

선교사와 농촌 선교

The Missionary and Rural Evangelism

Scripture: I Cor. 3:5-9

나는 심었고, 아볼로스는 물을 주었으며, 하나님은 자라나게 하셨습니다.

Text: I cor. 3:6 "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."

전파

After going to Corinth and preaching the Gospel, the Apostle Paul wrote: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." Pioneer missionaries to Korea could say the same, "We planted, Korean brethren watered, but God gave the growth." As a missionary in rural Korea for 35 years, I can say, "Korean Christians planted, I watered but God gave the growth." Since this has been the history of the Church of Korea, we must give to God all the glory.

경작 하다 작물

Paul compared his work to planting seed and cultivating a crop in a garden. Beginning 100 years ago, missionaries spoke of the regions of their rural responsibilities as "fields." They first established "stations" in major cities...Seoul, Pyeng-yang, Taegu, Pusan, Chungju. Here missionary families lived together, and here the first strong central churches were established. But at once they began widespread rural work, and missionary evangelists were assigned "fields," Underwood along the Han River to the "west field," Moffett to the "north field" in South Pyongan Province, Adams to the "east field" of Taegu, McCutchen to the "north field" of North Chulla, McCallie to the "south-west field" of islands near Mokpo. At first all was pioneer territory, and the missionary worked the same field for many years. At first the fields had to be plowed, and the first crops were very small. Like a farmer giving fertilizer and removing weeds and rocks, it was long hard work!

I remember how 50 years ago my father in Mokpo worked to the south-west in Kang-jin, Chang-heung, and Yung-am. He travelled in small motor boats, or in cars & busses on terrible roads, or walked for many hours to reach his churches in rain, snow, or wind. He had to take his own food, clothes and bedding for 10 days or 2 weeks. Living conditions were poor and difficult. There were no bathing facilities, or electricity, but plenty of flies and mosquitoes. In those days there were only 2 or 3 churches in each county, and he would spend a full week in each church holding a

사경회

십이 강한 인내

Sah-gyung-whey, teaching the Bible verse by verse with great patience, and the Christian way of life. Every morning he taught, in the afternoon he visited house-to-house, at night he preached. He examined new members and held the sacraments and trained the officers. But God blessed this "work of faith and labor of love", this long-time cultivation. It slowly began to produce a crop...30-fold, 60-fold, and 100-fold. Scores of such early missionaries covered the entire Korean peninsula, producing the great Korean Church of today. Almost from the first, new Korean converts became co-workers. Truly, "Some planted, and some watered, but God gave the growth."

훈련

믿음의 역사와 사랑의 수고

경작 한 일

생기게 하다 수확

동역자

참으로

심었고

물을 주었으며,

하나님은

자라나게 하셨습니다.

나 자신

Now, please excuse me for talking about myself. For 35 years, since 1948, my work has been rural evangelism, and I have never departed from my purpose of helping plant rural churches. There have been other duties, but this has always been my goal. In 1948 there were about 200 churches in North Chulla, now there are over 1300. "God has given the growth." My first assignment was what is now Chun-suh Presbytery, and later other parts of North Chulla. My language was poor, I made many mistakes. Rural regions were terribly poor. During the Korean War, Communist guerillas raided at night, burning villages, and there were refugees everywhere. The unfortunate division with the Ki-jang caused much fighting and bitterness. Usually I was tang-whey-jang of 30-40 churches, and just after the Kijang split for a short time 70 churches were assigned to me due to the shortage of Korean ministers.

농촌 선교

원 목적

목적

하나님이

자라게 하셨습니다

지정

실수

유감스러운

예를 들면

An example of this work was in Namwon. At Liberation there were only about 6 churches...all of them weak. But in a few years 22 new churches were begun in rural districts. There were 2 fine elders in the Namwon Tong-puk church, one a native of Namwon, the other a refugee from North Korea. They had boundless zeal to start new churches. Often they came to me saying: "We must start a church in Lee-paek Myun or Tai-san Myun. Already there are a few believers asking for a church. Come and help us." So we would get into the jeep and visit the place, sometimes to hold the first Christian service. Often this was the first car the village children had seen, and I was the first American. Many times we held the first service outdoors, and

끝없는 열심

와서

우리를 도우라

호기심

인자의 온 것은 잃어버린

삭개오

장소

the whole village, men, women, and children, would come out of curiosity. I liked to preach about Zacheus, with Luke 19:10 as the text: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Always there were two major problems: (1) a place

고역과

to worship, and (2) an evangelist...and both took money. Once I was able to get

철도역전

80 large used army tents from Kunsan airbase and we loaned these for starting new churches. We worshipped in various places...private homes, school-rooms, a railway

정미소

장고

station, a chicken house, rice mills, barns and warehouses, barber shops.

So great was the zeal of our Korean Christians, that many deacons and elders were

전시간

willing to work as evangelists full time. New Christians constantly worked among

neighbors to witness to Christ...often giving many days of time for this. I remem-

ber arriving one Sunday morning at Lee-paek Myun in Namwon for the first time. A

woman evangelist had begun work and asked me to come. We found 100 people ready to

be examined for the catechumen class, so that we could not start the service until

굶주리는

2:00 in the afternoon. Like starving people, everyone seemed to want the Gospel.

바나바

성령과 믿음이 충만한 자

God provided many laborers who, like Barnabas, were "filled with the Holy Spirit and

with faith." The missionary was there to help in various ways. The end of the

Korean War brought the greatest single years of growth. In 1954 I held 1018 examin-

ations. In 1955 more than one church a week was started in North Chulla. Our first

goal was at least one church in every Myun. Our Second goal was a church every 4 km

and this is very near completion. Missionaries could never take credit for starting

칭찬

동역과

churches...always with Korean Christians were were "fellow workmen" (3:9). Some

하나님이 자라게 하셨습니다

planted, and some watered, "but God gave the growth."

농촌 선교

What is the missionary responsibility in rural evangelism today? As we reach the

100th anniversary and the Korean Church becomes stronger with the number of Korean

적당하게

Pastors increasing yearly, the responsibility for rural evangelism is properly being

이동

줄어간다

transferred, and the number of missionaries drops, so that now less than 10% Presby-

교통

통신

terian missionaries are in this type of work. Travel and communication are far

구제

easier. Relief work is no longer necessary. Rural people are more prosperous and

~~better education~~

better educated. Yet along the coasts and among the islands and in the mountain valleys many places still have no churches. The easy places have been evangelized, but not the hard places. Even where there are many rural churches, less than 10% attend Church and Sunday School. Even if churches are 4 kilometers apart, more than 1000 new churches must be started. And since village people say, "Our village ...our church" and there are about 60,000 "natural villages" in Korea, Rev. Ahn ^{자연} ^{부락} ^{연구} ^{안기찬} ^{연구} ^{설립} ^{안기찬} who has researched this says that perhaps 30,000 more rural churches are needed. In recent years we have been working on Cheju Island where resistance to the Gospel makes church planting difficult, and where less than 2% of the people are baptized Christians. There are about 25 large population centers where churches should be started in Cheju alone.

Where the Korean Church is unable or unwilling to carry on this work, the mission-ary has a place. He can set the example of ^{중성} ^{무시하다} ^{경려} ^{해주고} ^{중고} ^{발견} ^{식길다} ^{경작} ^{하다} ^{작물} ^{추돌} ^{끌다} faithfulness to the task and concern for those who are otherwise neglected. I try to visit all rural churches in the area of my responsibility. I try to encourage and advise the evangelists...many of whom are seminary students. Always we try to build up the church, which, like cultivating a crop, needs daily attention. Our Korean language is not perfect, but sometimes our words have a special ^{추돌} ^{끌다} impact upon new Christians and attract non-Christian villagers simply because we have come from another land. Since 1967 my wife has accompanied me in this work. She teaches the children, befriends the women, and together we have visited in hundreds of village homes so that she is known and loved and welcomed everywhere. Who can ^{추진} ^{개산} measure our contribution, but we hope that like fertilizer on the field we have been a part of the great harvest.

From my observation, the Korean Church has the following needs for rural evangelism.

- ^{인력} ^{가치} ^{동전} ^{전도} 1. To recognize the value of rural evangelism. Some say it is too difficult, or not necessary because so many move to the cities. They say it is easier and cheaper and faster to start ^{자립} ^{지원} self-supporting churches in the cities. But rural people have ^{영혼} ^{증가} souls to be saved too! We must remember that most city-church growth is with people from rural churches. Probably more than half of you seminary student

인구 증가

come from rural areas. Because of population growth, there are more non-Christians in rural Korea now than when I came in 1948. One reason for the small number of Christians in Japan, may be that rural evangelism was not stressed as in Korea. God does not want us to neglect the enormous and productive field of rural evangelism!

2. To pray that God will again unite the first of zeal for personal evangelism Koreans still witness, but not on the scale they did 30 years ago. My wife and I try to persuade local evangelists and Christians to go with us in house-to-house village visiting, but we often hear excuses that it is not a good time because people are busy, or the weather is bad. May the Lord give back to all Korean Christians their "first love" of telling others about the Saviour!

3. To spend more time in educating new Christians. This is perhaps the biggest need of the church. People come to be examined for baptism who have not read the Bible, are ignorant of simple facts about Jesus, and know nothing about the sacraments. This is because the evangelists have not taught them. He just tells them to learn, or gives them a set of questions and answers to memorize by themselves. That is not teaching! That is like a farmer putting seed in the ground in April and going off to Seoul and coming back in October expecting a crop! The evangelist should gather his new believers each week for a period of study over many months. Only then will he produce strong men and women of faith, loyal to Christ and His church, capable of passing on their faith to their children and to their non-Christian neighbors. In addition, all church members need constant training...especially in the Bible. The early missionaries set an example of this and God created the great Korean Church...today's evangelists and pastors can multiply their success a hundred fold by following that example.

In closing, let me say that God wants all the people of Korea to hear the Gospel. He wants all His sheep not only found but brought into the fold. "It is not His will that even the least of His little ones should perish." On Easter afternoon some years ago, a young Korean minister told me of a wonderful event in his church that morning when they baptized new members. He had baptized a whole family. Six months

before the father and mother and three grown children had taken the catechumen exam. Saturday afternoon all came for the baptismal exam except the oldest son who was now in the army, stationed and Sang-moo-dai. He had been asked to come, but did not arrive. Perhaps he would come Sunday morning to be examined, but by worship-time he still had not come. Just as the pastor was about to baptize the new members, he came running in the back door. What should the pastor do? He beckoned his elders to the platform. "This young man has not been examined, but he must join his family in baptism!" Quickly the elders agreed. "Waive the examination, go ahead and baptize him!" So when the pastor read the names of those who should come forward to be baptized and included the young man's name, not even his own family knew he had arrived. Tears of great joy burst from the eyes of all to see this entire family baptized, even the son who had been far away, and all welcomed into the church of God!

This is what God wants for His entire family in Korea. He wants every seat at the banquet table filled, even if we have to go out into the "highways and hedges" (Lk. 14:23) to find them. He wants every lost lamb brought into the fold (Lk. 15:4). He wants every prodigal son returned to his father's house. This is what makes the angels of heaven sing, and the heavens resound with "Hallelujah!"

Here is the work God has given missionaries in the past. It is still the responsibility of evangelists and pastors of the church He has established in this land, ...and of missionaries from abroad whom God sends to help. "I planted, Apolos watered, But God gave the growth." "I planted, Apolos

The New Covenant-

Text: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." (I Cor. 11:25)

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Mat. 26:28)

Scripture reading: Jer. 31:31-34; I Cor. 11:23-26

Matthew quotes Jesus when He gave the cup saying, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Paul's version reads, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." For our communion meditation we are examining these familiar words to renew our understanding. All of us can hear such words a hundred times and never stop to consider their real meaning and thus lose some of the message of God's Word. What is the significance of this "new covenant" and the required shedding of blood symbolized in the Lord's Supper?

In its simplest form a covenant is merely an agreement between two parties. From earliest times men have made covenants with each other. The one we often witness is the marriage covenant when the bride and groom exchange vows. The most elaborate contract between labor and management, or an intricate disarmament pact between national super-powers could be called covenants. Some covenants mentioned in the Bible were on the purely human level as when David and Jonathan made an agreement to be best friends.

Very early God began to make covenants with men. After the flood, He made a covenant with Noah promising that never again would a flood destroy all flesh, and setting the rainbow in the cloud as a "sign" of the "everlasting covenant between God and every living creature." (Gen. 9:16). In Gen 17 God made a covenant with Abraham which He reaffirmed many times. God promised Abraham with descendants as numerous as the sand of the seashore and a land of their own. He promised to bless this nation and make it a blessing to all the nations of the earth. Abraham's seed was to keep the covenant through obedience to God. Circumcision was the "sign" of this covenant. Again God renewed His covenant at Sinai promising His people protection and blessing and an inheritance in the promised land, while the people promised obedience to God's laws, now spelled out precisely in the ten commandments and other precepts. A visible "sign" was the "ark of the covenant", the box containing the ten commandments, center of the tabernacle worship, and on the march at the head of the procession of God's people. At the heart of each covenant was the promise: "I will be your God" and the ark constantly reminded His people of that.

The Psalms and Prophets praise the "sure" covenants of God, His "everlasting" covenant. All the promises of God, all His blessings to men, all His expectations of His people centered on this word. Is it any wonder that in that solemn moment when Jesus instituted the most meaningful sacrament, He should declare: "This is the new covenant in my blood?" For here was symbolized God's implementation of the greatest of His promises to sinful men. God in Christ on the cross was declaring: "I will be your God," and "You shall be my people"...the basic conditions of every covenant He ever made...now possible by the blood of the Lamb.

1 There are several things about a Biblical covenant we must understand. First, is the parties to a covenant. If you make a contract in Korea, it will define what we call in English as "the party of the first" as Kap and what we call "the party of the second" as Ul. Who are the Kap and Ul in the Biblical covenant?

In the Old Testament, the covenant was between God and His people...but His people could never keep their side of the bargain. Good though some of them were, they could never fully obey God. The whole Old Testament demonstrates this. Good deeds, sacrifices and ceremonies could never accomplish God's demands and God always had to grant salvation only on the basis of the faith of His people

and never on the basis of their good works. God revealed that One would come, the Messiah, the perfect Lamb of God, who alone would satisfy the demands of Divine justice.

So with the sending of Jesus, God made a "new covenant" sometimes called the "covenant of grace." Primarily that covenant was with Jesus the only One who could perfectly keep God's covenant for us. Secondarily, through Him alone, those who have faith in Him are sharers in the New Covenant. Christ met perfectly all the demands of Divine law. Only through union with Him, through Him, or in Him, can we claim the benefits of God's covenant. Human efforts are utterly futile, only the mediator of the New Covenant in the person of Christ could keep ~~that~~ that covenant for us. So the covenant of grace was made "Primarily with Christ, secondarily with the elect; it was made directly with the Savior, mediately with those ordained to salvation." (I.B. Green)

2. A second consideration is the relationship between the parties, the Kap and the Ul. Two Greek words were used for ~~the~~ "covenant". The first described an agreement between two people, or nations, pretty much on an equal basis...man to man, fifty-fifty. If my neighbor has cows and I have hogs and we each agree to keep our animals inside our own fences and out of each other's property, that was a common covenant. By mutual agreement of the parties concerned, such a covenant could be changed, its terms altered.

But the common Biblical word, used in the Greek New Testament and the Greek translation of the Old Testament is different. It really means a will, such as a man makes to dispose of his property when he dies. The Latin translation is "testament" and the Latin translation of the Bible referred to the ^{old} covenant as the "Old Testament" and the ^{new} covenant as the "New Testament." It is proper for us to sign what is called a "last will and testament" disposing of our possessions after we die. This "will" or "testament" or "covenant" is not made between equals, or on equal terms. One person makes up all the conditions, states them in legal terms, and the other party or parties can only accept or refuse the conditions.

This is the kind of "covenant" God makes. "God and man ^{in Christ} do not meet on equal terms; it means that God, of His own choice and in His free grace offered man this relationship which man cannot alter or change or annul, but which he can only accept or refuse." (Barclay, NT Wordbook, p1 31). The ancient Philo said, "A covenant is a symbol of grace which God sets between Himself who extends the boon and man who receives it. It is fitting for God to give and for a wise man to receive." Barclay 31. The covenant tells us that all is of God. It is ^{not} futile to argue with God or seek to change His terms or denounce them as unfair as it is for an ant to try to order an elephant around.

God who is infinite in knowledge and power and wisdom and love has set the terms of His covenant. He offers them to us through Jesus who alone could perfectly obey God and who was obedient even unto death, yea, even the death of the cross. * God says, "Accept Him, and you are included in my covenant through Him." Live in union with Him, and you are living the true Covenant Life. Abide in His Word, and you are conforming to all my law. Here is God fulfilling His ancient prophecy through Jeremiah: "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my law ~~with~~ within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." When we thought of the parties ~~to~~ to the New Covenant we learn of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, when we consider the relationship of these parties--God making His covenant through Christ for us--we are again reminded of the sovereignty of God.

3. ^{God initiates everything} What is the content of the New Covenant? From the beginning, all the covenants of God were actually the same...and offer of divine grace...an undeserved free

Gift from offended God to offending sinners. Man's inability to perfectly obey the will of the Father had already been fully proved. The Old Testament period...or the old covenant period... had taught man's total inability. Hence an elaborate sacrificial system whereby man's guilt was symbolically transferred in the death of a lamb or other animal was an act of faith anticipating that God would somehow forgive through the shedding of blood...perhaps a dimly seen anticipation of His provision of the perfect "Lamb." *any new covenant required the shedding of blood - the real signifying the truth, the reality of the agreement*

So, in essence, the content of the new covenant so far as man is involved, is our acceptance in faith of the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." At one and the same time, Jesus (as the second of the covenant parties) was (1) our representative who perfectly kept man's side of the agreement, (2) the required sacrifice for man's sin, and (3) the One who as "testator" (that is, the one who makes a will) guarantees to us our full inheritance as sons and daughters of the Heavenly Father. With Christ filling those three functions, when we accept Him in faith, we are through Him partners in the New Covenant and through Him derive three benefits: (1) We are accepted as perfectly obedient to God's requirement; (2) we are assured of forgiveness of sins through the shedding of the blood of the perfect sacrifice, and (3) we enter into the family of God as His adopted children with full rights and privileges.

Identification with the people of God.

Dr. J. B. Green condenses the content of the covenant to two simple expressions: (1) God's offer..."life and salvation" to "sinners", that is, to rebels. (2) The requirement..."Faith (only) as the condition to interest them in the Saviour." Since nothing is of man and everything is of God, our Father promises with His covenant to give the Holy Spirit to "work in them that faith." Our participation in the covenant is through faith, and God provides that faith through the operation of the Holy Spirit. No good works, no animal sacrifices, no ceremonies, no self-effort of any kind will count before God...only God's grace is sufficient

Conclusion. All along God provided visible symbols of the invisible grace inherent in His covenant. The rainbow, circumcision, the ark of the covenant, the temple sacrifices. And with the institution of the New Covenant, it was fitting that Jesus tell His disciples to observe with bread and wine the supper reminding us of His death. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Q92 What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by visible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

Re sacraments are a kind of "visible sermon"

Baptism is a seal... not of man's ability, but of God's power and faithfulness

Ministry. 1961

Communion Meditation

Text: "Ye proclaim the Lord's death, till he come." I cor. 11:26h

We are accustomed to regard the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a memorial, and so it is. But our text reminds us that it is a proclamation, and today we call attention to this especially. "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."

I. The Lord's Supper proclaims the Lord's death to our ^{own hearts} ~~ourselves~~. This, of course we are accustomed to doing in celebrating this memorial. Jesus knew the value of a regularly recurring memorial feast to correct our human bent to forget even that which is important. The selection of bread and wine to symbolize His flesh and blood not only served as appropriate reminders of an event, but also, because He required that they be eaten, these elements relate the historical event to our own lives.

The cross is not to be regarded merely as something that took place 2000 years ago, but as the means of of salvation here and now to be assimilated into our bodies to provide life eternal just as food ^{is} partaken to sustain our physical bodies. The Lord's supper is more than a memorial. It proclaims the Lord's death to our inmost being. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves."

II. The Lord's Supper proclaims the Lord's death to our children. There is nothing wrong about the curiosity of even little children as they witness this sacrament. Most of what children learn is through observation of others, particularly their parents. Especially in a group such as this, where virtually all have been baptized in infancy, the solemn observance of the sacrament has a deep effect. There is nothing in the Scriptures which warrants concealing the cross from children just because tragedy, sin, suffering and death are involved, ~~is the tragedy in our modern times.~~

To be sure, there was tragedy and sin--but ~~xxxxxx~~ the ugliness was human, and sooner or later, even the most innocent child must learn of it. In what better way can they learn than in the shadow of the suffering and death of the cross with its evidence of God's love for the sinner and purpose to redeem from the tragedy of sin allowed to run its full course to eternal destruction. The questions of children are the opportunity to explain. "Ye proclaim the Lord's death."

III. The Lord's Supper proclaims the Lord's death to the world. Jesus knew this far better than most modern Christians within their dignified sanctuaries and stained glass windows. In view of the customs of the ~~times~~ ^{Jesus'}, it is not at all unlikely that curious but uninvited bystanders observed the very first celebration of this sacrament, as they nearly always do out in our little new country churches in Korea.

How many times have we read these words and celebrated this sacrament while the curious crowded the windows and doors. The simplicity ~~xy~~ of the service and the very words we proclaim are often the means of arousing the interest of such visitors. How can we determine the extent to which the Holy Spirit uses this occasion to "proclaim the Lord's death" to the unbelieving world?

IV. The Lord's Supper proclaims the Lord's death till he come. I like the phrase "Till he come." For one thing it assures us that history is not endless, that our labors have a termination, that Satan will not forever ~~be~~ seemingly have his way. But beyond this, it reminds us of His glorious return after which there will be no further need of this sacrament to remind us of His suffering and death.

If Christmas reminds us of the incarnation of Christ, and Easter of His resurrection, according to Scripture an appropriate reminder of the unknown day of His return is the Lord's Supper, as we recall the words of the Apostle Paul, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." The preaching of the ^{full} Gospel is not merely by word but by the "silent ministry" of this holy sacrament.

Conclusion. The Lord's Supper "looks forward as well as backward; a rehearsal of the Passion supper, a foretaste of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb... The pathos and the glory of the Table of the Lord..." XGT.

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:9-14; I Cor. 11:28

Text: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." I Cor. 11:28

A few weeks ago I dropped by to visit the Sung-wang Church just a few miles this side of Namwon. I found that anyone entering the front door of the church has to pass by what appears to be a sort of out-door bulletin board with a little roof over it to protect it from the weather. But instead of posters or other notices it contains only a large mirror. The purpose may be so that everyone can see if their hair is combed and their clothes in order. But it seemed to me to be a good idea to remind all who came to worship not only to consider their outward appearance but to stop and reflect on what kind of persons they are in the sight of God. Especially when we come to the Lord's table we are asked by Paul: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."

Jesus told us of one man who did just that. In His parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Jesus went right to the heart of self-examination. The Pharisee saw himself only in comparison with other people, by which standard he could boast of superiority by virtue of his careful observance of the ceremonial laws. But the publican examined himself in the light of the holiness of God, and prayed "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" Barclay tells of making a journey in the train to England. "As we passed through the Yorkshire moors, I saw a little whitewashed cottage and it seemed to me to shine with an almost radiant whiteness. Some days later I made the journey back to Scotland. The snow had fallen, and was lying deep all around. We came again to the little white cottage, but this time its whiteness seemed drab and soiled and almost grey--in comparison with the virgin whiteness of the driven snow. It all depends what we compare ourselves with. But when we set our lives beside the wonder of the life of Jesus, and beside the holiness of God, then all that is left to say is, 'God be merciful to me--the sinner.'" (Barclay, Luke, 234)

Historically the church has treated seriously the admonition to examine onself and confess our sins. The Roman Catholic Church developed the confessional system, making it an essential part of their religious practice. I have a little book called "The Scottish Ruling Elder" which relates how beginning with the Reformation in Geneva and Scotland, the chief function of the elder was in matters of discipline which were carefully enforced. Admission or rejection to the Lord's table was the principal means by which discipline was carried out. By various means, every communing member was examined prior to communion, and those who qualified were given small tokens to be presented for admission to the table.

"At Aberdeen in 1653 those debarred included 'ordinarie sleepers in time of sermon.' Wightmann of Kirkmahoe, in the early nineteenth century debarred 'all who use any kind of minced oaths such as losh, gosh, teth or lovenenty.'" p.56 At Ettrick in 1727 it was 'found that horse-racing was arranged for the Monday before Communion and therefore delayed the distribution of tokens till the Thursday, with the warning that none would be given to those who attended the races. The result was that the race meeting had to be abandoned.'" p. 51 The system was open to abuse because it was not unknown for it to be used for political purposes, since voting rights were also involved. Another danger was that it could be used to limit communion to a small set of self-righteous people. Noting this, Queen Margaret of Scotland said to the clergy: "What! Shall no one that is a sinner taste that holy mystery? If so, then it follows that no one at all shall receive it...and why did the Lord make the proclamation in the Gospel,

'Except you shall eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you?''

If the system appears quaint and out-of-date, let us remember that the intent behind it has never changed. This is not a time for morbid self-chastisement and introspection which could lead to actual depression or other distortions of our mental processes. But it is a time to examine ourselves in the light of God's words, to measure ourselves by the standards of His holiness as revealed especially by His Son Jesus Christ. This is a time to admit that we are sinners and to claim again for ourselves the mercy of God whose forgiveness is granted unconditionally to those who trust in the righteousness of Christ. It is especially appropriate to do so at the time we remember the death of our Saviour on the Cross. Not only do we look to Him as the One who took our place, the only substitute for the just retribution due to us for our sin, but also in His action we have the perfect standard by which to measure where we fall short.

Self-examination is necessary " and it is in this sense that we understand what the Scripture means by eating and drinking unworthily. Some people have taken this to mean that a person may not deserve to come to the Lord's table. The truth is that no one deserves to come to the Lord's table. 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' (Rom. 3:23). To eat and drink in a worthy manner does not mean to do so as deserving of God's blessing. It means rather to have a frame of mind, and attitude of heart, which is fitting...so the person who is worthy is really the person who realizes full well how unworthy he is and whose heart is therefore full of gratitude to God for the gift of His dear Son. 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' (Ps. 51:17)" Williamson 109

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."

Not Easily Provoked

Text: "Love is not easily provoked." I Cor. 13:5

"His spirit was provoked within him." Acts. 17:16

Scripture: Acts 15:36-41, 17:16-21

Temperers are notorious about climbing with the temperature. It is far easier to be angry than pious on a hot summer day. God gives us hot steamy days as well as the balmy spring ones, in order that we might exercise Christian graces. It seemed fitting today to consider the text: ^{1 Cor. 13:5} "Love...is not easily provoked" with special emphasis on the last word of the text. It is a Greek word meaning "to make sharp" and it is the word from which our word paroxysm is derived. The picture is given by the variety of translations of this term. RSV says, "Love is not irritable." Phillips: "Love is not touchy." NIV: "Love is not easily angered." NEB: "Love is not quick to take offense." Amplified NT: "Love is not touchy or fretful." Can you see it? "Provoked, irritable, touchy, fretful." Along with this familiar text from I Cor. 13, I want us to consider another text which uses the same word in a different way. Acts 17:16. "His spirit was provoked within him."

In both cases the word provoke is our word paroxysm. The dictionary defines paroxysm as "A periodic attack of disease or fit. A sudden and violent excitement or emotion, as of anger." What is this thing which can so easily strike us, especially on a hot day? Let us look at some illustrations in the life of Paul.

I. I can imagine it was steamy hot, perhaps at the end of rainy season, when the first two missionaries on furlough got to talking. They had ^{had} that one term and reported to the home church. Paul said, "Let's go back and see how the churches we started are getting along. Perhaps we can preach in more distant places this time." Barnabas replied, "OK, let's go! Let's try taking John Mark along with us again." Paul literally threw a fit. As we say, he simply went up in smoke. When the Bible says that there arose a "sharp contention" it uses this word paroxysm. That shows how burned up Paul was. Just why Mark's previous desertion of the missionary party seemed so personally repulsive to Paul is hard to say, but at this point there was no patching up the quarrel.

Paul had failed where it is easiest for most missionaries to fail...a case of personality clash. Paul had been a leader at the Jerusalem consultation on World Missions, and his position on a serious matter of policy had been vindicated. Could Satan have felt defeat in the harmonious result of the Jerusalem meeting, and so concentrated his efforts on destroying the effective missionary team of Paul & Barnabas by causing Paul to throw a temper tantrum over short-temper Mark? The two missionaries were as different as could be, but Paul owed a lot to his more mature friend Barnabas. But Paul possessed qualities of intellect and leadership that Barnabas recognized as superior to his own. Someone has written, "My guess is that it would have been a good deal more comfortable to be stationed with Barnabas than with Paul." (Cattell, p. 80).

Just because Paul was a victim in a personality clash is no excuse for us to imitate him. Later on he was sorry. Possibly his regret showed when he wrote the Corinthians to do better: "Practice a love which is not easily provoked!" By then perhaps Mark's conduct had proved that he had overcome his youthful weakness. But we must note that if such a spiritual giant as Paul could suffer such a defeat as to lose his self-control, so can we.

The irritations that surround those of us in Christian service are innumerable. Fellow-missionaries, fellow Christian workers among the Koreans, strangers we never saw before...all these irritate and exasperate. How we long for the patience and self-control, the real love which was not easily provoked, manifest by Jesus as the crowds pressed upon Him for healing, for words of wisdom, until He must

have been weary in body and soul and longed for peace and quiet. Even when He slipped away to a vacation spot with His disciples, they pestered Him with their quarreling over prestigious places in His kingdom. Yet Jesus never indulged in a paroxysm of temper. The most un-Christlike thing in the world is to lose one's temper. "Temper is no more to be eradicated than is the self. But it must be cleansed, and along with self, be hid with Christ in God" (Cattell p. 44) One missionary, who had participated in an ugly situation by a certain speech, told me, when I asked whether he really felt led to make that speech, "No. I felt I must say it quickly for fear I would be checked before I got it said!" (Cattell, p. 52)

II. Move a couple of chapters further in Acts. Paul was alone in Athens, waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him. Not knowing just where to start his witness to Christ in this pagan and snobbish intellectual center, but restless as usual, he strolled about the city and to the Areopagus. "Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of Idols." Other versions read: "his spirit was stirred in him" or "his soul was exasperated beyond endurance at the sight of a city so completely idolatrous." Again Paul threw a fit, he had a paroxysm, but this was much different.

Paul was provoked because of the evils of Athenian Idolatry. There were literally idols to every known divinity. To make sure no god was offended, they had them all, surrounded with rich trappings and ceremonies accompanied by all kinds of immoral practices. Expensive temples, platoons of priests and priestesses, lavish sacrifices. Paul saw it as a massive expression of sin. He was riled at these insults to the true God. That same temperament which exploded at the idea of taking Mark on a second trip now was touched off with the sight of so much evil. The result was action on his part. He went up Mar's hill to engage the city leaders in debate on the validity of his claims to know the true God in contrast with all their false pagan images.

How recently have we been as incensed as was Paul at some open sore of sin, some blatant denial of God and His power, some inhuman travesty upon justice and decency in open defiance of God's express commands? Frankly, I could name a dozen occasions when I have thrown a paroxysm at the conduct or attitude of some fellow missionary or Korean Christian brother...for every time I have been "provoked" because of the social, moral, and spiritual evils perfectly apparent every time we drive the streets or read the newspaper. If we Christians could be thrown into a paroxysm over these things as easily as Paul was in Athens, perhaps our fits of temper at one another would be excused and forgotten as soon as Paul's temper in the case of John Mark was forgotten.

⇒ Note that in Athens, Paul's anger was provoked by a spiritual situation. Social injustice could upset him too. At Philippi the exploitation of a poor demented girl caused him to work the miracle which landed him in jail. But he was especially sensitive to spiritual situations. There are many in our Christian circles today who rightly concern themselves over the great moral and social ills of the day. They go on crusades about civil rights, human freedoms, public health. These are important and proper concerns, yet the number is proportionately few which is "provoked" about spiritual matters...the idols of the Athenians...so often at the root of social ills as well. Paul did not go charging into temples, breaking down idols, and causing an uproar. But he was so disgusted with the evils that it drove him into the synagogue, into the market places, and out among the idle philosophers of the Acropolis, witnessing to the truth of the Gospel.

III. The two texts we have chosen, one written by Paul and the other about him seem contradictory in their message, but not so in their contexts. "Love is not easily provoked" warns us that the Christian, possessed of real love, does not take personal affront and fly into temper because he is abused or mistreated or even persecuted. The other text, about Paul, "His spirit was provoked within him" points to a justifiable righteous indignation because God is dishonored and evil allowed to flourish.

Both these texts describe the character of God Himself. In the Old Testament this very word is used repeatedly to describe God's reaction to human situations. Three times in Deut. 9, Moses uses this word Paroxysm to describe God's anger: "Remember and do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day you came out of the land of Egypt, until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord." (9:8) Here the continual peevish griping of the children of Israel had often exasperated God Himself.

Moses cited another instance at Mt. Sinai when his people took advantage of his absence to indulge in idolary and wickedness. "Furthermore the Lord said to me, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stubborn people, let me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they... Then I lay prostrate before the Lord forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin which you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger."

One other time is mentioned by Moses. This was when He had brought the children of Israel to the brink of the promised land but, dismayed by the report of the majority of the spies, they refused to enter. Such continual rebellions provoked God to intense anger at His own people.

God is no less angry with sin in His people today. Note that in the above references God was angry with His own people. In spite of deliverance from Egypt, in spite of continued nourishment in the wilderness of Sinai, in spite of promise of victory in possessing the promised Land, still His own people were rebellious and disobedient. How often we Christians forget the blessings of God and turn to rebellion and downright disobedience. Every time we gripe at physical conditions, everytime we fail to grasp His promises through faith, everytime we put material things as the idols we worship instead of God, everytime we are unwilling to step forward in faith to occupy the land inhabited by the giant of sin...we excite God to divine wrath against us. We suffer and we fail to reap the total benefit of God's grace as did those children of Israel.

Fortunately there is another side to God's character...whereby He supremely demonstrates how "Love is not easily provoked." Suppose God were to take offense everytime He had a right to against us! Suppose He became as indignant at every personal affront, everytime He is sidetracked in favor of something else, as we are in dealing with human associates. Where would we be? The writer of Psalm 130, who must have known the guilt of sin and yet experienced the underserved leniency of God, wrote:

If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee,
That thou mayst be feared.

If you would be like God, learn to be angry without sin (Eph. 4:26). Let your temper be aroused against evil but not against individuals who have given us personal affront. Like God, Hate the sin and love the sinner. God gave us the emotion we call Anger, but let our paroxysms stir us to righteous deeds for him in combatting the world of sin and the evil one; let it not be vented in personal grudges and vengeance. I believe that Paul was sorry for letting his temper get away from him in the matter of John Mark and may have had this in mind when he wrote those words, "Love is not easily provoked!" But if we are provoked let it be in accordance with the admonition of the writer of the epistles who again uses this same word from which comes our word paroxysm: "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." Heb. 10:24

I have not come to call righteous men but sinners to repentance.

And I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves...And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on.

But seek for His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you.

But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.

But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

And just as you want men to treat you, treat them in the same way.

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

If I then, the Lord, and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

If any one serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant ~~always~~ also be; if any one serves Me, the Father will honor him.

If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.

For whoever is ashamed of me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.

Abide in Me, and I in you, As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me...By this is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

HE IS RISEN

TEXT: "BUT NOW HATH CHRIST BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THE FIRST FRUITS OF THEM THAT

ARE ASLEEP." I COR. 15:20.

SCRIPTURE READING: I COR. 15:1-20.

THREE SHOUTS PUNCTUATED PASSION WEEK. THE FIRST WAS CHANTED BY A FESTIVE CROWD

BOUND FOR JERUSALEM: "HOSANNA! BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD."

THE SECOND WAS THE TERRIFYING ROAR OF AN ANGRY MOB: "CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM!" THE

THIRD WAS NOT SO MUCH A SHOUT AS A JUBILANT WHISPER PASSING FROM MOUTH TO MOUTH AMONG

THE FRIGHTENED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, "HE IS RISEN!" THESE THREE SHOUTS WERE HEARD ON

PALM SUNDAY, GOOD FRIDAY, AND EASTER SUNDAY. THEY PROCLAIM THE MAJESTY, THE

SUFFERING, AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE SON OF GOD. THE ONE WHOM THE FICKLE MOB PRAISED

WITH SHOUTS OF "HOSANNA" WAS NOT THE KIND OF KING THEY HAD HOPED FOR...RATHER HE WAS

THE KING OF HEAVEN WHO A FEW DAYS LATER WILLINGLY ALLOWED THEM TO PUT INTO ACTION

THAT AWFUL CRY OF "CRUCIFY HIM." BUT THREE DAYS LATER THE GRIEF AND GLOOM OF HIS

HANDFUL OF FRIENDS WAS TRANSFORMED INTO JOY AND HOPE WITH THE CRY, "HE IS RISEN!"

CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN!" THIS WAS THE NEWS WHICH GAVE BIRTH TO THE CHURCH OF THE

LIVING CHRIST, SENT FORTH BEARERS OF HIS GOSPEL TO THE FARTHEST CORNERS OF THE ROMAN

EMPIRE AND CONTINUES TO THIS DAY TO GENERATE THE LIFE AND POWER OF HIS CHURCH TO THE

ENDS OF THE EARTH.

OF ALL THE MIRACLES, SURELY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS BY FAR THE

GREATEST. WITHOUT IT THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH COLLAPSES LIKE A

HOUSE OF CARDS. WITHOUT IT EVERYTHING JESUS SAID IS MEANINGLESS. WITHOUT IT OUR

FAITH IS WORTHLESS, WE ARE STILL IN OUR SINS, AND WE ARE OF ALL MEN MOST TO BE PITIED.

BECAUSE IT IS THE PIVOTAL POINT OF THE ENTIRE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY, HER ENEMIES FOR

TWO THOUSAND YEARS HAVE TRIED EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS TO DESTROY IT. CRITICS HAVE

ATTEMPTED TO DISCREDIT THE WHOLE HISTORY OF THE RESURRECTION. SATAN HAS DONE HIS BEST

(OR SHOULD I SAY, HIS WORST) TO BRING DOUBTS AND UNBELIEF WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN CIRCLE.

ONE OF THE GREATEST OF ALL CHURCH LEADERS, PAUL HIMSELF, WAS EVIDENTLY CHALLENGED ON

THIS POINT IN THE CITY OF CORINTH BY THOSE WHO TRIED TO DENY HIS RIGHT TO BE CALLED AN

APOSTLE BY QUESTIONING HIS PREACHING OF THIS DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION.

I CORINTHIANS 15 CAN BE LOOKED UPON AS A MASTERFUL DEFENSE OF THE RESURRECTION

BEFORE THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION. LET'S IMAGINE THAT WE ARE THE JURY LISTENING AS

THE POLICE INVESTIGATOR BRINGS HIS WITNESSES TO TESTIFY AS TO THE TRUTH OR FALSEHOOD

OF THE ACCOUNT OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST BY THOSE WHO SAW CHRIST ALIVE AFTER HIS

Cap. 14, 87
Bobbie
Cuth.

DEATH, AND THEN BY THOSE WHOSE LIVES TODAY HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THIS TRUTH.

A. THE EYE-WITNESSES. WILL THE FIRST WITNESS STEP FORWARD:

1. "I AM A ROMAN SOLDIER." I HELPED NAIL JESUS TO THE CROSS. I SAW HIM SUFFER AND DIE WHILE THE SKY GREW DARK AND THE EARTH TREMBLED. WE HAD TO HURRY TO GET THE THREE MEN WHO WERE CRUCIFIED TOGETHER DOWN FROM THEIR CROSSES AS THE JEWS DEMANDED THAT THEY BE REMOVED BEFORE THEIR SABBATH DAY. THE CENTURION ORDERED US TO BREAK THEIR LEGS TO MAKE SURE THEY WERE DEAD. WHEN WE CAME TO JESUS HE WAS ALREADY DEAD. AS A SOLDIER I HAVE SEEN MANY MEN DIE...I KNOW THE SIGNS...I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT JESUS WAS DEAD SO WE DIDN'T BOTHER TO BREAK HIS LEGS. LATER WHEN THIS JESUS WAS BURIED IN THE TOMB OF A WEALTHY JEWISH FRIEND, I WAS ONE OF THE SQUAD OF SOLDIERS ASSIGNED TO WATCH THAT TOMB TO SEE THAT HIS BODY WAS NOT STOLEN. I SAW THE ENEMIES OF JESUS ROLL THE GREAT STONE OVER THE MOUTH OF THE TOMB AND SEAL IT MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY ONE TO ENTER. YOU KNOW THAT IT IS UNHEARD OF FOR ROMAN GUARDS TO FALL ASLEEP ON DUTY, SO IT WAS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO STEAL THAT BODY. YET SOMEHOW EARLY ON THE MORNING OF THE THIRD DAY SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL DID HAPPEN. WE SOLDIERS WERE OVERPOWERED. THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY. THE TOMB WAS EMPTY. ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT BY THE HAND OF ALMIGHTY GOD, THIS ONE WHO COULD HAVE BEEN NO OTHER THAN HIS SON, ROSE FROM THE DEAD. AS A ROMAN SOLDIER I CAN ONLY TESTIFY THAT IN SPITE OF OUR ARMED MIGHT, GOD PERFORMED THIS MIRACLE. THIS JESUS IS ALIVE!

2. "I AM A JEWISH PRIEST." I HATED JESUS, BECAUSE HIS CLAIMS TO BE THE SON OF GOD THREATENED TO DESTROY MY PRESTIGE AND POWER AS A PRIEST HERE IN JERUSALEM. JESUS CHALLENGED OUR SYSTEM OF INTRICATE LAWS CONTROLLING THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE JEWS. WE COULD NOT ACCEPT HIS PREPOSTEROUS CLAIMS TO BE GOD HIMSELF...SHEER BLASPHEMY! SOMEHOW BY TRICKERY HE SEEMED TO PERFORM SPECTACULAR MIRACLES...NOTABLY THE RECENT PURPORTED RAISING OF A VILLAGER NAMED LAZARUS AFTER HE DIED AND HAD BEEN BURIED FOR FOUR DAYS...CAUSING A SENSATION ATTRACTING AN ENORMOUS FOLLOWING. AFTER GOING TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF CONTRIVING HIS EXECUTION, WE WANTED TO BE SURE HE REALLY WAS DEAD WHEN THEY TOOK HIM DOWN FROM THE CROSS, AND SO WE PERSONALLY INSPECTED HIS BODY BEFORE BURIAL. HE HAD MADE AN ABSURD CLAIM ABOUT RISING FROM THE DEAD, SO TO MAKE DOUBLY SURE WE SEALED THAT TOMB WITH OUR OWN HANDS AND ARRANGED FOR ROMAN SOLDIERS TO STAND GUARD THERE NIGHT AND DAY. YET, EVEN I MUST ADMIT SOMETHING UNEXPLAINABLE DID HAPPEN...THAT TOMB WAS EMPTY THREE DAYS LATER. OF COURSE WE TRIED TO HUSH UP THE WHOLE MATTER BY TELLING THE GUARDS TO REPORT THAT THE DISCIPLES HAD STOLEN THAT BODY, BUT I MUST CONFESS THAT WAS A COMPLETE LIE. DEEP DOWN I KNOW THAT THERE IS NO REAL EXPLANATION EXCEPT THAT A MIRACLE TOOK PLACE AND JESUS IS ALIVE.

3. "I AM THOMAS" THE DISCIPLE, A NUMBER OF TIMES OUR MASTER HAD SPOKEN OF DYING AND RISING AGAIN ON THE THIRD DAY BUT SOMEHOW WE FAILED TO UNDERSTAND. WHEN HE WAS CRUCIFIED I STILL FAILED TO RECALL HIS FULL PREDICTION. I WAS SO DOWNHEARTED AND DESPAIRING THAT I WENT OFF ALONE TO MY ROOM AND DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO BE WITH THE OTHER DISCIPLES ON THAT FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. I MISSED THE EXCITEMENT WHEN THE WOMEN WHO HAD GONE TO THE TOMB AT DAYBREAK CAME RUNNING WITH THE UNBELIEVABLE NEWS THAT THE BODY OF JESUS HAD DISAPPEARED, AND HE WAS NOW ALIVE. I WASN'T THERE WHEN JESUS APPEARED TO THE REST OF THE DISCIPLES IN A ROOM WHERE THE DOORS WERE ALL LOCKED AND SPOKE THOSE FAMILIAR WORDS: "PEACE BE WITH YOU." SEVERAL OF THEM CAME AND TOLD ME ALL THIS, BUT I REFUSED TO BELIEVE WHEN THEY SAID, "WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD!" "IMPOSSIBLE," I SAID, "UNLESS I SEE THE NAIL PRINTS IN HIS HANDS AND PUT MY FINGER INTO THE PLACE OF THOSE NAILS, AND PUT MY HAND INTO HIS SIDE I WILL NOT BELIEVE!" "THERE MUST BE SOME TRICKERY." BUT ABOUT A WEEK LATER I WAS WITH THE DISCIPLES WHEN HE APPEARED AGAIN, CALLED ME BY NAME, AND SPOKE DIRECTLY TO ME: "REACH OUT YOUR FINGER AND SEE MY HANDS; PUT YOU HAND INTO MY SIDE...DON'T BE UNBELIEVING BUT BELIEVE!" BUT IT WASN'T NECESSARY TO TOUCH HIM AT ALL...HE WAS TOO REAL, TOO ALIVE, TOO SURELY THE CHRIST, AND I COULD ONLY FALL AT HIS FEET AND EXCLAIM, "MY LORD AND MY GOD!" I MAY BE HARD TO BE CONVINCED, BUT SHOWN THE FACTS I KNOW WITHOUT QUESTION: JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD. THERE WERE OTHERS TOO WHO AT FIRST REFUSED TO BELIEVE. FOR INSTANCE, JAMES THE BROTHER OF JESUS, WHO OUGHT TO HAVE KNOWN HIM BEST, HAD NEVER ACCEPTED HIS CLAIMS TO BE THE SON OF GOD...BUT AFTER THE RESURRECTION WHEN JESUS MADE A PERSONAL APPEARANCE TO HIM, HE REVERSED HIMSELF AND NOW IS THE ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER OF OUR CHURCH. ALL TOLD ABOUT 500 PEOPLE SAW THE RISEN CHRIST...WITH THAT MANY WITNESSES WHO COULD DENY THE FACT? YES! "CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN!"

4. "MY NAME IS PAUL." PERHAPS MY TESTIMONY IS THE MOST REMARKABLE OF ALL. AS A JEW AND A PHARISEE NOBODY EXCELLED ME IN ZEAL TO STAMP OUT THE GROWING HERESY ON THE PART OF SOME PEOPLE WHO BELIEVED THAT THIS MAN, JESUS OF NAZARETH, WAS THE SON OF GOD. EVEN THOUGH HE HAD BEEN CRUCIFIED AND EVERYBODY KNEW HE WAS DEAD, THESE CRAZY PEOPLE INSISTED THAT HE HAD RISEN FROM THE DEAD AND THAT BELIEF SEEMED TO SET THEM ON FIRE TO CONVINCE THE WHOLE WORLD THAT HE WAS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD, WHO COULD SAVE US FROM OUR SINS. I SECURED SPECIAL PERMISSION FROM THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES TO ARREST AND BEAT UP AND IMPRISON THESE STRANGE "CHRISTIANS," EVEN IN FARAWAY DAMASCUS. ON THE WAY TO EXTERMINATE THEM AT MIDDAY I SAW A BRILLIANT LIGHT FROM HEAVEN AND HEARD A VOICE SPEAKING TO ME, "SAUL (THE NAME I USED THEN), SAUL, WHY ARE YOU PERSECUTING ME?" I FELL TO THE GROUND AND ASKED, "WHO ART THOU, LORD?" THE VOICE ANSWERED, "I AM JESUS WHOM YOU ARE PERSECUTING." HOW CAN I DESCRIBE MY FEELINGS? THE ONE WHOSE FOLLOWERS I HAD HATED ENOUGH TO TORTURE AND IMPRISON AND KILL...THIS JESUS WHO I BELIEVED TO BE DEAD, HAD SPOKEN TO ME. I HAD DESPISED HIM AND HIS CHURCH, BUT BY THE

GRACE OF GOD HE LOVED ME, HE CHANGED MY LIFE, HE APPEARED TO ME, HE SPOKE TO ME, AND HE CHOSE SUCH A MAN AS I TO PREACH HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION. "BY THE GRACE OF GOD I AM WHAT I AM."

2. THE 1987 WITNESSES TO THE RESURRECTION. THE WONDER OF THE RESURRECTION IS THAT AFTER NEARLY 2000 YEARS IT STILL TRANSFORMS LIVES BY ITS POWER. IN ADDITION TO THOSE WHO WERE THE EYE-WITNESSES TO THE EVENT ITSELF, A "GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES" TODAY TESTIFY BEFORE US. LET'S CALL SOME IMAGINARY ONES TO TESTIFY:

A. "I AM MARY BROWN" AN AVERAGE CHURCH MEMBER. WHEN I READ OR HEAR HOW JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN ON THE THIRD DAY, THE HOLY SPIRIT TELLS ME THAT NOT ONLY CAN I BELIEVE THE TRUTH THAT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS A FACT OF HISTORY BUT ALSO IT GUARANTEES THE CERTAINTY OF MY SALVATION BY FAITH NOW, AND OF MY FUTURE FOREVER.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, CHRIST HAS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED HIS POWER TO CHANGE MY LIFE. WHEREAS I USED TO BE DEAD IN SINS, NOW BY THE GRACE OF GOD, I HAVE BEEN MADE INTO A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST. HE HAS FORGIVEN MY SINS AND CAUSED ME TO HATE THEM. AS PAUL WROTE IN I COR. 15:22, "AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, SO ALSO IN CHRIST ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE." IF CHRIST HAD NEVER RISEN FROM THE DEAD AND WAS STILL BURIED IN THAT TOMB, HOW COULD HE HAVE ANY POWER TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING FOR ME NOW, OR TO MAKE ME OVER SO THAT I AM NO LONGER IN REBELLION TO GOD BUT AM OBEDIENT TO HIM? ISN'T THAT THE "POWER OF THE RESURRECTION" OF WHICH PAUL SPOKE IN PHIL. 3:10?

IN THE SECOND PLACE, THE FACT THAT JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD DEMONSTRATES GOD'S POWER TO RAISE THE DEAD. THIS IS FAR MORE THAN JUST A BELIEF IN A VAGUE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AS SOME KIND OF SPIRIT WANDERING IN SPACE. EVEN MANY NON-CHRISTIANS, PEOPLE WHO NEVER HEARD OF CHRIST, BELIEVE IN THAT KIND OF FUTURE LIFE OF THE SOUL BASED ON THE GOOD WORKS DONE IN THIS LIFE. BUT THE FACT THAT JESUS ROSE BODILY, THAT THERE WAS NO CORPSE LEFT IN THAT SEPULCHRE, MEANS THAT, AS WE AFFIRM IN THE APOSTLES' CREED, I BELIEVE "IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING." WHEN MY PARENTS DIED THIS BROUGHT GREAT COMFORT TO ME BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED FIRMLY IN JESUS CHRIST AS THEIR SAVIOUR AND LORD AND I KNEW THAT WE COULD CLAIM ALL THE PRECIOUS PROMISES IN FIRST CORINTHIANS 15 FOR THEM. BURYING THEIR BODIES IN THE CEMETERY WAS NOT THE END...IN FACT IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A LIFE IN GLORY, A LIFE TO WHICH I TOO CAN LOOK FORWARD.

B. "I AM JOHN SMITH," A FARMER IN RUTHERFORD COUNTY. I USED TO QUESTION MARY SMITH'S TESTIMONY. "HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED?" I ASKED. "WHAT KIND OF A BODY DO

THEY HAVE?" I FOUGHT IN THE LAST WAR...I SAW BODIES BLOWN TO BITS BY SHELL FIRE. SOME OF MY NAVY FRIENDS WENT DOWN WITH THEIR SHIPS. WILL THOSE BODIES BE RAISED AGAIN? AND I THOUGHT OF MY BEST FRIEND WHO HAD A TERRIBLE CANCER WHICH DESTROYED HIS BODY, GAVE HIM UNBEARABLE PAIN, AND FINALLY CAUSED HIS DEATH. WHAT KIND OF A BODY CAN HE POSSIBLY HAVE? NOW IN THE BIBLE I FIND GIVES US AT LEAST TWO ANSWERS TO THESE PROBLEMS.

THE FIRST ONE IS TO LOOK AT JESUS HIMSELF. HE WAS TORTURED, BEATEN, AND THE SCARS OF THE CRUCIFIXION WERE ON HIS BODY AFTER HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD. YET HE WAS RECOGNIZABLE TO HIS DISCIPLES...THEY KNEW THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE, HIS MANNERISMS, HIS VOICE, HIS FAMILIAR GREETING. HE INVITED THEM TO TOUCH HIS BODY, HE ATE WITH THEM. YET HE WAS SOMEHOW DIFFERENT. HE APPEARED SUDDENLY WHEN THEY DID NOT EXPECT HIM. HE COULD ENTER A CLOSED ROOM WHERE THE DOORS WERE LOCKED. IT WAS THE SAME BODY WE SAW BURIED IN THAT GARDEN TOMB, BUT IT WAS DIFFERENT, NO LONGER LOCKED INTO THE PHYSICAL LAWS WITH WHICH WE ARE FAMILIAR. IF GOD COULD DO THAT FOR JESUS CHIRST, BY THE FAITH WHICH HE HAS GIVEN ME, I BELIEVE HE CAN AND WILL DO THE SAME FOR ME AS WELL. I CAN BELIEVE WITH ALL MY HEART WHAT JESUS TOLD MARY WHEN HER BROTHER LAZARUS DIED: "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE, HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME SHALL LIVE EVEN IF HE DIES, AND HE WHO LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE." (JOHN 11:25-26)

AS A FARMER, I CAN ALSO APPRECIATE THE ILLUSTRATION PAUL USES BEGINNING IN I COR. 15:36. HE POINTS OUT THAT A SEED PLANTED IN THE GROUND IS JUST A BARE GRAIN, APPARENTLY LIFELESS, YET GOD CAUSES A BEAUTIFUL NEW PLANT TO GROW FROM IT. IN A SENSE IT IS THE SAME AS THE DRY SHRIVELED UP BROWN SEED THAT WAS PLANTED, BUT IT IS GIVEN A NEW AND PERFECT FORM. I CAN SEE IN OTHER FORMS OF NATURE SIMILAR THINGS...SUCH AS THE BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLY THAT EMERGES FROM THE CATERPILLAR'S COCOON. THE GOD WHO CREATED ALL THESE LAWS OF NATURE HAS ALL THE POWER TO GIVE TO US NEW AND PERFECT BODIES. JUST AS WE ARE NOT ALL ALIKE IN THIS WORLD, SO WE WILL NOT ALL HAVE THE SAME BODIES IN THE NEXT WORLD. BUT WE CAN BE SURE THAT ALL THE IMPERFECTIONS, ALL THE ILLNESSES, ALL THE UGLINESS WILL BE GONE. INSTEAD WE WILL BE PERFECT, WITH TRANSFORMED BODIES JUST AS JESUS WAS GIVEN A BODY AFTER HIS RESURRECTION. LIKE HIM, WE WILL NO LONGER BE SUBJECT TO THE LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE, BUT WE WILL BE LIKE OUR SAVIOUR IN ALL THINGS.

C. "MY NAME IS LEE" AND I HAVE LEPROSY. I AM GETTING ALONG IN YEARS NOW BUT I LOOK FAR OLDER THAN I AM. ABOUT 30 YEARS AGO WHEN I WAS A YOUNG MAN, I NOTICED THAT I WAS NOT ABLE TO FEEL WITH THE TIPS OF MY FINGERS AND TOES. THEN SOME OF MY HAIR FELL OUT AND SPOTS AND SORES APPEARED IN MY SKIN. SOON IT WAS CLEAR THAT I HAD THE DREADFUL DISEASE CALLED LEPROSY. I WAS FORCED TO LEAVE HOME AND BEG FOR A LIVING.

PEOPLE WOULD NOT TOUCH ME. THERE WAS NO ONE I COULD WORK FOR. IT WAS ONLY UNDER BRIDGES OR IN CRUDE LITTLE HUTS OF STICKS AND MUD THAT I COULD LIVE. SHORTLY AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR I FOUND MYSELF LIVING WITH ABOUT A HUNDRED OTHERS WHO HAD THE SAME DISEASE OUT IN THE OPEN IN HOLES IN THE GROUND AND CRUDE SHACKS LIKE ANIMALS. ONE OF THE MEN WAS FROM A LARGE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WITH OUR DISEASE. HE WAS A CHRISTIAN AND AN ELDER IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. HE GATHERED US TOGETHER AND BEGAN TO HOLD MEETINGS. HE TOLD US ABOUT JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, AND BEGAN TO TEACH US FROM THE BIBLE. SOON WE GREW TO LOVE AND BELIEVE IN THIS JESUS, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE SEEMED TO HAVE CURED PEOPLE WITH LEPROSY. AFTER TEACHING US FOR WEEKS HE ARRANGED FOR A MISSIONARY TO COME AND HELP US START OUR CHURCH. SOME YEARS AGO I PREPARED TO RECEIVE BAPTISM AND THE MISSIONARY EXAMINED ME ON SATURDAY BEFORE THE DAY I WAS TO BE BAPTIZED. WE HAD BEEN WELL TRAINED AND ALL THE QUESTIONS HE ASKED WERE EASY TO ANSWER. I REMEMBER THERE WERE FOUR OF US SITTING TOGETHER TO BE EXAMINED. ALL OF US WERE BLIND, WE HAD LOST FINGERS AND TOES, OUR FACES WERE DISFIGURED, WE HAD NO HAIR. I AM SURE THAT ANY ONE WOULD THINK WE WERE HORRIBLE TO LOOK AT. AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION THE MISSIONARY ASKED ME, "WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU WHEN YOU DIE?" HE PROBABLY REALIZED THAT IN MY CONDITION I DID NOT HAVE LONG TO LIVE. I ANSWERED, "I WILL GO TO HEAVEN." THIS FAITH IS A GREAT COMFORT TO ME EVER SINCE I BECAME A CHRISTIAN AND LEARNED THAT JESUS WHO SAVED ME BY HIS DEATH ALSO ROSE FROM THE DEAD TO GIVE ME THAT SAME HOPE. THEN THE MISSIONARY ASKED A FINAL QUESTION: "AND WHAT KIND OF A BODY WILL YOU HAVE?" I THOUGHT ABOUT THE MISERABLE WRECK OF A BODY I NOW HAVE AND WHICH THE MISSIONARY COULD SEE PERFECTLY WELL. I REMEMBERED SOME WORDS OUR LEADER HAD TAUGHT US, WORDS OF PAUL IN I COR. 15, "SO ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. IT IS SOWN A PERISHABLE BODY, IT IS RAISED AN IMPERISHABLE BODY; IT IS SOWN IN DISHONOR, IT IS RAISED IN GLORY; IT IS SOWN IN WEAKNESS, IT IS RAISED IN POWER." I ANSWERED THE MISSIONARY'S QUESTION: "NOT A BODY LIKE THIS ONE, BUT ONE LIKE JESUS!" ALL THESE YEARS I HAVE LIVED WITH THIS AWFUL BODY...MY EXISTENCE HAS BEEN A LIVING DEATH...AND SOON PHYSICAL DEATH WILL COME, BUT WITH PAUL I CAN SAY, "THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."

CONCLUSION. CHARLES COLSON WENT TO PRISON FOR HIS PART IN THE WATERGATE SCANDAL AND BECAME AN EARNEST CHRISTIAN THERE. HE HAS POINTED OUT THAT IF HE AND SOME OF THE HIGHEST POWERED LAWYERS IN THE COUNTRY SUCH AS EHRlichman, HALDEMAN, MITCHELL AND PRESIDENT NIXON HIMSELF COULD NOT SUCCESSFULLY COVER UP A RATHER MINOR CRIME, HOW IN THE WORLD WOULD ELEVEN DISCIPLES OF JESUS, VERY ORDINARY MEN, WITH THE COMPLICITY OF UP TO 500 MORE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN COVERING UP A "FAKED" RESURRECTION, A BUSINESS FAR MORE VULNERABLE TO PUBLIC SKEPTICISM AND REJECTION. AS COLSON PUTS IT (P. 68): "TO SUBSCRIBE TO THIS ARGUMENT (OF A COVER-UP), ONE MUST ALSO BE READY TO BELIEVE THAT EACH DISCIPLE WAS WILLING TO BE OSTRACIZED BY FRIENDS AND FAMILY, LIVE IN DAILY FEAR

OF DEATH, ENDURE PRISONS, LIVE PENNYLESS AND HUNGRY, SACRIFICE FAMILY, BE TORTURED WITHOUT MERCY, AND ULTIMATELY DIE...ALL ALONG WITHOUT EVER RENOUNCING THAT JESUS HAD RISEN FROM THE DEAD." IS NOT ALL THE FORCE OF THE WORD OF GOD AND THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE TRUTH THAT JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN SUFFICIENT FOR THE DEFENSE TO REST? WITH ALL OF CHRISTENDOM ON THIS DAY WE REJOICE, BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT "HE AROSE!" "BUT NOW HATH CHRIST BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, THE FIRST FRUITS OF THEM THAT ARE ASLEEP."

Intro. Resur. greatest of miracles. Proved by more abundant hist. evidence.
Greatest signif. to Christians.

Those at Corinth quest. Paul's right to be called apostle, contradicted Gospel. I Cor. 15 decl. of right and truth. Whole argument rests on found. of res. Text.

I. Christ has been raised from the dead. Pol. investigator trying to discover truth or falsehood of resur. Summon witnesses.

A. Roman soldier. Helped killed Jesus. Knew death. Guarded tomb. Overpowered by supernatural act...only interpreted as hand of Alm. God, raised His Son. In spite of armed might, God performed this miracle, and Jesus rose from the dead.

B. Jewish priest. Hated Jesus, claims to be Son of God. Challenged our system. We could not accept preposterous claims to be God Himself. Composed false evidence. Examined body. He had predicted he would rise. Guard. Attempt to hush up. But no other explanation...a miracle took place.

Mary Magdalene

C. Thomas. Did not understand Jesus. We refused to believe women. I refused story of others. Trickery. Then I saw him. I am one who demands evidence. Others saw him, such as James. 500. God raised Son, according to Scriptures.

D. Paul. Most remarkable testimony. Zealous Jew & Pharisee. Watched Stephen die. Saw Jesus on way to Damascus. Had been working against God. (15:10)

E. Testimony of men convinced against their wills. If such testimony is not to be believed, preaching of Apostles is in vain, entire message of NT is falsehood, God Himself has been terribly misrepresented, and each of us Christ. bel. in vain. T

II. The first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Text. divides argument of chapter. Listen to modern voices who have found meaning in resur. for themselves.

A. Widow of Elder Chang. Res. of Christ, convinces me there is a resur. in my future. Immort. of body as well as soul. Two things:

1. Christ has demonstrated power to change life. (15:22). He who has changed my heart, has power to cause my body to rise.
2. God's power to raise has been demonstrated already. First fruits (15:23)

B. Leper. Use to raise question of (15:35). Resur. of Christ answers. Same body but transformed. Tomb was empty. Illus. of seed in ground. (15:42-44)

C. North Korean Christian. Resur. of Christ demonstrates to me the power of God. If He raised Christ, he can raise me. Paul speaks of mystery. Death is like sleep. (15:51-52). Christ has conquered death. (15:27) Easter a day of joy, of triumph, of demonstration of power of God. (15:57) Brings greatest of hope, even though we have trouble and sorrow and death in this life. Final victory with God. It is shared with us. Prayer with Paul: Phil. 3:10-11 "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

Conclusion: Is this not greatest miracles. Son of God died, but also rose, to prove all His claims, to grant hope of resur. to all who put faith in Him. This fact of the resur. gives us assurance in our faith in the Christ of history, it gives us hope for eternity with Him, it gives us protection against all wavering in our faith now, and provides incentive for Christian witness and service today. (15:58)

Who is Adequate?

Text: "...and who is adequate for these things?"

II Cor. 2:16b

Scripture: II Cor. 2:14-17

A psychiatrist might label me as some kind of freak when I admit that I was struck with the question Paul asks in II Cor. 2:16: "Who is adequate for these things." How would I diagnose a serious case of inferiority complex because that question is constantly echoed in my own experience when facing the expectations of God Himself, of the church which supports us, of those who make our work assignments, and especially of that vast multitude "out there" who expect the missionary somehow to supply all their needs, to solve all their problems, and to answer the ultimate question of their eternal destiny. "Who is adequate?"

Who is adequate to master a difficult foreign language? Who is adequate to preach messages that with clarity, logic, appeal, and forcefulness proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to people of totally different culture and religion, and who have no background of Biblical knowledge or Christian teachings? Who is adequate to cope with the complexities of cooperating with national church structures, or with the headaches of committee and board assignments? Who is adequate to live a life style which demonstrates complete commitment to Christ exhibits the fruits of the Spirit, and avoids all those cultural faux-pas or stupid slips of the tongue which antagonize rather than attract the very people we want to win? Who is adequate to always be the sweet aroma Paul speaks of here: "the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him?"

William Barclay illumines Paul's figure here, of the Roman Triumph, the procession of a victorious general through the streets of Rome. It was required that he have been a successful field commander of a completely finished victorious campaign against a foreign enemy. The official order was as follows: The state officials and senate, the trumpeters, the spoils of war, the white bull for sacrifice, the wretched captives in chains about to be put into prison and probably executed, the musicians with their lyres, and the priests swinging their censers with the sweet-smelling incense burning in them. Finally came the general himself in a chariot drawn by four horses. He was clad in royal

purple and held the ivory sceptre with the Roman eagle at the top. Over his head a slave held the crown of Jupiter. He was followed by his family and the army wearing their decorations and shouting cries of triumph. The procession moved through cheering crowds for it was a tremendous day which might happen only once in a lifetime. Paul sees "the conquering Christ marching in triumph through the world, and himself in that conquering train. It is a triumph which nothing can stop!" (Barclay 205) For the general and his victorious people, the sweet incense brought joy, but to the miserable captives doomed to death it was the smell of death. We says Paul, are "a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved, and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other and aroma from life to life."

What a responsibility! Who can cope? Who is worthy? Who is sufficient? Who is equal to such a calling? Who is adequate? Surrounded by doctors of the PMC in Chunju, I often think of their awesome responsibilities when prescriptions or the turn of the scalpel can cause life or death. How much greater their responsibility for all who deal with eternal issues of Heaven or Hell? Who is adequate?

Our passage answers the question. We don't usually get the impression that Paul suffered from an inferiority complex. The reason lies in his absolute assurance that God is adequate. As expressed in 2:14, God leads us in His triumph in Christ, God manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. Lest he be accused of commending himself, Paul writes in 3:4-6: "And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant." Elsewhere the great missionary wrote: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." (I Cor. 15:10)

How does God make us adequate?

1. He calls us...not merely out of darkness into light as He has called all Christians, but for special duty. When ^{He} calls He supplies the necessary qualifications whether it be for Moses the ability to speak, for David the shepherd boy the ability to rule, or for Paul to

say: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service." (I Tim. 1:12) "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you,' for power is perfected in weakness." (II Cor. 12:9a)

2. He gives us a message. "We are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God." Our message is not like that of those peddlers along the streets about us... shrill, rapidfire, high-pressure sales-talk luring the unsuspecting into purchase of shoddy substandard merchandize, but is the truth strait from God Almighty who has placed His seal of approval upon the infinite worth of the Word about Christ and Him crucified. Like Paul we are "not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes: to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16)

3. He causes the growth. We are here for a church growth seminar. Our purpose in Korea is the planting and nurture of the church of the Living God. Important as study of the processes and methods of the growth of God's Kingdom may be, we remember that growth is caused by the Lord of the harvest. He who calls the sower, and provides the seed, will cause the growth. We are nothing but God's workmen...as Paul put it: "What then is Apollos? And what is Paul/ Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth." (I Cor. 3:4-7).

Who is adequate? None of us! but thank God for His adequacy!

(over)

God is working His purpose out As year succeeds to year...
God is working His purpose out, And the time is drawing near;
Nearer and nearer draws the time, The time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God As the waters cover the sea.

March we forth in the strength of God, With the banner of Christ unfurled,
That the light of the glorious gospel of truth May shine throughout the world.
Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin To set their captives free,
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God As the waters cover the sea.

All we can do is nothing worth Unless God blesses the deed
Vainly we hope for the harvest-tide Till God gives life to the seed;
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time The time that shall surely be
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

Text: "...And who is adequate for these things?" (II Cor. 2:16b)

Scripture: II Cor. 2:14-17

A psychiatrist might label me as some kind of freak when I admit that I was struck with the question Paul asks in II Cor. 2:16. "Who is adequate for these things?" He would diagnose a serious case of inferiority complex, because that question is constantly echoed in my own experience when facing the expectations of God Himself, of the church which supports us, of those who make our work assignments, and especially of that vast multitude "out there" who expect the missionary somehow to come up with the answers to ^{supply all} their needs, the solutions to ^{solve all} their problems, and the ultimate question of their eternal destiny. "Who is adequate?"

Answer is the
To answer

Who is adequate to master a difficult foreign language? Who is adequate to preach messages that with clarity, logic, appeal, and forcefulness proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to people of totally different culture and religion and who have no background of Biblical knowledge or Christian teachings? Who is adequate to cope with the complexities of cooperating with national church structures, or with the headaches of committee and board assignments? Who is adequate to live a life style which demonstrates complete commitment to Christ, exhibits the fruits of the Spirit and avoids all those cultural faux-pas or stupid slips of the tongue which antagonize rather than attract the very people we want to win? Who is adequate to be the sweet aroma Paul speaks of here: "the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him?"

William Barclay illumines Paul's figure here, of the Roman Triumph, the procession of a victorious general through the streets of Rome. It was required that he have been a successful field commander of a completely finished victorious campaign against a foreign enemy. The official order was as follows: The state officials and senate, the trumpeters, the spoils of war, the white bull for sacrifice, the wretched captives in chains about to be put into prison and probably executed, the musicians with their lyres, and the priests swinging their censers with the sweet-smelling incense burning in them. Finally came the general himself in a chariot drawn by four horses. He was clad in royal purple and held the ivory sceptre with the Roman eagle at the top. Over his head a slave held the crown of Jupiter. He was followed by his family and the army wearing their decorations and shouting cries of triumph. The procession moved through cheering crowds for it was a tremendous day which might happen only once in a lifetime. Paul sees "the conquering Christ marching in triumph through the world, and himself in that conquering train. It is a triumph which nothing can stop!" (Barclay 205) For the general and his victorious people, the sweet incense brought joy, but to the miserable captives doomed to death it was the smell of death. We, says Paul, are "a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved, and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life."

What a responsibility! Who can cope? Who is worthy? Who is sufficient? Who is equal to such a calling? Who is adequate? Surrounded by doctors of the Presbyterian Medical Center in Chunju, I often think of their awesome responsibilities when prescriptions or the turn of the scalpel can cause death or life. How much greater the responsibility for all who deal with eternal issues of Heaven or Hell? Who is adequate?

Our passage answers the question. We don't usually get the impression that Paul suffered from an inferiority complex. The reason lies in his absolute assurance that God is adequate. As expressed in 2:14, God leads us in His triumph in Christ, God manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. Lest he be accused of commending himself, Paul writes in 3:4-6: "And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, ~~our~~ our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant." Elsewhere the great missionary

wrote: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." (I Cor. 15:10)

How does God make us adequate?

1. He calls us...not merely out of darkness into light as He has called all Christians, but for special duty. When He calls He supplies the necessary qualifications whether it be for Moses the ability to speak, for David the shepherd boy the ability to rule, or for Paul to say: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service." (I Tim. 1:12) "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.'" (II Cor. 12:9a)

2. He gives us a message. "We are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God." Our message is not like that of those peddlers along the streets about us...shrill, rapid-fire, high-pressure sales-talk luring the unsuspecting into purchase of shoddy sub-standard merchandize, but is the truth straight from God Almighty who has placed His seal of approval upon the infinite worth of the Word about Christ and Him crucified. Like Paul we are "not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16)

3. He causes the growth. We are here for a church growth seminar. Our purpose in Korea is the planting and nurture of the church of the Living God. Important as study of the processes and methods of the growth of God's Kingdom may be, we remember that growth is caused by the Lord of the harvest. He who calls the sower, and provides the seed, will cause the growth. We are nothing but God's workmen...as Paul~~x~~ put it: "What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth." (I Cor. 3:4-7)

Who is adequate? None of us, but thank God for His adequacy!

God is working His purpose out As year succeeds to year...
God is working His purpose out, And the time is drawing near;
Nearer and nearer draws the time, The time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God As the waters cover the sea.

March we forth in the strength of God, With the banner of Christ unfurled,
That the light of the glorious gospel of truth May shine throughout the world.
Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin To set their captives free,
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God As the waters cover the sea.

All we can do is nothing worth Unless God blesses the deed
Vainly we hope for the harvest-tide Till God gives life to the seed;
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time The time that shall surely be
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God As the waters cover the sea.

Scripture reading: II Cor. 8:1-7

Text: II Cor. 8:5 "First they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God."

What do the following have in common: a poor widow and a rich young ruler, Zaccheus and Barnabas, a Jerusalem Pharisee and Annanias and Saphira? This sounds like a good question for a quiz show, yet most of us will recognize that the New Testament has something to say about each of these and their possessions.

This is an appropriate subject to consider right after Thanksgiving and just before Christmas. At Thanksgiving we remind ourselves of God's goodness, particularly for material blessings. At Christmas we will be thinking of God's greatest gift as well as exchanging gifts among ourselves. Is there any better time to think of the best use of our possessions, especially in relation to giving? Unlike pastors of most congregations, this preacher is not concerned at the low level of giving of his hearers, but even missionaries can become such "professional" givers as to forget God's Word telling us why and how a Christian gives.

As we left the States a month ago, churches were concentrating on stewardship, a word we use to describe what we as custodians do with what God has loaned us. The last Sunday night in October we sat in on a stewardship meeting, where a committee of the church was planning its every member canvass. We heard sentiments ranging from the experienced insight of door-to-door salesmen as to how to extract the greatest financial yield all the way to genuine spiritual insight into Christian motivation for ~~giving~~ giving.

Jesus never owned any property, for He said: "The Son of Man does not have a place to lay his head." He had no money, and once had to ask His disciples to find a head-tax coin in the mouth of a fish. Apparently all He owned were His simple clothes. Yet He had plenty to say about possessions and the proper use of them. "It has been said that a third of all the parables of Christ have to do with men and their possessions." (Evans 112)

The early Church experienced such oneness that they even held their possessions in common...not a communism where private property forcibly become state property but a recognition in practical form that as children of the same Father all shared in the same household of faith. This seems to have met a special need ~~at~~ at that time, but was not continued. Nevertheless a definite responsibility for one another's material needs within the total church continued to result in special offerings as a sort of intra-church aid expressing common Christian love.

The New Testament picture shows a variable pattern of giving with no fixed percentages, or set dollar & cents figures. Jesus saw that love of possessions was such a barrier to a rich young ruler's search for eternal life, that He told him to sell everything and give 100% to the poor, yet that sad young man gave zero. A Pharisee boasted in prayer: "I give tithes of all that I get" but this 10% won no praise from Jesus. Zaccheus, a tax-gatherer, stirred by His distinguished Guest, resolved to rectify his sorry life and restore his ill-gotten gains four fold and give 50% of all he had to the poor. A poor widow gave 100% of all she had, two mites worth together about one won, yet earned eternal fame. Ananias and Saphira sold land and gave part to the church. Obviously they thought the sum large enough to fool everybody, maybe 75%. But their selfishness and deceit and desire for public applause exacted a dreadful penalty. Barnabas had also donated 100% of the proceeds of a land sale out of pure unselfishness and genuine generosity and Christian love which contributed to the fellowship and spiritual power of the church.

Unlike income taxes, Christian liberality is not a matter of legislation but of the heart. Yet certain great fundamentals are taught in Scripture, especially the

Lordship of God over His creation and man's position as caretaker of God's property
The first temptation of man in Eden was to contest God's supreme authority... His Kingship, His ownership of creation, His right to make the rules. Man's greatest sin has always been to arrogate to himself the rights and privileges of God. You remember the parable of the wicked husbandmen who beat up the servants of the owner sent to collect his rightful part of the fruit of the vineyard. As they killed the last messenger, the Beloved son of the owner, they plotted among themselves, "If we kill the ~~heir~~ heir, the vineyard will be ours."

Possessiveness is a strong instinct. This is my land, my house, my bank account. But God's Word says, "Not so. All things belong to God, the Creator, the Ruler, the Supreme Authority. He expects this recognition. How much the Bible, especially the Psalms, proclaims that God is supreme! Devout male Jews recited every morning and evening a set of passages beginning, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" reminding themselves of His Sovereignty. We cannot but somehow admire the Mohammedans who five times a day heed the call from the minaret: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet!" "If from the pulpit, or elsewhere, members of churches are hearing much about the love, grace and comfort of God, and little about the greatness, glory, majesty, and authority of God, ~~and~~ it is not surprising if the lives of many are characterized more by self-will and self-righteousness than by humility and devotion to the will of God." (Paul Lindholm).

The corollary to this great truth that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein" is man's responsibility as caretaker. God commands: "Be fruitful and multiply." that is, improve and enlarge God's assets, enjoy the fruit of the land, render due account of what we have done with God's investments. The mark of the good steward is to be found faithful. Unlike any human capitalist investing for personal profit, God keeps pouring new blessings into the economy, expecting yield only in terms of human responsiveness to His Lordship. Our democratic society has programmed us to belittle the rights of a Sovereign, yet God is a Sovereign whom we regard not with terror but with love and gratitude and loyalty. How many ills within and without the Church stem from forgetting this?

With these foundation principles in mind, look at Paul's words in II Cor. 8-9. The Jerusalem church was in terrible financial plight. Paul sponsored a relief offering among the world-churches to aid the mother church, somewhat of a reversal of the modern pattern of giving. This is the only general offering mention in the New Testament, although we know that the early church did support the poor and persecuted and widowed, and that the Philippian church sent generous gifts to the Apostle in his missionary labors and again when he was a prisoner in Rome. Now the Apostle organized an aid program for the Jerusalem Church. He may have been a busy church planter, theologian and writer but he also was above reproach in his handling of finances. Three times he calls it "this gracious work", something not every financial campaign director can get away with. Rather than handle the funds personally he had a committee of "the brethren" including well-respected Titus, and a famous preacher, and possibly Luke, the physician. There would be no scandal, no 2 million drachma foul-up in Paul's GEB! Listen: "We intend that no one should blame us about this liberal gift which we are administering, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of men." Paul cites at least five general teachings here about Christian giving.

1. Dedication to the Lord. Paul cites the example of the Macedonian churches. "First they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God." (8:5) Our attitude towards possessions has this doctrinal basis: recognition that we ourselves belong to the Lord and hence belong to all our brothers and sisters who also belong to Him as His children. Dr. Louis Evans calls all methods to get stingy people to function without this creedal basis mere "artificial regurgitation." He tells of a woman who came to a leading member of her church and community and said, "you know we have tried every sort of trick and means of raising money, but we can't raise our budget. We have had bazars, mock weddings, offered memorials, given parties and dinners, and conducted raffles. (In Korea she would say, we had a poo-heung-whai). None of these seem to work: what in the world can we try now?" The man replied,

smilingly, "Why don't you try religion?" All giving starts with the surrender of ourselves, when that is done the rest will naturally follow. "First they gave themselves to the Lord, and to us..."

The gift without the giver is bare

Who gives himself with his alms feeds three...

Himself, his hungry neighbor, and me. James Russell Lowell.

영제하

2. The example of Jesus Christ. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."(8:9) This is the great doctrine of the incarnation, the becoming-man of God, over which we rejoice at Christmas, exclaiming with Paul the last verse of this passage: "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!"(9:13) I hope you will pardon a personal illustration. When we visit in country villages we are often introduced with deep appreciation because we have left a wonderful land to visit them, or because, as last Sunday afternoon when we went from house to house in the wind and snow, we have gone to personal discomfort to honor them. Yet how infinitely greater our awe of One of whom we sing:

Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die

Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.

This was the enriching which Paul means when he says that in His poverty you have become rich...rich in treasures immeasurable by human standards but which can be acknowledged in the sharing of material possessions out of genuine love like Christ's.

프랑스를
방문

3. God Equalization plan. I Cor. 8:13-14. "I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their want, so that their abundance may supply your want, that there may be equality." The communists have an equalization plan, or claim to. Some other institutions that we know of have them too. Here is God's. The Corinthian church owed much to the mother church in Jerusalem. Now it is time for a reverse flow of a different kind of aid. Barclay points out that Paul is reminding us that life has a strange way of evening things up. If Paul were living today with the complexities of modern church life and finance, he probably would have expanded on the practical realities and necessity for each part of the body of Christ contributing what is lacking in other parts, not only in terms of material aid but of life itself. The other day at a meeting of country evangelists, they wanted me to tell them about pioneer church work in the States these days. The only real blitz of church starting I could think of are Korean churches...three in Atlanta, the biggest in Columbus, Ga. where a Honam graduate is pastor, one with 45 charter members in Miami of whom half hold doctor's degrees, 60 or so in the Los Angeles area...hundreds proliferating over the country. Maybe the spiritual blessings are being shared in the other direction in our time...God's equalization plan at work.

Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one

Our comforts, and our cares.

보통의 내기

부부

4. Christian giving is cheerful giving. Obviously Paul was having to prod this willingness at Corinth! Not unusual for church leaders to have to do such a thing! Apparently the initial idea for this offering came from Corinth but plans had been interrupted. Paul writes that he is sending his committee so that neither he nor the church would lose face for not finishing the campaign. They should have the gift in hand when he arrives, so that it will not be given as an exaction but as a willing gift. Probably we missionaries are tested at this point more than any other in the matter of giving. I must confess that with me it is often more than an exaction, it is an extraction. So often we are put under pressures, or shamed, or held up as an example, or maneuvered into a financial coverup of the shortcomings of others...so that our giving is anything but cheerful. How we need to pray for (1) correct assessment of real needs deserving help, (2) wisdom in determining the size and channeling of gifts, (3) for responsibility helping others recognize stewardship responsibilities, for (4) humility when profuse thanks are heaped upon us. This latter is especially true when we remember that the gifts we distribute are often not really our own but are the gifts of others transmitted through our hands. Dr. Evans reminds us that selfishness can be called a "respectable sin." "Have you ever thought of the fact that people who are stingy and covetous and classified with the

worst sort of people?" In I Cor. 6:9 Paul wrote: "Do not be deceived, neither the immoral, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God!" Did you every realize that singy people are ranked with the immoral and unrighteous? (Evans 122). How different the "willing gift." God loves a cheerful giver.

5. God will ppovdde every blessing. He will reward. "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (9:6) "And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abudance so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. (9:8). "he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply ynur resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ,You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanks-giving in God. (9:10-11) Make no mistake, rewards are promised in Scripture..not necessarily material rewards, but rewards nevertheless. The Creator God who sustain and replenishes all will provide what is lacking for his saints who labor with joy and cheerfully share God's bounty with others. Look at the early church. They had great power. Filled with the love of Christ, excited by the fact of the resurrection, full of His Holy Spirit. They had power. But read Acts 4:32-33. "They had everything in common and with great power the apostles gave their testimony!" Part of the power was because possessions were no problem, no cause of contention, but used as God intended them to be used: to express love for God and for one another.

Conclusion. Dr. Paul Lindholm tells this story: In Africa a family entertained a very prominent person. When the guest arrived he was welcomed with many polite words and gestures. The mother in the home had prepared a chicken for dinner. When it was time to eat, the father said to the visitor, "Our honored guest, it is customary for my wife and me to eat the breast of the chicken. We will need to do that now as usual. Our two boys, who are growing fast, must have the legs, and we always give the wings to our daughters, but for you, our honored guest, we have the feet and head of the chicken!" "Once," said Lindholm, "When I had told that story I asked the congregation if anything of that sort could happen in their country. There was a loud response in chorus, 'No-o-o!' Our best is not good enough!"

Evans: "We were all born with our hands closed into fists; only when we are born again can we learn to open them." The most commonly used benediction comes from the end of this epistle and begins..."The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"...that grace by which He who was rich, for our sakes became poor. Only as men give themselves to Him, as He gave Himself for us can we know th true joy and power of citi zenry in his Kingdom. "First they gave themselves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God."

and put our possessions at the disposal of God's children

1. Dedication to the Lord. *주님께 바치는 자기 자신을 주님께 바치는 것*
2. Example of Jesus Christ. *예수 그리스도 의 보기*
3. God's equalization plan. *하나님께서 평준하게 하신 방편*
4. Christian giving is cheerfl1 giving. *그리스도인 각인 주는 것은 즐겨 내는 일이다*
5. God will provide every needed blessing. *하나님께서 모든 필요한 복을 공급하시게 됩니다.*

Paul's 5 teachings about Christian Stewardship. 바울의 그리스도인 의 행정 기구 에 대하여 기록된 5 가지 리리. 고대 8-9

1. 자기와 모든 주님께 바치는 것이 제일이다. 8:5
2. 예수 그리스도께서 우리 복이 되었었습니다. 8:9
3. 하나님께서 평준하게 계획 세우었습니다. 8:14
4. 그리스도인들이 바치는 일은 즐겨 내는 일이다. 9:6
5. 하나님께서 모든 필요한 복을 공급하시게다. 9:11

6/3/74

In Journeyings Often

Text: II Cor. 11:26. "On frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren."

Scripture reading. II Cor. 11:21-29.

"I have been constantly on the road" NAB

"In Journeyings often" is how the King James Version translates the opening phrase of II Cor. 11:26, ~~or~~ as in the RSV: "On frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren."

How apt a description of missionary life most of the time! Paul the missionary set a precedent followed down the centuries by a host of imitators: the notable "wanderers for Christ" who left Ireland during the Dark Ages and fanned out over all of Europe; Boniface the Apostle of Germany; Alopen, missionary to the court of China in the 7th century; Wilfred Grenfell to Labrador, Xavier to Japan, Taylor to Inland China; Livingston exploring the heart of Africa, and so on.

Many of us here have either just finished a long journey or contemplate one in the near future, or plan one in a year or so. With the summer vacation season upon us it is well-nigh impossible to keep track of the whereabouts of each one of even our limited number of people right here. Our work keeps us travelling. In one recent period I made fairly long trips on 9 consecutive days. The Apostle Paul several times tells of being "sped on his way" but he knew nothing in comparison with our era of mechanized traffic, expressway busses, and inter-continental jets.

As travellers in a travelling age engaged in a travelling profession, to ponder this text may not be out of order: "In journeyings often." As a matter of fact all of us are on a continual journey from the cradle to the grave. I hesitate to call this a "long trip" because of other modern connotations of the term. But that is what we are all on, and the Bible frequently reminds us of this and uses the figure of speech of travel, or pilgrimage, as it tells us where we started, the detours and pitfalls along the way, the transitory nature of any abode, the guidance and protection upon which we may count, and our ultimate destination. Just about an even 300 years ago John Bunyan in the Bedford Jail of England wrote his famous "Pilgrim's Progress," probably the best seller in the English language outside of the Bible, using the theme of travel as an allegory of the Christian life.

"In journeyings often." Today we are taking 3 famous travellers in the Bible and learning from them lessons to apply as we travel the path of each day and the larger journey of life itself. The 3 I have selected are Abraham, Moses, and Paul. Bypassing all the other great lessons to be learned from them, from Abraham we learn of commitment to God, from Moses of dependence upon God, from Paul stewardship under God.

1. Abraham. Here is an ancient migrant who left Ur of the Chaldees, near the upper end of the Persian Gulf, and travelled with his father Haran up the River Euphrates to Haran in what is now northern Syria. After settling there for some time the old father died, and the Lord said to Abram: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth will bless themselves." (Gen. 12:1-3). So Abram went (vs. 4) and "set forth to go to the land of Canaan" (vs. 5). Later he journeyed on "still going toward the Negeb" (vs. 9) the desolate region south of the Dead Sea. Because of a famine he "went down to Egypt" (vs. 10). Later he went back to the Negeb (13:1) and to Bethel (13:3). Once when his nephew Lot was kidnapped by raiding tribal kings,

ties, physical exhaustion, and temptations which beset this lonely man Moses could never have been met unless he was daily dependent upon God to care for his needs. He was beset by all the characters in Pilgrim's Progress such as Obstinate, Mistrust, Timorous, Discontent, Self-conceit, Superstition, Envy, Malice, Love-lust, Hold-the-world and all the others. He passed through the Slough of Despond, Up the Hill of Difficulty, through the Valley of Humiliation, by Vanity Fair, the Valley of the Shadow. Here was Christian's attitude at the Hill of Difficulty:

"I beheld then that they all went on till they came to the foot of the Hill of Difficulty, at the bottom of which was a spring. There was also in the same place two other ways, besides that which came straight from the gate; one turned to the left hand, and the other to the right, at the bottom of the hill; but the narrow way lay right up the hill, and the name of that going up the side of the hill is called Difficulty. Christian now went to the spring, and drank thereof to refresh himself, and then began to go up the hill, saying:
The hill, though high, I covet to ascend;
The difficulty will not me offend,
For I perceive the way of life lies here.
Come, pluck up, heart, let's neither faint nor fear.
Better, though difficult, the right way to go,
Than wrong, though easy, where the end is woe."

For Moses the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, the daily cover of manna on the ground, the water gushing from a desert boulder, the victory which came while his arms remained raised, the sun that stood still while his people routed the enemy...all these were visible evidence of the God who was protecting and providing for His people. He learned as did Paul and as can we:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
"I can do all things in him who strengthens me." "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." The journey may be long and hard, but we can claim these and all the other promises of God's Word as along with Moses we depend upon Him.

3. Paul ^{takes} wins the honors as the ^{most persistent & enthusiastic} greatest traveller in the Bible. Like Abraham he was totally committed to God for the course of his life; like Moses he demonstrated dependence upon God for sustenance all the way. But as a traveller he distinguished himself by stewardship under God...making the use of each moment and each event to accomplish some gain for the Gospel. The Christian ~~life~~ pilgrimage is more than compliance with the will of the Lord, accepting strength and protection from Him daily. We are more than mere tourists in God's world; there is work to be done, ^{that is} lives to be influenced, ^{thus are} souls to be saved, and Paul never forgot this in his travels.

^{improving the exiguities of money & of food, the Gk wants to do that too}
Paul's journeys are too well-known to be rehearsed again here. The Middle East, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, the islands of the Mediterranean are known to have been his parish. I suspect he was the kind of man who knew the best stage-coaches, the shipping schedules, the best seasons for travel. With his energy and education and keen mind he would have been a fascinating travelling companion, pointing out places of interest and discoursing on matters of history and literature and mythology associated with such spots. Even a ship-captain on one occasion was willing to listen as this missionary advised how to sail the ship.

Yet every incident of Paul's travels gave him an opportunity to render ^{good} stewardship of his time. At Philippi spending the night in jail, he and his companions were ~~singing~~ praying and singing the praises of God, ultimately witnessing to the other prisoners and to the jailor himself. At Athens ~~at~~ a stroll up the Acropolis like millions of other sight-seers exposed him to the pagan idolatry of the place and he wound up giving a discourse to the scholars on the altar

to the unknown God. Shipwrecked on Malta and building up the fire by which he and his shipmates were drying themselves out, a viper came out and bit him. When they saw he was unharmed, the natives were astonished and listened to his Gospel. Every occasion was for Paul the opportunity to witness, to demonstrate the power of God, to draw God's people into a fuller understanding of His purpose. Even during the long days in a Roman prison he spoke to his guards of the eternal things of God and kept his ~~keen~~^{brilliant} mind busy composing letters which to this day bring God's Word to people all over the world.

→ Wherever we are and whatever the conditions are, we are in that spot because God places us there. He always gives us something to do for Him. The journey seems easier and the difficulties less pressing when we find in it all something to do for Him. This is stewardship of time, of talents, of opportunities. God does not require that we be brilliant or great, but he does require faithfulness on the part of His stewards. "One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

"In journeyings often." Abraham the traveller who shows us commitment to God. Moses the traveller who demonstrates dependence upon God. Paul the traveller who practiced stewardship under God.

I have a friend named Deacon Lee at the Ingye Church in Soonchang. He is now totally blind. Attracted by the singing he entered a church in Seoul and has since become a Christian, a deacon in this little pioneer church. He gathers the children of the village and teaches them the Bible, using a Braille Bible which he knows how to read. He recently asked me for a hymnal. Although he can't read it, he will have someone read him the words and he will punch them out in Braille so he can teach the children hymns. He often walks to the three main services at the church each week a round trip of 12 kilometers each time. The rough terrain does not bother him for he can walk ^{in the night of his blindness} as sure-footed as most of us ^{do} even in broad daylight, but the children sometimes torment him with sticks and stones and ^{even} make it impossible to get to church. ^{sometimes} When I commiserated with him on these difficulties and the long walk to church his reply was almost poetic in its Korean expression "I have figured it all out; if it is 10,000 kilometers to heaven, then each time I go to church I am 12 kilos closer to heaven!" Surely words of wisdom and faith from this blind pilgrim, and not a bad philosophy for every Christian travelling the highway of life! We can know that each day passed in commitment to God, dependence upon God, and stewardship under God is the happy way to bring us "12 kilos closer to our heavenly home."

*Yard by yard, life is hard
Inch by inch, it's a cinch*

(I Cor. 16:8-9 (In middle of announcing future travel plans, Paul says) "But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.")

Father, lead me day by day, Ever in Thine own sweet way;
Teach me to be pure and true; Show me what I ought to do.

When in danger, make me brave, Make me know that Thou canst
Keep me safe by Thy dear side; Let me in Thy love abide.

When I'm tempted to do wrong, Make me steadfast, wise and
And when all alone I stand, Shield me with Thy mighty hand.

May I do the good I know, Serving gladly here below,
Then at last go home to Thee, Evermore Thine own to be.

Hymn 458

108

344

458

(339)

strong & strong