

AMAZING GRACE

3/15/87 Bortie
Dunwoody
11/15/87 Princeton Bible Ch.
11/17/88 Ridgeview
10/9/88 Canton
10/16/91 Friendship

Scripture: Eph. 2:1-10.

Text: "By grace you have been saved." Eph. 2:5b.

Those who enjoy good health often do not ^{always} appreciate the gain and suffering of those who are desperately ill. They may even forget how bad off they themselves were when stricken by serious illness from which they have long since recovered. In similar fashion Christians who are no longer seriously aware of what life outside of Christ is like, can forget. If all of us understood better the desperate plight of those who do not know, or have not accepted, the love of Christ, His forgiveness, His peace, His new way of life...how much more ardent would be our attempts to win them to Him! Complacency about the millions suffering the eternally fatal sickness of the soul which is in ignorance of the healing power of the Great Physician has been a major cause of indifference to the urgent task of world evangelization by many of our churches and Christians. Forgetting what life apart from Christ is like causes even good Christians to take all the blessings of salvation for granted. Each of us needs to be reminded of how hopeless our lives would be without our Saviour, and echo a converted prodigal who became a famous preacher and who saw a wretched reprobate and exclaimed: "There, but for the grace of God, go I!" In Eph. 2:1-10 Paul reminds us of this "Amazing Grace." In one of the greatest passages in the Bible we are told (1) The Condition of the unsaved, (2) The state of the Christian now, and (3) How that transition is made.

1. THE CONDITION OF THE UNSAVED. (2:1-3) Paul's pronouns are interesting here. At times they are in the second person, and at times the first. Some think that when he uses "you" he is talking to the Gentiles, and when he says "we" he is referring to the Jews. It seems to me that he is using the terms interchangeably, as though both Jews and Gentiles were all "in the same boat." He says that without Christ (a) we are dead, (b) we are slaves, and (c) we are condemned.

(a) WE ARE DEAD. "You were dead in your trespasses and sins." (v.1). A dead person can do absolutely nothing for which his body was designed. He has eyes, but he cannot see. He has ears, but he cannot hear. He has a mouth, but he cannot speak. He has hands, but he cannot use them. He has feet, but he cannot walk. Why? Because he is dead. Now God made us with all these organs for a purpose. He gave us eyes to see the glories of the world He has made. He gave us ears to hear His voice. He gave us mouths to sing His praises. He gave us hands to do His work. He gave us feet to go where He directs. He made us in His own image to reflect His character. He made us persons to think His thoughts after Him. He made us sociable beings to have

fellowship with Him and with one another. He made us to "glorify and enjoy Him forever." But the person who is dead cannot fulfill this purpose of God. Why? Because he is "dead in trespasses and sins." Trespasses is a word meaning literally a slip or a fall. "It is used for a man losing the way, and straying from the right road; it is used for a man failing to grasp, and slipping away from the truth." (Barclay 112). Sin is "missing the mark." It is "the failure to be what we ought to be and could be." (Barclay 111). Because of trespasses and sin, Paul says a man is dead. HE HAS NO LIFE. ←

(b) WE ARE SLAVES. (v. 2-3a). ⁽⁻³⁾ "You were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind." This slavery takes three forms.

(i) There is the slavery of "THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD." (v. 2a) This is the slavery of "going with the crowd," the slavery of "doing what everybody else is doing." This is the slavery of habits and customs and practices of a world in motion in the wrong direction. Did you ever see an ant who has fallen into a ditch of swirling water caused by a heavy summer downpour of rain? He struggles frantically to free himself, but is helpless, dragged along by the raging current. So is the person who walks according to the course of this world.

(ii) Then there is the slavery of "THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT THAT IS NOW WORKING IN THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE." (v. 2b) Paul never doubted the existence of Satan, the wicked overlord, promoting hate and violence and greed and lust. The Apostle pictures him as constantly at work to subvert, to pressure, and to force men into evil ways, perpetually enslaving them to his will.

(iii) And then there is the slavery to our own "LUSTS" and indulgence in the "DESIRES OF THE FLESH AND OF THE MIND." (v. 3a) We are enslaved by all the envy, hatred, selfishness, filthiness, and disobedient thoughts that fill our minds. So there are three forms of slavery: Slavery to what the world is doing; slavery to the devil; and slavery to our own wicked natures...all those impulses and desires and evil thoughts that keep us from obeying God. Without Christ, men are first of all dead...they have NO LIFE, secondly they are slaves...they have NO REAL FREEDOM. ←

(c) WE ARE CONDEMNED. ⁽⁻³⁾ We were, says Paul, "by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." (v. 3b) In this verse Paul switches his pronouns from 2nd to 1st, as he

realizes that not only his readers, be they Jews or Gentiles, but he himself and his fellow Christians, were formerly under the wrath of God...born in sin, by nature sinful and deserving the wrath of God and therefore condemned. Many years ago when I was a seminary student I taught Sunday School a few times in the Penitentiary in Richmond, Va. Once I was taken to "death row"...the place where criminals who were condemned to death were kept. It was a terrible place...tightly barred, securely locked, with prisoners chained. What can one say to people like that? No greeting seems appropriate, and no kind of conversation relevant. These men had broken the law, been judged by the courts, and condemned to die. And yet that is where each of us stands in the sight of God but for His grace because we have broken His laws. We are condemned, there is NO HOPE. What a dreadful state for billions of people to be in! Dead...NO LIFE. Slaves...NO FREEDOM. Condemned...NO HOPE!

II. THE STATE OF THE BELIEVER. (v. 4-6, 10) Thank goodness Paul did not stop with the end of verse 3! The next verses are among the most wonderful in the whole Bible. Here is the most exciting conjunction in the world..."BUT GOD..." "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us." Rich in mercy, great in love...AMAZING GRACE! Without Christ, Paul has said men are dead, enslaved, condemned...but now IN CHRIST all is the exact opposite!

(a) WE ARE MADE ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST. (v. 5) "But God...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ." I think Paul saw the conversion of sinners as parallel to the death and resurrection of Christ. He was dead...because of our sin...and by the power of God raised from death. By the same power, God's grace raised us from the condition of deadness in sin. With Christ crucified and buried our sins are buried, and with Christ resurrected and ascended we are made alive together with Him. I had a long-time friend named Kim Wal-suk who used to drop by to see me even when he was in his eighties. About 25 years ago I heard that he was desperately ill and called on him. He lay on his pallet on the floor, according to Korean custom...eyes closed, not speaking, not hearing, and so far as I could see not even breathing...but I was told he was still alive. I prayed with the family and left, sure that soon there would be word of his death. But I had to wait for that until the winter of 1986 when the Lord called him home. A few weeks after that visit I learned that this apparently dead man was alive...back at work in his rice paddies, active as an elder in his church and in the Presbytery. Such is the difference when a man is made alive together with Christ. Now he can do what God made Him to do...see the wonders of His handiwork, hear His commands, speak to others of God's love and power, work for God, glorify God by showing others what God is like. No longer dead...but ALIVE!

(b) WE ARE MADE MEMBERS OF GOD'S HOUSEHOLD. (v. 4) Instead of being slaves to the world, to Satan, to our fleshly lusts, now we "are raised up with Him and seated with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Did you know that we who are Christians are living "in the heavenly places?" Eph. 1:3 tells us that we are blessed with every "spiritual blessing" in "the heavenly places." No longer slaves of the devil but now sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father and living as children in ^{His} ~~the~~ household of ~~our Heavenly Father!~~ Many years ago when we flew from Korea to America, the temperature in Seoul and its airport was unbearably hot and humid as we left in midsummer. There seemed no escape. Not a breath of air was stirring. But as the plane slipped far up into the clouds, the pilot spoke on the PA system: "Look out the windows at an unusual sight!...snow was falling as heavily as on a December day. Below in Seoul it was a hot, breathless July day. Now we sat in ~~x~~ cool comfortable seats, quiet and serene, watching a beautiful snowfall...we felt as though we were truly "in the heavenly places." When God by His grace makes us new creatures in Christ we are not only alive with Christ, but we dwell with Him in God's house as His sons and daughters...or, as Paul expressed it in different terms in Eph 2:17, "You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and are of God's household." We can claim citizenship in God's country, family rights in His household. That's ~~what~~ ^{why} we like to sing the words of that old Gospel hymn...

I'm living on the mountain, underneath a cloudless sky,
I'm drinking at the fountain that never shall run dry,
O Yes! I'm feasting on the manna from a bountiful supply
For I am dwelling in BEULAH LAND."

Do you know what "Beulah Land" means? "Beulah" is the Hebrew word for "married" and is found in Is. 62:4 where God speaks to His chosen nation, the Israelites, as though she was His bride: "But you will be called, Hepzibah (meaning my delight is in Her)" And your land Beulah (meaning married) For the Lord delights in you and to Him your land will be married." God's people dwell in the land married to Him as a bride is to her husband. Here is the same picture that Paul pictures of the church, the people of God, married as the bride of Christ to Him. In Christ we are no longer slaves, but dwell in Beulah Land..."married"...an intimate part of God's household.

(c) WE ARE CREATED FOR GOOD WORKS. (v. 10) Formerly we were on death row...under the wrath of God and condemned...but now we are created for good works. "for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Here Paul tells us that God had an original purpose for us, something for which He made Adam and Eve in the very beginning, but a purpose which has been thwarted by sin until God in Christ had to make us all over again...we are His workmanship just as a skilled carpenter takes a rough piece of lumber and creates a beautiful cabinet. Last year (1987) we made a friend of an elderly gentleman in a church in Rutherford County. Victor Logan was a

retired school principal and as a hobby made violins. He showed us one of the 13 he had made and on which he could make beautiful music. He had taken pieces of wood others might burn in the fireplace, and fashioned an instrument to bring pleasure and enjoyment to all who heard. Just so God has created us to make "beautiful music" for Him. Formerly we were condemned to die, but now we are able to walk in the way of good works which is God's intention for all of us. If people who call themselves Christians show no fruits...no good works...no evidence of living for Christ...they are still dead, they are still ^{slaves} ~~slaves~~, they are still under condemnation. I hope none of us here today are still dead, still slaves, still condemned! In Christ, lives should be new, vibrant, active, and fruitful as becomes those who are fulfilling God's purpose...His workmanship. Paul's words show us that as new creatures in Christ we are not dead but alive, not slaves but members of God's household, not condemned but performing good works as a result of His workmanship to His glory.

III. HOW THE TRANSITION IS MADE. (vs. 7-9) These verses are at the very heart of our Christian faith...especially verse 8. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." In verse 5, Paul also says "By grace you have been saved." We are saved by God's grace, the greatest word in the Bible...a term we often use and perhaps fail to stop and consider as we should. What is God's grace? I wish the Westminster divines had included that question and the proper answer when they composed the Westminster Shorter Catechism. One theologian defines it as:

(a) "An attribute of God...His free, sovereign, undeserved favor or love to man in his state of sin and guilt, which manifests itself in the forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from it." (Something God is...the Father...restoring the Prodigal). *what God is*

(b) "The objective provision which God made in Christ for the salvation of man." (Something God does...sending His Son to die for our sins). *what God has done*

(c) "The favor of God as it is manifested in the application of the work of redemption by the Holy Spirit." (Berkhof 427) (Something God gives...the Holy Spirit). *what God is doing*

Grace is the free, unconditional, unearned undeserved gift of God in granting us His love, His pardon, His way of salvation through Jesus Christ, His power of the Holy Spirit to live with and for Him. The speaker at a conference I once attended, built his messages around a little chorus which repeated the words: "The Gospel in a word is love." I disagreed. Of course, the Gospel tells us of all the great love of God in giving His Son for us...but there is more to the Gospel than just love. A better chorus would be: "The Gospel in a word is GRACE!"

Grace recognizes that we are sinners...dead, slaves, condemned. Grace declares that in Christ our sins are taken away. Grace says that, ^{through faith in} in Christ the slate is wiped clean and we are new creatures, restored to God's household. *God loved us enough to send Christ to die for us*

We receive this grace through faith. Faith is the unconditional acceptance of the grace of God. Faith is also a gift of God, so that it too is a part of God's grace in granting it to us. Grace is like a great reservoir and water main supplying all that God wants to give us...faith is simply opening the valve to let that grace flow into our lives. Just as medicine prescribed by the best of doctors does no good unless we take it, so the grace of God must be received...an act of faith.

We cannot pay for God's grace, we cannot earn it with good works, it is in itself a gift of God. There is, therefore, no grounds for us to boast about it, as the Apostle points out in verse 9...everything has been done by God and nothing by our own efforts. God's grace works in many different ways. ① Sometimes it is the dramatic turning experienced by the Apostle Paul; ② sometimes it is the desperation of a life which is wandering, wasted, and empty. ③ Sometimes it is the quiet persuasion of gradual exposure to the teaching of God's Word. ④ Sometimes it is the wrenching of some great trouble or crisis in life. ⑤ Sometimes it is the example or witness of an admired and trusted Christian friend. And sometimes it is none of these but a life protected from birth to death by the grace of God from what that life could have been otherwise...yet all are the grace of God...and all are received by the faith which He grants.

CONCLUSION: And why has God done all this? What satisfaction or reward does He claim for Himself? Verse 7 gives us at least part of the answer: "That in ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." In this way God receives the ultimate in glory...for all the universe for all time to know and understand His true nature which is so abundantly evident in what He has done for us in Christ Jesus. This is why the vast multitudes of heaven will sing throughout all eternity: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God." (Rev. 19:1)

Scripture: Eph. 3:7-13

Text: Eph. 3:7-8

Text (Old & New Version)

What is a 목사 ? In America we have several names, but often he is called "a minister of the Gospel" 복음의 일꾼 . I like this term 명칭 . It is Scriptural 성서적인^① A minister of the Gospel obeys his Master.^② He has humility.

③ He has a defined realm of activity. 복음의 일꾼으로서 활동할 범위가 있다. Paul used other words to describe himself. At the beginning of his letters he often called himself a "slave of Jesus Christ" 예수 그리스도의 종 and sometimes an "apostle of Jesus Christ" 사도 In Eph. 3:1 he called himself "a prisoner of Christ Jesus," and in 6:20 "an ambassador in chains" 죄사슬에 대인 사신이 But here he calls himself a "minister of the Gospel"...our theme for today. Read Text.

I. A minister of the Gospel is in obedience to a Master. 복음의 일꾼은 주인을 순종 한다 . The absolute sovereignty of God 하나님의 절대주권 is a foundation doctrine 교리 of Calvin's teaching. 330 years ago when Christian leaders of England & Scotland gathered at Westminster Assembly 대회 in London to write the Westminster Standards 웨스트민스터 신조 accepted by Presbyterian Churches everywhere, they made this doctrine central. This was because they refused to accept a pope 교황 in Rome or other bishops 대주교 as supreme 지국의 in the Church. Nor would they accept a head of state 황제 such as the king of England to rule the church. Only God is sovereign. 주권 He rules the universe 우주 By his will he governs 관리하다 all things. His plan 계획 is that only His Son be head of the Church.

This doctrine 교리 comes directly from the teachings of Paul. Although he was a great 위대한 leader of the early 초대 church, and though he was the founder 설립자 of many churches, he always recognized Christ as the head of the church by decree 명령 of God the Father. Hence every church worker is appointed 정하다 by God and must serve 섬기다 in obedience to Him. Paul looked upon himself 자신 as a slave, ransomed 속죄 값을 받은 by the blood of Christ. He was a servant 일꾼 , out of love voluntarily 자발적으로

working for His master. He was a steward 형식이 intrusted with the estate
재산 of His Father.

In verse 7 he points out that he was "made" 뤘었다 a minister through
"the working of his power," 그의 능력이 역사하시는 대로 "by the
gift of God's grace" 하나님의 은혜의 선물로 These words show
that the initiative 첫걸음 was on God's side. Only by God's selection, 선택
God's power, 능력이 God's gifts 영광의 선물 is the church supplied with workers.
Without these, a 목사 is just another laborer 노동자 as in a factory 공장.
He can have all the faults of anyone else. It is wonderful how God always calls,
trains, 양성하다 and endows 준비한다 his workers. We thank Him for calling
so many to serve the Korean Church. But let all 목사 remember that Christ is
the Head; we are the servants. It is the function of servants to obey. "It is
required of stewards that they be faithful 1 Cor. 4:2 과리인에게 요청되는 것은
주인에 대한 신실성입니다. He gives the orders, we obey. He
supplies us with the Gospel, we proclaim it for him. We are stewards 형식이
we are ambassadors, 사신의 representing our Master, the King of kings.

II. A minister of the Gospel is humble. 복음의 일꾼은 겸손한 자라.

In vs. 8 Paul says, "I am the very least of all the saints." 모든 성도 중에 지극히
작은 라보다 더 작은 라 He put himself below all other apostles, all the early
Christians, all his own converts, and even his readers. In I Tim. 1:15 he said,
"I am the chief of sinners." 죄인 중에 내가 귀수니라. Paul knew he was
unworthy 가치 없는, and is amazed that God should select him as a minister.

Paul's humility following the example 본 of Christ who said, "I am come
not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give my life a ransom for
others. 인자가 온것은 성김을 받으려 함이 아니라, 도리어 섬기려 하고,
자기 목숨을 많은 사람의 대속물로 주려 함이니라.

He followed the example of Jesus who washed His disciples feet and said (Jn. 13:14)

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet you also ought to wash
one another's feet" 내가 주와 또는 선생이 되어, 너희 발을 씻겼으니,

너희도 서로 발을 씻기는 것이 옳으니라.

The minister of the Gospel is a servant. A true 목사 does not come to be served by the members of his church, but to serve them. The humble "minister of the Gospel" expresses that humility in serving, not as a master. Minister = deacon = δiakonos

The church always needs humble ministers. The problem of all history has been pride, 자존심 love of power, 권세 struggle for control 과리 in the church. It created the Roman Catholic hierarchy 교권 제도 It has split Protestant churches. How different, if church leaders would say, "I am a servant of the Gospel," 내가 복음의 일꾼이라 "I am the least of all the saints." 모든 성도 중에 리극히 작은 자보다 더 작은 자라 What God calls me to do, I will do. What He asks me to suffer 고생하다, I will suffer. Where he sends me, I will go. What he gives me for a living, 살림 I will accept. The musician 음악가 Toscanni was one of the greatest 위대한 orchestra 관현악 conductor. 연주자. Once when he was talking to an orchestra 관현악단 when he was preparing to play one of Beethoven's syphonies 관현악 with them, he said: "Gentlemen I am nothing; you are nothing; Beethoven is everything 가량 중요하다 He knew well that his duty was not to draw attention to himself or the orchestra but to magnify Beethoven's music 작곡한 음악. Just so, the minister of the Gospel, exists only to exalt 높이다 Christ and His Gospel. The minister of the Gospel is like a pipe between a great reservoir 저수지 and thirsty people. He exists only to carry the water. The humble minister of the Gospel exists to carry the Gospel from our glorious Saviour to people thirsty for the water of life.

III. A minister of the Gospel has a defined realm of activity. 복음의 일꾼으로서 활동할 범위가 있다. His duty is to "preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." 측량 할수 없는 그리스도의 풍성을 이방인에게 전한 것 That was the obligation 책임 of a minister of the Gospel in Paul's time; and it is the obligation of a minister of the Gospel today. Building churches, organizing Presbyteries, serving on committees 위원회 and boards 이사회, social work 사회봉사...all are secondary. Preaching the Gospel is first.

이방인

a. A minister of the Gospel preaches to the Gentiles. For a Jew it was astonishing that God's grace extended to non-Jews. It simply could not be true! Yet Paul, ~~a~~ Pharisee of the Pharisees, a strict Jew, was convinced that God's grace was to all. In Korea we are not concerned with separation of Jews and Gentiles, but we have to remember that the minister of the Gospel is called to work beyond the group called God's people, i.e., the church, among those who are still on the outside...those who never come to church, or worse still, have never heard the Gospel! No true minister of the Gospel is ever satisfied to work just with His congregation...God calls him to the beyond.

b. A minister of the Gospel preaches the unsearchable riches of Christ
 측량할수 없는 그리스도의 풍성을 New version: 한량없는 부요한
 그리스도의 복음 It is easy for a ~~목사~~ to preach from what he reads
 in the newspaper, or in philosophy or history. It is easy to tell funny stories to amuse his congregation. But God calls him to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. All the love of Christ, all the forgiveness, all the new life 새 생명 promised in Him! When he preaches about Jesus born in Bethlehem...he points to the purpose of His coming. When he preaches on the miracles, 기적 he points to the power of the Son of God. When he preaches on Christ's teachings, he points to Christ as the giver of truth 진리. When he preaches on the cross, he points to Christ the lamb of God sacrificed 제물로 희생 for the sin of the world. When he preaches on the resurrection, he points to Christ our only hope. When he preaches on the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ascension, 승천 he points to Christ as King of all. When he preaches on the second coming, he points to the glorious fulfillment of God's promises. Preaching the gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ includes judgement 심판 for sin. It includes punishment 형벌 of evil. But it points to Him who says: "I am the way, and the truth and the life." 내가 곧 길이요, 진리요, 생명이라 For the hungry 배고픈 사람 and thirsty 목이 마른 the Gospel is bread 양식 and water. For the poor it is riches 부요한 것 untold. For the slave or prisoner 죄수 it is freedom. For the sinner it is forgiveness. For the lonely 쓸쓸한 it is

a great friend. For the dying, it is eternal life. **영생** Possessed of such
unsearchable riches **한량 없는 부요한** no wonder Paul said in I Cor. 9:10
"Woe is me, if I do not preach the Gospel! **만일 복음을 전하지 아니하면,**
내게 화가 있을 것임이로라.

Conclusion. Barclay 142). There is a famous story of the days when Sir Christopher Wren was building a great cathedral 대성당 in London. On one occasion Sir Christopher Wren was making a tour of the work ~~in~~ in progress. He came upon a man at work and asked him: "What are you doing?" The man said: "I am cutting the stone to a certain size and shape." He came to a second man and asked him what he was doing. The man said: "I am earning so much money at my work." He came to a third man at work and asked what he was doing. The man paused for a moment in his work, and straightened himself and answered: "I am helping Sir Christopher Wren to build St. Paul's Cathedral!"

The minister of the Gospel is helping God build His church. May all
here assembled be able to say with Paul: Verses 7-9

Eph. 3:7 (New Version) 나는 하나님의 능력이 역라하시는 대로, 내게 주어진 은혜의 선물에 의하여, 복음의 일꾼이 되었읍니다.

- ① 복음의 밑줄은 주연을 순종 한다.
- ② " " 겸손한 자라
- ③ " " "으로써 활동할 범위가 있다
- ④ 이방인에게
- ⑤ 한량없는 부모한 그리스도의 복음을 전하

THE NEW MAN

11/7/86 - Chapu
7/19/87 - Bostic
Duncan Creek
5/21/88 - Canton
Cony mural

Text: "Put on the new man"

Scripture reading: Eph. 4:17-32

Paul tells us of 4 kinds of men in his letters. There is the outer man (II Cor. 4:16), the inner man (Eph 3:16), the old man (Eph 4:22), and the new man (Eph. 4:24). At various times these terms may describe any of us. Look at them.

(1) The outer man is what other people can see. It may be a beautiful or ugly, fat or thin, tall or short, old or young person. That person may be well dressed or clothed in rags, well groomed or disreputable. People spend huge sums on the outer man...for clothing, cosmetics, adornments, grooming at beauty parlors and barber shops, and even surgical procedures to improve looks. ^{Medical} But we are aware that the outer man is always changing. Babies become adolescents, adolescents become adults. When we are victims of sickness or accidents, visible changes take place. When we are rested our outer man may be quite different from when we are tired. Inevitably, the outer man gets old and as Paul puts it, "wastes away" (II Cor. 4:16) as we know all too well when we begin to lose hair, or teeth, or our sense of hearing, or our sight is impaired, or we feel loss of strength and energy and endurance. Some day the outer man will die, be buried, and return to dust. This outer man constantly reminds us how transient we human beings are.

(2) The inner man can only be seen perfectly by God Himself. Marvelous modern medical instruments can reveal pictures of the inside of our bodies with great detail and accuracy. Yet only of God can we say "He knows our frame; he remembers we are dust." (Ps. 103:14) When God directed the prophet Samuel to anoint the youthful David as king, He declared: "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (I Sam. 16:7) While the outer man is wasting away, God is continually renewing the inner man (II Cor. 4:16). He is at work renewing, perfecting and preserving the inner man. This is what God's Holy Spirit is always at work doing for us. Paul prayed in Eph. 3:16 that God "May grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man." This is the part of man that never dies, and God is preparing it for eternal residence in heaven by the ministry of His Holy Spirit within us. Isn't it too bad that people are far, far more concerned about the appearance, and comfort, and health of the outer man than about the quality of the inner man that lasts for eternity?

(3) The old man is what each of us is before we are reborn by the Spirit of God. The old man is the person we are naturally before conversion. The "old man" describes all men who live in sin ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. The Bible tells us that the old man is "alienated from the life of God," he is licentious,

greedy, unclean. He is the kind of person described here in Eph. 4:17-19 in the paraphrased version of J. B. Phillips:

They live blindfolded in a world of illusion, and are cut off from the life of God through ignorance and insensitiveness. They have stifled their consciences and then surrendered themselves to sensuality, practicing any form of impurity which lust can suggest.

Paul says that this old man simply has to die. He has to be "crucified with Christ." (Rom. 6:6). A brand new start has to be made, just like a baby being born into the world. It must die and rise again to start life all over again. The death and resurrection of Christ makes this change possible; the work of the Holy Spirit *causes it to* makes this happen. When the old man with its burden of sin is nailed to the cross of Christ, then the new man appears, and this is what we are thinking about today.

(4) The new man is a "new creation" because he is now in Christ, completely remade. Here Paul uses another figure of speech...that of changing clothes. We are to "lay aside" or "put off" the old man which belongs to "your former manner of life" and "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." This means conscious cooperation with the Holy Spirit on our part. The outward man and the inner man still exist but *what only God sees* both are transformed as we put off and throw away the old man like discarding old clothes, and put on the new man. The Christian is a new man, no longer like the Gentiles who are alienated from the life of God but are renewed in the spirit of their minds and created after the likeness of God. This new man, or new creation, shows new characteristics outwardly...in his outer man, visible to all who see him. More importantly this new man shows an inner transformation ... in his inner man where God can see far better than the most modern X-ray machine.

works of Bible - not this preacher
Here in Ephesians 4, Paul continues and gives at least five marks of the "new man." God's Word gives many more, but now let's look at these five only.

(1) THE NEW MAN SPEAKS THE TRUTH. (v. 25) The first emphasis of Paul after telling the Ephesians to "put on the new man" is that they must speak the truth. The implication is that there were plenty of liars in Ephesus, and that some of them were even in the church! Maybe some Christians considered a lie the only way to operate a business at a profit. Certainly it was a way to tip the scales of justice in one's favor in a court decision. Lying also includes the whole range of broken agreements, broken promises, broken contracts. Paul himself was a victim of lies at the time of the great riot at Ephesus. In 4:14 he speaks of "the cunning of men" and "their craftiness in deceitful wiles." Well, the world hasn't changed much since then, but has merely refined the methods of deceit. Perhaps nothing makes a Christian stand out as a "new man" in a pagan world more than that he be trusted and respected as a "man."

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man" who has truly "put on Christ" is a conscience sensitive to all our responsibilities so that honest labor rather than stealing leaves us in a position to carry out the rest of Paul's injunction here to help others in need...the poor, the needy...even have plenty to support the ministry of the Gospel in our church and around the world.

(4) THE NEW MAN TALKS CLEAN. Verse 29. "Let no unwholesome (or evil) word proceed from your mouth." 5:4 expands on this: "there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks." I trust that none of us use the coarse language involving what are usually termed "four-letter words." But all of us are exposed to filthy or suggestive language not only in what we actually hear but in some of our reading, in our entertainments, and on the radio and TV. All this exposure means that the "new man" has to constantly resist the temptation to follow suit. Or perhaps rather than filthy language, the temptation for us is to indulge in other "unwholesome" words such as malicious gossip, cutting remarks, ridicule or belittling of others, etc. Some of that talk may in itself be harmless but is just none of our business. Paul tells us here how the "new man" uses his tongue for "only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear." Edifying words are helpful and instructive. They fit the occasion...that is, are appropriate to the current situation and meet some need. They impart grace...that is, they throw the light of the goodness and the promises and the power of God on otherwise dismal human scenes.

⇒ Helpful, fitting, gracious...that's the language of the new man. As a substitute for all unfitting language, Paul urges "thanksgiving." So much of our language is just gripping, or spiteful, or derogatory...Paul says, "If you can't think of anything else to say, just give thanks!"

(5) THE NEW MAN IS KINDLY. Verse 32: "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you." Here is the mark of the "new man" that really covers all the others. Perhaps it is summed up in the one plain word "goodness." So much of the world is hard, callous, indifferent, cold, selfish, brusque, untactful, unfeeling, self-seeking. The "new man" is kind. He is conscious and responsive and sensitive to people about him, and their needs and feelings. People enjoy his company and are benefitted by it. They seek his counsel and help. He has compassion and love and time for children, for the elderly, the poor, and the feeble. Perhaps his refusal to take personal affront (especially in trivial matters) is the outstanding factor in goodness and kindness...the "new man" is willing to be forgiving of others "as God in Christ forgave you." You may know people like that. I think of an uncle of mine in Rock Hill who was a trusted and honored bank official all his life, an elder in his church, one to whom not only his own

of his word." Paul gives us here one important reason for Christians to tell the truth: We all belong to each other, to the same family in the eyes of God. Eventually any deceit hurts the whole family, those we love, and ourselves as well. None of us should cherish anything more highly than a reputation as people who tell the truth. It makes the Gospel we profess more credible before all the world.

(2) THE NEW MAN CONTROLS HIS TEMPER. These words hit us all, and hit us hard. Some of us have a quick flash point, others can do a slow burn. I have both kinds. Verse 26 says, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." Verse 31 expands these words slightly: "let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice." When we are hot with anger we can easily indulge in slandorous libel and malicious tirades, and with an inner concealed rage our bitterness can consume our whole beings...upsetting our digestion, raising our blood pressure, and depriving us of sleep. There is a justifiable anger against sin and its consequences of injustice and poverty and crime and desecration of God's holiness, and this anger can be without sin. But here Paul is talking about anger over personal grievances, and he points out two ways anger can be sin. One is when we let it run past sundown...that is, when we harbor it and let it inflame all kinds of evil passions and retaliatory instincts. The other is when it becomes an "opportunity to the devil" or, as Phillips puts it, provides the devil with a foothold. And what better chance does Satan have than when we lose control of ourselves? And when are we least in control of ourselves if not when in a raging temper tantrum of anger?

(3) THE NEW MAN WORKS HONESTLY. "Quit stealing," says Paul in verse 28. "Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need." Paul was writing to Christians. I wonder if any Ephesian Christians felt personally insulted when they first read this letter! Or maybe you here today want to say "Woe, preacher! Be careful! What, me stealing!" Maybe some Ephesians were still thieves, in the usual sense, but I doubt it. Yet by dishonest business practices they very well could have been. Or by idleness they were depriving their families of food and other necessities...in effect stealing from them. Like us today, they needed to remember that stealing can include not paying bills on time, underpaying those who work for us, delaying paying their wages, using our position to expect unwarranted favors, and a host of other matters. It is interesting that more than once Paul encourages manual labor, and that while serving at least one congregation he demonstrated the dignity of working with his hands as a tentmaker. Honest work cancels the necessity to steal while at the same time it is a true application of our Lord's teaching to love our neighbors as ourselves. One of the marks of the "new

family and close friends but the entire city went for sage counsel and advice and help, because like Barnabas in the early church, he was a "good man, full of faith, and of the Holy Spirit." Of course Jesus Himself supremely exemplifies this sort of person. "When he saw the crowds he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless." (Mt. 9:36) "He saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them and healed their sick." (Mt. 14:14) "Suffer the little children to come unto me..." He said. Jesus wept when friends were grieving. Even on the cross words of kindness and forgiveness and tenderness and thoughtfulness fell from His lips "Woman, behold your son!" "Behold your mother." And the ultimate kindness of all was a word of cheer to a worthless scoundrel dying in agony of body and conscience at His side, "This day you will be with me in paradise!"

CONCLUSION. The new man (1) Speaks the Truth, (2) Controls his Temper, (3) Works Honestly, (4) Talks Cleanly, and is (5) Kindly. Bearing in mind these five marks of the "new man", remember that we Christians are in the spotlight of God's inspection of all that we are, just as a politician is bared before the public when he runs for office. In recent days we have seen just how brutal this can be, as we have been treated to exposes of public figures in our own land such as presidential candidates, nominees for the supreme court, religious leaders, and other public figures. Excluding what is pure fiction or twisted for political purposes, it remains a fact that every public figure is held up to public view. How does he earn his money? How does he spend it? How does he care for his family? or act at home? or train his children? Does he pay his taxes? keep the laws? participate in the community chest? Does he use bad language? Has he been guilty of immorality? How does he wear his clothes? Who are his close friends? What are his attitudes to other races, towards war, towards crime, towards use of drugs...and on through all the various public issues of our day. Even his most trivial remark or deeply private misdeed become black headlines in the morning papers. Suppose you and I were under this spotlight...how would we fare? Actually this is our status before God, "before whom all hearts are open and from whom nothing can be kept secret."

Thank God for verse 30 which you may have noticed we have not discussed: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." In Christ God has created us as new beings with new natures under the power and influence of His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always prompting us to resist every temptation to lie, to lose our temper, to be lazy, to use the wrong language, to be unkind...and when we do yield to those temptations the Holy Spirit is grieved. But that same Spirit of God has been given to us as the guarantee that God is at work purifying and effecting the take over of the "new nature" within us until the day when the "new man"...body and soul.. will be redeemed and transformed into membership in the perfect

church of God. That "new man" is still incomplete, but with the implementing power of God's Spirit, Paul in this letter gives four short exhortations any of which can serve as the motto of the "new man" each of us strives to be:

4:24...Put on the new man.

5:1...Be imitators of God.

5:2...Walk in love.

5:8...Walk as children of the light.

9/17/77

How to Imitate God

Scripture: Eph. 5:1-20

Text: "Be imitators of God." Eph. 5:1

Airline pilots are without question superb flyers. They have risen to the top through a system designed to weed out the incompetent. Typically, a 747 captain is in his mid-50s and has been flying for 30 years. Starting in his early 30s, he served as a co-pilot for seven years before making captain. Whatever his rank, the training never stops. He is constantly practicing instrument landings and emergency procedures, both in the jet cockpit and in remarkably realistic flight simulators. Twice a year the airline is required to check out his proficiency. In addition, an inspector...completely unannounced...may show up just before take-off, occupy the jump seat in the cockpit...and revoke his license on the spot if he detects a major failing during the flight. Every six months he must pass a demanding physical, and every year the company also looks him over. (Fr. Time Mag.)

If jet pilots are expected to take perfection as their standard, daily train toward that ideal, and endure critical inspection of their proficiency...is it surprising that God sets a high standard for His children, especially those with life-and-death responsibilities for others? Paul states God's demands of us as Christians and missionaries: "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children." Similarly Jesus commanded: "You therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Literally, Paul says to mimic God. Since Jesus is our only revelation of God in the flesh, he is insisting upon imitation of Christ Himself. This interpretation is clearly supported in the next verse where Jesus is indeed our model.

In Eph. 5:1-20, ^{imi}mitation of the Lord is put into concrete practical terms as a "walk." In several languages, including Korean, the word "walk" has the idea of "conduct" or "manner of life." Paul was not insisting on anything humanly impossible. He could have pointed out that "Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5:24), "Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9), and that God commanded Abraham "I am God almighty... walk with me." (Gen. 17:1). He says, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children" and this involves walking with the Lord in three ways: "Walk in love" (vs. 2), "Walk as children of light" (vs. 8), and "walk circumspectly" (vs. 15).

1. Walk in love. (1-2) Love is the first and most obvious characteristic of God which we are to mimic. You know how children imitate their parents...a little boy standing behind the steering wheel imitating daddy driving, a little girl pinning up her hair and staggering around in mother's high heel shoes. AFKN often shows a pathetic shot of children upending liquor bottles in imitation of their parents' behaviour the night before. But children also imitate attitudes and personality traits, and when we are called upon to walk in love, then like God, especially like God as we know Him in the flesh, we are to show divine love...the putting of the best interests of others ahead of our own, the concern, compassion, and total self-giving of our Lord Himself...all that Paul describes so eloquently in I. Cor. 13. In verses 1 & 2, He gives three reasons why we should walk in love.

1. We are God's children. What greater satisfaction than to know that we are children of God! Outside of Christ we have no sense of belonging to such a Father...but in Christ we have oneness with God, the security of dwelling in the Divine household, and the obligation of acting like His children. So the first reason for walking in love is simply that we are His sons and daughters. Since God is love, the members of His family should walk in that same love.

2. We are God's beloved children. This is the same word used by God twice when speaking from heaven at the time of the baptism and the transfiguration of Jesus. He said: "Behold, this is my beloved son." Just think! God uses the same word to describe His love us us as He used to describe His only begotten Son! How incredible that God could love us that much! We are beloved...is it too small a thing for Him to expect that we should walk in love too?

3. We were purchased with a great price. We walk in love because we are God's children, we are His beloved children, and we were purchased with a great price. We imitate Christ who "loved us, and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Real love is always self-giving. It is just the opposite of the selfishness, self-will, and self-advancement motivation controlling the old man before Christ changes his heart. Such love has something marvelously pleasing about it...Paul uses the figure...a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Jewish sacrifices of sweet smell were not those ^{of atonement} for sins, but were symbolic of obedience, devotion, and praise. Paul is speaking here of Christ's life and death of perfect obedience and demonstrated love as a fragrant offering. This term makes me think of someone cooking a Christmas turkey with all the stuffing and spices that go with it. The cook opens the oven door and all that heavenly aroma fills the house...pleasing, satisfying, inviting. Christ's death for us was like that, and it represented perfect love, pleasing to God. Our response? Walking in love! _{obedience and}

II. Walk as children of light. (3-14) This paragraph poses a stark contrast between the worlds of darkness and of light. Paul's severe words about immorality and impurity, filthiness, silly talk, levity, idolatry must be read against the unspeakable blackness of pagan society in Ephesus. Sexual vice, lewd talk, and complete abandon to evil sensuality were openly practiced and encouraged as a part of the Greek and Roman temple cults. When Paul's Gospel undercut the worship of Diana, no wonder there was strong reaction. Not just the sale of golden images, but prostitution and all other forms of evil were threatened by this first of all religions to take a strong and uncompromising stand on the side of purity. Paul gives us three reasons why we must walk as children of light.

1. We are saints. (3-4) Saints are literally "set apart ones." It is beneath the dignity of a saint to indulge in sins belonging to the world of darkness. Paul calls upon saints to abstain from sins of the flesh, sins of the mind, and sins of the tongue...all of which are frequently associated with one another. Sadly, we are forced to assert that far too many Christians, certainly in America, seem to lean over backwards to avoid the image of being a saint! They don't want to be so labelled! Rather than being set apart from the vices of the world of darkness they want to be just as much like that world, and even a part of that world, as possible. Paul says, if we are saints...act like it...walk as children of light!

2. We are kings. (5-6) Jesus told Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Heirs of the kingdom have no business indulging in those things which are specifically excluded from the kingdom of God. Vs. 5: "No immoral or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is an idolater) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Paul's rigid position on this is further declared in 1 Cor. 6:9 and Gal. 5:19-21. Rev. 21:8 says that the lot of such sinners shall be in "the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." Paul says we are not to be argued into these sins...as it appears so much of the world today, including segments of the church itself...is attempting to do...because they incur the wrath of God. People today recoil from the concept of the wrath of God, but there is no doubt in Paul's mind that the wages of sin is death. These things are unbecoming children of God, heirs of His kingdom! They are worse for Christians than for others! We cannot be sinless, but we can sin less, and less, and less.

3. We are to walk as children of light because we are saints, because we belong to a kingdom, and because we are light. (7-14) Light and darkness are totally incompatible, either physically or spiritually. This epistle makes frequent contrasts between those who were once darkness and are now light in the Lord. In Chap. 2 the image is in terms of being dead and now alive, between slavery and sonship, being under the wrath of God and being empowered to live for Him. In Chap. 4 the picture is that of the old man versus the new man. Here it is light versus darkness. Condensing the richness of these verses, we observe that Paul says four things: (a) Light is something Christians are because they belong to God. You are light, you are God's children, so walk as children of light. (b) Light produces

fruit in terms of what is good and true and right...just as sunlight in the physical world is essential for the production of all crops. (c) Conversely light exposes darkness and its fruits..hence rather than cooperate with darkness the business of the Christian is to expose its evils. (d) Light is the time to wake up...in the language of an ancient hymn, we live in a dawn when Christ Himself gives us light to walk during the new day.

III. Walk Circumspectly. (15-17). Some of you heard R.K. Robinson use these words in giving the memorial to my Aunt Margaret Hopper at mission meeting, because of her habit of bidding good-bye to young missionaries with the words: "Walk circumspectly." This was not without reason, because these words means to "look around" and has the idea of precision or accuracy. Make sure you walk carefully, with exactness...just the opposite of carelessly, aimlessly, without guidance or forethought. Christians are to use their heads, be alert, not sleep-walking, or drifting through life. Someone has said that next to His Bible perhaps the most important reading for the Christian is the daily newspaper. If we are to walk in love and to walk in the light, we must be aware of what is going on in the world about us...its pitfalls, its needs, its problems, its despair...yes even its sin, its depravity, its hopelessness. Paul briefly gives five reasons to walk circumspectly

1. It is a mark of wisdom. Only fools drift. The wise man observes the currents and the storms and trims his ship accordingly.
2. Life is short...time passes. Opportunities are here today and perhaps gone forever tomorrow. Did you know that the word "opportunity" means "toward the port" For sailing ships there was a moment when they could tack "toward the port", but once passed, it was difficult, if not impossible, to make the harbor. So with life.
3. The days are evil. Pitfalls and snares surround us. Christians must keep a sharp eye open to avoid being engulfed by the dark world around us.
4. God has given us a mind...He expects us to use it. "Understand what the will of the Lord is."
5. God has a plan for our lives...looking carefully how we walk makes it possible to observe the road-signs of God's will for our lives. Eph. 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for Good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Conclusion. (17-20) Paul's conclusion is the assurance of two bases of support and strength for God's children to imitate Him...The Holy Spirit, and Christian fellowship.

1. Be filled with the spirit rather than with wine. Substitute for all worldly artificial stimulants the inner power of God's Spirit! The power of the Spirit is not merely for preaching and witnessing as often thought, but also for living, for imitating God, for the daily walk as described here. But wine-drinking does illustrate what the Spirit can do. (a) Wine imposes an outside control causing man to lose his self-control; The Spirit, also an outside control, puts man under God's control. (b) Wine temporarily induces a certain cheer and artificial joy; the fruit of the Spirit is also joy...of the real and permanent variety in the Lord. (c) Wine-drinking lubricates a certain conviviality and sociability with the boys in the tavern; The Spirit brings true fellowship knitting men's hearts together and creating the body of Christ we call His Church.

2. This brings us to the other basis supporting our walk in imitation of God, Christian fellowship..."addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart." Christians must gather as Christians, join in worship, recharge their spiritual batteries if they are to go out to walk in love, walk as children of light, and walk circumspectly. This impressed us this summer. I was discussing campus Christian life with Jim Abrahamson, pastor of the church our David attended at Chapel Hill, and where he and his bride met. This church is non-denominational, the pastor preaches straight Biblical expository sermons...yet it attracts some 500 students in a campus commun-

strangely evangelical

ity which this pastor called "Sodom" and where the pressures are largely anti-religious and anti-church, and where well-equipped denominational churches abound yet attract only a handful of students. I observed that Christian students seemed better off on secular university campuses than in most of our denominational schools which seemed every more hazardous spiritually. His reply: "That is true, provided there is a believing community."

Those tiny Christian groups in Ephesus and Corinth were just such believing communities in the midst of paganism and vice and persecution...where individual Christians derived strength to survive. Our Alice's husband, Jack, found such a group with the Navigators in the Airforce. Barron, stationed in the army in Colorado joined the "Four Seasons"...young people banded together for Bible study, Christian service, and simply to enjoy clean outings together. David and Liza found this supporting fellowship (and each other) in one of the smaller fellowship groups within that Chapel Hill church. We saw this on Sunday morning at Decatur Church where after morning worship the congregation stood about on the lawn drinking punch and enjoying being together in Christian community. We saw it on the night when Emory Nursing School students received their pins. After a ceremony totally devoid of any religious element in spite of the Christian origins of that university, Christian nurse members of the Koinonia fellowship and their parents met for a brief hymnsing...a small group with widely diverse backgrounds yet with a common bond of unity in Christ...a group which had been the believing community for Margaret. We found it Sunday afternoon in Decatur when we visited her fiancée's church...a "house church" if you please...where some 50 were packed into an ordinary home...mostly young married couples, veterans from the armed services, many touched by Navigator's...who come together with strong ties of Christian fellowship to be fed of a solid diet of Biblical exposition with none of the truths watered down or ignored. I think we see it here in Korea in our mission stations, in our Christian fellowship on Chidichan or Taichon Beach, to say nothing of countless little churches and Christian institutions. Common to all of these is mutual friendship, spiritual oneness in Christ, desire to help one another in even the most mundane tasks of living, supporting one another in prayer, and so on. When these become an end in themselves, as unfortunately sometimes happens...a sort of closed fortress existing only to sustain and defend itself...they fail God's purpose. But when they nourish and revitalize spiritual life, sending Christians out into the world to be imitators of God as beloved children, then they go forth to walk in love, to walk as children of light. to walk circumspectly "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children!"

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His word
What a glory He sheds on our way.
When we do His good will
He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey.
Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IN THE WORLD

5/10/87 ^{Bodie} ~~Sumner~~ ¹
5/8/88 Ridgeway
5/14/88 Elbowsh

Scripture reading: Eph. 5:21-6:4

Text: "Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." Eph 5:21

What is the most beautiful thing in the world? Is it Western North Carolina in the spring with dogwood and azalea and tulips in bloom, meadows and lawns a soft green, and the sun shining from a cloudless sky? Is it the majestic Alps, with mighty crags crowned with glistening white snow? Is it some priceless painting, some inspiring symphony orchestra, some palace or cathedral? Is it beautiful clothes, a sparkling diamond ring or a ^{shiny} new automobile? While we all appreciate the beauty of the world God has created and many of the objects made by men...I submit that neither Buckingham palace in London or Biltmore house in Asheville can begin to compete with the beauty of a Christian home. "Things" have their day but eventually pass away, flowers in the garden or paintings on the wall or the snows of the mountains disappear, but a Christian home will carry into eternity qualities of beauty which survive forever. Christian homes provide the pillars of the church, they ~~will~~ produce the leaders of society and nation, ^{and} they ~~will~~ multiply the population of heaven.

It is ~~traditional~~ ^{we} ~~on Mothers' Day~~ ^{to} ~~to honor our mothers~~ ^{and} ~~Preachers~~ ^{can use the} ~~example of Godly mothers~~ ^{who have gone before} ~~to encourage and admonish those in their congregations.~~ ^{Preachers} ~~They~~ can thank God for the sacrifice and love of mothers. ~~They~~ can exhort children to honor and obey their mothers. Some of us have only the memory of mothers who have long since gone to their heavenly homes. They were the ones who in an era without automatic washing machines, central heating, indoor plumbing, antibiotic drugs, or automobiles, ^{managed} ~~labored~~ to keep their children fed, clean, and healthy...and we must honor them for that. Somehow ~~the~~ ^{today} modern mothers seems even busier despite all ^{our} ~~the~~ modern conveniences, but they too deserve our gratitude and love as they labor to make homes attractive and healthy and happy. ~~Today~~ ^{Remembering} that the mother is often the center of the activities of the home, shining like a ^{brilliant jewel} ~~beautiful diamond~~ in the setting of a fine gold ring, let's think ^{today} of the Christian home...which includes the father and ~~the children~~ ^{as well}. Some of us live alone, some of us have seen most of those formerly in our homes grow up and leave or move to their eternal home, some of us are just establishing homes, some of us are growing up and look forward to homes of our own. ^{whatever our own circumstances} But consider now what I am calling the most beautiful thing in the world: The CHRISTIAN HOME.

I. GOD'S WORD AND THE CHRISTIAN HOME.

A. The very first thing God did for man was to give him a wife and thus establish

the home. He had no sooner created Adam, than He said: "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." With the creation of Eve, God made family life possible. From the beginning He wanted people to live in happy family units. All the way through Scripture, God uses the imagery of the home and the relationships within the family relationships to illustrate His care of us, and our obligations to Him, and our proper way to live as His children. He calls Himself our Father, and us His children. In the passage we have just read, the relationship of husband and wife illustrates the love of Christ for His church. Everywhere in the Word of God the home is exalted. Could it be that one reason for this is that a Christian home is truly just a bit of heaven on earth...and that God wants all the world...especially the part which disregards Him...to see and desire this most beautiful thing in all the world?

B. Home life occupies a major place among the basic rules by which God ordained that they should live, the Ten Commandments delivered to Moses on Mt. Sinai and engraved on tablets of stone that they might endure forever. ~~The first four commandments concern our relationship with God Himself, and the last six the inter-relationships between human beings.~~ Of those six, two have to do directly with family life in the home, and these two are spread in the middle of the ten.

1. "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." ~~That is the fifth commandment and it is the foundation our Creator laid for home life. The celebration of a special day for our mothers, or for our fathers, is one way we customarily obey this commandment...but it is far more than presenting them with a dozen red roses or a box of chocolates. It means that 365 days in the year we show gratitude for what parents do for us, we respect their mature wisdom, we accept their guidance, we obey their wishes. In Eph. 6:1 Paul points out, that this commandment has a promise attached to it, "that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth." Children, do you want to be happy? The best way is to honor your parents...respect, love, and obey them. Paul says It is even the best guarantee of a long life! Furthermore, this is the exact pattern of how we should honor our Father in heaven...and the blessings are the same..that it may be well with you and that you may live long...not just on the earth...but forever in His heavenly home."~~

2. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." ~~The other commandment dealing with the home is the seventh. How many homes are filled with unhappiness and even destroyed because of failure to keep this commandment? How many reputations have been destroyed when marriage vows have not been kept...as we have been reminded all too often~~

recently by the startling newspaper headlines and lurid details on TV? How many people are suffering prolonged pain and agonizing deaths because failure to obey this law of God is producing a terrible world-wide scourge of disease affecting both the guilty and the innocent? How many lives of children and young people have been warped and twisted and disillusioned by wrecked marriages? The Bible does not conceal the fact that many times ^{when} God's people failed to observe this commandment, and invariably ^{suffered} this resulted in unhappiness, pain, and punishment. God gave this commandment to a nation which was surrounded by peoples whose cultures knew nothing of the sanctity of marriage and purity in sexual relationships, yet He demanded of His people, "You shall be holy, as I the Lord Thy God am holy!" Thank God for every Christian home where this ~~seventh~~ commandment is obeyed, ^{and} where in the pure love of parents, children ~~can~~ see an illustration of Christ's love for His church, and of the holiness of God our heavenly Father.

C. God sent His Son into a Godly home. When Gabriel ^{announced to} the Virgin Mary that she would have a Son, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you...you have found favor with God." It is said of Joseph, ^{who became} her husband, that he was "a righteous man." ^{This couple was} ~~These people were~~ ^{their} deeply conscious of ^{their} relationship to God, they wanted to obey Him, from the start they presented Jesus in the temple, when He was old enough they took Him to observe the Passover in Jerusalem. No wonder it is written that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." ~~Joseph seems to have died early, but~~ Mary continued to love and care for her Son and was ~~there~~ with Him in that terrible hour when ^{Jesus} ~~He~~ died on the cross. Among the ^{his} last words of Jesus were those asking His friend John to take care of His mother. ~~While the details are sketchy,~~ there is every reason to believe that God deliberately put His Son in a home where He was surrounded by love and care and mutual respect...an example for any Christian home today to follow.

D. The Apostles wrote of the importance of Christian homes. The passage here in Ephesians is perhaps the most detailed. ^{5:21 again} ~~Here~~ the firm foundation of a Christian home is expressed in 5:21, "Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." These words → come at the end of Paul's instructions ~~to the Ephesians~~ as to how to behave in their church, but they also preface his exhortations about family relationships...and perhaps with reason, because for 200 years after Christ there were no formal church buildings, but worship was held in the homes of Christian ^{houses} families so that often church and home were the same. You notice that he first ^{Paul} affirms that the husband is → the head of the household, something widely disputed in our own day, but quickly goes → on to admonish them to love their wives...in fact he says so four times in this one paragraph! In his epistle Peter goes further, "You husbands, live with your wives in

an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." (I Pet. 3:7) On the other hand he asks wives to "be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (5:22), and to "respect her husband." (5:33) In a society where wives were often treated as little more than slaves, Paul and Peter were setting a standard of love and respect for the rights and privileges and obligations of each party as well as a certain ^{structure} sense of authority and orderliness...not that one should dominate the other but that each know their place and function.

Paul simply could not get away from using ^{used} the relationship of man and wife to illustrate that of Christ and His church and vice-versa. The supreme example of how a husband should love his wife is by comparison with how Christ loved the church "and gave himself up for her...a relationship based not on #1 ruling #2 with an iron fist of authority, but a love willing to sacrifice self for the one who is loved. And just as the purpose of Christ giving Himself was to sanctify the church in order to present her "in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless" so the husband should love his wife. Paul does not forget the children... exhorting them to obey and honor their parents, and on the other hand instructing fathers (and I am sure he would include mothers) not to "provoke your children to anger, but to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (6:4) I am a firm believer that a strong sense of security ~~makes for~~ ^{creates} a happy home, but ^{also} ~~for~~ children who develop socially, intellectually, morally and spiritually as healthy mature adults and Christians. When children know that there is love between parents, and between parents and children, that there is order and respect for each other's ^{the} rights, and that discipline is administered firmly but with love... they know their feet stand upon the solid rock of security. ~~But~~ ^{Most} of all their security rests on the place our Lord has in the home, ~~as we are admonished in our text:~~ "Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." "Fear" here means ~~not~~ not only awe but also reverence and respect. And this brings us to the other point I want to make in this message.

II. WHAT MAKES A HOME CHRISTIAN?

A. In a Christian Home Christ is Lord. This is the setting in which Paul asks us ~~we are~~ ^{we are} to be subject to one another. The real "boss" of the home is neither husband nor wife, but Jesus Christ. All decisions must be made with reference to Him. What will please Him? What will further His will? What will best demonstrate ^{the} kind of Saviour He is before the rest of the world?

All of us know what a difference it can make as to who manages the store or factory where we work, who is principal of the school we attend, or who governs our land. How much more the One who is the Supreme Authority in our home! ~~When Jesus is Lord in the home, His love is reflected in all relationship.~~ When Jesus is Lord, His spirit of service and willingness to sacrifice is evident. When Jesus is Lord, His Spirit produces the fruit of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control." And supremely, when Jesus is Lord, His kind of love will pervade the atmosphere of the home...the kind of love which cares more for the other than oneself, willingly sacrifices for another, "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things"... "never fails."

B. In a Christian home, the Bible is central. ^{not just a great} By this we do not mean a great family Bible with ^{many of} all the births, marriages and deaths recorded on the front page, lying prominently in its place on a table in the parlor, ^{two} but never opened. No, we mean a faithfully read and studied "rule of faith of practice." If Christ is Lord of the home, then ^{his} the Word of God is the ^{family} rule book by which the family lives. In our home we have ~~acquired~~ a number of modern gadgets. We have a micro-wave ^{oven,} and with it a manual which we must study in order to use it properly. We have an automobile, ~~and~~ with it an owner's manual which should help us to use it over a long period of time. ~~I keep~~ all these manuals in a filing cabinet and whenever I can't figure out how to use one of these things, I look up the directions. ~~Very likely,~~ I would prevent breakdowns and get better usage if I read these directions regularly and kept them in mind and didn't have to ^{refer to them} open the filing cabinet in emergencies. So with the Word of God...faithfully and daily examined as God's manual for life, it is ^{the central rule-book} a central feature of the Christian home. Children who see their parents reading their Bibles, will know that here is the manual by which God expects home life to be ordered.

C. In a Christian Home there is Family Worship. More than anything else in our message ^{today}, this may be the most important. ^{is available} When the family gathers daily for worship, there will be evidence that Christ is Lord, and the Word of God central. If the Christian Home is the most beautiful thing in the world, then in that home the most beautiful feature of ^{that home} all is to see father, mother, and children worshipping together. ^{we} All of us have heard many times over that the family that prays together stays together, but that can be expanded to say that Such a family receives all the blessings of being a true household of faith, where God supplies every need, guides all footsteps, and strengthens for every task. "There is nothing that will smooth out all the little tangles and set all wrong things right again like the daily worship together." (Miller 180)

Illustration of each paragraph

Many are the excuses offered for failure to have family worship. ⁽¹⁾ Lack of time is the favorite...but we have time to eat, time for TV, time to make money, time for all sorts of other things. ~~When we give~~ ^{we} time to these matters but fail to give time to worship God ~~do we not make Him secondary, to everything else?~~ ⁽²⁾ Others ~~will~~ say they are too timid...but when the crises of family life overwhelm us, will we not regret that we have failed in our weakness to claim God's power? ⁽³⁾ Still others ~~will~~ hesitate because not all in the family are professing Christians, and yet here is the opportunity to ~~begin fulfilling~~ ^{our} the fundamental responsibility of ~~all~~ ^{or} Christians to witness.

In my opinion, the best way for every family to begin the day is with family worship. It may be around the breakfast table, or seated in the living room...but such a gathering will set the tone for the day and at bedtime help us to look back upon a day God has blessed with happiness and usefulness.

Family worship may take many patterns. Some like to sing...and this is one way even little children learn our hymns...words and tunes that will be remembered to their dying day. Some like to follow a devotional guide like the ones provided by many churches, such as "Our Daily Bread," which offers a Scripture passage, with a brief devotional message, and a short prayer. For families with little children, one of the best ways is the practice in the home where I grew up and the one we followed in our own home for many years...the reading of a chapter from a good Bible Story Book, which puts the whole Bible in simple language so that ~~literally~~ from infancy children learn the stories of Abraham and Moses, of David and Daniel, of the life of Jesus and His teachings and miracles, death and resurrection. When they are older the Bible itself may be read, but already the panorama of God's dealing with men through history will be planted in their minds. At Mt. Sinai the Children of Israel were instructed how to use the Word of God revealed to them: "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." (Deut. 6:7) Daily exposure to the truths and influences of the divine Word "will weave into the (childrens') memory of their home golden and silver threads which will remain bright forever." (Miller 185) And all worship should include ~~prayer~~ ^{thanksgiving and thanksgiving} for the needs of the home, for the children in school, for other loved ones and friends...especially those in sickness or other need...guidance in work of the day, for the church." Even little children may be encouraged to talk to God in family prayers.

D. In a Christian Home, the church is the focus of family activity. Our modern way of life is so crowded with activities outside the home that we scatter in every

direction returning only to eat and sleep. Not only our jobs, but clubs, social events, athletics, civic responsibilities...all claim time and attention. Many of these are good and worthwhile and as a rule can be ways to express our Christian faith...but supremely the whole family should find in their church ~~should be~~ the place of worship, of fellowship, of mutual support. ~~Along~~ ^{With} this should be our use of Sunday, the Lord's Day. I know that the complexities of our culture make demands upon the Sabbath, but it should be a day when the worship of God's house claims first place and God's provision for rest from other duties give time to relax physically and mentally ^{time for the family to be together} while we wait quietly for the spiritual re-charging needed for the days ahead. The pillars of the church are the Christian families who use the Lord's Day as the Creator ordained from the beginning of time, and gather to pray and praise and hear the Word of God in fellowship with others of the household of faith in His church.

If we want to honor our mothers, not just on the 2nd Sunday of May each year, but every day in obedience to God's command, remember that the most beautiful thing in the world is a Christian Home. ^{May God help every mother here and all other family members to create such homes.} May God grant that every home here represented may become just a bit of heaven on earth...a foretaste of our eternal home.

Closing prayer:

God, give us Christian homes!
Homes where the Bible is loved and taught,
Homes where the Master's will is sought,
Homes crowned with beauty Thy love hath wrought:
God, give us Christian homes!

God, give us Christian homes!
Homes where the father is true and strong,
Homes that are free from the blight of wrong,
Homes that are joyous with love and song;
God, give us Christian homes!

God, give us Christian homes!
Homes where the mother, in queenly quest,
Strives to show others Thy way is best,
Homes where the Lord is an honored guest;
God, give us Christian homes!

God, give us Christian homes!
Homes where the children are led to know
Christ in His beauty who loves them so,
Homes where the altar fires burn and glow;
God, give us Christian homes!

Text: "Fight the good fight of the faith." I Tim. 6:12a

Scripture reading: Eph. 6:10-20

Paul was a general in the Salvation Army. He preached peace but he was no pacifist. He knew that permanent peace within men and among men comes only by waging warfare with wickedness. Paul was a sturdy old warrior who knew the weapons and tactics of Satan and his cohorts. He delighted in describing Christian Living as a Good Fight. Like any seasoned soldier who passes on his experiences to others, this veteran of spiritual warfare often used military language when exhorting Christians to battle against temptation and sin and Satan. His charge to a young soldier of the cross named Timothy is our text: "Fight the good fight of the faith" a part of I Tim. 6:12. No real Christian can live his religion without fighting the good fight. Some of you may call yourselves Christian, but every day you surrender to the enemy. If so, you are cowards in the good fight. Some of you may want to fight but find yourselves constantly defeated by sin. If so, you need protection for the good fight. Some of you may be fighting and winning but you feel lonesome and helpless in the terrible struggle. If so, you need confidence that you can call in reinforcements for the good fight. In Ephesians six, Paul sounds his call to arms for the Good Fight, telling us about our Adversary, our Armor and our Allies.

I. Our Adversary. The first thing a soldier wants to know is, Who is my enemy? Is he strong and well armed? Does he have plenty of forces at his disposal? Is he skilled in the art of warfare? Does he have information about my own weak spots? Has he been victorious in other battles? As far as the Good Fight is concerned, the answer to all these questions is "yes" according to Paul's experience. He says we must stand against the "wiles of the devil." "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." We must stand in "the evil day," watching day and night, alert, ready to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. Our adversary is strong and subtle, he is experienced and tireless, he is always at work no matter where we turn. We call our adversary the devil, or Satan.

The New Testament everywhere assumes the presence and power and personality of Satan as an evil being opposed to all that is good and true. Some people laugh at the idea that there is a devil. They say that belief in his existence crept into the Christian faith from heathen religions. They claim that a righteous and good God could not allow the presence of the devil in His universe. Such people are simply shutting their eyes to the testimony of the Bible, and of Jesus, and of our own experience. "To Jesus Christ...Satan was no figure of speech; but a thinking and active being, of whose presence and influence He saw tokens everywhere." (XB VI 99). Jesus regarded Satan as His great antagonist and told His disciples to pray for deliverance from the Evil One. He knew that Satan does not stand alone but has at his disposal an imposing array of spiritual power--demons and unclean spirits. Paul called these "principalities, powers, world rulers of this darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness" and so on. He knew that Satan is the clever overlord of all these evil forces which we face on every side.

If Christians are to fight the Good Fight we must be acquainted with our adversaries. We don't know much about Satan's origin, except hints that he was a heavenly being who rebelled against God and ever since has opposed the forces of righteousness in the universe. Some of our ideas about him may be wrong; a lot of them come from John Milton's poem, "Paradise Lost;" but there is no doubt about his existence according to the Bible. He was the first sinner and is the fountain of sin. Falsehood and hatred are his chief qualities. Jesus called him a murderer and the father of lies. As the prince of this world he promotes hatred and warfare and bitterness and strife and doubt and despondency...delighting in bloodshed and intolerance and immorality and godlessness. Satan works through men.. some of them obviously his tools, others difficult to discern. We cannot be

neutral in this world war between good and evil. We are either servants of God or servants of Satan. The devil is as slv as a fox, and can even pervert the good that is in the best of us to suit his purposes. He can tempt a saint and use him to twist the truth. In His infinite plan, God allows Satan temporary power, but as His Kingdom advances the devil's domain diminishes.

Our adversary is at work. Paul says "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood." A wrestler comes to close grips with his oponent in hand to hand conflict. So is the battle against Satan. When he workssthrugh human beings our conflict is with flesh and blood, but the Good Fight is essentially a spiritual conflict. Satan tempts us in more ways than we can number. He tempts us to be lazy...or to over-work ourselves; he tempts us to worry...or to be over-confident; he tempts us to ignore our sins...or to be so worried about them as to be despondent. He may attack by making a Christian proud and boastful of his own self-sacrifice and humility. He may attack by telling a Christian he is so good he does not need to go to church. He may suggest that we should let somebody else do work in the church that we ought to be doing ourselves. He may tempt us to work so hard all week that we are too tired to worship on Sunday, or by giving us such a good time Saturday night that we can't stay awake on Sunday morning. He may plant in our minds doubt and disrespect and indifference toward our Savior by means of the arguments and ridicule of some of our so-called "friends" he makes us keep company with. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!" Christians! Know your adversary! Stand against the wiles of the devil! "Fight the good fight of the faith!"

II. Our Armor. The adversary is fearful, but Paul guarantees the safety of the Christian warrior who uses the armor that God provides. A wise soldier takes all possible precautions for his personal safety in battle. In modern warfare that may mean ducking behind a rock or lying in a fox-hole. Paul who knew about Roman soldiers and their armor, told Christians that we have armor for the Good Faith also. Since Satan is our enemy and his weapons and tactics are spiritual, we need spiritual armor for this battle. Paul illustrates this with pieces of the armor of a Roman soldier, inviting us to use it. We must take up the whole armor ...to forget one piece may be as fatal as for a Roman soldier to leave his breast or arm or leg unprotected. With this Paul tells us to "be strong!"

1. First is the girdle or belt of truth. The military belt of the Roman soldier bound in his under garments, held together the loose ends of his armor, and braced up his limbs for action. With his belt tightened the warrior is tense and firm, his dress and figure a picture of concentrated energy ready for action because his mind is made up to fight. The belt of the Christian warrior is truth. We must fight certain that we stand for the truth of God's faithfulness and all other blessings. Satan is the father of lies and falsehood, but Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. We ^{defend ourselves by} fight the deceit of the devil with the crystal clear truth before which falsehood trembles. The truth of God's promises and assurances is our belt, securing us in the face of the devil's lies.

2. Next is the breastplae of righteousness. When men fought with swords and spears and arrows the soldier had to cover his breast with armor to protect his heart. The Christian's breastplate is righteousness. Though we are not righteous in ourselves, when we accept Christ as Lord and Savior, God clothes us with the righteousness of Christ. By His Spirit ^{of the heart} in our hearts He gives us a righteous disposition which is the best defense against sin. The true Christian does not purposely desire to sin, because he wants to please God. Thus the arrows of the tempter fall harmlessly from our breastplates as long as we remember that "he that is born of God doth not commit sin." Put on the breastplate!

3. The third point of danger is the soldier's feet. "Have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Shoes must be comfortable and stout and durable if the soldier is to be alert in case of attack, and stand firm in battle,

and advance against the foe. Shoes symbolize alertness, being prepared. The Christian must be prepared because Satan can upset us when we least expect him and where we do not expect him to strike. Our preparation is the Gospel of peace, the good news of Jesus Christ who brings peace to men through Jesus Christ.

4. Then take the shield of faith. Roman soldiers carried a large shield behind which they could hide. The thrust of a spear would be broken by such a shield. If enemies shot arrows tipped with flaming tar they would glance off a shield. Satan hurls malignant hate and slander and scorn and threats. Quiet faith in God to forgive our sins and confidence in His power to protect is our shield against all that. Roman soldiers could stand with their shields locked together like a steel wall. The Church that is composed of Christians who are putting up a united front of shields of the faith is like a fortress against the attacks of Satan.

5. The fifth protection is the helmet of salvation. Modern soldiers also wear helmets to protect their heads from falling shrapnel or other missiles. Paul says to receive this helmet as a gift from the Lord. The hope of our salvation is God's greatest gift and our most precious possession. In the Good Fight of the faith this assurance of God's power to grant eternal salvation affords insurance against the blows of Satan which may not be warded off by the shields of our faith which sometimes are not as perfect as they ought to be.

6. Last of all is the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. This is our only offensive weapon, but all that is needed. A Roman soldier could fight with spear or bows and arrows, but his most effective weapon was the sword. The only way to strike back at Satan is by proclaiming the word of God...the very sword Jesus used when tempted three times in the wilderness. Men's words may be twisted or resisted, but Satan can never stand before God's word. "The word of God is living, and active and sharper, than any two-edged sword." Christian warrior! Know your adversary!...the devil. Put on your armor!...^①the belt of truth^②the breastplate of righteousness^③the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace,^④the shield of faith^⑤the helmet of salvation.^⑥ Learn God's word! Use it as a sword against temptation and sin!

III. Our Allies. Nothing comforts the soldier in battle more than to know that when his own strength is exhausted, when his buddies are wounded and dying, or when his enemies press beyond the limit of his endurance...nothing is more heartening than to know that at any time he can call for reinforcements who spring forward with fresh courage, new weapons, and abundant support. When North Korea invaded the South in 1950 all seemed hopeless until the United Nations under the leadership of the United States stepped in to the battle to help and eventually win. What comfort that brought to the tiny Korean army in those days! And so with Christians who fight the Good fight of the faith. Our adversary is too strong for us to fight alone, our armor is stout but often imperfect and sin-scared Christian warriors cannot stand firm indefinitely. We must have help.

Paul tells how to call in the help of allies. First he says to pray for help. Stand, he says, ^①take up the whole armor of God. ^②with all prayer and supplication at all seasons in the spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. The Christian soldier prays for God's help for himself. He prays for the support of his allies. The greatest ally is God Himself. "God is our refuge and strength...He will not suffer thy foot to be moved." When you are tempted, our feet are slipping, we can't seem to use our weapons, Satan seems to be winning, pray for help! In moments of danger if we are to call in help we must keep the prayer telephone line open...thus Paul says to pray at all seasons. Then we can be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."
"Though hosts encamp around me, Firm to the fight I stand;
What terror can confound me, With God at my right hand."

The soldier of the cross can also count on the support of fellow Christians...mil-

Commanding general

Pray for other lands
lions of them, a vast multitude without number out of every tribe and nation. It encourages a soldier to know that along the battle lines there are no cowards who are falling back leaving him in an exposed position. Christian! There are millions like you fighting the battle for truth, so take heart! Not only Almighty God but countless Christian friends are ready to help in the battle. I know of people who have broken the curse of drinking alcoholic beverages because a pastor or other Christian friend had come to provide companionship and support when the temptation was upon them. Young people have been preserved from drifting into the ways of the world by their ties with other Christian friends.

"Like a mighty army moves the Church of God
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;
We are not divided, all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity."

Conclusion: "Fight the good fight of the faith!" Your adversary is strong, but your armor from God is stout and your allies more powerful than the enemy. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Christian, fight the good fight so that in the end you may say with Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give to me at that day; and not to me only but also to all them that have loved his appearing."