In **Colossians 1:3** - *We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*

we read, "God.....the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ".

Compare with -

Colossians 1:2 - *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

".....God our Father.....". God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in a unique sense.

c. Paul designates Him as the God.

Three things are mentioned in these few verses -

(1) The Father -

Colossians 1:2-3 - *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

(2) The Son -

Colossians 1:1-4 - *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,*
2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

Colossians 1:7 - *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

(3) The Spirit -

Colossians 1:8 - *Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*

PAUL'S DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF.

He is -

Colossians 1:1 - *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,*

Again the description is threefold.

1. "An apostle".

The word means "a sent one".

Compare with -

Luke 6:13 - *And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;*

An apostle was one who had seen the Lord and had been a witness of His resurrection.

Acts 1:21-22 - *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,
22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

Acts 9:3-6 - *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

2. “An apostle of Jesus Christ”.

How wonderful to be the special messenger of the King of kings! We are to be just that!

2 Corinthians 5:20 - *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

3. “By the will of God”.

Paul's call and authority were derived from God Himself. Compare -

Galatians 1:1 - *Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)*

John 15:16 - *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

PAUL'S DESCRIPTION OF TIMOTHY.

This is also in -

Colossians 1:1 - *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,*

“Paul, an apostle.....and Timothy our brother.....”.

Notice -

1. The apostle's affection.

He describes young Timothy as his brother. Timothy was, of course, his “own son in the faith” -

1 Timothy 1:2 - *Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

2 Timothy 1:2 - *To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

and fellow-labourer in the gospel.

Acts 16:1-3 - *Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.*

b. The apostle's humility.

Paul was the great apostle and Timothy the young assistant. The one man was much older than the other, so it is a mark of Paul's humility that he mentions Timothy.

3. The apostle's diplomacy.

This is very beautiful. Timothy was a native of the region where these Christians lived. Many would be thrilled to hear his name mentioned. Paul was always very tactful when it came to the matter of bettering human relationships.

PAUL'S DESCRIPTION OF THE COLOSSIANS.

This sevenfold description is contained in -

Colossians 1:2 - *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Colossians 1:4-6 - *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,*

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

1. He addresses them as "saints".

Colossians 1:2 - *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Every Christian is a saint. God places us "in Christ". Immediately we become saints.

1 Corinthians 16:1 - *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.*

Philippians 4:21 - *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.*

b. He speaks of their steadfastness.

That is the meaning of the word "faithful".

There were some in the church who were not faithful, but read -

1 Corinthians 15:58 - *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

3. He refers to their new relationship in Christ.

In **Colossians 1:2**, he describes them as “brethren”. This is the true brotherhood.

Romans 8:29 - *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Hebrews 2:11 - *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,*

d. He speaks of them as believers.

Colossians 1:4 - *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,*

He refers to their “faith in Christ Jesus”. Faith must not only be initial, trusting Christ for salvation, but it must be comprehensive.

Romans 1:17b - *The just shall live by faith.*

d. He especially mentions their love.

In **Colossians 1:4** - *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,*

he speaks of their love “to all the saints”.

In -

Colossians 1:8 - *Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*

he tells us that this love was “in the Spirit”.

Galatians 5:6 - *For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

If we have faith we shall love!

Compare with -

Galatians 6:10 - *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

1 Thessalonians 3:12 - *And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:*

2 Peter 1:7 - *And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*

6. He says these Christians were filled with hope.

Colossians 1:5 - *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;*

To rejoice in our inheritance in Christ will fill us with hope and banish doubt and fear.

1 Peter 1:4 - *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

g. *He describes them as fruitful Christians.*

Colossians 1:6 - *Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:*

This is God's will for each one of us.

John 15:4-5 - *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:8 - *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

PAUL'S DESCRIPTION OF EPAPHRAS.

This threefold description is in -

Colossians 1:7-8 - *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

1. He was Paul's dear fellowservant.

Paul looked upon every other true servant of the Lord as a partner, a co-labourer.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 - *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?*

6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

2. He was a faithful minister of Christ.

This, above all, is what God requires of us.

Matthew 25:21 - *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

1 Corinthians 4:2 - *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

c. He was a declarer of love.

Let us speak well of others. Let us declare their "love in the Spirit".

PRAISING AND GIVING THANKS

STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: Colossians 1:9-14

Paul was a man of prayer. He was a great Christian, an outstanding scholar, a model missionary, a giant among men, spiritually, morally and intellectually. But, above all, he was a man of prayer. His Christian life began in prayer -

Acts 9:10-11 - *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.*

11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

He prayed for himself -

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 - *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

He asked others to pray for him -

Ephesians 6:18-20 - *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

He practised the holy art of intercession, praying for others, like his Lord.

John 17:9 - *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*

It is significant to notice that Paul's prayers were full of praises. In this study, we are to notice his praises in -

Colossians 1:3 - *We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*

Colossians 1:12 - *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

Then we are told for what he prayed in -

Colossians 1:9-14 - *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

12 *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

13 *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

14 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PAUL'S PRAYER.

Colossians 1:9 - *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*

It was marked by PERSISTENCY.

“We also.....do not cease to pray for you.....”. Paul knew something about unceasing prayer.

Compare -

1 Thessalonians 5:17 - *Pray without ceasing.*

Luke 18:1 - *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*

Prayer is a warfare.

Ephesians 6:12 - *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

If we give up when we are praying, the battle goes to the enemy.

Acts 2:42 - *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Acts 2:46 - *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*

It was marked by INTENSITY.

Notice the word “desire” in this verse. It indicates that Paul was passionate in his praying. His prayers were filled with a deep longing. There was an intensity about them. Compare -

Matthew 17:21 - *Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*

c. It was marked by UNITY.

Paul says, “We.....pray for you.” We may pray alone -

Matthew 6:6 - *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

James 5:17 - *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*

But there is special power in united, corporate prayer.

Compare -

Acts 16:25 - *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*

Matthew 18:19 - *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

2. THE CONTENT OF PAUL'S PRAYER.

In **Colossians 1:9-14** we are told that Paul prayed for seven things.

1. That they might be given PERCEPTION.

He prayed that these Colossians -

Colossians 1:9b - *.....desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*

We need spiritual enlightenment in order that we might know the will of God and do it. By nature we cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God.

Compare -

1 Corinthians 2:14 - *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

John 3:2-7 - *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

4 *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

5 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

7 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

2. That they might lead lives PLEASING to the Lord.

Colossians 1:10 - *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

Compare -

Romans 15:3 - *For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.*

Galatians 1:10 - *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*

c. That they might engage in PROFITABLE service.

Colossians 1:10 - *.....being fruitful in every good work.....*

Until we become Christians, our lives are unprofitable. It is only when we are converted that they are made profitable.

Philemon 10-11 - *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:*

11 *Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:*

The will of God is that our lives should manifest the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

23 *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Compare with -

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

2 Peter 1:5-7 - *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;
7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*

In **John 15** we find that there are three stages:

fruit -

John 15:2 - *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

more fruit -

John 15:2 - *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

and much fruit -

John 15:5 - *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

John 15:8 - *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.
Compare -*

2 Timothy 4:11 - *Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*

Acts 13:13 - *Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.*

4. That they might PROGRESS in the Christian life.

Colossians 1:10 continuesand increasing in the knowledge of God;

The operative word is the word “increasing”. Paul longed that these Christians should grow. See the beautiful picture in -

Hosea 14:5-7 - *I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.
6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.
7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.*

The Christian life is in three stages: “little children”, “young men” and “fathers”.

1 John 2:12-14 - *I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.
13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.*

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

e. That they might be endued with POWER.

Colossians 1:11 goes on*strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power,.....*

Paul is praying that they might have the experience of Pentecost -

Acts 2:4 - *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

For none of the things of which we have been thinking are possible in our own strength.

Compare -

Ephesians 3:16 - *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

Philippians 2:13 - *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Potentially, the power of the Holy Spirit has been given to us - but what about experimentally?

Compare -

Acts 1:8 - *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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Luke 11:13 - *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

6. That they might have PATIENCE.

Notice these three vital words in -

Colossians 1:11 -*unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*

“Patience” here means “endurance in the face of trial”.

Compare -

James 5:11 - *Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

“Longsuffering” indicates “gentleness” and “lovingkindness”.

1 Corinthians 13:4 - *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

The apostle prays that these Christians might endure in the face of fierce testing; that they might do so with a gentle and loving spirit; and that they might be filled with joy, even though called upon to suffer for their Lord.

Acts 5:41 - *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

Compare -

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

g. *That they might be filled with PRAISE.*

It is important to notice the difference between praise and prayer. There are some things for which we are to pray. But there are blessings for which we are to thank God because He has already given them to us. Notice the word "hath" mentioned three times in -

Colossians 1:12-13 - *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

and the word "have" in -

Colossians 1:14 - *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

We do not need to pray, nor should we pray for these things which we have. What are they?

(1) His PROVISION.

Colossians 1:12 - *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

He has given us an "inheritance".

Read and compare with -

Romans 8:16-17 - *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Thank God!

(2) His POWER.

Colossians 1:13 - *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

See what He has delivered us from and translated us to!

Read **Ex. 14:13-31**.

Thank God!

(3) His PARDON.

Colossians 1:14 - *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

How we should thank God that all our sins have been -
removed from us -

Psalms 103:12 - *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

blotted out -

Isaiah 44:22 - *I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.*

cast into the depths of the sea -

Micah 7:19 - *He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

and that God will remember them against us no more -

Hebrews 10:17 - *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

Thank God!

*Oh, how great Thy loving kindness,
Vaster, broader than the sea;
Oh, how marvelous Thy goodness,
Lavished all on me!*

*Yes, I rest in Thee, Beloved,
Know what wealth of grace is Thine,
Know Thy certainty of promise,
And have made it mine.*

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: Colossians 1:15-29

There is coming a day in which the Lord Jesus Christ will have the pre-eminence, a day when He will be Lord, and when -

Philippians 2:10 - *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

What a glorious prospect this is for Him - and for us!

*Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
'Till moons shall wax and wane no more.*

But important as is the prophetic application of these words, there is an equally important present, personal application. That is our theme here.

The word "pre-eminent" means "occupying the foremost place". We are not thinking of the pre-eminence of one doctrine over another, one creed over another or one denomination over another, but of one personality over another.

The one personality is the Lord Jesus Christ - and the other is you and me. So, when we speak of the pre-eminence of Christ, we mean Christ occupying the foremost place in our life. Is He first in our life, home, business, friendships, pleasure.....? Compare -

Ecclesiastes 3:19 - *For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.*

3 John 9 - *I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.*

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ALONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE PRE-EMINENT IN OUR LIVES.

Only one person in the whole of God's universe has the absolute right to occupy the first place in your life and mine.

Others may seek to have the first place, but it is not their right to seek or to obtain it. The devil seeks the pre-eminence in your life and mine, but it is not his right to have it.

There are three reasons why the Lord Jesus Christ alone has the right of being first in our life.

Because He made us.

Colossians 1:16 - *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

Particularly notice that we were not only created "by Him" but "for Him". Compare -

Proverbs 16:4 - *The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.*

Isaiah 43:7 - *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

He made us in order that He might be first in our hearts and lives.

b. Because He has redeemed us.

Colossians 1:13-14 - *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

We belong to Him by legal right for He has purchased us with His own life's blood.

Compare -

1 Corinthians 6:20 - *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

1 Peter 1:18-19 - *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Through His infinite sacrifice upon Calvary's cross, and by the mighty power of His resurrection, God has -

Colossians 1:13 - *.....delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

A kingdom must have a king. Once we were in Satan's kingdom and he was our king. Now we are in Christ's kingdom and it is His right to reign over us. Is He King of your life?

3. Because God has given Him the pre-eminence.

Colossians 1:18 - *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Compare with -

John 5:23 - *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*

then notice in -

Colossians 1:15-20 - *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

that God has given Him the pre-eminence -

(1) in likeness -

Colossians 1:15 - *Who is the image of the invisible God.....*

(2) in power -

Colossians 1:15 - *..... the firstborn of every creature:*

(3) in creation -

Colossians 1:16 - *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

(4) in eternity -

Colossians 1:17 - *And he is before all things.....*

(5) in authority -

Colossians 1:17 - *.....and by him all things consist.*

(6) in the church -

Colossians 1:18 - *And he is the head of the body, the church.....*

(7) in the new creation -

Colossians 1:18 - *.....who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

(8) in riches -

Colossians 1:19 - *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*

(9) in final victory -

Colossians 1:20 - *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

Now read **Matthew 12** and see that our Lord declares His pre-eminence by saying that He is greater than -

the temple -

Matthew 12:6 - *But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.*

the Sabbath -

Matthew 12:8 - *For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.*

the devil -

Matthew 12:29 - *Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.*

Jonah -

Matthew 12:41 - *The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*

and Solomon -

Matthew 12:42 - *The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*

He is greater than them all!

**THOUGH IT IS THE RIGHT OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TO OCCUPY
FIRST PLACE IN OUR LIVES, HE DOES NOT ALWAYS DO SO.**

He is not always free to exercise His right, for, in your life and in mine, very often self is first.

Luke 9:59 - *And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

Luke 9:61 - *And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

Notice the words “.....me first” and compare with -

3 John 9 - *I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.*

Sometimes other things come first -

a. *another life* -

Matthew 10:37 - *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

2. personal ambition, pleasure or possessions -

Luke 18:23 - *And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.*

**THE LORD JESUS MAY BE PRESENT IN OUR LIFE, YET NOT PRE-
EMINENT.**

If you are a Christian, He is truly present - but is He pre-eminent? It is true to say today that, in measure, He is present in our national life, our political life, our commercial life and our religious life, but He is not, by any means, pre-eminent! The same may be true of us. He may be in our life, but not king; resident, but not president.

4. HE MAY BE PROMINENT BUT NOT PRE-EMINENT.

He may hold an important place in our life and yet not hold the first place. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if He is truly pre-eminent or only prominent.

5. WHEN THE LORD JESUS IS PRE-EMINENT IN OUR LIVES, THE FOLLOWING THREE THINGS ARE TRUE.

1. There is supreme love to His Person.

We love Him more than any other person or thing, more than His service, more than ourselves - ".....more than these".

John 21:15 - *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

2. There in unquestioning obedience to His commands.

Read -

John 14:15 - *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

and compare -

John 2:5 - *His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

Acts 9:6 - *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

c. *There is complete submission to His will.*

When the Lord Jesus occupies the foremost place in my life, I shall be willing to serve Him in the sphere of His choice, to suffer should He will it, and, if necessary, to die for Him. Indeed, my attitude will be -

Matthew 11:26 - *Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

THE PASTOR'S CONFLICT

STUDY 4

Scripture Portions: Acts 11:19-26; Colossians 2:1-5

Paul had never seen the Christians at Laodicea or Colosse face to face, yet he writes to them of his deep concern for their spiritual welfare and of the burden upon his heart for their spiritual and eternal well-being.

Colossians 2:1 - *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;*

What an unveiling of the apostle's heart! He is a model for every minister, pastor, leader and worker in the Lord's vineyard; an example we can never hope to equal but should seek grace to follow.

Colossians 2:1-5 - *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;*

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

We are told seven things about the conflict of which Paul speaks in **verse 1**.

THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT.

It was not primarily physical. It was spiritual, mental and emotional. His great heart yearned over the Christians at Laodicea and Colosse. This issued in a volume of intercessory prayer on their behalf.

Paul's conflict was a burden of spiritual desire for the blessing of the Lord to rest upon those who had been converted through his ministry or who had been entrusted to his spiritual care. Such conflict, of course, does affect the body.

Doubtless the guards in Paul's "hired house" -

Acts 28:30 - *And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,*

not only heard the apostle pray - they saw him pray, and, as he lifted his arms towards Heaven, his whole being seemed to tremble as he poured forth his petitions.

Do we know anything of such a conflict in our prayers for others?

THE INTENSITY OF THE CONFLICT.

Paul calls it a "great conflict....", **verse 1**. This suggests the idea of intensity. The prayer which filled his heart and mind was an intensely heavy burden. Indeed, the Greek word suggest that it was an agony. Read and compare -

1 Corinthians 9:24-26 - *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

25 *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

26 *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

1 Timothy 6:12 - *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

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

How intense is the effort put forth by the sprinter or the wrestler.

And how intense must be the conflict in which Christians engage if they are to win through in prayer for blessing upon those for whom they have a spiritual concern!

The word “conflict” suggests that there are obstacles in the way, as there are.

Read, meditate on and compare -

Ephesians 6:12 - *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Colossians 1:29 - *Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

3. THE SUBJECTS OF THE CONFLICT.

Look again at **verse 1**. It is important to notice that Paul is not speaking here of a concern for the unsaved, but for the saved, for the babes in Christ who needed to grow to maturity.

Colossians 1:28 - *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:*

Paul undoubtedly had a passion for the salvation of sinners.

Romans 10:2 - *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

But his concern here was for the sanctification of the saints and the spiritual welfare of those who had been converted and needed to go on.

Ephesians 4:14 - *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

Are we concerned for the welfare of the babes in Christ?

4. THE NECESSITY OF THE CONFLICT.

Colossians 2:4 - *And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

The apostle tells us why he felt it such an urgent matter to wage a prayer warfare for his fellow-believers. It was that they were in danger of being turned aside by false doctrine. Indeed, some of them had already been turned aside. Paul was burdened that this undermining work of the enemy should be arrested.

Colossians 2:8 - *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

Do such dangers exist today? They certainly do! Christians all over the world are faced with the subtle dangers of humanistic philosophies which discount the power and the wisdom of God.

Often such philosophies are put out in the name of so-called “scholarship”. But, in addition to the unbelief of many professing Christian teachers and leaders, there is the presence on every hand of false cults.

Paul felt that, in view of this situation which existed in his day, if someone did not engage in a conflict for the deliverance and protection of these babes in Christ, they would be beguiled and moved away from their firm standing in Christ.

5. THE PURPOSE OF THE CONFLICT.

Paul’s concern found expression in the prayer of intercession.

Colossians 2:1 - *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;*

Colossians 2:3 - *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

He prayed that they might be blessed in five ways.

That they might be ENCOURAGED.

The word “comforted” means “encouraged”. Discouragement is the first enemy which attacks the new convert.

b. That they might be ENAMOURED.

“*Knit together in love.....*”. There is safety for us in loving and in being loved.

3. That they might be ENRICHED.

Paul prayed that they might be “*knit together in love and unto all riches.....*”.

Ephesians 1:3 - *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

Colossians 2:9-10 - *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

2 Peter 1:3 - *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

d. That they might be ESTABLISHED.

Paul prayed that they might have “*the full assurance of understanding.....*”.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 - *For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*

Hebrews 6:11 - *And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:*

Hebrews 10:22 - *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

5. That they might be ENLIGHTENED.

Paul prayed that they might understand “*the mystery of God.....and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.....*”.

Compare -

Ephesians 1:17-18 - *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:*

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

6. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CONFLICT.

Colossians 2:5 - *For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.*

The apostle tells us that, though geographically he was separated from these Christians by a long distance, he was actually with them in spirit. As one translator renders it: “I am by your side, watching you like a proud father.

What a joy it brought to Paul to see his prayers answered in the lives of those for whom he prayed!

7. THE SECRET OF THE CONFLICT.

We may well ask: “Who is sufficient for these things?”

How can we be faithful in exercising this ministry of intercession and of loving concern for others?

The answer is in -

Colossians 1:29 - *Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

2 Corinthians 3:5 - *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*

RECEIVING AND WALKING IN CHRIST

STUDY 5

Scripture Portions: Psalm 1; Colossians 2:6-10

The apostle Paul appeals to Christians to go on in the same way as they started.

Colossians 2:6-10 - *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Just as we receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, so we must go on living and labouring - walking by faith. This passage of scripture, the key verse of which is -

Colossians 2:6 - *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

contains three vital truths about the Christian life.

1. WE ARE TOLD WHAT IT REALLY MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

What is a Christian? Some people believe that to be born in a “Christian” country, to have received a Christian education, or to accept and apply Christian principles constitutes a person a Christian. Or, they believe that, being christened, baptized or becoming a member of a church, makes anyone a Christian. No!

It is possible to do all these things and still not be a Christian, according to -

Colossians 2:6 - *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

In other scriptures to which we shall refer, a Christian is one who has “received Christ Jesus the Lord”. He is not simply one who believes about “Christ Jesus the Lord”, or who receives the doctrines of Christ, but he is one who receives Him, the Lord Jesus Himself.

Read these four illustrations of this simple and glorious truth.

John 1:11-12 - *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Christians are those who have received the Lord Jesus. To believe on Him means to receive Him.

2 Corinthians 13:5 - *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

The proof that we are Christians is that the Lord Jesus Christ is dwelling in our hearts.

Galatians 2:20 - *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

A Christian is one in whom Christ dwells.

Colossians 1:27 - *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

The experience of the indwelling Christ is a “mystery” to the uninitiated, but it is a glorious reality to those who receive Him as Saviour and Lord.

2. WE ARE TOLD WHO IT IS THAT THE CHRISTIAN HAS RECEIVED.

The Christian has received “Christ Jesus the Lord”.

Colossians 2:6 - *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

1. Take the first of these names: JESUS.

This is His human name given to Him by God at His birth.

Matthew 1:21 - *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

It refers to the historical man Jesus. But, it has a much deeper significance, for it means “Saviour”. This was the great purpose for which our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world.

1 Timothy 1:15 - *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

2. Take the second of these names: CHRIST.

This is His official title.

He is the divinely appointed and anointed Messiah, the commissioned One.

It is as “Christ” that He dwells within us.

Colossians 1:27 - *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

It is in “Christ” that we are hid.

Colossians 3:3 - *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

It is “Christ” who is our life.

Colossians 3:4 - *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

c. Take the third of these names: LORD.

This indicates His sovereignty. The One whom we have received is the Master who is upon the throne in Heaven and who is to be enthroned in our hearts.

Every Christian has therefore received:

(1) JESUS - the Saviour who died for him.

Isaiah 53:5-6 - *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Compare -

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

1 Peter 2:24 - *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

(2) CHRIST - the living One who dwells within him.

Look again at -

Colossians 1:27 - *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

Galatians 2:20 - *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

(3) the LORD - the Sovereign and Master who rules over him.

Compare -

Philippians 2:11 - *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

1 Peter 3:15 - *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

All this is very wonderful, for see what it actually means for the Christian.

#1 - All his sins are forgiven.

The same Jesus who has been received is the One who bore his sins away on Calvary's cross.

#2 - He has received a new life.

The Christ whom he has received now lives within him as his life.

#3 - He recognizes a new sovereignty.

The One whom he has received is not only "Jesus" and "the Christ" but He is "the Lord", his Master and King.

3. WE ARE TOLD HOW WE ARE TO CONTINUE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Notice the words “as” and “so” in -

Colossians 2:6 - *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

We become Christians in a moment by receiving “Christ Jesus the Lord”, but to live the Christian life takes a lifetime.

As we began, so we must go on -

Colossians 2:6-7 - *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Verse 7 contains four instructive metaphors describing four characteristics of a Christian who is going on with the Lord.

#1 - The first characteristic is SECURITY.

We are “rooted” - rooted in “Christ Jesus the Lord”. If this is so, then we are secure, for our roots go right down into His glorious Person and into the fulness of His purpose in grace concerning us.

#2 - The second characteristic is MATURITY.

We are being “built up in Him”. We are not only secure, but our great need is to grow.

2 Peter 3:18 - *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

and to be built up in the faith -

Jude 20 - *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,*

When we receive the Lord, we are only spiritual babes -

1 Peter 2:2 - *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

but we must not remain in a state of spiritual infancy.

#3 - The third characteristic is STABILITY.

We must become “stablished in the faith”. Paul warns about the danger of being turned aside from the faith.

Colossians 2:8 - *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

We may be turned aside by worldliness -

1 John 2:15-17 - *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

or error -

Ephesians 4:14-15 - *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

#4 - The fourth characteristic is PROSPERITY.

This is indicated by the word “abounding”. Our lives are to be fruitful and a blessing to others.

Read and compare -

Psalm 1:3 - *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

John 7:38-39 - *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

1 Corinthians 15:58 - *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Thus we see the four directions of the Christian life -

- Downward* - “rooted”
- Upward* - “built up”
- Inward* - “stablished”
- Outward* - “abounding”

In conclusion, read -

Colossians 2:9-10 - *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

where the apostle reminds us that in Christ is all fulness, and that in Him we are “complete”!

A CHAPTER ON HOLY LIVING

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: Colossians 3:1-25

The whole thrust of Paul's argument and appeal in this chapter may be summed up thus: "Christian, because of your union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, ascension and exaltation, your life must be different!"

The first two chapters of this letter are doctrinal, but now, with chapter three, we move into the practical and experimental teaching of the epistle. Our belief must behave. Our creed must be translated into conduct. What we are "in Christ", (our standing), must be influenced by and must affect what we are, (our state), wherever we are.

The doctrine is vitally important, but we must adorn it.

Titus 2:10 - *Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

Because of all that we are, by virtue of our union with Christ, our whole life must be different.

1. WHAT ARE WE BY VIRTUE OF OUR UNION WITH CHRIST?

The expression "with Christ", which occurs three times -

Colossians 3:1 - *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

Colossians 3:3-4 - *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

gives us the answer.

The first speaks of our POSITION with (or in) Christ.

"Risen with Christ....." -

Colossians 3:1 - *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

and "dead.....with Christ....." -

Colossians 3:3 - *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

Through faith in Him, we have died and have risen again.

Colossians 2:12 - *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

Galatians 2:20 - *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

In God's reckoning, every Christian has been crucified with Christ and raised with Him.

The second speaks of our PROTECTION with (or in) Christ.

“Hid with Christ....” -

Colossians 3:3 - *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

And, where is He?

We are as safe as the Lord Jesus is. Could we be safer? This is true now and it will be true through all eternity.

c. *The third speaks of our PROSPECT with (or in) Christ.*

We are to be glorified.

Colossians 3:4 - *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

In the purpose of God, this glorification of the saints is already an accomplished fact.

Romans 8:30 - *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Thus we see that by faith in Christ, through our union with Him, we have a new position, a new protection and a new prospect.

Because of this, our lives are to be different. Our standing must influence our state.

What we are “in Christ” must be seen in what we are in the world.

2. IN WHAT WAYS ARE OUR LIVES TO BE DIFFERENT?

1. We must PUT OFF certain things.

Colossians 3:5-9 - Weymouth - *Therefore put to death your earthward inclinations - fornication, impurity, sensual passion, unholy desire, and all greed, for that is a form of idolatry.*

6 It is on account of these very sins that God's wrath is coming.

7 You also were once addicted to them, while you were living under their power.

8 But, now you must rid yourselves of every kind of sin - angry and passionate outbreaks, ill-will, evil speaking, foul-mouthed abuse - so that these may never again soil your lips.

9 Do not lie to one another, for you have stripped off the old self with its doings.....

All these vices we are to put off. We are to put off, to reckon as dead -

Colossians 3:5 - *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

all those things which pertain to the old life -

Colossians 3:9 - *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;*

2. We must PUT ON certain things.

Colossians 3:10-14 - Weymouth - *And you have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being remoulded into full knowledge so as to become like Him who created it.*

11 *In that new creation there can be neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free man, but Christ is all and in all.*

12 *Clothe yourselves therefore, as saints holy and dearly love, with tender-heartedness, kindness, lowliness of mind, meekness and long-suffering;*

13 *bearing with one another, and readily forgiving each other, if any one has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, you also must forgive.*

14 *And over all these put on love, which is the perfect bond of union.*

Like the Prodigal, we came back to the Father in rags and tatters, but we do not stay like that - we “put on”.

Luke 15:22-24 - *But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:*

23 *And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:*

24 *For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.*

c. We must LET IN certain things.

Colossians 3:15-16 - *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

(1) **“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.....”**

We have peace with God -

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

So now we must let the peace of God fill and flood our being -

Philippians 4:7 - *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

This means a state of perfect harmony within, even though there is discord and distraction without.

Isaiah 26:3 - *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

How we need this peace, this freedom from fear and anxiety, this inner poise and power! We may have it - how?

(2) **“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you.....”**

If our minds are filled with His Word, our hearts will be filled with His peace!

Psalms 119:165 - *Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*

Compare -

Colossians 3:16 - *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Ephesians 3:16-17 - *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

4. We must LET OUT certain things.

The word “do” occurs four times in -

Colossians 3:17 - *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Colossians 3:23 - *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*

(1) ***Everything we do is to be done as service for the Lord.***

Note “whatsoever” in -

Colossians 3:23 - *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*

This refers to preaching, praying, playing, working, our secular job, etc.

(2) ***We are to serve thankfully.***

Not groaningly, grudgingly and complainingly.

Philippians 4:6 - *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

(3) ***We are to serve heartily.***

How can we serve in any other way when we serve such a glorious Master?

e. We must LOOK UP all the time.

Colossians 3:24 - *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

Here is the secret of the first four! Our faith is in and our eyes are upon “the Lord!” - to whom one day every one of us must give account.

2 Corinthians 5:10 - *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

*May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and pow’r controlling
All I do and say.*

JOHN MARK: HE TURNED BACK!

STUDY 7

Scripture Portions: Acts 13:1-13; Acts 15:36-41

We all need the solemn warning of -

Luke 9:62 - *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

This particular study is specially designed to warn us from taking any course which will bring dishonour upon the Name of the Lord and unhappiness into our lives.

John Mark stands out on the pages of the New Testament as a great character - but he did "turn back". He was a most useful servant of the Lord and one whose ministry the apostle Paul valued tremendously.

2 Timothy 4:11 - *Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*

In addition, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the Gospel which bears his name.

2 Timothy 3:16 - *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

Let us gather up the scripture allusions to this man, whose Hebrew name was John and whose Roman name was Mark (or Marcus).

1. JOHN MARK WAS GREATLY FAVORED IN HIS YOUTH.

His mother was a Christian.

We read in -

Acts 12:12 - *And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.*

that the saints met for prayer in her home. He must have had constant contact with many of God's servants.

Picture that prayer meeting and those who would have attended it - Peter, in particular, and later on, Paul.

He was brought up in a godly home.

He had been brought up according to -

Ephesians 6:4 - *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

2 Timothy 3:15 - *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

was true of him.

Read -

Proverbs 22:6 - *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

There was evidently a measure of affluence in his home.

We know that this must have been so, for -

Acts 12:12 - *And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.*

tells us that “many” were gathered together in Mrs. Mark’s home.

Therefore it must have been a fairly large house, a house where servants were kept and guests were entertained.

It is not always a blessing for young people to have been “born with a silver spoon in their mouths”, but, it can be so!

d. Mark had consecrated relatives.

We have already commented upon his mother. Notice also that, evidently, Barnabas was his uncle or cousin.

Colossians 4:10 - *Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister’s son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)*

What a blessing a Barnabas-like relative can be!

5. Above all, John Mark was converted when he was quite young.

1 Peter 5:13 - *The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.*

suggests that he was converted through Peter’s ministry - perhaps at the very prayer meeting recorded in -

Acts 12:12 - *And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.*

How great to come to Christ when one is young, before the ravages of the world, the flesh and the devil have had time to spoil that life and while that one has a whole life to lay at the feet of the Lord!

2. JOHN MARK ACCOMPANIED BARNABAS AND PAUL ON THEIR FIRST MISSION TO THE GENTILES - BUT, ALAS, HE TURNED BACK!

When we remember his background, his home, the influence of his mother, of Peter and of the many saints he must have known, it is small wonder that John Mark had a burning desire to serve the Lord in some special way and enter what we call “full time service”. So it was that the opportunity came to accompany Barnabas and Paul.

Acts 13:1-5 - *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

2 *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

3 *And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

4 *So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.*

5 *And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.*

But read also -

Acts 13:13 - *Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.*

where we find that he suffered a spiritual lapse.

To any young people who are contemplating entering “full time service” for the Lord, we would say: -

1. Count the cost.

Mark may have failed just here. Perhaps he felt the great “thrill” of being a missionary but did not sufficiently face up to the hardships, problems and testings of a missionary’s life.

Luke 14:27-33 - *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

28 *For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?*

29 *Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,*

30 *Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

31 *Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?*

32 *Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace.*

33 *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

2. Do not be in too much of a hurry.

1 Corinthians 7:29 - *But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;*

is true, and so is -

John 9:4 - *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*

and so is -

Isaiah 28:16 - *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*

God never hurries when He is making and preparing His workmen.

Deuteronomy 8:2 - *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*

Discipline is necessary.

The lessons of humility, obedience and trust have to be well learned.

3. Be absolutely sure that your motive is pure.

Why do you want to be a preacher, an evangelist, a missionary?

Oswald Chambers once said, "It may be harder to face God with your motive than to face congregations with your message."

Psalm 139:23 - *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:*

d. Remember that you will have no greater success "on the field" than you are having here and now.

"As now, so then."

Have you begun at home?

Mark 5:19 - *Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.*

Have you begun at Jerusalem first?

Acts 1:8 - *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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

5. If you become a missionary or a preacher, you will have to begin by serving an apprenticeship, by being an "assistant".

Acts 13:5 - *And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.*

Paul and Barnabas had Mark as their "minister", but "assistant" is the word.

Are you willing for that? Just to carry the "big" preachers' equipment?

f. Be absolutely sure of your call.

Acts 13:2 - *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

Acts 13:4 - *So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.*

We read that the Holy Ghost called two men - but three went.

Was this third man (Mark) of man's appointing and not of God's?

The desire, the opportunity, the need, the ability and even the invitation - these are not God's call (though they may be present in the call).

The call of God is indicated in **Acts 13:2 and 4**.

7. How solemn and sad it is to get out of the will of God!

It brings trouble to ourselves, trouble to others.

It lets the Lord down.

Acts 15:36-40 - *And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.*

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

-
3. THE LAST THING WE ARE TOLD ABOUT JOHN MARK INDICATES A COMPLETE RESTORATION AND REINSTATEMENT AND A FULL DEDICATION TO THE LORD AND TO HIS SERVICE.
-

Compare -

Colossians 4:10 - *Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)*

2 Timothy 4:11 - *Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*

If you have got away from the Lord, confess it to Him -

1 John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

and come back to Him quickly!

EPAPHRAS: AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: 2 Corinthians 4:1-12

Colossians 4:12 - *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

The apostle Paul describes Epaphras as “a servant of Christ”.

He is mentioned only three times in the New Testament -

Colossians 1:7-8 - *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

Colossians 4:12-13 - *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis.

Philemon 23 - *There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;*

He was a native of Colosse and a zealous worker for the Lord.

Through his ministry many of his fellow-countrymen had been converted. Thus the church at Colosse had been founded.

In this church, as well as in the assemblies at Laodicea and Hierapolis, Epaphras exercised a pastoral and a teaching ministry.

Colossians 4:12 -13 - *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis.

1. EPAPHRAS WAS A BELOVED FELLOW-WORKER.

Colossians 1:7 - *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

The apostle describes Epaphras as his “dear fellow servant”. There was a special reason for referring to him in this way.

At the time this epistle was written, Epaphras was with Paul in prison. He had visited Paul to seek his advice and counsel concerning errors which were creeping into the church at Colosse.

But he did not only seek help, for, without doubt, he gave much help to Paul, comforting him and ministering to him in a number of different ways.

What a great privilege it was for Epaphras to minister to God's honoured, suffering apostle. How natural that Paul should feel a deep affection for Epaphras!

EPAPHRAS WAS A FAITHFUL MINISTER OF CHRIST.

He was undoubtedly a successful servant of the Lord. But Paul emphasizes that he was "a faithful minister of Christ".

Colossians 1:7 - *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

Can there be a greater commendation than this! Epaphras was the minister of the church at Colosse, but, more important than that, he was a minister of Christ. He was directly responsible to the Lord Himself. It was from the One who sat upon the throne that he received his orders, and to Him he was faithful.

Look up the following references in the order given and check up on this important question of being faithful to the Lord.

Matthew 25:21 - *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

Luke 16:10-12 - *He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.*

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Luke 19:17 - *And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.*

1 Corinthians 4:2 - *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

1 Timothy 1:12 - *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;*

2 Timothy 2:2 - *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

Revelation 2:10 - *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

3. EPAPHRAS WAS A BEARER OF GOOD TIDINGS.

Colossians 1:8 - *Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*

Nobody knew the church members at Colosse better than Epaphras, yet he said all the good things he could about them. He extolled their virtues and kept silent about their shortcomings.

Be careful that you are never guilty of criticizing your church or assembly. Your careless criticism may breed disaffection among the members and bring dishonor upon the Name of the Lord.

Notice that Epaphras was not only “of” the church at Colosse; he was “for” the church at Colosse.

If you are “of” a church (belong to one), be sure you are always “for” it as well, for the Lord’s sake and for the sake of your fellow-believers.

James 1:27 - *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

In his book, “The Sins of the Saints”, Dr. Herbert Lockyer has this searching paragraph under the heading, “**The Bitterness of Criticism**” -

“Bitter, unworthy and unChristlike criticism is the dead fly causing the ointment of many a good life to send forth a stinking savor.

“Whether in church or assembly, believe in it and serve it with your utmost loyalty. Yes, and shield the faulty ones in the flock, exposing no one’s dirty linen to the gaze of the public.

“If you do not altogether agree with a preacher, be silent about him before the godless. Do not tear him, or any of your fellow church members, to pieces before children.

“To be guilty of dragging the failure of a church, preacher or Christian before the world is to act as a traitor in the camp. This is a sin of which we are all, more or less, guilty.”

4. EPAPHRAS WAS A MAN OF PRAYER.

Colossians 4:12 - *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

We should all be men and women of prayer, though some may be specially called to a ministry of prayer, as Epaphras evidently was.

Notice the three characteristics of Epaphras’ praying.

8. It was PERSISTENT prayer.

“always.....”.

Is not this where we so frequently fail? We give up, instead of holding on.

Genesis 32:26 - *And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

Compare -

Luke 18:1 - *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*

1 Thessalonians 5:17 - *Pray without ceasing.*

9. It was AGONIZING PRAYER.

“laboring fervently.....” or, quite literally, “striving in an agony.....”. Here is the idea of intensity in prayer.

Psalm 66:18 - *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*

Acts 20:31 - *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*

c. It was INTELLIGENT prayer.

“that ye may stand (be firm), perfect (be mature, fully grown) and complete in all the will of God.”

What need there is for such Spirit-taught praying.

Romans 8:26 - *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

5. EPAPHRAS WAS A TRUE MISSIONARY.

This is clear from -

Colossians 4:13 - *For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis.*

This man had a deep concern, not only for the Christians at Colosse, but also for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Have we any concern for the millions who have never heard the gospel? Do we pray for their salvation? Do we give of our own substance for missionary work? Could we go to the foreign field?

May God give us all a true missionary vision!

*Father of Love, canst Thou forgive the blindness
That lets Thy child sit selfish and at ease
By the full table of Thy loving kindness,
And take no thought for these?*

*As Thou has loved, so let me love - returning
To these dark souls the grace Thou gavest me,
And, on to me impart Thy deathless yearning
To draw the lost to Thee!*

DEMAS: THE SNARE OF WORLDLINESS

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: 1 John 2:15-29

Almost every character of whom we read in the Word of God is known for something. Each is associated with some deed of glory and honour, or of shame and dishonour.

The subject of this study is Demas, who is mentioned in -

Colossians 4:14 - *Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.*

Here was a man who lived and worked with the apostle Paul but who afterwards, like John Mark, deserted him.

Luke 9:62 - *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

When Paul wrote this Colossian letter, all was well.

Colossians 4:14 - *Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.*

But things had tragically changed when, some four years later, he wrote to Timothy.

2 Timothy 4:10 - *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

Demas had been a man of great privilege. He had been converted at Thessalonica, most likely through the ministry of Paul. Added to this, he actually worked with the great apostle. But, though he was so privileged, he suffered a serious spiritual breakdown.

We must remember that his backsliding started in his heart before it became manifest in his life.

Compare -

Proverbs 14:14 - *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*

2 Timothy 4:10 - *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

What was the cause of his going back?

In Demas' case, the cause was worldliness. But there are other scriptural reasons why people go back.

A LOVE FOR THE WORLD.

2 Timothy 4:10 - *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

This verse warns us of the snare of worldliness. This does not necessarily mean that he attended places of worldliness.

It is possible to be a worldly Christian without ever participating in the world's pleasures. Worldliness is everything around us which excludes the Lord Jesus Christ.

Demas probably began to adopt the world's standards. Possibly he began to view missionary endeavour from the world's standpoint and found himself asking, "Is it worth it?"

Consequently, he lost the heavenly vision.

Acts 26:19 - *Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:*

It is sad when the world's icy grip begins to affect a Christian.

Consider the serious words in -

1 John 2:15-17 - *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

2. SEVERE PERSECUTION AND TESTING.

Compare -

Matthew 24:9-10 - *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Matthew 5:10-12 - *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then, look up -

Luke 8:13 - *They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

Is this a commentary upon the experience of Demas?

It frequently happens that those who have trusted Christ and have confessed their faith in Him “falter” when the fires of persecution begin to burn.

Many young believers who have been nurtured in a Christian home and church, discover when they leave home to go to college or to work out “in the world”, that their faith is very severely tested. Some, like Demas, turn back!

All such tested ones need our prayers, (not our criticisms), and all the encouragement we can give them.

3. FALSE TEACHERS.

It is improbable that this was true in the case of Demas, though there were many in his day, as in ours, who were sidetracked by false teachers.

Matthew 24:11 - *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

Compare with -

2 Timothy 4:3-4 - *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

Be on your guard lest the subtle endeavour of some Jehovah’s Witness, Christadelphian, Christian Scientist, Seventh Day Adventist or Spiritualist turn you from your hope and from the simplicity that is in Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3 - *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

Acts 20:29-30 - *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

1 Timothy 4:1 - *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

2 Peter 2:1-3 - *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

4. FORSAKING THE HOUSE OF GOD.

When those who have at one time loved the Lord begin to “cool off” in their love and zeal, it is usually detected by their less frequent attendance at the services of their church.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

How many folk used to go to church, be at the prayer meeting, attend the Bible study, or used to be a keen worker for the Lord!

Their spiritual experience is now all in the past tense. Like Demas, they have gone back.

Compare -

Acts 2:42 - *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Colossians 1:9-11 - *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

5. INDULGING IN SOME SIN.

There is a solemn warning about this in -

1 Timothy 1:19-20 - *Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:*

20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

One “little” sin, harboured and indulged in -

Psalms 66:18 - *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*

is enough to precipitate a headlong spiritual downfall. Give no ground to the enemy!

Ephesians 4:27 - *Neither give place to the devil.*

“Keep short accounts with God.” Confess all sin to Him immediately!

Compare -

1 John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Proverbs 28:13 - *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

6. FAILURE TO RECEIVE THE WORD OF GOD.

John 6:66 - *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

It was when the Lord Jesus began to reveal some of the deeper truths concerning Himself and His mission, that many turned back.

The only way to go on in the Christian life is to receive the Word of truth as the Holy Spirit reveals it to us. Not to do so, is to go back, for there is no standing still.

To live in disobedience is to do what Demas did - to experience a spiritual lapse.

1 John 2:5 - *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

Compare -

Hebrews 4:2 - *For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

James 1:22 - *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

7. DEFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

1 John 2:19 - *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

suggests that some who turn back like Demas do so because they have never been truly born again. They have only professed to be Christians.

2 Timothy 3:5 - *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

They have never possessed Christ.

John 1:12 - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

Galatians 2:20 - *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

What about doing a little of -

2 Corinthians 13:5 - *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

What are the safeguards against spiritual relapse?

We must give heed to the injunction in -

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 - *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.
12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

Turn to -

2 Timothy 4:6-10 - *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.
9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:
10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

2 Timothy 4:17-18 - *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.
18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

and see how Paul himself stood firm against any kind of relapse.

Paul was fully yielded to the will of God.

2 Timothy 4:6-7 - *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*

Are we fully yielded to His will?

b. Paul lived in the light of the Second Advent.

2 Timothy 4:8 - *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Compare with -

1 John 2:28 - *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

1 John 3:1-3 - *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Do we live in the light of His near return?

3. Paul had absolute confidence in the Lord to deliver and to preserve him.

2 Timothy 4:17-18 - *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This can and should be our confidence also.

By God's grace, let us press on - until Jesus comes!

ARCHIPPUS: FULFILLING OUR MINISTRY

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: 2 Timothy 2:1-15

This concluding study in our series is based upon one of Paul's requests at the end of his **Epistle to the Colossians**.

Colossians 4:17 - *And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.
And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*

It almost seems as if this personal note was added as a postscript at the end of his letter. Let us look at the four very important thoughts contained in this one verse.

1. THE REQUEST THAT PAUL MAKES.

It is very simple indeed: "Say something to Archippus"! Who was he? He is only mentioned here and in Paul's letter to Philemon. It is very likely that he was the son of Philemon, in which case he lived in a fine Christian home in Colosse.

He was a minister, a leader, a pastor having the charge of an assembly of believers. Was he the pastor of the church at nearby Laodicea?

Colossians 4:16 - *And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.*

In **Philemon 2** - *And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:*

he is spoken of as Paul's "fellowsoldier". Thus we see that Archippus was a man of special privilege: son of Christian parents, member of a Christian household, in special service for the Lord. It was to this man that Paul felt compelled to send a special message, indeed, a word of warning, "Say something to....." this man of special privilege.

Has the Lord something to say to those of us who are pastors, evangelists, teachers, Christian workers?

2. THE PRIVILEGE THAT PAUL HIGHLIGHTS.

Archippus was privileged for each of the reasons mentioned above.

But there was one special reason. Paul focused on this when he exhorted Archippus to "take heed to the ministry which (he had) received in the Lord".

What a solemn and wonderful thing it was for Archippus, for he had received a ministry in the Lord!

But every Christian has received a special ministry in the Lord.

Compare -

1 Corinthians 12:7 - *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

Ephesians 4:7 - *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

The Lord has given a special task to every child of His.

What is the ministry you have received in the Lord? - not the ministry that you have assumed or undertaken just because it appeals to you, but the ministry you have received in the Lord, your God-appointed, God-given task? Name it - or perhaps you have not discovered what it is?

Maybe yours is the task of bringing up your own children -

Ephesians 6:4b - *.....bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

What a privileged ministry yours is!

Maybe yours is the task of bringing up or caring for someone else's children. This indeed is an honour which offers great scope for really fruitful service.

- c. Maybe yours is the task of serving your local church as an office-bearer: deacon, treasurer, secretary, teacher, steward, organist. You are a privileged person.
4. Maybe yours is the task of engaging in all kinds of loving ministries behind the scenes. You may be far too timid to appear in public, but what a privilege you have to "do your bit" behind the scenes!
- e. *Maybe yours is the task of bringing encouragement to those who are in the forefront of the battle. Mr. Encourager - is that your name?*
- f. *Maybe yours is the task of exercising a ministry of correction. Yes, you are a privileged person, but what grace, tenderness, wisdom and care you need.*
7. Maybe yours is the task of praying for the Lord's work and workers. "There's not much I can do - only pray!" Is that all?

You see, as members of His Body, we all have a function to fulfill, a job to do.

Read carefully and thankfully -

1 Corinthians 12:14-17 - *For the body is not one member, but many.*

15 *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

16 *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

17 *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*

Romans 12:3-8 - *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

4 *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:*

5 *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

6 *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;*

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;
8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

3. THE FAITHFULNESS THAT PAUL DEMANDS.

“Archippus.....the ministry which thou has received in the Lord.....fulfil it!” The word “fulfil” means literally “fill-full”. There is a beautiful illustration of its meaning in -

John 2:7 - *Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.*

So Paul exhorted Archippus to fill his service for the Lord up to the brim - fully. This is what God requires of all His servants - unhesitating, unquestioning and unconditional obedience, plus diligence and wholeheartedness.

See what the Lord Jesus was able to say -

John 17:4 - *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

Compare with Paul’s own words -

2 Timothy 4:7 - *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*

Towards the end of his life, Paul could say that he had fulfilled the purpose that God had for his life. He urged Archippus to see to it that he could say the same.

Had Archippus been unfaithful? Dr. Ironside says that it seems likely that he “had a tendency, not uncommon among some young preachers, to settle down comfortably and take things easily”. Was this Archippus’ failing?

Is it ours? Are we lazy, careless, undisciplined? Perhaps the word we should use is lukewarm. Are we lukewarm? Why use this word? Because it would most aptly fit the case if it is true that Archippus was pastor of the church at Laodicea.

Revelation 3:14-22 - *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

There is no doubt about the fact that every Archippus, every preacher, pastor and leader is beset by special temptations.

For this reason Paul gives a warning to Archippus.

4. THE WARNING THAT PAUL GIVES.

“Take heed.....!” Be watchful, on the alert! In this connection, we might well close our study with a prayerful consideration of the following “Take heeds” -

1. to yourself.

Deuteronomy 4:9 - *Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;*

2. to your spirit.

Malachi 2:15 - *And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.*

c. that you regard not iniquity.

Job 36:21 - *Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.*

4. that no man deceive you.

Matthew 24:4 - *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.*

e. what you hear.

Mark 4:24 - *And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.*

5. how you hear.

Luke 8:18 - *Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.*

6. how you build.

1 Corinthians 3:10 - *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

*Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work, and speak, and think for Thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me.*