We trust the Lord will just open the Scriptures to everyone’s understanding as we teach. We realize that there’s so much confusion out there today, and people are hungry for the Word. Someone asked me the other day if we were going to get all the way to end of this Bible study before the Lord comes. There’s no way because once we finish going this direction, see there’s a lot back here that we skipped. I didn’t even touch the Minor Prophets, or the whole Book of Psalms and Proverbs, so I could live to be a hundred and never exhaust this Book. So we’ll just keep going until the Lord either comes or takes us off the scene, whichever may come first.

As we begin book number 40, we’ll be turning back to where we left off in the last lesson and that was in Philippians chapter 3. For maybe new listeners I always try to emphasize Paul’s apostleship to the non-Jews. We are to rightly divide the Scriptures in such a way that we don’t have everything all mixed and jumbled up, and that’s the key, of course, to understanding the Bible. I had to point out to a lady the other day, where she had a question on something that Isaiah had written. And as I read what she was referring to, and you could tell by the text that it was written to the Jew, I pointed that out to her, and she said, "Well I never saw that before." You can’t take things like that and say, "that’s for us," because that was written to the nation of Israel under the Law. Today we’re not under Law, but rather Grace, so a lot of these basic fundamental truths get mixed up with that which didn’t even pertain to the Church Age believer, and consequently we do have so much confusion.

So Philippians is one of Paul’s prison epistles. As we pointed out when we began with Ephesians that these prison epistles just sort of a step up into a higher plane of theology than the epistles he had written earlier. Those latter were pretty much elementary, and fundamental so far as salvation is concerned, but when we get into these prison epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, this is deeper water, this is higher ground. Paul is dealing primarily now with these letters with "our position in Christ, and what are we in the Body of Christ." We are somebody, and regardless of our station in life in the secular world, yet in God’s eyes we are somebody special. I’ve said it to my classes in Oklahoma over and over, "Everyone of us have somebody out there that no one can reach, but you or I." And so
we have to be ready to share the Gospel with that person when the opportunity presents itself. And the only way you can be ready is to know the Scriptures. Be skilled in the Word of God. So let’s now continue on where we left off in last taping and that was in Philippians chapter 3, and we got down through verse 3, but let’s just start reading in verse 1 to pick up the flow.

**Philippians 3:1a**

"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord...."

Now remember the circumstances that Paul is writing in. He’s in prison, right next door to Nero’s Palace, and the guards that are actually chained to him were some of the most vicious Roman soldiers who had probably survived some of the great military campaigns. These were tough characters, but yet after being chained to the apostle Paul for maybe 24 hours they became believers. And as we’ll see again toward the end of the Book that Paul’s ministry actually penetrated right into the inner halls of the wicked man Nero. So never forget that he’s in prison, he’s chained to a Roman guard, but yet he can say, rejoice in the Lord.

**Philippians 3:1b**

"...to write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe," Paul says all these things just simply make sense to you. Now here comes a word of warning. And it’s just as appropriate today as it was when he wrote it in probably about 64 or 65 AD.

**Philippians 3:2**

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." Now of course the concision there that he was making reference to were the Judaisers, and their constant promotion of the circumcision of the flesh, to Paul’s little congregation of Grace Age believers. Now with that in mind let’s read verse 3.

**Philippians 3:3**

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Now this circumcision, of course, is a spiritual circumcision which he refers to in one of his other letters, which is the cutting off of the old Adam, which was superfluous, and you and I as believers don’t need old Adam, **we have the new nature**. So Paul alone deals with that old Adam or as we call it that old sin nature. So Paul says,
"Beware of those things, because we’re not concerned about circumcision in the flesh, but rather we’re concerned about the spiritual circumcision which is something only God can do. Now let’s move on into new ground in verse 4.

Philippians 3:4a

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh...."

Now you want to remember that whenever the Jews in Judaism promoted circumcision, and keeping the commandments, what were they emphasizing? The flesh. It was what man could do of his own volition. See, that was as far as it could go, but we’re not under the fleshly influence in this Age of Grace, but rather we under the influence of the Spirit of God. We’re in a whole new ball game. So looking at verse 4 again.

Philippians 3:4a

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh..."

As a good Jew, remember, and here Paul gives seven reasons again why he could boast in the flesh. Now when I look at things and I find seven, and we had seven of them back in the Book of Romans, then again I always have to be reminded of the intricacies of the inspired Word of God. Now Paul didn’t sit down and rack his brain as he was writing, and asked himself, "How can I lay out seven things? Because seven is a nice number in Scripture." I don’t think that even entered into his mind, but rather I think the Holy Spirit just let these things roll through his mind and they came off his secretary’s pen as he dictated. It all just came rolling out and after the fact we have seven again, God’s perfect number, and here they are.

Philippians 3:4b-6

"...If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: (now here they come) 5. Circumcised the eight day, (that’s number one) of the stock of Israel, (that’s number 2) of the tribe of Benjamin, (that’s 3) an Hebrew of the Hebrews; (that’s 4) as touching the law, a Pharisee; (that’s number 5) 6. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; (or that assembly of believers up there in Jerusalem. That’s 6) touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless, (that’s 7)

So we have seven things that he had going for him as a good Jew. Now remember that the verse that’s coming is, "he’s going to count all that as dung in the King James or trash is a better word." But let’s go back up to verses 4, 5 and 6 and see what the
man is talking about that he has so much going for him in the flesh as a good Jew and yet it amounted to nothing when it came to the Spirit.

**Philippians 3:4**

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

In other words at that time when he was a Judaiser he was just about at the top of the heap when it came to religious people. There just weren’t any more religious than Saul of Tarsus, and so he lists these seven things then that coincided with that position as a good religious Jew.

**Philippians 3:5a**

"Circumcised the eight day, (according to the Law. That’s what the Law demanded) of the stock of Israel,..."

Now that word *stock* when you chase it down, do you know what that really implies? He wasn’t just a half-Jew, it wasn’t just his father who was a Jew, but both father and mother. He was a Jew through and through. Now keep all this up here in your computer (brain) because it’s going to really come to a boil when he says, "that he’s chucked all of this." So here he is one of the primary families of Israel.

**Philippians 3:5b**

"...of the tribe of Benjamin,..."

Not many Jews were able to name their tribal ancestry, but for some reason or other Saul of Tarsus still could do that. He knew that he was still of the tribe of Benjamin. Now that brings something to mind that I hadn’t intended to do, and I hope I can find it. Sometimes I walk into a buzz saw when I try to find some of these things. So hopefully I can find this one also. It’s back in the Book of Genesis chapter 49. Now I just can’t dogmatically say that this is what he’s talking about but I sure think in my own mind that’s it’s ringing a bell of some kind. This is where Jacob pronounces his blessing on the twelve sons, and he goes through the whole list from the eldest, which of course was Ruben up there in verse 3, and he brings you all the way down to the youngest which was Benjamin in verse 27.

The main reason I like to teach is to get people to think about things they might never otherwise think about. Now keep Saul of Tarsus and the kind of a man that he was as a great religious persecutor of Israel. And one I refer to as a raging bull while on the
road to Damascus. He couldn’t get there fast enough to arrest those Jewish believers. Now look at this verse as Jacob looks down the halls of time.

**Genesis 49:27**

"Benjamin (as a tribe) shall ravín as a wolf; (does that ring a bell? Wasn’t that old Saul of Tarsus? I believe that when the Lord inspired Jacob to say this, this was exactly what the He had in mind, that there was a Benjaminite coming that would fulfill this prophecy to the exact degree.) *in the morning he shall devour the prey*, (his persecuting. How he just ravaged those Jewish believers) *and at night he shall divide the spoil.*"

Do you know what I think that is? That’s the reference to the rewards the man is going to get in glory someday for having gotten Christianity off the ground. Now you may not agree with me, but I have to think that this was already back in the mind of God as Jacob was rehearsing the prophecies concerning the twelve sons. Well that was just a little free for nothing, so let’s come back to the Book of Philippians. We’ll be continuing on in verse 5.

**Philippians 3:5b**

"... an Hebrew of the Hebrews;..."

Now let’s look at another verse where he says much the same thing over in II Corinthians chapter 11. I always say that when Scripture repeats itself, whether it’s within a verse or two, or whether if it’s within a Book or two it’s there for a purpose of repetition, *and repetition is the mother of learning.* So we have to understand the make up of this apostle.

In this verse Paul’s concerning himself with the divisions in the Corinthians Church. Some said, "Well we’re not going to follow that guy Paul, but rather we follow Christ’s earthly ministry teaching only." Others said, "Well we’re going follow what Peter preaches." Still others wanted to follow what Apollos taught. So Paul has to come back in II Corinthians especially, defending his apostleship, that he was the one given to us Gentiles from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, *and that he is our example in the Church Age today as we’ll see in Philippians 3:17 when we get to it.* So he always had to defend his apostleship, his authority - and here is one of the primary ones.

**II Corinthians 11:22-23a**
"Are they (all these other leaders of the divisions) Hebrews? so am I, Are they Israelites? so am I, Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 23. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more:" So where does that put him? Head and shoulders above everybody else. He is the apostle of the Gentiles as he declares in Romans 11:13. Now back to Philippians. chapter 3.

**Philippians 3:5b**

"...an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, (and remember the law was fleshly. What was he?) a Pharisee;"

Now you all know what a Pharisee was. He was that self-righteous who pulled his robe around himself, and said, "Well I don’t commit sins, I’m above all that." And consequently they showed their utter depravity in doing it, but this was Saul of Tarsus. He was a religious Jew to the hilt. He loved temple worship, he loved his Old Testament, but he loved it with a blind ignorance. See this is what’s so true of so many people even today. Oh they’re religious, they love their religion, they’re sincere, and I respect them for that. But the only problem is,"they’re sincerely wrong!" And as Saul of Tarsus had to find out when he met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, he melted like hot butter. Why? Because all of a sudden he was confronted with the same God that he thought he was trying to stamp out, and now he has to come back with a whole new approach to his previous lifestyle as a Jew of the Jews, Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Now verse 6.

**Philippians 3:6a**

"Concerning Zeal, persecuting the church;..."

The word church here is so unfortunate, it should be persecuting the assembly. I’ve taught this over and over the last 9 years on television, that the word Church is not always the same group of people. I guess maybe I should take the time to do that again today, because if there’s anything that confuses the masses it’s this one word, "Ecclesia". Ecclesia is always translated Church, or in a place in Acts it is translated I think correctly, as an assembly, but see this assembly was a group of Ephesians rioters. They were pagans, so they certainly weren’t Church.

So the word Church, "Ecclesia really the true definition is, "a called out assembly." In other words they were a group of people who were no long part and parcel of the masses, but they’ve been separated from the masses. Let’s look at Acts chapter 7 to show you what I’m talking about. And I think this is what Paul is talking about when he tells us to rightly divide the Scriptures. Don’t just take the word Church and consider it as the same group. They are different and you have to separate
them, and here of course is the most obvious. Here Stephen is rehearsing Israel’s history, and he takes it all the way back to the call of Abraham, and now he’s all the way up where they were coming out of Egypt.

**Act 7:36**

"*He (Moses) brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs to the land of Egypt, and to the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. 37. This (speaking of Christ now in his fulfillment of the Mosaic type) is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 38. This is he, (speaking of Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified Christ) that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:"

In other words all the way up through the Old Testament whenever there was a person in the Godhead speaking or dealing with some element of humanity, who was it? It was God the Son, it was Christ, and here it’s so evident. Look at verse 37 again.

**Acts 7:37**

"*This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear."

Well how did Moses know what to say, except the Lord had implanted into his thinking. So it’s always the personality of God the Son who is speaking. Now look at 38 again.

**Acts 7:38a**

"*This he, (the One you crucified) that was in the church in the wilderness..." (but not a New Testament Church)

I’ve only heard one guy try to make it into a New Testament Church, and he tried desperately. He twisted every Scripture you could think of to try and make it fit, but it just won’t fit, because this is not a New Testament Church. It’s a called out assembly to be sure, but of what kind of people? Jews. So this assembly that was called out of Egypt is the nation of Israel under Moses’ leadership, and here the word Ecclesia, instead of being translated Church should have been translated a called out assembly, because that’s what Israel was. **We can look at another one in Acts chapter 2, and this one also is so often interchanged with what Paul calls "the Church which is His Body". But you see Acts chapter 2 doesn’t include the words "which is His**
Body," because it’s not. Now here in Acts chapter 2 we have the Jewish feast day of Pentecost, and let’s look at verse 47. Remember these were all Jewish believers.

Acts 2:47

"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

It would have been so much better if the translator would have used "a called out assembly" here rather than Church. These Jews were called out from the masses of Jews who had rejected Jesus of Nazareth. But this little assembly of believers had recognized Him for what He was. He was the Christ, the Messiah, and that’s all Peter proclaimed to them that day. So this called out assembly cannot be called the Church which is His Body, and it doesn’t call it that. But rather it just simply says, "And the Lord added to the church" (Ecclesia) or the Lord added to that called out assembly of Jews, people that were becoming believers.

Now let’s look at one more which really shakes up this translation, and that would be in Acts chapter 19. Of course here we’re in Ephesus and as a result of Paul’s preaching so many of those idolaters were becoming believers. They were throwing away their idols and literally wrecking the business of the idol makers, the silver craftsmen. So he was causing a riot here in Ephesus.

Acts 19:29-32a

"And the whole city was filled with confusion; and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theater. (Can you picture it? Now those theaters back in the ancient times had doors much like our football stadiums of today. So I can just see this mass of people just filing into that open-air theater. Now verse 30) And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples (his followers, certainly not the twelve) suffered him not. 31. And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theater. 32. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the (Ecclesia) assembly was confused:...."

Here they translated it assembly, but they could just as well put in the word church. It would be no more obnoxious as the called out Jews from Egypt or the called out Jews at Pentecost. So here is a good way to chase down words and realize that they don’t always mean the same thing.
Lesson One • Part II

Fellowship In Resurrection Power

Philippians 3:4-16

Now getting back to where we left off in the last lesson and that would be in chapter 3. We’re talking about Paul and how he is writing from this place of adversity in prison right next door to Nero’s palace in Rome. But the little Book of Philippians is filled with the word "rejoice, rejoice, rejoice." Now he is going to set us up for a tremendous thought, and that is how much did he give up for the sake of the Gospel. Well we’ve already looked at seven of the great things that he had going for him as a religious Jew up there in verse 5 and 6. Now let’s look at verse 7, and what a statement! How many American Christians could say something like this?

Philippians 3:7

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

Now let’s look at one verse first in Galatians and then I’m going to take you back to the Book of Acts, because the name of the game is see how all of Scripture fits so beautifully, and I’m always trying to bring out exactly that. This Old Book is supernatural, it is intricate in how it all fits together. It’s just not a jumble of thoughts and ideas as some would have you believe, but rather it is an intricate whole from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21. Now in Galatians chapter 1, let’s start with verse 11, and these are verses that we’ve used quite often over the years, and Paul is again rehearsing how he came into the ministry of being the apostle of this Age of Grace.

Galatians 1:11-14

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (now here it comes) 13. For ye have heard of my conversation (manner of living) in time past in the Jews’ religion, (that’s what he was talking about in those 7 points we just studied in the last lesson in the Book of Philippians) how that beyond measure I persecuted the church (assembly) of God, (those Jewish believers at Jerusalem) and wasted it. (the guy was heartless. He would throw them in the dungeon, put them to death, anything to get them off the scene so they wouldn’t oppose his religion.) 14. And profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."
Now what kind of a profit do you suppose he’s talking about? Financial. He was a big wheel in Judaism, and as I rehearsed on this program before, you go down into the lower diggings of the city of Jerusalem, and they excavated some of the houses of the High Priests of Israel and they were gorgeous. And no doubt Saul of Tarsus enjoyed the same lifestyle because he was one of the highest paid fellows in the business, because he was the most zealous. And that’s what he said back in verse 14.

**Galatians 1:14**

"And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

Now that’s what he had going for him. Now Paul said in the Book of Philippians that he counted all that but loss. Now let’s see what the word loss meant to the apostle because the same word is used in Acts chapter 27:10. Here Paul and the rest of the sailors are at the height of the storm and the ship is about to sink out there on the Mediterranean Sea on their way to Rome.

**Acts 27:10a**

"And said unto the, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage,..." That’s the same Greek word translated loss in Philippians. Now what happened to the ship and it’s contents don’t you? It was sunk, it was a total loss. It’s used again in verse 21.

**Acts 27:21**

"But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete and to have gained this harm and loss."

A complete loss of everything, it was gone, it was down into the depths. This is exactly how Paul treated everything that he had going for him as a religious Jew. And don’t forget that I pointed out that the stock of Israel implied his whole family. Now of course I am convinced in my own mind that Paul had a wife and children, which he would have had to have had if he was a member of the Sanhedrin. And we know he was a member of the Sanhedrin because in Acts chapter 26 we find Paul rehearsing for the third time in the Book of Acts his experience on the road to Damascus. Chapter 9 of course was written by Luke, but in chapter 22 and 26 Paul rehearses the same thing in the first person as he’s doing here. He’s telling how all of this brought him to the place where he was on his road to Damascus. In this Scripture I always have a hard time trying to decide where to start. But we’ll just start with verse 9.
Acts 26:9-10

"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: (remember how he said in the Book of Galatians how he had wasted that assembly?) and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice (vote) against them."

In other words he voted to put them to death, and that means he had to be a member of the Sanhedrin or he wouldn’t have been in the position of voting on these people. So as a member of the Sanhedrin he had to have a wife and children, because that was one of the by-laws I guess we would say today. You had to have the experience of raising a family to be a member of the Sanhedrin, and how to handle teenagers for example. Now that makes sense doesn’t it. Now back to Philippians, and let’s do verse 8.

Philippians 3:8a

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss (like that ship that sunk at sea, it’s all gone. His family, his wealth, his home, his prestige as a Pharisee, and his clout among Judaisers. Paul says he counts it all loss) for the excellency (that which is far better) of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:...."

Now how many believers in America stop to put Christ in that comparison? Does He mean more to us than everything we own or possess, or enjoy? Is He number one on our list of priorities? You know my wife is always kidding me that my beautiful black cattle are first with me, but that’s not right. Oh I enjoy them and love them so much. In fact I have a couple of old herd bulls and they just lick me like a dog, and that thrills me, but listen, they are not first in my list of priorities. **This Book is first, and you know how I love to teach it.** But I still can’t come close to imagining what it was like for this man to have lost everything, including his family for the sake of Christ. No wonder he is constantly affirming his authority as an apostle to us Gentiles. Now you stop and think, the twelve disciples and apostles all died a martyr’s death there’s no doubt about that. **But they didn’t suffer constantly, and the only thing that kept driving Paul was his love for the Lord and his Gospel of salvation that the Lord revealed only to him.** Now finishing verse 8.

Philippians 3:8b

"...the loss of all things, ( and on top of that he’s not crying about it) and do count them but dung,..."
Rather than dung I like the translation *trash* better. His life as a zealous Jew of Judaism now had absolutely no value or attraction to him any more. It was down the tube, it was out of his life, and as we’re going to see a little later in this chapter, *"forgetting those things which are behind, "* but we’ll talk about that when we get to that verse. 9. So not only did Paul win Christ in verse 8, but look at his position in verse 9.

**Philippians 3:9a**

*"And be found him,..."* That’s the same phrase that he used 90 sometimes in the Book of Ephesians. *In Him, In Whom*, these are position terms of where we are as believers in this Age of Grace. We’re not just here on the planet hoping to go to heaven someday, that’s our position already. Now looking at verse 9 again.

**Philippians 3:9**

*"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"*

All right now let’s go to Matthew chapter 10, and maybe this will help us understand how he could look at the loss of family and home, and prestige, but especially family. He could look at the loss of his loved ones and consider it dung, or trash. Well I think I can make a point that in Matthew chapter 10, as we have a statement that a lot of people have gotten confused about, and it throws a curve at them because they don’t understand the basic language. And it is disconcerting if you don’t know how these things are to be applied. And here Jesus is speaking during His earthly ministry.

**Matthew 10:37**

*"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."* And then in another portion of Scripture, He put it like this.

**Luke 14:26**

*"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."*

Now we know that the Lord God does not expect us to hate our parents and wife, and children as we understand the word hate. But rather it’s a comparative term. Our love
for Christ should be so much greater than it is for our family that comparatively speaking, it’s as if we hate them.

Well it’s the same way here in Philippians chapter 3, how could Paul just glibly seemingly cast off all of his family relations and count it as trash that he might win Christ is again a comparative thing. I’m sure that deep in his heart that Paul longed to be reunited with his family, but he knew that it would never happen because of what had transpired between him and Christ, who of course was hated by the Jew on the street, and no doubt his family as well. But always keep those things in mind that it was a comparative thing. Now back to verse 9.

**Philippians 3:9a**

"And he found in him, not having mine own righteousness,..." Which he was attempting to do in Judaism, wasn’t he? He was keeping the Law, he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and now he realizes that his own righteousness had nothing to do with it. But all of his relationship with Christ, his position in Christ was based on one word and what is it? Faith! **And what was the faith? Believing what God said.** Faith is taking God at His word! First for salvation to believe the Gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4) absolutely, but it doesn’t stop there. Faith is something we practice everyday as believers.

Now you’ve got to stop and think, why is America in the horrible wicked state that it’s in? And it is in that state whether we like to admit it or not. What’s our problem? Hey it’s not drunkenness, it’s not drugs, it’s not sexual immorality, but only one thing. America has lost faith in the Word of God. That’s our problem, but if we could get America back to what God has said, then we’d solve all our problems in short order. **So for us as believers never forget that we have to practice faith, not just for salvation, but for Christian living.**

Let me give you a good example, and the reason this comes to mind, we had this Friday evening in our Tulsa class, and I probably never saw it this distinctly before. You know I learn as I teach whether people know that or not. So come back with me to the Book of Numbers, chapter 20. We’ve got quite a few of our Friday night people here, and you’re going to remember this. Here in this chapter we find the children of Israel still out there in the wilderness, they’re still in their 40 years of wondering. And as it has happened at least once before they’re out of water. Their herds are bellowing, they’re thirsty, the people are getting thirsty, and so Moses goes before the Lord, and the Lord tells him, go get his shepherd rod, but instead of striking the rock this time like he did the first time this happened back in the Book of Exodus he’s to speak to the rock. So now we pick up the account.
Numbers 20:7-11a

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 8. Take the rod, and gather thou thy assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. 9. And Moses took the rod, from before the LORD, as he commanded him. 10. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock? 11. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice:..." That was just a simple change in what he was supposed to have done, but instead of speaking to that rock he again did like he did back in Exodus, only this time he struck the rock twice. Now finishing the verse.

Numbers 20:11b

"...and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also."

So the Lord condescended anyway and the water came forth abundantly. Now verse 12. I’ve had so many people ask, "Was this the reason that Moses did not get to go into the Promised Land?" No that’s not the reason. Yes he broke the type, he should have spoken instead of smiting, because when Christ died on that cross He died once. Smitten once for the sins of the world. And from then on He was to be spoken to as Lord and Saviour, so Moses did break the typology. But that was not why God lowered the boom on him and said, "Sorry Moses, you’re not going into the Promised Land." Now don’t you know that must have been a heartache.

We were at Mt. Nebo not too long ago, it wasn’t that clear on the day we were there, but on a clear day you would be able to see clear up beyond the Sea of Galilee. You Should be able to see over Jerusalem, and almost to the Mediterranean Sea. Moses could have seen just about all the way down to Gaza from that high point on Mt. Nebo. I can just imagine the heartache that Moses must have felt, that simply because of one act of disobedience, he lost it. Now he didn’t lose his salvation. Moses is going to be in glory just like we are, but he lost that reward. But it wasn’t just because of his anger, or because he smote the rock, but the key word is in verse 12. And I want to bring this home for us believers today in this Age of Grace.

Numbers 20:12a

"And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not,..."
God doesn’t say a word about striking the rock. God doesn’t say a word about Moses’ temper, God simply says, ‘you didn’t believe me!’ Isn’t that something? That was Moses’ error. He did not take God at His Word.

Now come back to Philippians and as you’re turning just put your mind in high gear. How many times does even the apostle Paul give us commandments that is the Word of God that should have an effect on our everyday life? For example, "husbands love your wife." What is that? That’s a commandment. And when husbands don’t do it as a believer, what are they failing to do. Exercise faith in God’s Word, because that’s what God has said. In another place Paul says, "flee every appearance of evil." Not just the evil itself, but even the appearance of evil. Now that’s a commandment, and when we don’t do it, we’re showing a lack of faith. In another place, he says, "pray without ceasing." And when we fail to pray we are acting in unbelief. And you can go on and on throughout Paul’s letters, and just see these things that the Word of God has instructed us, and telling us how to behave as believers seven days a week. And when we don’t abide by that, we are showing unbelief.

I’ve pointed out before when I teach about the children of Israel, how most that came out of Egypt did not get to go into the Promised Land. Only those that were 20 years and below got to go in. God said, "They do always err in their heart; and have not known my ways" in Hebrews 3:10. Let’s look at the reason they could not go into God’s rest in Hebrews chapter 3 for a moment. For sake of time let’s just look at verse 18 and 19.

**Hebrews 3:18-19**

"And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, (a reference of going into the land of milk and honey) but to them that believed not? 19. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

It wasn’t because of what the children of Israel had done on their journey to the Promised Land, not because of any thing that they would do, but it was all because of their UNBELIEF. And that’s just simply "no faith." And even as believers we can still be guilty of being weak in faith when we do not obey the Word of God. Now that goes back to what I just said a moment ago. "What’s America’s problem? That’s it. America no longer believes what this Book says. You may not agree with me, but if you know anything about our society today, then you have to agree with me. America as a nation today does not believe what this Book says. They scoff at it, they ridicule it, they may pay lip service to it for an hour on Sunday morning, but that’s about it. But God expects us to believe what He has said, that the whole idea of faith. Now back to the Book of Philippians for the minute or two we have left. Looking at verse 9 again.
Philippians 3:9

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness (self or legalism) which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God (as a believer, as we walk day by day) by faith:"

Now let’s go on into verse 10 and we’ll pick that verse up again in the next lesson. All of this is not only bringing the apostle to this place, but you and I as well, because this is written for our admonition.

Philippians 3:10a

"That I may know him, and the power of the resurrection,..." 

Now there again very few Christians today put any emphasis on this word power. It’s the English word "Dynamo." My, if you ever go down into one of the great hydroelectric dams such as Hoover Dam where these huge generators are you can see that with one turn of that dynamo it sends out humongous amounts of current. Well that’s from where the word comes from. Only God’s power makes a dynamo look like nothing in comparison.

Philippians 3:10a

"That I may know him, and the power (not of His creation which was tremendous, but rather the power) of the resurrection...." 

See that’s where we are today, we’re on resurrection ground, and we have to depend on that resurrection power not just for salvation, but for our every day existence. It’s that resurrection power that gives us the ability to live a victorious life, it’s that resurrection power that can bring a drug addict out of his habit. It’s that resurrection power that can break nicotine and alcohol or any other addiction that man may have, but even believers today are prone to forget that that is where it’s centered. It’s the core of our belief.
Lesson One • Part III

Fellowship In Resurrection Power

Philippians 3:4-16

Now to continue right on where we just left off in our last lesson and that would be in verse 10. It’s so thrilling to have our visitors from out of state in our class today, and we just trust that you can find your way back down here to Tulsa. In fact Paul has already said that he was coming back again next month, and he lives in Minnesota. We just have a good time in Christian love and fellowship as we open the Word of God, and hopefully we do it in such a way that you can understand it more clearly. Now in the last lesson we ran out of time before I finished my thoughts of verse 10, so we’ll pick back up with that verse.

Philippians 3:10a

"That I may know him,..."

That’s the joy, hope and security of every believer that we can know Him. He’s not just some strange God way out there some place, but rather we know Him. When I read this verse I think of a little antidote that I read years and years ago and I’m sure most of you have also heard it or read it of the young lady who was attending a university, and while there someone gave her a book to read, and she tried several times to get interested in it and never could. She would read the first chapter or two and put it back on the shelf, and finally forgot about the book. But by the time she was a senior at the university she had fallen in love with one of her professors, and it turned out he was the author of this book she could never get interested in. Then all of a sudden she couldn’t devour the book fast enough and her roommate who had been with her all through school said, "Well what in the world? I thought that was the book you could never get interested in?" She said, "it is." Her room mate said, "well why are you interested in it now?" "Because" the young lady said "I’ve fallen in love with the author!.."

Well you see that’s the secret, when you in fall in love with Christ you cannot exhaust this Book. You’ll just keep seeing new things pop up all the time, and you think, now why didn’t I see this before? Well it’s just like God told Israel when they could have gone into the land of milk and honey. He said, "I won’t drive them all out at once, I’ll drive the Canaanites out just fast enough that you can absorb and you can take over the land. Well that’s the way He does us with the Scriptures. See, He doesn’t unload it all on us at once. Even right now I could go for another 1/2 hour showing you verses that I never saw until maybe the last year or so, and I know there’s going to be more
verses coming. **So anyway we get to the place where we know Him, He’s personal, He’s close to us, He knows all about us.** And of course when we come into that relationship with Christ, we’re also going to suffer with Him.

Now again as I’ve said so often, we in America know very little of suffering for our faith. Now it could happen yet, we hope it won’t, but it could. Remember though that through about 90% of Christendom’s history, believers suffered for their faith. They were persecuted, they were driven out from valley to valley. Their homes and villages were just utterly uprooted and destroyed simply because they were Christians. Another verse comes to mind on this subject, come back if you will to Romans chapter 8. We were just talking about it at break time. "What’s going to be our lot for eternity?" Well the Bible doesn’t tell us an awful lot about that. About the only super verse that we have on the subject is found in I Corinthians 2:9.

**I Corinthians 2:9**

"**But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**" And that’s about as much as we’ve got. We know there’s a glorious situation that’s coming, but just how we’re going to function, and what we’re going to do is pretty much hidden from us, but this verse gives us a little hint that He’s got good things prepared for us. Now in Romans chapter 8 let’s begin with verse 14

**Romans 8:14-17b**

"**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (or the children) of God. 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; (we don’t live under constant fear that we’re breaking God’s laws) but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.** (that relationship again, do you see that? We’re in Christ, He’s dear to us and we’re dear to Him.) **16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:** (now here it comes) **17. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;...**"

Now that’s as far as we can go with it, but it’s going to be something! **Everything that God has prepared or is preparing for eternity that’s His is also going to be ours.** That’s what joint-heirship is all about, and in this case beyond human understanding. That’s part again of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Now continuing on in the verse.

**Romans 8:17b**
"...if so be that we suffer with him, (a lot of people want to take the good stuff, but don’t want the bad. Well you see it all goes in the same program. We may have some suffering to do. But if we suffer with Him) that we may be also glorified together."

This is our prospect, and the world may think we’re crazy, they may think we’re a bunch of kooks, but I’ve got news for them. It’s just like when the philosophers of Athens thought that Paul was nothing but a babbler. They thought they had all the real stuff, and he was just a babbler, but you see history has proven differently, and when you go to Mars Hill there a huge bronze plaque in memory of the apostle Paul, and not a single philosophers is mentioned. So in reality who were the babblers? And who had the truth? Now back to Philippians chapter 3.

**Philippians 3:10b**

"and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"

Now we don’t like the word death do we? I don’t for sure, we all hate it. A loved one or a pet can die and it just literally tears us up. We just literally despise death, but the bright side of the coin is that out of death, for us as believers, comes life, and that’s the process. There has to be death in order for life to appear. It’s shown in every seed that’s planted, as that seed has to die in order for a new blade of grass to appear. Well it’s the same way here, we have to be made conformable to His death before we can partake of His life. Now again, let’s go back to Romans chapter 6 to follow up on that thought. Let’s just compare Scripture with Scripture when ever possible like you’re supposed to do when you study. See all of these basic doctrines that flow from the pen of this apostle will always dove tail together, as his writing all fit together perfectly.

**Romans 6:5**

"For if we have been planted..."

And where do you plant things? In the ground. Now I’m going to be right up front with you. I get letter after letter asking me about cremation. Well I can’t quote a Scripture that absolutely forbids it, but I think in language it flies in the face of Scripture. The whole idea for the believer of placing our loved ones in the earth is that that they’re only there waiting for the resurrection day. And here again the concept is a seed planted in the earth, not burned, not reduced to ashes, but rather it’s planted, and as soon as it’s planted the seeds of resurrection begins. So Paul uses that same analogy that if we have been planted, literally put to death.

**Romans 6:5b**
... together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:"

Now in Philippians Paul used the word *conformable*, and here in this verse the word is *likeness*, but I can’t see a nickel’s worth of difference between the two because it’s still identifying us with His death. And there can be no life until there is death. Now reading on in Romans chapter 6.

**Romans 6:6-7**

"Knowing this, that our old man (our old Adamic nature. That part of us that came by way of physical birth) is *crucified* (remember crucifixion kills. We have been put to death by our faith being identified) with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, (or put out of commission) that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

Now we have another analogy right across the page in Romans chapter 7. And this is a Pauline doctrine that death brings new life, but we can’t have new life until we’ve died to the old nature. Here in this portion I guess we’ll just take time to read them all so let’s begin with verse 1.

**Romans 7:1-4**

"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law;) how that the law (the civil law) hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? (when he dies that law ends it’s authority) 2. For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law (the civil law) to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. (if a spouse dies, then there is no law to forbid the living partner to remarry. Scripture doesn’t forbid it, because death ends that relationship) 3. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: (because it was not ended by death) but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. (why does Paul put this in here? To show us a doctrinal statement and here it is.) 4. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law (that is the Mosaic system) by the body of Christ; (remember the body of Christ died. Death is what broke that strangle hold of legalism on the human being) that ye should be married to another, (not to another man or woman which ever the case may be, but to whom?) even to him (Christ) who is raised from the dead, (and why are we united to Christ in resurrection power?) that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
Now in a marriage relationship, what is fruit? Children. In this Spiritual relationship what is to be our fruit? Soul winning. We’re to win the lost, that’s why God left us here, we’re to be a testimony to His Grace. Now not everybody can be one like someone else, we’re not robots, we’re not all identical alike. But there should be that desire on the part of every believer to see lost people saved. **Because the mind of God has been imparted to us, and the mind of God is that He’s not willing that any should perish.** So this should be our driving desire that we might see lost people saved. I’ll never forget when we were in Charlotte, North Carolina this summer a whole black family came to know the Lord, and I just shared this with some black folks the other night. I know we have a tremendous black audience across America. Well in Charlotte this black family comprised of a husband, wife, and two grown sons and their wives, and their kids shared with us that their whole family had been saved through our program. Well I tell you what, that just makes your day, because that’s why we’re here. And when we left from out here, Steve came to the car with tears running down his cheek and said, "Now Les don’t you forget, you have changed this whole world for my whole family." Well we’re here so that "**we should bring forth fruit unto God.**" Now back to Philippians chapter 3.

**Philippians 3:10b**

"**being made conformable unto his death;**"

In other words we have died with Him, we’ve been crucified with Him, and resurrected with Him in resurrection power. **Now remember resurrection power is what gave Him victory over everything thing that could ever oppose Him.** Resurrection power gave Christ victory over all the satanic forces, and over all the power of hell and death. Everything that was ever created now comes under His authority by virtue of His resurrection power. Now that’s where we walk, that were we live and breathe, and move is in that resurrection power. Oh I could go on and on about His wonderful and mighty resurrection power, but for sake of time let’s go on into verse 11. Now this next verse is not a verse that makes you think you can work for salvation, but what Paul is driving home is that his whole hearts desire is to attain unto that resurrection body. Let’s read the verse.

**Philippians 3:11**

"**If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.**"

Let’s go ahead and drop down to verse 20 and 21 of this same chapter. We may get to it later in the afternoon, but if not we’ll pick it up next month.

**Philippians 3:20-21a**
"For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; (Even though we’re walking here on the earth our citizenship is already settled in heaven) from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,..." (not his body of humiliation)

I was reading again just the other night, that a lot of people don’t realize that in His earthly ministry the name of Jesus used alone was the name of His humiliation. It was not the name that attached itself to His power and His glory, but the name of humiliation. And as He went in that name of Jesus as a man and suffered the horrors of the cross and the death of it. Then in resurrection power now we know Him more as "The Christ or The Lord Jesus Christ." So it is not totally appropriate to simply refer to Him now in resurrection terms as simply "Jesus."

I had made the statement some time ago that never that I knew of did the disciples ever refer to the Lord as Jesus. They called Him Master, they called Him Lord, but never called Him Jesus. Well this gentlemen called and said, "I’ve got you." I asked him to show me the verse and he read a verse or two, but it was using the term Jesus in the third person each time. So always remember that the Lord, or the Lord Jesus Christ is His appropriate term as a result of that resurrection power. He is no longer the man of Nazareth or the man of Galilee, but rather now He is the Lord Jesus Christ. Now back to our text in verse 21.

**Philippians 3:21a**

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,...

His resurrected body which could go right through the wall or ceiling. It could go from here to Pluto in a second or less. And you know what? That’s the kind of body we’re going to have someday. It’s coming and I don’t think it’s that far off. Now finishing the verse.

**Philippians 3:21b**

""...according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Now let’s see how Paul puts that back in I Corinthians chapter 15. This is almost the same language and just confirms that this is what the apostle was talking about by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**I Corinthians 15:51-52**
"Behold, I shew you a mystery; (a secret, something that’s never been revealed before in Scripture.) We shall not sleep, (or die physically, but since we can’t go to glory in this old body,) but we shall all be changed. (this vile body will be made like unto His glorious body) 52. In a moment in the twinkling (or the blink of an eye) of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (living believers) shall be changed." We simply can’t and don’t want to go to glory in this old body of corruptible flesh. But when the Lord changes it we can, and He will. Now verse 53.

I Corinthians 15:53-54

"For this corruptible (this body that is prone to corruption)must put on incorruption, (it has to become an eternal body that will never die and never corrupt) and this mortal must put on immortality. (in other words we’re going to live, rule, and reign with Him forever. And then verse 54.) So when this corruptible (body) shall have put on incorruption, (by a sudden change for the living believers) and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

What kind of victory? Resurrection power victory. And we will no longer deal with this old body of flesh, but rather we will be transformed and translated in that split second of time we just read about. Now back to Philippians once more and let’s look at verse 11 again.

Philippians 3:11

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection (out from among the dead is a better translation then) of the dead."

And what do you suppose he’s talking about? Well when the believer experiences what I teach as the Rapture. And the living one are the ones we just talked about in I Corinthians chapter 15. And there’s a sister chapter in I Thessalonians chapter 4 that tells us so clearly that the dead in Christ will rise first, and then the next split second we follow them in that resurrection. And here this is what Paul is alluding to. That I might attain unto the resurrection out from among the dead." I checked several Greek dictionaries and so forth last night and that’s exactly what it says. Not just the resurrection of the dead, but a resurrection from among the dead. In other words, not everyone is going to be resurrected at the same time. Now let’s go back to John chapter 5 so that you’ll know what I’m talking about when I say not everybody will be resurrected at the same time. Here in this passage the Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry is speaking.
"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. 29. And shall come forth; (now here we have a separation. They’re not all going to come forth at once, but) they that have done good, (these are those who have become believers, they will be people of faith, and will come forth) unto the resurrection of (eternal) life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

These will be those who have done evil or were destitute of faith. This resurrection will take place a thousand and some years later according to Revelation chapter 20. And then if you remember how I taught I Corinthians chapter 15 back when we had that study, I think even the New Testament saints will also be divided into three groups. The first fruits that has happened in Matthew chapter 27 when Christ came out of the tomb. Then the major resurrection will be the Church Age (that’s us believers) in the Rapture of I Corinthians chapter 15:51-55 and I Thessalonians chapter 4:13-18, and then we have a third group which will be the Tribulation saints in Revelations chapter 20.

So you have those three categories of New Testament believers that will come forth on that last resurrection day. Then after that the lost will be resurrected to go to that Great White Throne Judgment to have their day before Christ before being cast into the Lake of Fire. This judgment will take place at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ, and before we go into eternity.
Lesson One • Part IV

Fellowship In Resurrection Power

Philippians 3:4-16

Now coming out of verse 11 in the last lesson, Paul’s whole hope of everything is that out resurrection from among the dead. It’s amazing how that Paul’s tenure of speech has changed. In his early letters, he was expecting the Lord to come in his lifetime, he really was. In fact a lot of people accuse him of being against marriage and so forth back in I Corinthians chapter 7. Well it’s wasn’t that Paul was against marriage per say, but rather he thought the Lord was in such close proximity of coming, then why cumber it up with marriage responsibilities and so forth. Well I’m about getting to that place today myself. (as the audience laugh) Les says, now that’s got nothing to do with Iris. I’m talking about entering into marriage. Our television audience will love that one won’t they?

But anyway this was where Paul was looking, he just thought the Lord was coming any moment, but you see now by the time he writes Philippians and death is just around the corner, he doesn’t feel that way. So now he realizes that he will more than likely go through the valley of death, and will be waiting for that out resurrection from among the dead. Now verse 12.

*Philippians 3:12a*

"Not as though I had already attained, (in other words, you don’t immediately arrive) *either were already perfect..."*

The Christian life is not an instantaneous perfection, but rather we grow in Grace and knowledge. **We begin our Christian life as a baby begins the physical life, and we feed on the milk of the Word, and then as we progress hopefully we get into the deeper things of Scripture and get to the meat of the Word.** But it is a growth process from the beginning until the end, so that’s all Paul is saying here. He knew that even the great apostle that he was, he did not suddenly have it all. And of course after you study the writings of Paul and his life, we realize that his early letters of Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians did not have these deeper doctrines that we find in these later epistles.

I feel Paul picked up the deeper things while he was in prison in Caesarea, while most people would think those were wasted years for Paul. But I don’t think they were wasted at all, I think that while he was languishing there in prison waiting to go to Rome, the Holy Spirit unloaded all these truths on him, so that when he gets to that
prison experience he’s ready to start unfolding these prison epistles. So looking at verse 12 again, Paul says, "he’s not already perfect."

**Philippians 3:12b**

"...but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

Now let’s back up a few pages to the Book of Galatians chapter 1, and here is what I think Paul is making reference to in Philippians. In verse 14 we find that Paul was that religious Pharisees, keeping the tradition of the forefathers.

**Galatians 1:15**

"But when it pleased God, (the Sovereign God who’s in control of every life) who separated me from my mother's womb, (so God put the finger on Paul before he was ever born.) and called me by his grace."

Saul of Tarsus didn’t deserve what he got. Saul of Tarsus didn’t deserve the preeminent apostleship that he was given, but it’s all of Grace. I was so thrilled last Sunday at our Church. We had a guest preacher and he used the Book of Philippians for his text, and as he opened his sermon, he said, "never forget that the one greatest man that ever lived other than Christ Himself was the apostle Paul." When he said that I almost stood up and shouted. I know not many people feel that way about Paul, but he is by far the greatest man that ever lived. Moses was great, and Abraham but I don’t think any of them can hold a candle to this man. And how he suffered for the sake of the Gospel, but it all begin when the Lord had His finger on him even while he was still in the womb. Then verse 16 is what he was apprehended for.

**Galatians 1:16-17**

"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; (or Gentile or the non-Jewish world) immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, (the exact opposite direction from Jerusalem) and returned again unto Damascus."

What does this all show us? That here was a man now that wasn’t going to be the apostle of Israel as the twelve were, but he’s going to be the apostle of the Gentile world. And that’s why I’m always hammering away at the authority of his apostleship. Let’s go back a little further to Acts chapter 9, and this will be another
reference of how he was apprehended by Christ Himself. He was stopped in his tracks because God had something special for the man to accomplish.

Acts 9:1-4

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2. And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3. And as he journeyed, (a Sovereign God interrupted and intervened in the affairs of this man) he came near Damascus and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?"

And for sake of time come all the way down to verse 10 where we find Ananias. a Jew living in the city of Damascus, and the Lord speaks to Ananias.

Acts 9:10b-15a

"Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth. 12. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles,..."

And see, Saul never forgot that, and the farther he went in his ministry the more that was confirmed. Now on your way back to Philippians let’s stop in the Book of Romans chapter 11, and let’s read verse 13 to show you what I mean. This is a verse that Jerry had never seen until he saw it in our class many years ago, and told me to keep showing people this verse, because it makes all the difference in the world.

Romans 11:13a

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles,..."

Do you see how plain that is? Paul doesn’t include the twelve, because he is the apostle of the Gentiles, Peter and the twelve were the apostles of the Jews. (Galatians 2:9) Now let’s come on up to Romans chapter 16 for a moment. These are verses that
again affirm his authority as the apostle for this Church Age, or this Age of Grace, or the age of the Gentile.

_Romans 16:25_

"Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, (secret) which was kept secret since the world (age) began."

Or since Adam was created. This Gospel that Paul is preaching to the Gentiles was unheard of throughout all of human history. The Jews had no comprehension that God would save Gentiles without making them proselytes of Judaism. Over and over I have to make comment of the fact that this man was apprehended to be the apostle of the Gentile world. Remember the doctrines for this Age of Grace come only from Romans through Philemon. All the rest of Scripture is for us, we teach it, we believe, we trust it, but when it comes to basic doctrines for us today, you have to go to Romans through Philemon. You start dabbling in the rest and you’re going to get confused, and you start mixing these things and it just won’t make sense. But keep them separate and it all fits. Now back to Philippians chapter 3, and let’s look at verse 13.

_Philippians 3:13a_

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended;..."

Do you know what Paul is saying? "I didn’t have a thing to do with my being stricken on the road to Damascus. That wasn’t my doing. I wasn’t out there looking for God, but the Lord apprehended me." And you know it’s the same way today. For a moment let’s look at John’s gospel chapter 3. And while you’re looking for that just stop and think, while Adam and Eve sinned and sewed fig leaves, did they go down the trail yelling Lord where are you? What did they do? They went and hid. They weren’t looking for God, He was the last one they wanted to see. Now look what John tells us. This is the Lord Himself speaking.

_John 3:19-20_

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20. For everyone (the non believer whether they want to admit it or not) that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."
Now that’s mankind’s state until the Light came in. This was Saul of Tarsus’ state. He wasn’t really seeking the Light, but rather he was trying to stamp out something that he thought was in contrariness to the Light, although he didn’t have the Light himself, but he also didn’t know he didn’t have the Light. His religion had no light, and it’s no different today. For the most part, people do not seek the Light of the Truth. Most people will say, "Leave me alone, I’m comfortable, I’m getting along just fine." But one day they’re going to wish that somebody would have prevailed upon them, but nevertheless mankind does not apprehend the Light of their own volition.

**Philippians 3:13a**

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind,..."

Can we really forget? No we can’t forget, but God can. See, when God forgave us, does He remember our past? No, that’s been wiped clean forever. Now we can still remember, it’s there, but we don’t have to let those past things control our present. In fact as I was looking over these Scriptures last night I couldn’t help but get the thought, this is almost psychology 101. How in the world can you be a happy productive person if you’re constantly wallowing in the sorrow of past mistakes?

That reminds me of an antidote I read years ago. This young man was working under this rather harsh taskmaster, and the boss was just really chewing him out one day, and the young man said, "Well boss tell me, why don’t you ever make mistakes?" The old boss looked at the young man and said, "Experience." Well the young man said, "How did you get experience? "By making mistakes" the boss said. See that’s exactly the way it works. We’re going to make mistakes, and if we learn from them, hey that’s good psychology, that’s what mistakes are for, so that we learn from that experience. But to wallow in the sorrow and misgivings of past mistakes, hey you’ll never amount to a hill of beans. So the apostle Paul is right on when he says, "forgetting those things which are behind."

Now don’t think for a minute that Paul forgot the horrible persecution that he brought on those Jewish believers. We know he did because he said, "I wasted the Church." So it plagued the poor man all through his ministry, but he didn’t let it stop him from being a productive apostle. He did not let it drive him into a mental disarray. So he says, "forgetting those things which are behind." You just simply can’t change things that have past, so there no use worrying or fretting about it. We all make mistakes, some of them greater than others, but you don’t correct them by stewing over them. You don’t change the situation. You go on and just learn from those mistakes, and that’s exactly what Paul is saying here.
Philippians 3:13b

"...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,"

Now when you come on into verse 14, like Paul does so often in these letters, what’s he alluding to? The Olympic races. So again he throws us the image of those runners going down the track.

Philippians 3:14

"I press (leaning forward as far as possible to hit the finish line first. And that’s the analogy that Paul is drawing. There’s no lackadaisical running here, this is full speed ahead. ) toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

What greater prize could we work for. Now Paul’s not talking about working for salvation, as that’s impossible, but rather he’s talking about the rewards that will be waiting for him. Well we could go into I Corinthians chapter 3 and look at rewards but we won’t take time for that. I would like to at least finish this chapter, and we’ve got a lot of material in here yet. Now verse 15.

Philippians 3:15a

"Let us therefore,..."

Because of the picture that he has just drawn of the Olympic runners putting everything in their race. My goodness! We’ve got to look at some of these things, so let’s go back to I Corinthians chapter 9.

I Corinthians 9:24

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, (the race of your Christian life then) that ye may obtain. (the prize, the reward.)

We don’t know what it’s going to be, but we know that there’s going to be reward that we just can imagine, because of our running the Christian life. Now verse 25, and here’s another analogy to the Olympics.

I Corinthians 9:25a

"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things..."
Now that word *temperate* is a key word for Christian living. Temperate means to maintain a balance. You don’t go flip flopping from way over here to way over there, but rather we maintain a balance. Even in their training they did not train so hard that they decimated their body, but on the other hand they weren’t so careless that they were out of shape either. So they played it temperately, and were ready when the race day came.

*I Corinthians 9:25b-26a*

"...*Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown;* (usually the winner in the Olympics won just a leaf that was all dried up and was put between the pages of a book when they got home) **but we an incorruptible. 26. I therefore so run,**..."

Not for salvation, but rather for rewards. A lot of people don’t like that concept but that’s Pauline. Once we’re saved, we’re to run, we’re to work, we’re to strive, we’re to do everything we possibly can to win the prize in the high calling of Christ Jesus.

*I Corinthians 9:26b-27*

"...*not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:* (or shadow boxing I guess we’d call it) 27. **But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**"

Or put on the shelf like you would a cracked pot that could not be used for anything else. If they had a beautiful pot that a lot of work had gone into, but then discovered it had a crack in it, the owner would put those pots on a separate shelf to be sold as simply a vase to decorate. So that’s what Paul is saying, "I don’t want to end up on the shelf as a cracked pot," and that should be our attitude also. Now back to Philippians chapter 3 again. Now verse 15 again.

*Philippians 3:15*

"*Let us therefore, (as believers) as many as be perfect, (maturity as a result of Christian growth) be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, (other than growing in our Grace and knowledge) God shall reveal even this unto you.*" In other words, when we start having hang ups that are not in God’s good purposes, He’ll show them to us. Now verse 16.

*Philippians 3:16*

"*Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*"
Now all that is really saying is that once we’ve entered into a salvation experience, we’re a child of God, we’re a member of the Body of Christ, and we’re to be a testimony of His Grace. We’re not to be out there causing turmoil and dissension and so forth, but we walk by these same rule, and what are they? I maintain that Christianity is as practical as the day is long.
Lesson Two • Part I

Paul - Our Example

Philippians 3:17 – 4:23

We hope by now that you are so interested in the Word of God that you are studying on your own, as that’s number one priority. So many of our letters tells us that for the first time many of our listeners are studying the Word, and now are understanding what they are reading. **After all, the Word of God is Truth, and the Holy Spirit has been given to us so that we can discern it.** So this is our prayer and whole purpose for being here.

Now we’ll get right back to where we left off in the last lesson and that will be Philippians chapter 3 and verse 17. And here in this verse Paul makes one of those graphic statements that a lot of people just don’t like to swallow. It just rubs them wrong, and here it is.

*Philippians 3:17a*

"Brethren, be followers together of me,..."

Do you know what about 99% of so-called Christians say? "Well I don’t follow Paul, but rather I follow Jesus." Well you know my favorite clique on that is, "Then what do you do when you come to the shores of Galilee and He keeps going?" It’s pretty hard to do isn’t it? So always remember He was God, and we can’t walk in His footsteps, but the apostle Paul is just as human as we are, and we are admonished to follow him as he follows the resurrected Christ. Also remember that I’m always emphasizing that Paul only knows Christ, crucified, buried, and risen from the dead and ascended back to glory. **And it was from that position in glory then that the Lord reveals all these precious truths to the apostle Paul. That’s what makes his apostleship so unique, and this is why he can say, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we now as Grace Age believers are to be following him as he follows Christ.**

Let’s chase a few of the references down that command us to be followers of Paul. First let’s go back to I Corinthians chapter 4, and we do this just to show folks that you can spend a whole evening chasing down some of these references that tie everything together. In this first reference let’s begin with verse 16, and again remember that every word that Paul writes is inspired by the Holy Spirit. This isn’t just his personal ego coming out, but rather it’s the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and look what He says in verse 16.
I Corinthians 4:16

"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."

Because Paul was the one who was literally now walking in the footsteps of the ascended Lord. Not the earthly Jesus that we see so much in the four gospels, but this is the ascended Lord who has now finished the work of the death, burial and resurrection which of course then becomes our Gospel that we must believe for salvation. Now turn a few pages to chapter 11 for the next one, and he says basically the same thing. I’m always emphasizing, why does the Scripture repeat? Well it’s the same reason we repeat things today. Emphasis! If you want somebody to really get something straight, then you don’t just tell them once, but maybe two or three times, because this is the way you want it done. Well Scripture is the same way. When there is a repetition within a short period of time, it’s there for emphasis. Now look how beautifully this verse also fits.

I Corinthians 11:1

"Be ye followers of me, (now here’s the whole thing) even as I also am of Christ."

So it isn’t that we are told to follow just the human steps of Paul, but really as he follows Christ in the realm of the Spirit, so also we do. Now keep turning to the right, and come to Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 1. Those of you who have been with me ever since we started in Romans remember that we’re always pointing out that Paul’s earliest letters were pretty much elementary, but when we started those prison epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon we took a jump up, and we get into further revelations that Paul experienced and wrote then shortly before he was martyred. And here’s one even late in his ministry, and he’s still saying the same thing.

Ephesians 5:1-2

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; (see?) 2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

And then Paul delineates all the things that should no longer be a part of our Christian experience. So always remember that we follow him, even as he follows Christ. The next one I think I’ll take you to is in I Thessalonians chapter 1. Let’s begin with verse 5, and remember where all of these various congregations are. Thessalonica was up there on the Aegean coast of Greece just a little south of Philippi, and of course was one of Paul’s earliest congregation on the European Continent, and look what he says.
I Thessalonians 1:5-7

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were (speaking of himself) among you for your sake. (now verse 6) And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; 7. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia."

And it’s also our purpose for being here today. We are to be an example now as we follow in the footsteps of the apostle who follows the Lord, and all of this is to bring honor and glory not to ourselves, but to the Lord who has bought us, and paid for us with His shed blood. There is another one in I Timothy chapter 1 where Paul tells us that he’s our pattern, our example, so let’s look at that one also.

I Timothy 1:15

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Paul says that he was chief. But remember, chief here in the Greek means, like head of a state, such as a Governor, he was first.

Paul was not the worst sinner, but rather he was at the head of the line for sinners who would become Grace Age believers, and here it is in verse 16.

I Timothy 1:16

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

So Paul became our pattern and our example, and remember when he wrote these things, they were all inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. We know that Paul’s writings are not popular today, and I know some people have even gone so far as to say that they don’t think that any of his writings should even be in the New Testament. But my land, if we didn’t have Paul’s letters, we would have nothing, because here is where all of our basic truths for salvation, for Christian living, and the hope of the Church Age are all written out in Paul’s epistles. If you take that away, then we’d have nothing left, except the four Gospels. And even then, my land, what good is that? If you take that away, then we’d have nothing left. Now back to Philippians chapter 3, and reading on in verse 17. Remember Paul always promoted Grace. My land, last night Iris and I watched television for the first time in ever so long. On public television they had the three Irish tenors, maybe some of you saw it. It was a rather good program, but as soon as
they started this one song, Iris said, "I bet this will get them a standing ovation," and what was the name of the song? Amazing Grace. And I’ll tell you what, when those three men sang that song my goose bumps just jumped. When they had finished I told Iris, "Isn’t it amazing that the world just acclaims that tremendous hymn, and yet I wonder how many really understand what it’s saying." And it is hard to understand unless you’ve read the account of the author of "Amazing Grace" John Newton.

Just to summarize it, he had been raised in a Christian home in England, he had rebelled, left home and went to sea as a sailor. Over the years in spite of his debilitating life style he became a sea captain of a slave ship, and you know what those slave ships were. They were horrible. They had absolutely no concern for human life. And with it of course, he was an intense alcoholic and very immoral. So anyway his whole life had simply hit the skids, and finally as he was getting old and up in years, he remembered what he had heard at his mother’s knee. So he cried out for salvation, and the Lord saved him miraculously, and shortly after that he wrote this tremendous hymn, "Amazing Grace."

You know when you analyze the word he says it all. "Once I was lost." See, that’s what most people do not realize, "That until we’re saved, we’re lost." So old John Newton, by virtue of his lifestyle, recognized that indeed he was lost, and now he was found. "Blind." Spiritually blind. I suppose he ridiculed his mother’s face when he was young in his blindness, but the day came, probably an answer to that dear woman’s prayers, when John Newton became a true believer. But most of all he comprehended the Grace of God. Why should God save a man like John Newton, he didn’t deserve it. He deserved nothing, but oh the Grace of God. So every time you hear the hymn, I want you to realize that even though the world may acclaim it, how many of them really understand what John Newton is trying to tell us.

But always remember it’s all of Grace, and that’s what the apostle Paul is known for. "The apostle of Grace." I read a book some years ago and that was the title of the book. "The apostle of Grace," it was a biography of the "apostle of Grace," and I couldn’t put it any better. Now coming back to our text in the book of Philippians chapter 3 and let’s look at verse 17 again.

**Philippians 3:17**

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

That we too can be precipitators of people believing by the Grace of God that Christ has done everything that needed to be done. Now verse 18. In this verse we find a warning, and we’re seeing it all around us today. We know that the first thing that
Jesus told the disciples when they ask Him, "What are the signs of your coming, what’s the signs of the end of the age?" And the first thing that He told them was what? "Be not deceived." In other words the warning is the world is going to be deluged with deceptions. And my goodness we’re seeing it all around us. I always have to remind my Oklahoma classes, where I suppose I can be a little more intimate in my statements than I can on television, that you must realize that even the most bizarre, the most far out false teacher will use so much of the language that we’re accustomed to hearing. They’ll use the same terminology, but they’re false from the word go.

A Scripture comes to mind in the Book of Galatians, chapter 1. Oh, they claim too to be walking in the same path that we’re walking, but as Paul delineates it so clearly in Galatians that they’re perverting the truth. And remember that a perversion is that which is good, but it’s had something adulterated added to it. That’s the whole idea, and that hits the nail on the head with so much of what we’re seeing today in the name of Christianity.

**Galatians 1:6**

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ (and where were these Galatian believers slipping to?) unto another gospel:"

Then he comes back in the next verse and says, "It’s not really another gospel, it’s not something totally different so that you can see. It not that these people are preaching something that I’ve not heard before. No, these false doctrines use a portion of the truth, in fact a good portion. They may use 90 percent of truth, but then what do they do. Verse 7.

**Galatians 1:7**

"Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert (add to) the gospel of Christ."

And remember to pervert something merely means that you take something which was pure and genuine, and you add something to it, and that makes it a perversion. Remember what Paul’s Gospel was as we’ve seen in I Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 10:9-10 and some of his other Scriptures? "That you must believe in your heart that Christ died for your sins, was buried and rose again." But false teachers were coming in and adding to his pure Gospel that we must believe for salvation.
So this was Paul’s admonition that the true believers there in Galatians were not to be led away with a perverted Gospel. Oh it still had the basis for what he had taught them, but now they had perverted it, and in this instance of demanding that these Galatian believers keep the Law of Moses and be circumcised, which became the perversion of those early congregation.

But we’re seeing the same thing today. These false teachers will use the right language, they use so much of the truth in Paul’s Gospel but then they also demand baptism and all these other requirements, and it becomes nothing more than a perversion. So we’re to be aware what the Word of God really says, and don’t go mixing anything to Paul’s Gospel, less we be led astray with perverting. Now coming back to the Book of Philippians again if you will. I kind of jumped the gun because verse 18 is where I probably should have used Galatians 1.

Philippians 3:18

"(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, (it was breaking the apostle’s heart that these false teachers had come in. Remember that Paul was in prison when he wrote this. He’s not in a position where he can go out and confront these people, he can only do it by the written Word, and he says) that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:"

Even though they say much of the same thing that Paul said, but it’s by that perverting his Gospel that they have brought that anathema upon themselves and then they have become the enemies of the cross of Christ. Oh they think they’re preaching the Gospel, they think they are getting people on the right track, but the apostle says, "They’re not," and they’ve caused him to weep. Now look at verse 19, and you’d think this would scare some of them.

Philippians 3:19

"Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, (well that’s a King James term, but whatever, it says what it means and it means what it says. It’s their physical appetite, and that’s mostly all they’re concerned about) and whose glory is in their shame, (oh they may have outward glory, but the real fruit of their works is shameful) who mind earthly things." Now I have to go into the next verse for a moment before I can pursue that thought, so let’s read verse 20.

Philippians 3:20a

"For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven;..."
Now do you remember ever since we first started this whole "Through the Bible" series many years ago on television back in Genesis we made the distinction that everything concerning the Jews, the nation of Israel, the Law and the Old Testament prophecies were all earthly promises? Whereas all the promises made to the Church Age believers are heavenly promises? Let me show you what I mean. Come back to Genesis chapter 26 and let’s look at verse 12, 13, and 14. Now this isn’t the only place you can find this, but this is a good example. We don’t have time to chase down all these verses that show the material wealth of these Old Testament people, especially the Patriarchs. Now here in this chapter we’re dealing with Isaac who had already been given everything that his father Abraham had. So here in this chapter Isaac has been a good manager of everything that he had inherited and has increased it.

*Genesis 26:12-13*

"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him, (Physical, material blessing. We’re not talking about Spiritual blessing here.) 13. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew (financially and materially) until he became very great:"

See God doesn’t condemn wealth. And for Israel it was a reward for their faithfulness, because Israel was an earthly people with earthly promises, material, physical, and this is just an example of it. Now verse 14, just to make sure that you understand that we’re talking about material blessing.

*Genesis 26:14*

"For he (Isaac) had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants, (and that meant also everything that went with it. Do you remember when Abraham sent the servant up to Syria to get a bride for Isaac? When the servant first approached the family, what did he make sure that they all saw? Those gold rings and bracelets, earrings, which designated the wealth of his master Abraham. Then all that wealth was handed on down to Isaac, and it goes to the place in verse 14) and the Philistines envied him."

That’s nothing new is it? People haven’t changed even to this day. So any way the point that we want to make here is that all the promises of the Old Testament to the nation of Israel were indeed earthly, and they were material. They respond to the commands of God, and God responded to their obedience with their material blessings. But for us the Church Age believer today that’s not the case. Our blessings and all of our rewards are heavenly, and that doesn’t mean that God can’t bless us here on this earth, and that God can’t bless us with wealth and so forth, but we’re not to expect it. My, some of these preachers have just put it out there that if you do such
and such that God is duty bound to make you a millionaire. No He isn’t! That’s not the Gospel of Grace, that’s not Christianity, our promises are heavenly!

Even though we may go through this life with absolutely nothing of this world’s wealth, so what. Remember all the wealth of glory is waiting for us, and one day all believers are going to cash in on it, and that’s why the apostle Paul will say later in this Book of Philippians, "that no matter what his lot in life was, he was content."

Even though he was wealthy early in his career before he came to know the Lord, he pitched all that as we saw in our last lesson, and counted it but trash for the sake of the Gospel. Why would he do that? Because now the true wealth of the believers are heavenly, and those are heavenly promises. Now coming back to Philippians chapter 3. So for these people who are adulterating, and perverting the Gospel of Christ, they are doing nothing but satisfying their physical appetites, and mind nothing but earthly things. Turn back with me to the little book of Jude and we’re going to see these same kind of people that I think the apostle Paul had on his mind when he said in verse 18 that these enemies of Christ caused him to weep because they were perverting that pure Gospel of the Grace of God. They were adding to it things of the flesh and materials. Now let’s look how Jude describes them.

*Jude 1:8*

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." Down to verse 10 we find.

*Jude 1:10a*

"But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally..."

The natural man is tied to earthly things. So here it’s saying the same thing. These false teachers are merely concerned with the material, and they try, I suppose, to use verses from the Old Testament to substantiate their thinking, but I’ve got news for them. We’re not living under the Old Testament economy, but rather we’re living under Grace, and under Grace our whole scenario is heavenly.
Lesson Two • Part II

Paul - Our Example

Philippians 3:17 – 4:23

Now we’re going to begin this lesson in Philippians verse 20, and my, what a verse. You know too many times we read these things casually and say, "There’s nothing in there." Oh no? It’s a loaded verse if you start really picking it apart. Remember in verse 19 the last thing Paul said was that these false teachers who have adulterated and perverted the truth are only concerned about earthly things. But for the believer it’s a different story.

Philippians 3:20a

"For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven;..."

Well where your citizenship is, what also should be there? Well, your heart. And so all of Paul’s teachings then are centered in our position in the heavenlies. In fact it just comes to mind, I hadn’t planned on using this, but in Ephesians chapter 1 and drop down to verse 3, and this just says everything that I said last program.

Ephesians 1:3

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:"

Now the King James says, "heavenly places" but I prefer the heavenlies. Now that’s where we’re positioned, that’s where our citizenship is, that’s where all of our blessings rest and come from. I ended that with a preposition didn’t I. You’re not supposed to do that are you? But anyway that’s where everything is centered for us as believers. So now coming back to Philippians for a second.

Philippians 3:20a

"For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven;..."

Let’s establish that first by turning to Colossians chapter 1 - so we realize, "How did I become a citizen of heaven? How did I end up in that position?" Well here it is in verse 12. This is the closing part of the apostle’s prayer on behalf of the Colossi believers.
Colossians 1:12

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet (or prepared us) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:"

What light? Well the Light of Christ Himself: Who John’s gospel says, "That Light that has lighted every man that cometh into the world." So we are an inheritance of that Light. Now in verse 13 Paul is referring again to the Father.

Colossians 1:13

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and (at the same moment) hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

Well where is the Son’s kingdom? It’s in heaven. Now one day, and we think soon, it’s going to be on the earth, but tonight He is in heaven, so everything concerning His kingdom is heavenly, and so that’s where we are, that’s where our citizenship is. So we have been translated into the kingdom of his dear Son. You know I’m always using the word that Christianity is so practical. So come back with for a moment to II Corinthians chapter 5, and don’t lose sight now of where our citizenship is. Well if our citizenship is in heaven, then what are we so far as the world is concerned? Aliens. Not from outer space, but from the earth itself, because our citizenship is in heaven. Well, now Paul uses a terminology in II Corinthians chapter 5 that fits so perfectly even in our present day political system.

II Corinthians 5:20a

"Now then we (as believers whose citizenship is in heaven) are ambassadors for Christ,..." See that’s a perfect terminology, because we still use ambassadors today. When our government sends an ambassador to Tokyo, he’s not a citizen of Japan, but rather he’s an alien, because his citizenship is back here in America, but he’s living in Japan. So what’s he doing over there? Well he’s being a representative of his home government. Isn’t that a beautiful picture?

That’s where we are. We’re on this earth as aliens, but we’re not just here being parasites. We’re not here just living off everybody else, We are here as direct associates of the glorious kingdom of heaven itself, and we’re here to show forth, to reflect our place of abode. That’s what we’re here for, and we are to literally reflect our heavenly position day in and day out. And that’s why I personally feel that is our great commission. This really fits, this is what you and I can do everyday of our lives. Everyday we can reflect the place of our citizenship, reflect the One who is the head of the Body, and we are ambassadors, we are constantly
representing the Lord Jesus Christ and in verse 18 he tells us "we then are ministers of reconciliation." In other words, all we have to do is let lost people know that God has already reconciled them, it’s all been done, but God can’t appropriate it until they believe it.

We make it so hard for unbelievers. I can look back in my own experience - I’ve made it hard for people. I know better now, it’s so simple. Just recognize your lostness, recognize that you’re without hope, but everything has been done for you, it’s a free gift, and all we have to do to appropriate it is to believe it in our heart. (Romans 10:9-10) The moment we believe it, God translates us into the kingdom of His dear Son, He makes us a citizen of heaven, but at the very same moment he designates us an ambassadors for Him.

Politicians have to connive and bribe to get an ambassadorial position, but we don’t have to do that because ours is given the moment we become a citizen of heaven. And oh what a responsibility we take on. You know I told my classes here in Oklahoma the other night if everyone of my class people, which is only a few hundred people, could win one every couple of weeks, and then they in turn could go out and win one every couple weeks, do you realize how fast we could make an impact on this nation? But that’s what God expects us to do, we’re ambassadors, and we are to be constantly reflecting the place of our citizenship where Christ is not so much the King of the Body as He is the Head of the Body.

Now along those lines of thinking let’s come back to Romans chapter 8. I just told some folks that I could go an hour on this verse. But some people are getting impatient that I’m taking too long to go through the Bible, and they want to know "How many more books there will be before you finally finish." Well I can’t answer that question, I think the Lord’s going to come before we get through. Now here in Romans let’s just drop in at verse 14. See, these are all tied together. This is all because of our salvation experience, and the resulting position in the Body of Christ, in the Kingdom, just however you want to picture it.

Romans 8:14-17

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (or children) of God. 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; (we’re not shaking in our boots in fear of an awesome God. No, we are one and part of Him) but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, (which is a positional term again) whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are (that’s our promise from God) the children of God: (now for some more promises, and notice it doesn’t promise me flocks and herds and material wealth, but these are all heavenly promises.) 17. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and
joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Then Paul goes on in verse 18, and if there’s any doubt, "Is it worth suffering for?" And suffering scares most of us, but verse 18 sets that to rest.

_Romans 8:18_

"For _I reckon that the suffering of this present time_ (and all the times according to II Corinthians chapter 11 that this man suffered) _are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us._"

That’s our hope. Now the Lord may bless us, and He has according to other parts of the world, as they think we’re all millionaires. But nevertheless that’s not our primarily purpose for being here. Our primary purpose is to lift up our position as representatives of our heavenly abode, and that is as ambassadors. Now back to Philippians chapter 3. We’ve discussed the first half of verse 20, but there’s more. Not only is our citizenship in heaven, not only are we ambassadors as a result of that citizenship, but we live moment by moment looking for the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

_Philippians 3:20_

"For _our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:_"

Another accompanying verse is found in the Book of Titus chapter 2. This is a verse that I have learned to confront people with who refuse to accept the Deity of Christ, and there are more than one group that do that. They do not believe that Jesus was God. I’ve tried all the other references and they’ve always got an answer for it. They’ll wiggle around it one way or the other every time, but this one shuts them up every time. This one they don’t have an answer for. In fact I just used this one again yesterday. The Scripture here ties in so beautifully with Philippians 3:20b "_from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ._" Look what Paul writes to Titus.

_Titus 2:13_

"Looking for _that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:_"

Is there any doubt? They can’t wiggle around this verse, so learn to use it. When people come to your door and you asked them if they believe that Jesus Christ is God,
and they say no, and give you all the reasons in their Bible that He isn’t, then you just show them this verse and it will stop them. They can’t get around it.

**Titus 2:14**

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar (something of intrinsic value) people, zealous of good works"

But all the while we’re doing our good works, what are we looking for? The appearing of the Great God, and blessed hope. I’ve asked people more than once, "What is your blessed hope?" And it’s amazing how many people will say, "When I die I’ll go to heaven." Well that’s a good hope, but that’s not the blessed hope. The blessed hope is that maybe before we leave today the Lord will return, and we’ll meet Him in the air, and I think most of us are getting homesick for that event. We just can’t wait, but that’s as it should be, but you don’t sit down on some hillside and wait for it to happen. We’re to keep busy, working, and planting.

I’ve had more than one say, "Well Les I was ready to plant an apple tree, and thought well what’s the use." But I always say, "Go ahead and plant your apple tree, because we don’t know when He’s coming back, but we think it’s very near." I’ve got a fence that I know I should replace, and I haven’t done it yet, because I think the same thing, but one of these days I’ve got to get it done. But nevertheless we don’t sit down and say, "Well the Lord’s coming!" No, no, we work and we continue to plan and raise our families and take care of our business as if the Lord won’t come for another 100 years. But way down deep, what do we know? It’s getting close!

We don’t know how soon, but as you see the world just falling apart, and again right here in Oklahoma, how we’ve been shaken to the toenails by another act of violence among our kids. I know it’s hard to comprehend, but the moment I hear of something like that the verse comes to mind of what Paul wrote to Timothy "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." We might as well look at that Scripture for a moment since we’re thinking on those lines. So come back to II Timothy chapter 3 verse 1. And we can expect this kind of thing. It’s not going to get better. The best we can hope for is that we can slow it down. And that we can get enough of the Word out to our people and our young people and our kids that maybe we can slow it. We’re not going to turn it around. We’re not going to see a 180 degree turn. We’re not going to see a great world revival. Forget it! It’s not in the Book. But II Timothy chapter 3 does give us the scenario. Let’s look at verse 1.

**II Timothy 3:1-3a**
"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents,(What age level is that? Our kids, the teenagers. The Book is pointing straight at them.) unthankful, unholy. 3. Without natural affection…” What group of people does that address? Whether it’s a wife abuser, a husband abuser, or a child abuser. What’s their problem? They don’t have any natural affection. And we’re going to see more and more of it. It’s something that is disappearing from the human scenario. Nobody cares. Let’s continue on.

II Timothy 3:3b

"…trucebreakers,…"

They can make a deal and 30 minutes later they can break it. Now you know most of us are old enough, we lived in a day when you made a deal and shook hands on it and that was it. You didn’t have to have 4 copies. You didn’t have to have a whole great long page of legal stuff. You made a deal, you shook hands and that was it. You kept your word come what may. But not any more because we’ve become a society of trucebreakers.

II Timothy 3:3b-5

"…false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. 4. Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

You know what that tells me? Oh, they’re in church on Sunday morning. They’re filling their pew for that one hour or so on Sunday morning. And then that’s their obligation fulfilled. And then they’ll go right back out and perform all the rest of this and it doesn’t even bother then. Not all do that. Don’t get me wrong. But this is too often the case. And so all of these things are all part and parcel of our end time scenario. Now back to Philippians chapter 3.

Philippians 3:20b

"…from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:"
that Paul speaks of and the voice of the archangel, and then as he says in I Corinthians, "we who are alive and remain shall be changed." But now in I Thessalonians chapter 4 and let’s begin with verse beginning with verse 13. This is what we’re to coincide with Philippians 3:20. When this happens we’re going to have a body fashioned after His glorious body.

**I Thessalonians 4:13**

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, (have died physically) that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

In other words, if we’re believers and our loved ones are believers when they died, we’re going to see them again. We don’t have to weep and wail like we will never see them again. Now verse 14. I always call this the qualifying factor of being in the Rapture.

**I Thessalonians 4:14**

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, (see, there’s Paul’s Gospel, and if we believe that with all our heart) even so them also which sleep (died) in Jesus will God bring with him."

In other words, those who were believers who have died are in glory, they’re in Paradise, they’re in the Lord’s presence conscience, but I don’t feel they’re up there walking the golden street. They’re waiting for their resurrection just like we are. So when the trumpet sounds and Christ leaves heaven, these departed souls of the Church Age believers will come with Him to be reunited shortly with their resurrected body. Now verse 15.

**I Thessalonians 4:15**

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, (the crucified, resurrected, risen, ascended Lord was instructing Paul to write this) that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (died) 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"

See, when I teach these things I always like to teach comparisons. This is not the Second Coming. The Second Coming comes with calamities, and disasters, and probably nuclear warfare, earthquakes, and all the rest. That’s the Second Coming. At that time He will come to the Mount of Olives, which is on Jerusalem’s east side.
None of that happens here. This Rapture of the Church is just a silent intervention except for the trumpet of God, and He doesn’t come to the Mount of Olives, but rather only to the air. Verse 17.

*I Thessalonians 4:17*

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Why? Because we’re citizens of that heaven from whence He has come to get us, and He’s going to take us back to that heaven. And so what a glorious blessed hope we are looking forward to. **And we really think that one day soon that trumpet is going to sound and we’re going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.**
Now let’s go back to the Book of Philippians for just a little bit. We’re going to be jumping around again in this lesson, but we’ll start with verse 21 of chapter 3. Did I spend the whole half hour in verse 20? I didn’t intend to do that, as I thought sure I’d finish the whole Book of Philippians today, and we may yet be able to do that. Now verse 21 is another loaded verse that has so much in it that you have to use so much to enhance what the apostle is talking about. At the end of verse 20 we’re looking for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ to come for us.

Philippians 3:21

"Who shall change our vile body, (this old body of corruption) that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

In other words, He’s going to be able to take this body and make something of it. Now that’s a real hope isn’t it? Now let’s just look at a few verses that enhance that concept, so come back to I Corinthians chapter 15. When I teach the Rapture of the Church I always try to use I Corinthians 15:51-58 along with I Thessalonians 4:13-18, but here we just want you to see what Paul was talking about in Philippians when he says, "That when the Lord comes he will change our vile body, this body of sin and disease into a new body."

I Corinthians 15:51a

"Behold I shew you a mystery; (a secret that had never been revealed before. This secret had been kept in the mind of God until He reveals it to this apostle.) We shall not all sleep..."

We’re not all going to die. There’s going to be a group of believers living who will not go through death. I think Enoch in the Book of Genesis chapter 5 is probably a pretty good illustration of that in the Old Testament. Enoch walked with God just before the judgment of the flood, but we find that he was translated, and escaped that judgment. So I tie that in with the Rapture of the Church. We’ll be here one moment and be gone in a split second and shortly after that the horrors of the Tribulation will fall. So Paul here is showing us a secret. Something that has never been revealed before. The Lord Jesus never mentions this during His earthly ministry. Peter knew
nothing of it, but this is a revelation that was given only to this apostle in this Age of Grace. So we remember we shall not die.

*I Corinthians 15:51b*

"...but we shall all be changed."

Regardless whether the believer has died or is alive at the Rapture we’re all going to be changed. We’re going to have a body fashioned after Christ’s resurrected body, and we’ll look at a few of those verses in a moment. Now verse 52. For those of us who are alive and remain this body change won’t take long to accomplish.

*I Corinthians 15:52a*

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:"

Now trump here is singular and I’ve started to emphasize that because I’ve had several that have tried to drum the trumpets of Revelation down my throat as being the call of the Church. Well there’s no correlation or anything that even comes close to fitting this trumpet of God that Paul speaks of and the trumpets in Revelation. Number one, this is the trumpet of God, it’s singular. Revelation has seven trumpets that are given to seven angels, not to announce His coming and the resurrection, but rather they’re to announce plagues, and the wrath of God. So I can’t see any correlation whatsoever. This is the trumpet of God and it shall sound. Now finishing verse 52.

*I Corinthians 15:52b*

"...for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (the dead in Christ. Only for the Church Age. Not the Old Testament believer, as they’ll have their own resurrection, but the Church Age believers) shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

So we’re all going to be raised incorruptible, and have the same kind of body that Christ has. Every Church Age believer, whether we’re weak, carnal, or spiritual, whether we’ve accomplished a lot, little or nothing. We’re all going to be changed. And now verse 53, and here’s the reason.

*I Corinthians 15:53-54a*

"For this corruptible (this body of flesh) must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54. So when this corruptible, (this body that is prone to go back to the dust of the earth) shall have put on incorruption,..."
Do you know what that means? That body is going to last for eternity! Now I was reading again the other night that astronomers are finding more and more with the explosion of technology, and even though I don’t agree with their timing yet it certainly sets my mind spinning. If, as they say, this universe is billions and billions of years old, then that’s still nothing compared to eternity. We can’t put eternity in billions and billions and billions of years, because that would put an end on eternity. Eternity will never end. That’s enough to almost scare you isn’t it? How are we going to stay interested in staying alive that long? But whatever, it’s just mind boggling, that this new body that we’re going to receive is going to be our abode for eternity. **When you think of these things you wonder how lost people can be so careless, because they too are going to an eternity. But it’s going to be an eternity of misery and sorrow and hopelessness.** Now let’s get back to the positive.

**I Corinthians 15:54**

"**So when this corruptible** (this body of flesh that has been programmed for 70 or 80 years or so) **shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.**" Now for sake of time let’s jump down to verse 57.

**I Corinthians 15:57**

"**But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

Now let’s go back to the Book of Luke chapter 24, and get a picture of this new glorious, resurrected body that we’re going to have as believers. This passage is just one instance, there were several others. I’m sure the one you remember the most is when our Lord fell in step with the people on the road to Emmaus. He walked and talked with them, they invited Him in, no doubt, for an evening meal. He went in with them, supped with them, I’m sure, and all of a sudden He’s gone. Then in a split second He’s in the upper room in Jerusalem with the disciples.

Now here in Luke we get a graphic description of that that new resurrected body, and it’s going to be a literal physical, spiritual, and yes spiritual body. Let’s begin with verse 34. See this is what we have to do, we just can’t gloss over a verse and say, "Well I don’t really understand it." Just search the Scriptures, and if we’re going to have a body that’s fashioned after His glorious body, then it behooves us to go into the Book and see what that body was like. Well here it is. This was His resurrected body that we’re going to read about. In verse 33 we find the disciples had returned to Jerusalem.

**Luke 24:34**
"Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. (remember these disciples knew nothing of resurrection before it happened. Peter and John never believed it until they saw the evidence in John 19.) 35. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."

Now that’s where I think that on the road to Emmaus when they asked Him into the home, He must have had supper with them, before He left, because they’re now sharing that news. "He sat down and ate with us, He walked with us." Now verse 36.

Luke 24:36-39

"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, (He didn’t knock on the door or come through the window, but rather came right through the walls. That’s beautiful isn’t it? I tell you what, that’s going to be fabulous) and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37. But they were terrified (now this is the eleven, they had been with Him for three years.) and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. (we would say a ghost) 38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39. Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself: handle me, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

So that’s the make up of our eternal body. It’s going to be a body fashioned after His glorious body. It’s not going to be a body of flesh and blood, it’s going to be a body of flesh and bones. Now the first thing we have to asks is, "If the blood is the life flow of the human body, what is going to maintain life then of our new resurrected body?" Well, the Spirit will. The Spirit of God becomes what the blood is for us today. So we’ll be comprised of flesh and bone, but it was visible, physical, touchable, tangible, see that? This isn’t some either real invisible mist, but rather this is reality. Now verse 40.

Luke 24:40

"And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet."

Now I pointed out I think in our last taping how that Mary didn’t recognize Jesus when He appeared in that pre-dawn light. Remember the last vision she had of Jesus was the horror of His crucifixion. That’s when He had been so total disfigured, as all the sins of the world were placed on Him. Isaiah chapter 52:14 says, "He was more marred than any other man". And then all of a sudden see a man standing there perfectly whole with all of His fleshy attributes. No wonder she didn’t recognize Him. When we see Him the only thing that will depict His crucifixion will be the nail
and footprints and the wound in His side. But the Scripture gives no evidence of Him being disfigured and so forth now. Now verse 41.

*Luke 24:41a*

"And while they yet believed not..."

Isn’t that amazing? Now we think the world is in dire straits today because they simply can’t believe the Word of God. I bring that out when I ask the question, "What’s the basic problem with America?" We’ve become a nation destitute of faith. We just can’t believe the Word of God anymore as a nation of people. But listen, that’s not all that unusual. Here were these eleven men, who were with Him for 3 years and had seen the evidence. Peter and John had seen it earlier, and had heard how He had walked with the men on the road to Emmaus, and yet their hearts are so stirred, that they really can’t believe that it’s Him. Now finishing the verse.

*Luke 24:41*

"And while they yet believed not for joy, (in other words they were so ecstatic) and wondered, (the Lord was so patient with them wasn’t He? He could have said, ‘Why can’t you believe when you have seen the evidence,’ so in so many words, He says, ‘well let’s prove something’) he said unto them. Have ye here any meat?" (food)

Now it wasn’t that Jesus was hungry and had to eat, but He’s going to prove something to them, and I love this, because I love to eat. I think we all do, and we’re going to have the opportunity to enjoy food in eternity, I know we are, and here’s one of the evidences of it.

*Luke 24:42-43*

"And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43. And he took it, and did eat before them."

He didn’t pretend to eat it, but rather He ate it in that resurrected body. Now verse 44.

*Luke 24:44*

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, (back in that 3 years of ministry) that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."
You know I’ve always said that the Old Testament was full of everything concerning His first coming. So why didn’t they know? Because it was hidden from them, God didn’t intend for them to know. Remember that’s God prerogative. He keeps things hidden until it’s time to reveal it. In fact, my favorite verse to point that out is right here in Luke. Just back up a few pages to chapter 18, and let’s look at these verses again. In this passage this is back when His earthly ministry is coming to an end. They’re up there in northern Israel, at the headwaters of the Jordan River, and they’ll soon be heading up to Jerusalem. And notice just how plain this is. My there’s not gobbledygook, there’s no deep theology here, it’s just plain English.

**Luke 18:31-34**

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. (What’s He telling them? All the things written in the Old Testament are coming to a head, they’re about to be fulfilled. And He tells them in the following verses how it’s going to be.) 32. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, (the Romans) and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, (they did just about everything to Him) and spitted on: 33. And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. (He’s got it all right there in one package, but look at the next verse.) 34. And they (the twelve who had been with Him for 3 years) understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Now this is not the only time He tells them straight out, but God had hidden all of this from them. God didn’t want them to know and they didn’t know until the right time. See this is why Paul can honestly say that, "**To him were revealed mysteries that had never been revealed to mankind before.**" Oh they may be back there in some kind of Latin language, but boy you’d have to be a better scholar than I am to dig it out, because God kept it secret. It’s the same way here. These twelve men had no idea of what He was talking about. In that same light keep your hand here in Luke, and come on over to John’s gospel chapter 20. A dear old Sunday school teachers years ago told me that when he was teaching these verses out of his quarterly one Easter Sunday morning, that they skipped right over these verses, because the author of that Sunday school quarterly didn’t want the people to see this verse. It’s that amazing? But we try not to skip anything. Now look at what it says.

**John 20:8**

"Then went in also that other disciple, (John) which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. (They saw the evidence) 9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."
When Peter and John saw the evidence of the empty sepulchre they believed. This is Peter and John we’re talking about. So why didn’t they know? God hid it from them. You know I’m always using Deuteronomy 29:29.

Deuteronomy 29:29a

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed, belong unto us…"

But they don’t belong to us until it’s revealed, and that always brings me right back to the apostle Paul’s use then of the word mystery. No body was supposed to understand it until the Lord revealed it to that apostle here in the Church Age. Now coming back to Luke chapter 24 again. So here we have these men who have been with Him for three years whose minds had been providentially closed so that they did not understand, but now they’ve got the proof standing right there in front of them in His resurrected body. Now back to verse 42.

Luke 24:42-43

"And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43. And he took it, and did eat before them."

To show them His physical make up. Well you have the same thing in Acts chapter 1, when He ascended and the eleven stood there and watched Him go. Did they see some kind of an enigma? They saw the risen resurrected Lord as He is now showing them that He can eat. Now verse 44 again.

Luke 24:44-45

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me. (Now verse 45. What did it take for those eleven men to finally put it all together?) 45. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,"

Isn’t that mind-boggling? But you see it’s no different today, as I can teach until I’m blue in the face. I teach five nights a week now, but I could teach every night, and it wouldn’t make any difference unless the Lord opens the heart. It has to be that way, but on the other hand we have to fulfill our requirement of getting the message out there, so when the Lord does open their heart, it’s ready to take root. So always understand that these things were kept hidden from these men until God was ready to reveal it. Now for a moment let’s go on to verse 46.
Luke 24:46

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it beloved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."

That was what the whole scope of Scripture was leaning on, His coming to suffer, to die and to be raised from the dead, and then to show Himself openly that He was alive and showing us the kind of a body that we will one day enjoy. We’ve got one minute left so let’s go quickly to Matthew chapter 17, and here we have another glimpse of that glorious body that we’re going to have ourselves one day.

Matthew 17:1

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light,"

One day that’s the way we as believers are going to be like that.
Lesson Two • Part IV

Paul - Our Example

Philippians 3:17 – 4:23

We always like to thank you for your letters, your financial help, and most of all for your prayers. We realize that the Lord is using us in a tremendous way. We’re living in a day when a lot of people think that, "Christianity is for the women." But I think that we are unique that we reach so many men in our ministry. All my classes here in Oklahoma are over half men, and when we have seminars around the country, it’s always over half men, and that’s as it should be. It’s the men who need to be men, I tell you what, living the Christian life is not for the weak. It takes real men to walk it as Paul of course is evidence. Now I think we’re ready to move on into Philippians chapter 4. There is a possibility that we’ll finish this Book in this lesson, and be ready for Colossians next month.

Philippians 4:1

"Therefore, (because of the Lord’s coming as Paul has been talking about. It’s at hand, and could happen at any time.) my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."

Now never forget, where is Paul when he writes this? Well, in prison right next to Nero’s palace, and is chained to a Roman guard constantly. Many of whom I’m sure were probably some of the most furious warriors of the Roman army. Probably some of them had carried out the capital punishment. Wouldn’t it be bazaar if one of those fellows who had been commissioned to lop off the head of Nero’s wife, had actually become a convert of Paul? That wouldn’t surprise me a bit, because some of the most ruthless men in the Roman army were chained to Paul as a guard.

And he was such a powerful witness that I’m sure that by the time many of them left their tour of duty, they were believers. You say, "Well where do you get that?" Well look what it says in Titus chapter 2:11 You know I try to encourage people, when you read a verse, don’t just read it but contemplate it. Just stop and think and let the Spirit lead our thoughts, "How could something like this happen?" Well look at the verse, and always remember that it takes the Grace of God to bring a person, and especially people like these Roman guards to a knowledge of salvation.

Titus 2:11

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."
Now of course the "all men" of Paul’s day would have been the then known world or the Roman Empire. But nevertheless Paul’s gospel had already permeated the Roman Empire from the west to the east. How else could it have happened except that these Roman soldiers in their revolving tour of duty would go to one end of the empire to the other. And as a result they became emissaries, and following in the footsteps of the apostle Paul by taking the Gospel of Grace everywhere they went. My what greater evangelist than a saved hardened Roman warrior. Have you ever thought of that? We’re going to see as we close the letter of Philippians that Paul mentions the very believers in the household of Nero. Now verse 2.

**Philippians 4:2**

"I beseech (or I beg) Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord."

Now these are two ladies that evidently had some differences of opinion in the Philippian congregation, but they were active. A lot of people think that Paul was anti-feminist, and always putting women down. No he wasn’t! And here he is encouraging these two ladies that he knows that are active in the Philippian Church that they solve their individual differences so that they could be of the same mind in the Lord. Now along that same line when people tell me that Paul hated women, I tell you he couldn’t have because he let so many help him in the ministry. So come back to Romans chapter 16 and let’s take a look at some women who helped Paul, and these are not the only ones. You can also defend the apostle by directing that kind of people who are of that mind set to these verse.

**Romans 16:1**

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;"

Do you see that? Now she wasn’t a pastor, but she was active in the Church. She was a servant, she was serving the Lord, and Paul commends her for that. Now verse 2.

**Romans 16:2**

"That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer (helper) of many, and of myself also." Now verse 3. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Now let’s drop down to verse 6.

**Romans 16:6**
"Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us."

Naturally this wasn’t Mary the mother of Jesus, so remember over and over Paul makes reference to women. And I think the crowning accolade that a man could put on a woman, especially in those days, was that this whole Roman letter was committed unto this lady Phebe in the first verse. She carried this letter from Corinth all the way to the city of Rome. **So always remember that Paul was not anti-feminist whatsoever.** If he thought so little of women as some people claim, he would never have entrusted something as precious as the letter to the Romans to a woman, but he does, so whenever anybody comes up with that idea you just pitch it, and tell them they’re way out in left field, and that was not the case. Now coming back to the Book of Philippians and verse 3.

*Philippians 4:3-4*

"And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also and with other my fellow labourers whose name are in the book of life. (they were believers, no doubt about it. Now verse 4. From that prison next door to the most horrible death spot that ever lived Paul can write the following) Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."

My, if Paul could rejoice under his circumstances, then who are we to ever complain. Now the next two or three verses I always use when it comes to prayer for the Grace Age believers. For years I got hung up on John chapter 14, where Jesus says, "Whatsoever you will."

*John 14:13a*

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do,..."

Well that didn’t work for me. I wrote to more than one friend of mine in the ministry, and wanted to know what was the matter with me, because this doesn’t work. And my friends had all kinds of gobbledygook for answers. But now I know why that didn’t work for me. Our Lord at that time was talking to the twelve under totally different circumstances. That was all in view of the Kingdom, then indeed whatever they asked it would happen.

At that time I didn’t know Paul gave the Church Age believers instructions for prayer. So here is the answer for our prayer life today. Does God always answer prayer? Yes.

Now it may not always be the way we think it should be, but He always answers. But now let’s look at it in verse 5.
Philippians 4:5

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

We’re not to go way out in left field, or get carried away with kooky ideas, but we’re to maintain a stable walk and manifestation of our faith, and now here it comes in verse 6.

Philippians 4:6

"Be careful for nothing: (in our language, what do we say? Don’t worry about anything. That’s easier said than done isn’t it?) but in every thing (and that means what it says. But in every thing) by prayer and supplication (but there is one string attached, and what is it?) with thanksgiving let your requests be made know unto God."

Be thankful! That’s why I think most people’s prayers go unanswered. They just are not thankful. I think many Church congregations over the years have gone down the tube because they forgot to be thankful. I think our beloved nation has gotten to the straights that we’re in because we have forgotten to be thankful. Remember when Paul was in Athens we find that being thankful isn’t just an admonition to the believer, but the whole world should recognize the goodness and provision of God. I think it’s in Acts chapter 17 that we find that.

Acts 17:24

"God that made the world and all thins therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25. Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. 26. And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28. For in him (God) we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

Now Paul is talking to pagan Greek philosophers. He’s not talking to believers here, but even the unbelievers had better wake up and realize that all these good things that make life possible come from the God of glory. Now back to Philippians chapter 4. So we can come with our prayers of supplications, but it has to be with thanksgiving. You thank the Lord for what He’s going to do before you even ask for it. I think that is the clue to the whole idea of Christian living, is that we live in that constant attitude
of thanks. Thank Him for His Grace. We thank Him for such a great salvation. We thank Him for His Word. We thank Him for all the promises in it. Now if we approach Him with that attitude of thanksgiving we can do the following.

*Philippians 4:6b*

"...let your request be made known unto God."

Nothing is held out. Now I’m not going to let people come up with something frivolous, but anything that is of necessity, or we find dear and important to us, then we have every privilege in the world to bring it into God’s throne room. Alright now I always put it this way. God may answer yes, and miraculously, or otherwise our prayers can be answered. Oh we see it happen occasionally. But other times the Lord says no, and our prayers are not answered. Other times the Lord may say, "Just wait a while, I’ll do it in my own time." But the next verse tells me that here is our immediate answer to prayer, whether He says, "Yes, No, or Maybe Later, that’s beside the point. The answer to our prayer is now in verse 7. The moment we pray and ask with thanksgiving we have the following.

*Philippians 4:7*

"And the peace of God (why? Because we’ve left it in good hands. He knows how to handle it, He’s in total control. So the peace of God) which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Now we know we’re living in a world where many are stressed out. Everybody is talking about stress, and no doubt it’s there. Stress works on the mind, but what is the best treatment for stress? The peace of God, that passeth all understanding. It’s beyond human comprehension that even when things are going against us, even when things are tough, and even when we think God has forgotten all about us. Don’t you ever think that. That’s when you’d better wake up and realize that God is in total control, even when the bad things happen. So that’s our real answer to prayer, that just as soon as we bring something into the throne room, God responds with His peace that passeth all understanding. Now let’s move on down to verse 8 and hopefully we can finish the chapter today.

*Philippians 4:8a*

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,..."
will peal off seven statements, and here’s another one. Seven things that we can find as part and parcel of the peace of God.

Philippians 4:8

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Seven perfect mental attitudes. My, that’s enough to heal depression or almost any malady. Oh to think on things that are true. What causes a lot of the dilemma today? People don’t know what’s true. People don’t know what they can believe. Our newspaper, the Daily Oklahoman, has articles everyday warning us not to be taken in by the con artist of what ever the media vehicle, whether it’s the internet, or tele-marketing, or whatever, don’t be taken in. We’re living in a world that is not truthful. But we’re supposed to think on things that are true. Think of things that are honest. Honesty has almost become a lost art.

The used car dealer is the butt of most jokes in that regard I suppose. I’ve got a friend up in Minnesota who was a used car dealer for a long time, and he’s a character, and I’m sure he’s watching the program. I’ll never forget we were at a Church picnic up there, and a dear old gentlemen came up to him, and said, "Aren’t you Don so and so?" He said, "Yeah." He said, "Well I bought my first car from you years and years ago." He said, Yeah I remember that deal explicitly. That’s the only time I ever lost money." Well that’s the glib response of a used car dealer salesman. Some of them like to pull the wool over people’ eyes. That’s not a blanket statement as I’m sure there are some who like to be fair and honest in their dealings.

But nevertheless we’re living in a world where we’ve got to be constantly on guard that some body doesn’t pull a fast one on us. We’re not living in a world where everything is honest. Whatsoever things are just. Now that’s along the same line as honesty. If it’s honest and just, what more could you ask for. Whatsoever things are pure. Boy there’s not much of that anymore either, and that’s why I’ve quit watching television. There is absolutely nothing pure on there any more, it’s getting ridiculous. Whatsoever things are lovely. I always have to think of my wife’s sister, as that was one of her favorite words. Everything was always lovely. Well that’s nice, that’s great, but it’s a word that probably is not as easy to explain, but whatever. Take it for what it means.

Whatsoever things are of good report. Now you see all seven of these tie in to the basic Christian premise of truthfulness, and honesty, and integrity, in fact I can
just lump the whole shebang into one word. Biblical morality. See that’s what makes for good citizens. If there’s any thing that you can really feel good about, then this is where it’s at. Now verse 9. All seven of these areas of Christian lifestyle Paul says –

*Philippians 4:9a*

"*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me,*..."  

Here was a man who filled the bill on all seven of these attributes of a Christian life. Now do you see why the Holy Spirit says, "*Follow Paul?*" If you can fulfill these seven attributes as a believer in your everyday life experience never will some body point a finger at you and say, "Well there’s a hypocrite if I ever saw one." Because this is true Christianity, and there’s nothing that makes us less than real. You know I’ve always said, "Christianity isn’t being so heavenly minded that we’re no earthly good." No that's not what it is. Christianity is so practical. There is nothing more practical on this planet than the Christian life, but only a believer can live it, because it has to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. If I’m going to finish Philippians I’ve got to do it in 2 minutes huh? Verse 9 again.

*Philippians 4:9*

"*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do and the God of peace shall be with you.*" Now there’s a promise, it’s a response from a loving God. Now verse 10.

*Philippians 4:10*

"*But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, (or mindful) but ye lacked opportunity.*"

In other words, the Philippians were not wealthy people. They were up there in northern Greece, and not a big commercial center like Corinth. So they didn’t have a lot to give. Now verse 11.

*Philippians 4:11*

"*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*"
Now I’ve brought out in past program since we’ve been in Paul’s letters that I think early on when he was a big wheel in Judaism, he was a wealthy man. I think he was probably one of the wealthiest Jews in Jerusalem. But he pitched it all for the sake of the Gospel. Does he complain? No he’s still content. Even though he has nothing, but a few pieces of parchment and a cloak or two, and never complains about his lack of physical material wealth. Now verse 12.

*Philippians 4:12-13*

"*I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.* (now verse 13, and what a promise). *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*"

We can do nothing of ourselves, but when Christ is in control there is nothing that we cannot do that He wants us to do. Then of course in verse 15 he speaks of the giving and receiving from the Philippians. And in verse 17 Paul tells us the only reason he desired a gift was so that they in turn would get their reward in glory. Now verse 22. I said I’d try to bring this Book of Philippians to a close, but I wish I had a few more seconds. Now here again Paul makes mention about the saints Nero’s palace.

*Philippians 4:22-23*

"*All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household. 23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*"

So we find Paul’s converts in the very heart of Nero’s palace.
Lesson Three • Part I

Seven-Fold Prayer of Paul for Us

Colossians 1:1-16

I always like to give a few words of introduction before we start a new book, as we call them. Remember that Colossians is also one of the prison epistles. This is another one of the epistles of Paul that was written while he was in prison in Rome. And it’s in that category of letters that is a jump up, doctrinally, from his introductory letters of Romans, Galatians and the Corinthians. And as soon as we get into these prison epistles of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians it’s just higher ground. It’s deeper water. **And these are elements of the faith that I’m afraid too many people are just glossing over or are not paying any attention to, but it’s paramount if we really want to get into the depths of the Word of God, we have to do a study of these prison epistles.**

Ephesians, if you remember, was just almost totally doctrinal. Our position, where are we as a believer in the body of Christ. Well, what does that mean? Well, it’s a position. It’s something that the Old Testament believer knew nothing of. We are in the Body and are connected to Christ, the Head. Even though He’s in glory and we’re still on earth, there’s still that connection. And so Ephesians brings that out. And then Philippians had to bring about the fact that even though and we may be going through trials and temptations and tribulations, we have every reason in the world to rejoice. **Rejoice, the apostle Paul says, in spite of our circumstances.**

And now Colossians is written primarily to warn the Colossi believers, as well as us today, of things that can so easily make inroads into our belief or faith. Now you might say that you didn’t know that Paul dealt with any false teaching in Colossians. Yes, he does. He deals with two facets. One of them was atheticism. Now most people, I think, probably hear the word and don’t really understand what it means. Atheticism was that teaching that you had to put down all the desires of the flesh. And it all had to do with "you can’t do this" and "you can’t do that" and "you can’t enjoy this" and "you can’t enjoy that". In fact, I think that some of the early church monks and the monastery type of people would just literally put themselves through misery for that very reason, that they were not to enjoy a single day of life. And hoping thereby to gain favor with God. You’ve probably heard of the hair shirt, where they would just wear that shirt with the hair next to their skin and just be miserable. Well, they thought by so doing they were pleasing God.
And then on the other hand you had these people who were trying to convince the early church believers that there was more to it than what Paul had given them. And that you had to get in and get understanding of the angelic powers and some of these things that we would say today were the New Age movement and so forth. And we’re up against the same things. In fact, I guess I’ll let you read the two verses where that’s brought out the most clearly. It’s over in Colossians chapter 2 and verse 8 and then the other concept is over in verse 16. And so the whole little book of Colossians revolves around these two warnings. And it’s just appropriate today as it was when Paul wrote it. So let’s look at chapter 2 and verse 8. This is just an introduction and then we’ll get back to the first chapter.

**Colossians 2:8**

"**Beware** (that’s a word of warning.) lest any man spoil through philosophy and vain deceit, (that where it comes in that "you can’t do this or that" and "you’ve got to put yourself down and keep your appetites under control") after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, (not God’s word that they’re following, but man-made devices) and not after Christ."

Now let’s go over to verse 16 and here we have this warning not to get caught up in these things that we do to, again in the flesh, merit favor with God.

**Colossians 2:16**

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days;"

What does that mean? Don’t get hung up on what day of the week you worship. You’d be surprised how many letters and phone calls we get from the television audience that say, "Aren’t we supposed to be keeping the Sabbath?" You see, here is a warning in verse 16. Don’t get hung up on those things. I always answer with one stock answer and that is that we’re not under Law. Law demanded Sabbath worship, seventh day Sabbath. We’re not under anything like that. And so here is the warning. Don’t get hung up on some of these things as to what you eat or drink or a holyday or a new moon or Sabbath days. Now look at verse 18. And this is another warning.

**Colossians 2:18a**

"Let no man beguile you (or deceive you) of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels,..."
Do you see what that says? A voluntary humility is something you force on yourself to literally put yourself down so that somehow God will kind of feel sorry for you, I guess. So don’t be taken in by that.

**Colossians 2:18b**

"...intruding into those things which he hath not seen vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."

Now in America in the last few years have you noticed this constant emphasis on angels, especially at Christmas time. Everything you see is angels, angels, angels. Popular television show has something to do with angels. I’ve never seen it but I can just about imagine what it amounts to. And listen, we’re warned that we don’t get involved with things like that. And we’ll be commenting on that more strongly as we come through it verse by verse.

So anyway, this little letter to the Colossians was, along with other things, written to warn us of various types of false teachings. And always remember, I’m afraid too many believers today do not get a concept of what the Apostle Paul was up against when he went out into that Gentile world. And he did not have a great army of advance men. The poor fellow had maybe one or two of his co-workers, Luke or Barnabas, or whoever, would come in to these cities steeped in paganism. And even as you visit some of those ruins of those ancient cities and you see the ruins of these ancient temples. And you see, especially in Athens, the female goddesses, umpteen of them, just standing there in a row up on top of those columns. That’s all they saw. Everywhere you looked it was a constant reminder of their worship of the gods and goddesses of mythology and along with that was gross immorality. **And into that environment comes the Apostle Paul with nothing more than the Gospel. And yet the Gospel was so powerful that in the midst of all that idolatry he was able to bring people out of it and put their faith in that finished work of the cross, and it so transformed lives.**

Remember that account in the book of Acts that Ephesian silversmiths were losing so much business of making their idols and these new found believers were throwing them away and were no longer buying them. Listen, you know what that tells me? He made such an impact in the city of Ephesus that it affected the business people who were selling idols and so forth. We can’t imagine what that must have been like. And without any support. Now, the same way with Colossi. Colossi was just a little city just a few miles inland from Ephesus and it was evidently a congregation that had been begun by one of Paul’s converts at Ephesus, Epaphras. And then from that one individual a little congregation, again of pagan people, have become believers.
And so as Paul writes this letter, remember he’s never met these people. This is one group he writes to that he didn’t know one of them but by faith. But it was still the result of the man’s ministry in Ephesus a few miles away. So always remember that whenever Paul writes to these believers, they had just recently come out of abject paganism, idolatry, the worship of the gods and goddesses. And then to be able to bring them to the place where they would separate from all that and endure the persecution that was brought on them. I just can’t imagine.

Because here we are in our enlightened America and with all of our Constitutional rights and we can’t get people interested. Isn’t it amazing? And yet, he went into these pagan cities, steeped in their idolatry, and did nothing but preach the Gospel and they came out by the scores. Well, that’s the background of this little letter to Colossi. Inland from Ephesus which is on the western end of present day Turkey and a congregation, as I said, who he had never met personally, but he had heard of them through Epaphras and consequently he writes this little epistle. Starting at verse 1

**Colossians 1:1a**

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,…"

A lot of people, I think, have gotten the idea that Paul was some kind of an egotist. That he just sort of went out on his own. In fact, the Corinthian church kind of accused him of that. And that he’d just sort of gotten this idea that he could start something on his own and he was making inroads into Judaism and all that. No, here he makes so plain that his apostleship was by the will of God. And of course, Timothy is with him. And remember he is writing from prison in Rome.

**Colossians 1:1b**

"…and Timotheus our brother."

And here I’m always emphasizing to whom is he writing? To the saints. Paul always writes to the believer. Never to the lost world. But he’s writing to the believers and so these are Gentiles like we and so this is why we can read the books of Colossians, Ephesians, and so forth and know this could just as well have been said to the believers in the United States of America in 2000 or whatever year we happen to be in. It could have just as well been. Now reading on in verse 2.

**Colossians 1:2-3**

"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ (see how he positions them?) which are at Colossi: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ. 3. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you."

You remember one time, I think it was back in the Corinthian letter where he was listing all the pressures and the tribulations he was going through, and how many times he was cold and hungry and on top of all that he had the care of the churches! Well, this was on his mind constantly. These little groups of believers, scattered throughout the Roman Empire. He was praying constantly for them. Now verse 4. And here is proof that he’s never been at Colossi. He’s never seen these people.

Colossians 1:4

"But since we've heard of you faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have to all the saints,"

Have you ever had someone ask you, "How can I know that I’m really saved?" It’s a good question. I don’t mind a bit if someone calls me and says, "Now Les, you’re always talking about someone being a true believer. How can I know that I am a true believer? And not like multitude of others who are simply church members and sitting in their pew for an hour on Sunday morning and hope that they’re okay. How can I know that I’m a true believer?" You know what my first answer is? "Do you love the Word of God?" And then I follow that right up with the second one. "Do you love being with God’s people?"

In fact I just had a gentleman call last night and ask the same question and I said, "Okay. Do you have a love for the Word of God?" He said, "Yeah, I do for the last couple of years. I just can’t get enough of it." I said, "Okay, then my next question is, do you enjoy being with God’s people or would you rather be in some night club instead of a Bible study?" He said, "I hear you. I hear you." Well, that’s just exactly what Paul is saying here. What was the proof of their faith? Their love for fellow believers! See, the world doesn’t love us. The world would much rather have us be out there in some night club or some other place of amusement than to be in a Bible study. You know that. But we’re to be the other way around. We’d much rather be with fellow believers studying the Word than being out there being entertained in some ungodly way. That’s always the mark. And so here again he says that the proof of their faith was the love that they had for the saints or their fellow believers.

Now that doesn’t mean that every believer is perfect. I don’t think we even have to like every believer. There’s a difference between love and like. Isn’t that right? I hope I don’t get my foot in my mouth. But I maintain there is a difference between liking someone and loving them and you don’t necessarily have to do both. You’ve got to
love them, but you don’t necessarily have to like someone who rubs you wrong and
doesn’t have the same interests that you do. And you just certainly wouldn’t say,
"Well I just wish I could spend every day of the week with that individual." No, you
don’t have to like people all that much but we have to love them. And there’s a big
difference. Love is that which seeks the other person’s highest good. These people
had a love for the fellow saints. Alright let’s read on.

Colossians 1:5

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof you heard before in the
word of the truth of the gospel."

Now I was mulling over the programs as we produce them and it’s now over 500 of
them, I believe. And I got to thinking maybe I have not been emphasizing enough
that one of the fruits of our salvation is not just the hope of glory, but eternal
life. Now think about it for a minute. You probably haven’t heard me emphasize that
as much as I should. Listen, when we’re saved we enter into eternal life as over
against death. And this is all part of the package. That when we step in by faith and
embrace the Gospel, God imbues us with eternal life. That means that we will
never die. Now I know that we think of it casually, but I’m going to hit the nail on the
head a little harder. Do you know what it means to have eternal life? It never struck
me until the other day I was reading an article on how many billions and billions of
years the universe is.

And I got to thinking, goodness even if it is that old, and I don’t believe it is, but if it
were, do you know that we’re going to live way beyond even that length of time? Do
you realize that our life will never end? That’s beyond me and I think it’s beyond you.
But see, this is all part of what Paul is talking about. That not only is it just salvation
for the here and now, not only is it a fire escape that we’re not going to go to Hell, but
that we have eternal life! And life is something that is vibrant. Life is something that
is exciting. Life is something that there’s a never a dull moment. You know I’m
always afraid that when I get to the place that I haven’t got a quality of life, I want to
be gone. I don’t want to lay around as a vegetable. I know we haven’t got any control
over that, but if I could have my desire I’d want to go from one day of activity and
then be gone. Because that’s what life is all about. But listen when we get into
eternity, it will be vibrant. It will be exuberant and it’s going to be forever and ever.
You know you hear in Handel’s Messiah the end part that says, ‘forever and ever and
ever’. I told Iris the other night when we were listening to it that I wondered if the
people who are singing that really know what they’re singing? Forever and ever and
ever! That’s eternity. That’s what Paul is talking about. Now verse 6

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

Now I’m going to deal with the word "fruit" when we get to verse 10, so I’m going to skip it here in this verse. When we get to verse 10 we’ll see what he’s talking about when he prays that we’re to be fruitful. So now let’s go on to verse 7.

Colossians 1:7-8

"As you also learned of Epaphras (the gentleman who I feel brought this letter to the Colossians and was probably instrumental in getting that congregation started) our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ. 8. Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit."

That should be the very epitome of a believer’s life is our love for the Lord, first and foremost. You love the one who died for you and bought you and forgave you. But then that love just literally goes out all the way around us to our family, co-workers, fellow believers. And love is the key, as Paul teaches it throughout his letters. Now verse 9.

Colossians 1:9a

"For this cause…"

What cause? Because of the love that he’d heard of these Colossi believers. And don’t you dare forget what were they just a few months or years ago? Pagans! And pagans didn’t know what love was. We’ve got missionary friends down in Bolivia and he was just sharing with me one of the last times they were home, how they were doing a translation for some of those primitive tribes and every once in awhile they get hung up in their translations because those people just don’t have a word for something. And you know what one of them was? Love! They didn’t have any idea what love was. They didn’t even have a word for it in their vocabulary. Now that’s shocking to us. But listen, when you have people who have never been exposed to the love of God and the truth of the Gospel, they don’t understand real love. And these pagans especially had no love. And consequently they could follow all these gods and goddesses and stuff because there was not true understanding of love. Let’s read on.

Colossians 1:9

"For this cause (because he understood that the Colossi believers knew what love was now all about. They loved each other, the Word, loved God and so he says for this cause) we also since the day we heard it, (what do we call that today? Reputation.
What was the reputation of these Colossi believers? They were loving, sincere, godly (ex-pagans) *do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*

What do you suppose he was praying for? That it wouldn’t stop! That it would just continue. And this is the reason, I think, the Scripture told us that Christianity literally did turn the Roman Empire upside down and it was because they were so sincere in their love first for one another as well as for the Word and God Himself.
Lesson Three • Part II

Seven-Fold Prayer of Paul for Us

Colossians 1:1-16

We appreciate it so much when you write and tell us you’re studying the Word and are enjoying it and sharing it with others. That’s what we’re here for. This is what I want to show from the Book of Colossians – how these early Christians didn’t just sit on what they had gained, they shared it, they spread the Word and that of course, is our responsibility even today. So let’s go back to where we left off in our last program. Colossians chapter 1 and we’ll pick up again in verse 9 where Paul is introducing a prayer that he offers continuously, I’m sure of, on behalf of these Colosse believers, but it is also appropriate for us today. This same prayer is for us and I think it behooves us in turn to pray for fellow believers. And it’s also practical and don’t forget, what were these people a few years ago? Pagans, with no understanding of the Old Testament.

They don’t have any of the Old Testament. They don’t even have any of the New Testament. And so the more you think about that the more amazing it is that here we have a group of people that the Apostle Paul can deal with on this level and know that they knew what he was talking about. And then bring it on up to our present situation. My, it should be so much easier to teach these things today. Where people have at least, a cursory knowledge of the Old Testament and they have an understanding of how Christ was born at Bethlehem and so forth. These people didn’t have any of that. And so it really should be easier now but it isn’t. Human nature hasn’t changed one iota. These people steeped in paganism were just as human as lost people are today and it took the same power of God to bring them out of that as it does to bring a lost person to the light even today. And so Paul goes on.

Colossians 1:9

"For this cause we also, (because of their love and testimony) since the day we heard it, we do not cease to pray for you, (and now here comes the Apostle’s desire on behalf of these new believers) and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;"

How many professing Christians today can claim to have any of that? Not very many! And this is deep. This isn’t just the stuff on the top. This is down in the deep things, to be knowledgeable of His will, in wisdom and spiritual understanding. You know, how many times have you heard people say, "Well you know, it’s just blind faith." No, it’s not just blind faith. You’re supposed to know what you believe. You’re supposed
to have an understanding of the Word that when Paul says if someone asks, "What’s the hope that you have?" You should be able to show them from the Word. And that’s what he means by being skilled at it and be able to turn to portions of Scripture and let the people read it. This is what God’s Word says. He also says "that you might be filled", that it will just control their lives, the knowledge of his will and wisdom and spiritual understanding. Now verse 10. This comes down into the nitty gritty of their everyday lives, Monday through Saturday.

*Colossians 1:10a*

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord (a person that the Lord would not have to be ashamed of and be what kind of a person?) unto all pleasing,"…

I do not buy this stuff that a believer has to constantly be like sandpaper to the world around them. I don’t think that’s necessary. I don’t think we have to constantly rub people the wrong way. **Now, we don’t compromise. We’re not going to just go with the flow.** But we don’t have to be irritating those people around us. Paul never teaches that. But as we stand for the truth, we do it in a way that is pleasing to those around us. And that is what he’s praying for. Now I said in the last program that we’d stop at the word "fruitful"

*Colossians 1:10b*

"...being fruitful in every good work,..."

Now that’s not to merit salvation, remember. Salvation isn’t of works. We don’t work for salvation. But we work for rewards. And if we’re going to have rewards, we’re going to have to have fruit. Now that’s a term that’s used quite a bit in the New Testament. I’m going to take you back and we’re going to chase a few of them down. Let’s go all the way back to John’s gospel and a portion of Scripture that most people are fairly acquainted with and that’s the vine in chapter 15. Let’s start at verse 4. These are the words of the Lord Himself during His earthly ministry.

*John 15:4-5*

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, (there’s that position that Paul enlarges on in the chapters that we’ve been studying in Ephesians especially) the same bringeth forth much (what?) fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."
You can’t help bringing forth fruit. If you have that relationship with Christ as a result of believing the Gospel then you are positioned in Christ and consequently you’re going to be a fruit bearer. But the last part of the verse is the key: "For without me ye can do nothing." So whatever we do, we do it with His power, and His help and the result is that we’re going to bear fruit. Now let’s turn on over to Romans chapter 7, where again we have the word fruit used in a different connotation instead of a vine and branch, we’re talking about a marriage relationship. Now this of course is Paul’s basic doctrine of being separated from the Law, and all of it’s demands. By Grace then we come into a totally different relationship.

Romans 7:4

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law (that is the Ten Commandments basically) by the body of Christ; (that is His death on the cross. When Christ died on the cross He fulfilled all the demands of the Law.) that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, (and what’s the purpose?) that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Now there’s nothing sexual or reproductive here, but rather this is Spiritual, this is just an analogy. Now in a marriage relationship between a husband and wife, the fruit of that relationship is children, and that’s the fruit of marriage. But here we’re not talking about physical marriage, but the analogy is when we became dead to the Law because of the death of Christ, now we are free to be married to another. Instead of the Law and all of it’s demands, we’re now married to Grace, the Saviour, the Lord Himself. And it’s all of Grace, because He has satisfied the Law, and we have become dead to the Law, then we are free to be united with Him in a union that again is going to produce fruit. Now I feel the fruit here then is "The fruit of a soul winner!" We should be able to win lost people to Christ, whether it’s your children, your grandchildren, your Sunday school kids, or whatever the case may be. We should be able to show fruit as a result of our being married to Christ. Remember this all just a Spiritual fulfillment of an earthly circumstance. Now we have another idea of fruit in Galatians chapter 5. This teaching on fruit is a Biblical concept that we’re to be fruitful. How many times haven’t I said on this program, that we’re not saved just for a fire escape. But we’re saved to be fruitful and to serve.

Galatians 5:16-18

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, (in your daily life) and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (in other words you can’t just drift, because it’s a battle. 18. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."
You don’t have to worry about not stealing or doing all these sins listed in the next verses because the Spirit will not lead you in that direction. But most people just take these for granted today. Everybody’s doing it, there’s nothing wrong with these is the attitude of the world, and what are they?

_Galatians 5:19-21_

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness. 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Now those are the things of the flesh, but now coming down to verse 22, and now what do we see? Fruit. Now in this particular verse, it’s the fruit of the Spirit, but goodness sake, who is the Spirit working in? The believer. The fruit of the Sprit is that which comes from the believer who is under the control of the Sprit. And as the last part of verse 23 says, "against such there is no law," Do you know what that means? There’s nothing bad about any of these. None of the fruits will ever cause an up evil in a community. They all enhance good living, and look at them.

_Galatians 5:22a_

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, (see the Colossians had that love that only true Christians know about.) joy,..."  

We’re in a world that is frantically chasing after happiness. They never talk about joy, they’re always wanting to be happy. But remember there’s a vast difference between joy and happiness. Happiness is simply the results of your circumstance. Everything is going great, you have money in the bank, and a new car in the garage, a new home to live in, the kids are all doing ok. Boy who couldn’t be happy with that, but it’s still an empty happiness. But joy is a Spiritual thing. **Joy comes as a result then with our peace with God!** And that’s why Paul says in Philippians over and over, "Rejoice." Not because they had all these material things, they didn’t. But because they had that salvation, because they were right with God, then consequently they could be joyful. So it’s the fruit of the Spirit. Now continuing on with verse 22.

_Galatians 5:22b_

"...peace, (an absent of conflict) longsuffering, (patience is another word for longsuffering) gentleness, (you will never see a gentle person commit murder or
constantly aggravating everyone.) **goodness, faith. 23. Meekness, temperance;** (maintaining a balance) **against such there is no law.**"

Not a one of these is an attribute that somebody would say, "I wouldn’t won’t that to happen to me. They are good attributes for anybody’s Christian life. Well it’s fruit, and the results then of God’s working in the life of the believer. Now back to Colossians again chapter 1. So all of these put together is what Paul had in mind, I’m sure, when he says that you might be fruitful in all aspects of life.

*Colossians 1:10b*

"...being fruitful in every good work, and increasing (day by day) in the knowledge of God:"

Now listen, every believer starts at the same level in his Christian life. Whether we’re 8 or 80. **Every believer starts at that same level and what is it? A babe in Christ!** We all begin as babes in Christ. But, just like in the physical realm, is there anything more pitiful than someone who is 40 years old and still has the mentality or the physical attributes of a 5 year old? And our hearts go out to them. I can’t think of anything worse, and yet that’s most Christians. They’ve never gotten away from their infancy spiritually. And the Corinthians were that way. Let’s go back. It’s been a long time since we’ve been in Corinthians too and we’ve got a lot of new listeners coming in every day, and so for those of you who have heard all this before, bear with me because I’m doing this for the sake of new folks. Go back to I Corinthians 3, starting at verse 1.

*I Corinthians 3:1*

"*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*"

Now they were believers. He’s not using the word "carnal" here as denoting the lost person. These were Christians who were believers but they were still infants spiritually. They were still on milk. Now verse 2.

*I Corinthians 3:2*

"*I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*"

That’s not the only sad part, they still weren’t able to handle meat, however long Paul had been dealing with them. So you see, if Paul could look at our situation today, he’d
probably smile and say, "I know. I went through it. It’s no different." It is so hard to get people off of the milk of the Word and into the meat. But listen, once you get a taste of T-bone steak you don’t ever want to go back to the baby bottle. And it’s the same way here. My, once you get a taste of how thrilling this, and how it all fits from Genesis through Revelation, you can’t get enough of it. That’s the way it’s supposed to be. But you see, that’s not most Christians. Most professing Christians are just satisfied that they’re saved, and I hope they are, and they never intend to go any further. But that’s the sorry part that they’re content to remain as babes and on the spiritual milk. Now let’s go back to Colossians chapter 1.

Colossians 1:10b

"...being fruitful in every good work, and increasing (day by day) in the knowledge of God:"

Now when we get down to verses 15-17 we’re going to hit some of those areas that very few people have delved into, with regard to the knowledge of God. But for now, let’s just move on in Paul’s prayer.

Colossians 1:11

"Strengthened (spiritually) with all might, according to his glorious (what’s the word?) power,..."

Now you see none of these things that I teach can be accomplished without the power of God. It’s utterly impossible. You cannot become a student of the Word without the power of God. You cannot become a child of God without the power of God. And so it’s an intrinsic word that means exactly what it says. That it has to have the power of God that will bring us to where God wants us to be. Now let’s go a couple more statements here as we only have a couple of minutes left. In other words, I guess I should have pointed out that this is another one of those instances where Paul has seven things. You can pick them out yourself. I’m always commenting on that. Paul didn’t sit there and rack his brain and think, now how can I get seven statements in here. But over and over, throughout his epistles he comes out with 7 full statements. Now that’s inspiration because that’s God’s perfect number. So here again, he has 7 statements and now he goes on to verse 12 that he’s giving thanks to the Father.

Colossians 1:12

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us (all believers) meet (has prepared us) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."
Now I’m afraid I haven’t got enough time left to really bring everything out that this is doing. That he is giving thanks to God the Father who was instrumental in bringing us out of darkness and transplanting us into the kingdom of His dear Son, which is life. We’ll look at it a little further in our next program because we’ve only got a few seconds left. But all this was in Paul’s prayer on behalf of these ex-pagan believers who knew nothing of the past Scriptures. They knew nothing of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They knew nothing of Israel’s God. They knew nothing of Christ’s earthly ministry. **But when Paul came and presented the fact that One died for their sins and rose from the dead and they believed it, God moved in and opened their understanding.** And we’ll look at that in our next program.

But here again he is praying all of this. And this is just as appropriate for us as it was for them. **We too are to be growing in the knowledge of God, day by day. This week you should know more of the Scriptures than you did last week. By this time next week, you should know more than you do today.** Now, we’re living in a time of exploding technology. It’s just mind-boggling. But listen, there’s just about as much to learned in here if we’ll just put our hand to the plow, as it were, and start digging for it and the Lord will bless you for it.
Lesson Three • Part III

Seven-Fold Prayer of Paul for Us

Colossians 1:1-16

Now we’ll be turning once more to Colossians chapter 1 where we just left off. We want to pause for a moment to thank you for your help and prayers for the ministry. It also just thrills us to here you say, "you’re studying, and sharing it with others." After all this is what turned the Roman Empire upside down, and this is what made Paul’s apostleship so unique, as he got those new believers into the Word. Although they didn’t have the printed Word that we have, yet it made such an impact on society that the world around them knew that those ex-pagans were a different breed of people once they came to know salvation.

Now we’ve got a lot to cover today, my goodness I thought I was going to have a hard time filling four programs with this little Book of Colossians, and here are not even out of chapter 1. I’m always amazed myself. Now verse 12.

Colossians 1:12

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet (or prepared us) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:"

Now let’s look at giving thanks to the Father. I’ve had several questions lately, it’s funny how they sort of come in groups, and the question is, "Is it appropriate to pray to the Father in this age of Grace?" Well I taught it on television, and had forgotten when I taught it but I found it the other day, so I’m going to have you turn back to Ephesians chapter 5, because maybe some of you or some of the listening audience wonder about praying to the Father, as the Lord’s prayer instructs us to do. Yes that has not changed. This is as clear cut an answer as you can get.

Ephesians 5:20

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:"

Isn’t that exactly how we do it? So it’s still appropriate today, yes we do pray to the Father, and we do all in the name then of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we’re going to see that relationship in the Trinity in little later verses, but for now come back again to Colossians chapter 1. So Paul as he prays to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ he has thanked God, the Father that He took these Colossians out of paganism,
out of darkness, out of the chains of the satanic powers and translated them into the heavenly kingdom. **Now what’s happened to the Colossians has happened to us. We too have been translated from a position in darkness, and we are now citizens of the heavenly kingdom.** Now Paul does not make a big a do about our kingdom relationship, because after all that’s primarily associated with the nation of Israel.

But when Christ came to the nation of Israel, and John the Baptist announced Him, and He said the Kingdom of heaven is at hand, Well what was he talking about? The King was in their midst! The King, literally, physically in the person of Jesus of Nazareth was in their midst, and He was offering them the opportunity to have the Kingdom over which Christ would rule and reign. So that was the whole concept as it came to the nation of Israel.

Now we’re not associated with the nation of Israel in that kind of a kingdom relationship, but since Israel’s King is our Saviour, and is the Head of the Body, here again we do have a relationship, and for some reason or other the Holy Spirit has cause Paul to put this in here that we have been made citizens of the kingdom in heaven, and with that I can agree with 100 %. But I still maintain that Paul never calls Christ our King. We are not in a King – subject relationship. **We are in the Head of the Body, and members of the Body, which makes us heirs with Christ, joint heirs as we just saw in our last program. As believers we’re married to Christ, in a Spiritual relationship, but nevertheless we are now citizens of this heavenly kingdom because God the Father has delivered us from the power of darkness.**

Now let’s go back and compare Scripture with Scripture. This time we’ll even go outside Paul’s realm, and go all the way back to Matthew chapter 16. For those of you who have been under my teaching very long has heard this more than once, because this is Peter’s confession of his saving faith during Christ earthly ministry. Also remember that this is just at the end of His ministry. From here they’re going to go on up to Jerusalem and He will be crucified. They’re up in northern Israel in the area that’s in the news lately, just west of the Golan Height, they were up there at Caesarea Philippi which is at the northern border of Israel, right at the foot of Mount Herman, and at the head waters of the Jordan river. And from there they’re going to make their way down to Jerusalem and the crucifixion.

*Matthew 16:13-16*

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14. And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."
That’s as much as Simon Peter said, was it enough? Yeah it was enough, and look what Jesus answered.

Matthew 16:17

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: (now this is the part I came back here for you to see) for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Now let’s reconstruct. Do you remember the account how Jesus was walking down the shores of Galilee, and He came across these fellows probably mending their nets, and did He spend an hour or two telling them who He was, and what He was going to do? Not from what I understand Scripture. But rather what did He tell them? Follow Me, and I’ll make you fishers of men! And what did those men do? They dropped their tools and nets and followed. Have you ever asked why? Well here’s the reason why, because you see, God opened the eyes of these fishermen that here was the promised Messiah, and nothing need more be said. So here in verse 17, the Lord is saying, "Peter somebody didn’t twist your arm to believe who I am. Some body hasn’t spent 3 years trying to tell you who I am, but rather the Father opened your understanding.

Matthew 16:17b

"...for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

In other words it had to be a super natural opening of even Peter’s understanding. Has anything changed? No. The only thing today we refer to the Spirit opening it rather than the Father, but nevertheless they’re all part of the Godhead so that becomes irrelevant. Now let’s take another one that I’ve used over and over and when I tell people that I pray almost everyday for Lydia I’m talking about the circumstance of Acts chapter 16. Almost every morning I say, "Now Lord today as those programs go out, give me Lydia’s by the hundreds and by the thousands." And what I’m talking about? The setting is in Philippi.

Acts 16:13-14

"And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. (these ladies were probably Jewish and having a devotional) 14. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, (she was a good Jew, but lost) heard us; (now here’s the part I pray
for) whose heart the Lord opened, (and when the Lord opened her heart, what happened?) that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

And what do you supposed Paul told her? "Christ died for your sins, and He arose from the dead," and she attended to that, and believed it for her salvation. (Reference I Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 10:9-10.) But would it have done Paul any good had the Lord not opened her heart? No. See that still has not changed. The Lord still must open the heart of that lost person so that they will listen and come to the place of believing it in their heart. Now let me take you to another one in II Corinthians, and I may want to use this verse a little later in Colossians, but that won’t hurt. Now these 2 verses are along this same line of thinking. Now remember what we just saw? Peter, blessed art thou for the Father has revealed it unto thee. Lydia was the one who’s heart the Lord opened, now remember both of these people were in the same circumstance that these people are in II Corinthians chapter 4, as every human being is.

**II Corinthians 4:3-4**

"But if our gospel (Paul’s Gospel of I Corinthians 15:1-4) be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (and that’s every human being until their saved) 4. In whom (these lost people, good as well as the bad, who are not going to make it to heaven, and why?) the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Who is fighting constantly to keep people in the dark? Satan is, because that’s his job, and as soon as a person become a believer, then his job become one of throwing doubt in their way, and throwing all kinds of problems into the life of the believer. Satan enjoys doing that. But first and foremost he’s going to keep the mind of those who believe not blinded.

**II Corinthians 4:4b**

"...lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Now let’s look at verse 6. Now by the power of God this is what happens.

**II Corinthians 4:6**
"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,"

How do you and I come to realize that first and foremost who Jesus was? How do we get to realize that He died for my sins and rose from the dead? God has to reveal it, God has to open our understanding. I could stand here and teach until I’m blue in the face, and if God doesn’t open the heart, I’m wasting my breath. And that’s the way it is all through Scripture. Now coming back to Colossians, this is the whole idea again. Paul is thanking God the Father for having opened the hearts and the minds of these Colossi believers and has delivered them from the power of darkness (v. 13). The chains of Satan. But for these people, darkness was paganism, which is even far darker than our Western civilization. And so the Lord opened their eyes and delivered them from the power of darkness and at the same moment He translated or transplanted them.

In an area like eastern Oklahoma where everybody has flowers and gardens, that’s a better word. When you transplant, what do you do? You take a plant from that particular place and you re-plant it over here. Well, that’s what God did with us. He took us out of darkness and He literally transplanted us into the Kingdom of Heaven. And our eternal abode, our position, and now a verse that we studied just weeks ago in Philippians and so it won’t hurt to review it. Let’s look at Philippians chapter 3 and verse 20.

Philippians 3:20a

"For our conversation (citizenship) is (where?) in heaven…"

How did our citizenship get transplanted from the earthly domain to heaven? Colossians 1. God the Father has transplanted us from darkness into the Kingdom of His dear Son.

Now that isn’t so deep and yet very few people have this concept. Very few people understand that when they were saved, they were literally made a citizen of a heavenly kingdom, which will tie us then to when Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on earth. And we’ll be part of that. So our citizenship is in Heaven. And lest you think it’s a play on words, Paul, by inspiration, tells us exactly what heaven he’s talking about. The abode of God. From whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so that is what God has done by virtue of our faith in the Gospel. He has opened our eyes, broken those chains of darkness and He has transplanted us into the Kingdom of His dear Son. Now let’s look at verse 14 of Colossians 1 and the first thing you’re going to notice in these new translations is that the word "blood" isn’t in
there. And for whatever reason, I’m not going to make comment on it, but my good old King James still has it. And here it is.

**Colossians 1:14**

"*In whom (that is in the Son up there in verse 13) we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"

Now let’s go all the way back to Hebrews and let’s look at a verse that we haven’t used for a long time. We certainly have in the past but it’s been awhile. Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 22.

**Hebrews 9:22**

"*And almost all things are by the law (back in the sacrificial economy) purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*"

Now I call that an absolute. You know, they’re trying to tell us today that there are no absolutes. I beg to differ. There are absolutes and this is one of them. **Without the shedding of blood there has never been any forgiveness of sin.** You go right back to the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve had sinned and were expelled and what’s the first thing that God does to restore them? He kills the animals. It was a blood sacrifice.

Now it’s amazing how that Satan counterfeits everything that is perfect in God’s economy and adulterates it in the process. Now if you know anything about paganism, if you’ve ever had missionaries come home, especially years back, from some of these almost uncivilized areas, what were they constantly doing in their tribal rituals? Killing animals, or roosters or birds and sprinkling or spattering the blood all over. Why? That was Satan’s counterfeit. And so almost every culture up through human history has had a constant bath of sacrificial blood. But that was the counterfeit. That was the adulteration.

The true system of blood sacrifice was what God instituted with Adam and Eve and then bought it up and perfected it with the Law and the Temple worship. And it all was centered on the animal sacrifices. You know all of that. The Passover Lamb and I’ve shown you from Scripture that when Israel would sin a particular sin, there was a particular sacrifice that they would have to bring. It could be a turtledove, a goat or whatever, but it was always a blood sacrifice, **Because without the shedding of blood there has never been forgiveness. Now I know that today we don’t hear anything anymore about the blood concept. But listen, it’s the way the Sovereign God ordained it. That without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of**
sin. And of course, I feel that the reason for that is that back in Genesis chapter 9 it
tells us that life is in the blood. And you cannot get new life without death happening
first and death is signified by shed blood. And so you follow this all the way through
God’s dealing with the whole human race leading up to His own supreme sacrifice,
which had to be a shedding of blood. That’s why He could have never been hung. He
could have never died a death by hanging which was a typical capital punishment way
of putting people to death. But it wouldn’t have worked because then there wouldn’t
have been the shed blood. And it had to be a death where there would be that shedding
of blood. It had to be! Because this is the way the Sovereign God ordained it and who
are we to say that the shed blood is no longer of consequence. Well, anyone who does
is in danger of Hellfire because without the shedding of blood there is no remission.
Now let’s see how Paul enlarges on it. Come back to Romans chapter 3 starting at
verse 23.

Romans 3:23-24

"For all have sinned (every last single human being) and come short of the glory of
God. 24. Being justified freely by his grace (that unmerited favor) through the
redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"

Now you all know what redemption means. It’s the process of paying the price and
gaining something back. Now verse 25

Romans 3:25a

"Whom (Christ) God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his (what?)
blood,…”

You can’t take that out. We have to maintain that it was His shed blood which was in
accordance with His whole divine plan for the ages beginning with Adam and Eve’s
sin just outside the garden all the way up through the Old Testament economy of Law
and temple worship, all bringing us up to the supreme sacrifice of all time, the death
of Christ Himself. And that’s when sacrificing stopped biblically. There was no more
need for sacrifice once Christ died. Now the pagans kept it on. But biblically there
was no more need for sacrifice. But never forget that without the shedding of
blood there is no remission.
Lesson Three • Part IV

Seven-Fold Prayer of Paul for Us

Colossians 1:1-16

Now we’re going to go right back to where we left off in Colossians chapter 1 and we were at verse 15. Now those of you who have been with me ever since Genesis, will probably remember that when we talked about God in Genesis 1:1 as the creator of every thing, heaven and earth, I always come up to the New Testament and use these verses in conjunction. So this is nothing new for a lot of you.

Colossians 1:15

"Who (that’s a pronoun, but it refers back to God the Son up there in verse 13. So it’s God the Son, who) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." (or creation)

Now I guess I have to stop. Everybody that knows anything about the Bible at all knows the verse that says, "No man hath seen God at anytime and lived." And yet we have instances back here in the Old Testament where Jacob actually put up a landmark after he wrestled with God.

Genesis 32:30

"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

So then people think that the Bible contradicts itself. On the one hand it says, "No man can see God and live, and yet Jacob says, "I have seen God face to face." Well you can go back to Genesis chapter 18 and we know that Abraham set the table of the fatted calf, and what ever else went with it, and the Lord and two angels sat down and ate. Now Abraham wasn’t out in some invisible foggy whatever, but rather the Lord was visible. He was there physically. He ate, and Abraham talked with Him about the city of Sodom and Gomorrah

Now it’s not a contradiction, but you have to understand that God, the invisible triune God, no man has ever seen, how could they, He’s invisible! Plus the fact that if man would have ever found himself in the position to be in the presence of that invisible triune God, he would have never survived. So what has happened? Well the best way I can usually put it, if I can use the blackboard, is that here we have God, the invisible triune Spirit God, but once man filled the scene and would now have to have
some way of identifying with his Creator, what did God do? **Well one person of the Godhead stepped out and became visible, tangible, over and over, and it’s always God the Son.** God the Son is the member of the Trinity that has always been the One to communicate with man, and become the visible manifestation of that invisible God.

So yes, no one has ever looked on the triune, invisible, Spirit God. But when God the Son steps out and becomes visible, and can communicate with man, it’s no problem whatsoever. So it isn’t a contradiction, you just have to understand the circumstances. Now this is what Paul is talking about here in Colossians chapter 1. Let’s look at verse 15 again.

*Colossians 1:15a*

"**Who is the image of the invisible God,**…"

Now we’re going to take this slow. God the Son is the image, and what’s an image? Something that you can see, it’s not something out there in enigma or in a semi-state. An image is something that you can see with your own eyes. **All right then God the Son is the visible image of the invisible God.** Do you see how plain that is? God the Son stepped out of that invisible Triune Godhead and in the person of the Son He became visible, He became tangible, and He walked among men all the way into the Old Testament.

So whenever God appeared, like speaking to Moses out of the burning bush, although in that instance He didn’t appear visibly. But Moses certainly heard Him speak, and so who was it? **God the Son!** I don’t call Him Jesus back in the Old Testament because the Bible doesn’t, but He was **God the Son!** When God appeared unto Abram in Ur of the Chaldees, who was it? **God the Son!** And as I’ve already rehearsed, when Jacob wrestled with the man until the breaking of the day, who was the man? **God the Son!** And then He would just simply go back up into the Godhead. Now continuing on in verse 15.

*Colossians 1:15b*

"**…the firstborn of every creature:**"

He was before anything that ever appeared. Now that’s his eternalness again. God the Son was just as much from eternity past as God the Father and God the Spirit. We’ll be looking at that, if not in this lesson, then the next in chapter 2:9. But for now I want you to see that God the Son, whom we now know as Jesus the Christ is the visible manifestation of that invisible God. Now the other thing that you always have to remember is that whenever God the Son stepped out of the Godhead, He lost none of
His deity. Remember that. He did not lay aside a portion of His power or deity, but He was always God! So just because He became visible, and appeared in Bethlehem in the virgin birth, He never stopped being God. Now at that time He laid aside His glory, because He could not have co-habited with mankind in all the glory of the Godhead. But other than the glory that He laid aside, He never stopped being God. And of course He never exercised it until He began His earthly ministry.

Now you’ve got to stop and think, had Jesus of Nazareth been anything less than God, and once He understood that He could control the elements, He could raise the dead, He could heal the sick, would have He ever limited it? Would you? Would we have limited it once we realized that we had this kind of power? Why we would have used it to the extreme, but you see, He didn’t. See, He always kept it under perfect control. When He was manifesting Himself from His humanity side, He never let His deity interfere. So always remember that it was because of His deity that He could control His power instead of taking advantage of situations. Now verse 16. This visible manifestation of the invisible God is the same God of Genesis 1:1. And you know what that verse says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Well this is the same God that we now know as Jesus the Christ.

**Colossians 1:16**

"For by him were all things created, that are created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, (including the spirit world of angels and demons) whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, (righteous or evil) all things were created by him, and for him:"  

They’re for His pleasure, and everything that God ever created is under His control and it’s to establish His Sovereignty and it’s all been done for His own pleasure. And no one dare question it, because He’s Sovereign. Now let’s go back and compare some more Scriptures with this. We haven’t done this for a long time so I think it’s appropriate, but rather going from Genesis to Colossians, we’ll go from Colossians backwards. Our first stop will be in John’s gospel, chapter 1.

You’ve always got people who will say, "Well this is Paul who’s teaching Christ was the Creator." But when they say that, remember Paul agrees with every thing in Scriptures. He never contradicts anything. Now there may be instances where it may seem that Paul contradicts, but he doesn’t. Remember, Paul is teaching in the Church Age dispensation, and as a result we also find that God’s program for this age has changed, because now we’re under Grace rather than Law. But here we’ll see that Paul and John agree completely that Jesus Christ was the Creator.

**John 1:1**
"In the beginning (the same three words of Genesis 1:1) was the Word, (notice the Word is capitalized. The other word I like to use here is the Communicator.) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

You know we have some groups that just can’t buy this so they have twisted their writings and have made Jesus Christ something less than God. But while we’re on that subject let’s look real quick in the Book of Titus to show you they’re wrong there also. I think I used this in a lesson or two back, but it’s also very appropriate here. If you have someone come to your door and they try to tell you that Jesus was not God, that He was a prophet or something less than God, and was not the Creator God, then this is the best verse I’ve found to confront that. All the other verses that prove that Christ was the Creator they’ll twist and try to get around it, but on this one they can’t. I mean you just can’t get around this one. Here Paul writes the following.

**Titus 2:13**

"Looking for that blessed hope, (that’s exactly were we are in the Church Age right now. And what’s the blessed hope?) and the glorious appearing (the Rapture) of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"

See you just can’t get around the fact that Jesus Christ is also the great God. I’ve showed them the verse back in Isaiah chapter 9, and they’ll say, "Yeah, but that’s the mighty God, that’s not the Almighty God." They’ll just use any little thing to wiggle around it, but this verse in Titus, you can’t argue with. Because we’re looking for the great God, the Creator God, the God of the universe, and who is it? Jesus Christ! Now back to John’s gospel chapter 1.

**John 1:2-3**

"The same was in the beginning with God. (He’s always been! He’s from eternity past the same as the other persons of the Godhead) 3. All things were made by him: (just like Paul says in Colossians. Everything that was ever created was created by God the Son.) and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Whether it was heavenly, invisible, dominions or powers, regardless, everything was made by the Word. Now who’s the Word? We find that in verse 14.

**John 1:14a**

"And the Word was made flesh,..."
Do you see that? The Holy Spirit never took on flesh, God the Father never took on flesh, but God the Son did, and so here’s the evidence.

**John 1:14a**

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,…)"

What’s he talking about? The Mount of Transfiguration when Peter, James and John went up into the mountains with Christ, and what happened? He shown like the sun, and Peter, James and John witnessed that, and that’s what John is referring to in verse 14.

**John 1:14b**

"...and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Well I’m not going to take you all the way back to Genesis, as you all know that very first verse. But instead let’s turn ahead to Hebrews chapter 1, and just notice how all these verses fit. John says, "The Word became flesh, and nothing was made without Him" Paul says in Colossians "Christ is the visible manifestation of the invisible God, and by Him all things were created." Now here in Hebrews, and I think Paul wrote this Book also as the Lord permitted Him to write half of the New Testament.

**Hebrews 1:1-2a**

"God, (this God right here as we have it outlined on the blackboard. This whole Triune God in His invisible Triune makeup) who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. (Old Testament) 2. (God) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,…"

Do you see that? In other words, when God the Son was manifested in the flesh and He begin to reveal things that all the Old Testament had been talking about merely in a latent form, now here He is in fulfillment of it all.

**Hebrews 1:2**

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom (speaking of God the Son) he (God) hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"
Now you can’t get it any plainer than that. I had a gentlemen one time ask the question, *Who in the world is Jesus Christ?* At the time it shocked me as I thought, how could anybody even think such a thought. But now I know this is a question that more people should be asking. Who is He? **He’s the Creator of the universe, He is all Sovereign God of everything, and yet He’s the One that went to that Roman cross.** As I stated over and over, those Roman soldiers who put the nails through His hands were His created beings, He made them, and let them do that to Him. Now you see this is all part and parcel of what Paul is trying to get across to us, is who Jesus Christ really is. And if we understand who He really is then we can understand how that by the death of the cross, He could by his own volition pay the sin debt for every human being that’s ever lived because He’s God.

No human could have ever done that. See this is what puts Christ head and shoulders above all other religions of the world. None of their leaders could have ever done what Christ did, they could have never died for the sins of mankind. They could never even scratch the surface of what the Creator God Himself has done. This is where our faith then becomes, not a blind faith, we know what we believe. We know it was the Creator who purchased our salvation. It was the Creator who took on human flesh, made of flesh and blood so that He could become the supreme sacrifice and fulfill the demands of that Holy God, **because "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."** See how it all beautifully fits together? Now finishing verse 16 again in Colossians.

*Colossians 1:16b*

"...all things were created by him, and for him:"

It was for His pleasure, they’re His. Let’s turn to Acts chapter 2 and look at another good one. Here Peter is preaching to the nation of Israel on the day of Pentecost.

*Acts 2:22-23a*

"*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23. Him, (Jesus of Nazareth) being delivered (up to the cross, not by the Roman decree, not by the shouts of Jews to crucify Him, but when was He really delivered up to be crucified? It was) by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,...""

It was long before anything was ever created, it was way back in eternity past, when the determinate counsel or the meeting of the minds again of this Triune Godhead came together, and what determination did they make? We’re going to create the
universe, and in one little tiny corner of the universe, we’re going to create a planet. And on that planet we’re going to create a race of humans. We’re going to let them start absolutely sinless, we’re going to put them in a perfect environment, but they’re not going to be satisfied, and they’re going to rebel, they’re going to sin. But we’re going to come right back with a plan of redemption, and One of Us, One of the Trinity, is going to be the Redeemer. One of Us is going to go down to that little planet and take on flesh, and blood, and we’re going to go to a cross, and be lifted up and crucified so that we can purchase the salvation of our created beings. And who was the One in that Trinity that went? God the Son! Because God planned it that way from start to finish. Nothing caught God by surprise, it was all in the blueprint, and when the fullness of time was come as it says in the Book of Galatians. I used that verse when I shared the Christmas story with my Oklahoma classes, rather than the Bethlehem story.

*Galatians 4:4*

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman made under the law."

Why? To purchase man’s salvation!